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## A CONSERVATIVE VIEW OF JUDAISM.

A RECENT movement in the community, and a recent book by one of the Editors of this REVIEW, have imported a flavour of party politics into the affairs of Anglo-Jewry. If it is not yet altogether true to say with Mr. Gilbert's hero that every little Jew or Jewess is born either a Liberal or a Conservative, it is at least apparent that these party names are acquiring a very real and a somewhat urgent significance in that small but influential section of Jewish thought which has its seat in this country. The Liberal case has been stated with singular lucidity and force in Mr. Montefiore's volume; and if in these pages I attempt to state the Conservative point of view, it is partly because Mr. Montefiore asks it, and partly, too, because it has fallen to me in the business of communal life to defend certain views and opinions which I must try to justify to myself. The essay need not take the form of a criticism of Mr. Montefiore's book. I hardly know if the hospitality of this REVIEW would be open to any such work. But something will have to be said of the views which that book expressed, and it will be convenient to quote them in Mr. Montefiore's own words. These do not, as he is at pains to remind us, commit any one else at all, either to the views themselves, or to the particular shape which he gives to them. At the same time, Mr. Montefiore will have found a number of people to agree with him, and most of them, it is fair to assume, will be willing to accept his language as an adequate expression of their thought. In this sense, and without violating Mr. Montefiore's claim to speak about "that particular and individualized form of Liberal

Judaism" which he himself happens to hold, Liberal Judaism, as he interprets it, may be taken as a definite conception corresponding to a definite set of opinions, which are shared by a definite section of the community.

This means a good deal. It means all that is implied, in journalistic language, by a "parting of the ways" and a "crisis" in affairs. It means that the Jewish community of England is dividing itself into two camps, the orthodox and reform, or the Conservative and Liberal, or the old and the new, for the classification is strangely familiar, and the simplest forms of expression are the best. Can the old beliefs put on their new clothes? Can the Jew who conscientiously rejects the tradition of the inspiration of the Pentateuch attend the same public worship as the Jew who conscientiously accepts it? Nay more, can the same name "Jew" continue to include them both? Or does the so-called New Criticism set a bar between Jew and Jew, leaving the traditionalists to defend a lost cause and a forsaken belief—on the side of the angels, it may be, but of angels who have been superannuated—and placing the Liberals or Liberationists at the head of a movement of reconciliation in which, as precedent ordains, the sword is the instrument of peace?

To many of us it will seem a pity if no *via media* is found. To many, again, it will seem imperative that no *via media* should be found, for the disputes of theologians are beyond the remedy of compromise. But with these opinions, and their consequences, the present paper has no concern. There will never be wanting the advocates of dissension and destruction. There will never be wanting those adherents to a creed who find their expression in a perpetual protest. Religion has always been the fruitful mother of conflict. Perhaps, as the deepest emotion of which the human race is competent, it is subject in a peculiar degree to the universal law of competition. Religion, like teeming earth, feeds on its own decay. It recalls to a vivid imagination the slaughterous and parri-

cial habits of the gods in the old Greek myth. Orthodoxy produces Protestantism; Protestantism, Dissent; each devours, or is devoured by, its offspring—the martyrs of one generation are the tyrants of the next; victor and victim there must ever be on the road to Zion, as to Rome.

In any state of society which exists by internecine strife certain advantages attach inevitably to the winning side. This, again, is in accordance with natural law. Without the assured enjoyment of victory's fruits there would be no heart in the fighting; and Protestants in religion have this, at least, on their side, that the brightness, the dash, the élan, the glamour of audacity and effect, are as necessarily and inalienably their perquisite as tail feathers adorn the peacock. "They prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the Lord of Hosts." But against this bare, bald statement of a claim must be set the fascination of novelty, and daring, and revolt—a fascination which is hardly correctly described and dismissed as meretricious, because it is an actual part of the natural process of development, and as such we must reckon with it and allow for it. In religious affairs, far more than in political, the Conservative case is severely penalized by nature. Changes which might frighten men in the conduct of the State, changes which might affect their purses, or unsettle their homes, or disturb their land-tenure, or otherwise touch their material interests, tend to attract them on the spiritual side by providing that grandest recipe for recreation—variety without responsibility. A certain personal trouble is involved in taking a holiday for the body. But the soul can enjoy a change of diet, and leave the consequences to others. Our spiritual nature, so to speak, and so speaking for the majority of mankind, is endowed with a vicarious digestion. We sing the psalms, and the Church does the rest. Accordingly, if certain Church dignitaries come along with a new form of psalm-singing, the mere novelty of which is an attraction in itself, many of us are quite content to transfer the responsibility as

before, and to quicken our spiritual appetite by a change of diet and occupation. Then the Protestant leader is liable to commit the mistake of little great men, and to make an end of his means. The temptation to form a new sect, instead of reforming the old, is too often irresistible. Indeed, it would sometimes seem as if the universal church has to await the hour till it can come as a unanimous reaction against the multiplication of churches and the meticulous diversity of creeds.

There are signs of this process in the Jewish community, and the most dangerous sign of all is the refusal to discuss it. Silent change is intolerable because it is so easy. The success of the corybantic method, as Huxley described it, will be increased tenfold if no sound is heard from without. Conservative Judaism must speak out, though it be only in self-defence. It cannot see its ranks depleted, and refrain from iterating the truth and the faith that are within it. The ram's horn should blow as loud a reveillé as any which is beaten on a drum. More than this is involved in the matter. One hears so frequently to-day that this or that feature of Judaism "does not appeal" to some seeker after spiritual rest that one tends to forget whose after all was the blame. This dispensation by default, this irresponsiveness in the worshipper, is not in itself a proof that the old creed is outworn. The cry for change finds an echo, and some may mistake the sound for an answer to their own prayers; variety, too, is a safe tonic, and the satisfaction of the patient is not always a symptom of disease. At least, it may fairly be urged that before throwing over the old forms some effort should be made to discover the secret of their vitality, and to determine whether this complaint, this tedium of the synagogue and its consecrated usages, is an indication of spiritual strength and intellectual awakening, or is merely a by-product of the forces of ignorance. There is no more plausible weapon in the whole armoury of dialectic than the appeal to common sense. Common sense is the grandest demagogue,

yet it is not to be trusted out of sight. The most excellent things in life—half its passions, and all its emotions—should listen to it, and pass by. The appeal from faith to reason, with the intellectual flattery it involves, is more often than not an appeal from light to darkness. *Gemeinsinn* is the cleverness of *das Gemeine*, and in affairs of the soul, as in affairs of the heart, common sense degrades, not exalts. There is only one thing more flattering than the appeal to common sense in a context of this kind, and that is the discovery of an unsuspected soul. Orthodox, or conservative, Judaism to-day has to counteract both these subtle perils. It has to meet the intellectual peril, and overthrow it; it has to take account of the latent spiritual longing, and teach it to find satisfaction without prescribing invalid's food. In other words, it has to correct two rather morbid tendencies, the tendency to an undue respect for one's own intellectual doubts, and the tendency to an exaggerated care for the nice requirements of one's own soul. These tendencies it must show to spring from a defect of the intellect and an excess of the spirit. Judaism, as a religious system, demands in a high degree the quality of intellectual imagination, and it reduces nearly to a minimum the spiritual claims of the individual. There is no confession in the synagogue; salvation is administered in big doses; and, mortifying as this may be to the self-esteem of the sickly soul, it yet seems to correspond to such imperfect observation as we are privileged to make of the Creator's relation to the world which he created for his praise. He does not interfere to save any one man among us from the consequences of his acts or from the exercise of his volition; and public worship, if it express the homage of man to God must, one would think, be satisfied with the revelation of God to man. The attempt to establish in the synagogue a form of ritual which shall admit a more intimate and personal communion between the worshipper and the Deity seems to the conservative Jew to contain the elements at least of a morbid and a Romanizing inten-

tion. It substitutes a private for a public purpose. It directly encourages the hysteria of the confessional. It eviscerates Judaism, leaving the empty husks of ceremony and tradition in the place of the living fruits offered on the altar of the sanctuary. And, more than this, it must be urged that the condonation of a service, adapted in its outward features to the practices of Gentile churches, is in itself a betrayal of the racial and religious separatism of which the Jews are trustees.

All this is negation and invective. But something of this point of view must be stated at the outset of a Conservative *apologia*. The most cherished feelings of the conservative Jew are outraged by such hypotheses as the following from Mr. Montefiore's volume :—

“The liberal Jew cannot regard the Law as the centre of Jewish belief and practice. If he were founding a public service *de novo*, he would not make the reading of the Law its central and most important feature. If he were building a synagogue, without reference to past custom, he would not put scrolls of the Law into an ark, and make that ark the most sacred part of the building. If he had such an ark, he would put in it the prophecies of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, rather than the Pentateuch, for the Prophets are more primary and more essential than the Law.”

“The prominent references to the Law in the liturgy can easily be given a new and different meaning by ‘liberal’ worshippers. To them the Law is no longer the Pentateuch, but the Moral Law, before whose majesty all men must bow. That is the Law to which they ask God to ‘open their hearts.’ That is the Law which they trust may ‘become pleasant in their mouths.’ Or, again, the Law is the will of God. That we may know and do God’s will we ask him to grant us ‘understanding and discernment.’ Or the Law is the Hebrew Scripture as a whole, which still remains the formal and constituent charter of Judaism, and of which we may truly say, ‘Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast given it to us.’ In these various ways, which, because they are freely acknowledged, are not sophistic or insincere, we may adapt the language of the liturgy to our own beliefs and aspirations.”

“There are persons who want to maintain the Jewish race quite apart from any religious consideration. There are some who would even go so far as to speak of the Jews as a ‘people’ or a ‘nation,’ and would desire to keep up, as they call it, the national idea. Such persons would object to intermarriage on purely ‘racial’ or ‘national’ grounds. There are others who combine these grounds with motives of religion. There are others, again, who, while by no means assenting to the theory that the Jews are a nation, have yet a sort of sentimental, unreasoned, atavistic feeling of race, and dislike the notion of intermarriage. With all these I am in disagreement. If it were not so, I should indeed be guilty of a contradiction when I desire the ‘denationalization’ of Judaism, and support the counter theory of an ‘Englishman of the Jewish persuasion.’ A man can only belong to one nation at a time. But, heart and soul an Englishman by nation, one can also be heart and soul a Jew by religion. But by religion only. The mere *race* is unimportant; it has no influence upon action.”

The basis of all this reconstruction, this readjustment of the spiritual compass to an altered mental horizon, is placed in the alleged incompatibility of modern knowledge with traditional Judaism. The “higher” criticism of the Bible puts a definite stop to the uncritical standards of former generations. It is no longer admissible to say, “What was true enough for my fathers is true enough for me.” Reason forbids so pusillanimous a surrender to tradition and sentiment. It proves that Moses never wrote the Pentateuch. At the touch of its analysis the fabric of the Mosaic Law crumbles into dust. Its new Bible is sprinkled with A’s and B’s and C’s, like a kind of alphabetical index to its multiple authorship; and, naturally enough, those who use this critical apparatus, or those more particularly who use it at second or third hand, think that their case is proved when they say, “How can we repeat, ‘This is the Law which Moses set before the children of Israel,’ when we know (1) that it is not the Law, and (2) that Moses did not promulgate it?”



Liberal Judaism concedes these objections, and repairs its tenement accordingly. Certain passages of the Pentateuch it omits, as wholly inamenable to reason. Certain others it modifies in order to adapt them to reason; and others, again, it submits to a fresh interpretation, at the expense more often than not of their essential sap. By this process of selection and rearrangement it discovers ways round the Law, by which to evade or to transform its original obligations, and with the simple but ingenious device of stating that "Moral" is *sous-entendu* whenever the Liturgy says "Law," it provides a ready escape from inconvenient fetters. But "Moral Law," we must all admit, is a phrase peculiarly susceptible of liberal interpretation; and if loyalty to the Jewish race and observances of the Jewish religion can be satisfactorily acquitted by obedience to the moral law, and if the injunction to obey it is recommended by a compliment to the mental powers of the rational disciple, then we may close our arks or furnish them with tracts on Utilitarianism, and hold up to the congregation of Israel the admirable and demonstrable truths of Bentham and the younger Mill.

A pained surprise is sometimes expressed at the outer darkness in which we live, who have informed ourselves of the latest results of the researches of Biblical criticism, and who yet continue to uphold the authority of the Law, and to practise the religion of our forbears in the forms which it prescribes, as far as they are compatible with the conditions of modern life. The answer is that the two things have nothing to do with each other. It is the characteristic of liturgical language (conservative Judaism replies) to provide for emergencies of that kind. Liturgical language never pretends to scientific exactness, and when science comes along and proves it inexact, it readily admits the charge, but claims, as it has always claimed, the quality of a higher truth than the truth of scientific demonstration. The problem was stated and solved a generation ago, in Matthew Arnold's *Essay towards a better Apprehension of the Bible*. "The language of the Bible," he wrote, "is literary, not scientific,

language; language *thrown out* at an object of consciousness not fully grasped, which inspired emotion. Evidently, if the object be one not fully to be grasped, and one to inspire emotion, the language of figure and feeling will satisfy us better about it, will cover more of what we seek to express, than the language of literal fact and science. The language of science about it will be *below* what we feel to be the truth." To weigh language of this kind in the crucible of science is to apply, as Sir Leslie Stephen puts it, "a totally inappropriate test. . . . The churches," as Sir Leslie continues, not without a touch of irony, "would escape a good many difficulties, and apologists a good deal of trouble, if they could boldly follow Arnold and say that they do not appeal to the reason, but to the imagination" (*Studies of a Biographer*, II, 118). The Jewish Church need not hesitate to follow Arnold to this extent. It may go further and say that the function of religion is to appeal to the imagination, and that a religious system which failed to make that appeal, and which could be approved unexceptionally by human reason, is a system which omits the Unknown. And the Jewish Deity possesses that awful attribute of unknowableness. Conservative Judaism prefers, in the full exercise of its intelligence, and with eyes and ears all open, to leave something to the imagination. It uses figurative language consciously—deliberately, one might say—and with a keen sense of the added power which is thereby lent to expression. In this way even the much abused opening verses of Genesis, which the higher criticism expunges as wholly unreasonable and unacceptable, and which are omitted, accordingly, from the new Revised Version of its sensitive disciples, contain a truth and beauty distinct and distinguishable from the truth and beauty in their kind of the scientific theory of origins.

It is no part of my purpose to attempt a defence of the imagination, but it is interesting at least to try, in quite untechnical language and doubtless very imperfectly, to describe what might be called the psychological process of

belief in the mind of a Jew, to whom the obvious inaccuracy of the first chapter of Genesis does not in any wise impair its spiritual appeal to his religious emotions. We must suppose him standing in the position of the psalmist :—

“ When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained ; what is man, that thou art mindful of him ? and the son of man, that thou visitest him ? ”

In other words, our Jew—our ideal synagogue-going Jew—is in a mood to realize the tremendous vastness of the universe, and his own immeasurable insignificance as a unit on the face of the world. Yet, oppressed and awestruck as he is, he recovers to a certain extent his failing sense of self-respect by means of the reflection, which inevitably suggests itself, of a purpose and an order which have been imposed upon, or are discernible in, the chaos. Light and darkness, water and earth, seed and fruit, these display a distinctness and regularity which even the infinitesimal unit—individual man—can plainly recognize and turn to his own uses. His terror is changing, accordingly, to a kind of wondering admiration, blent with which is the feeling that all this orderly procession on a scale hardly conceivable to a finite intelligence is designed for, or has led to, the growth of his own importance. Take the psalmist's reflection again :—

“ For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands ; thou hast put all things under his feet : all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field ; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. ”

Note here how inevitable, to use a hackneyed word, is the psalmist's expression of his mood. Can any one, feeling those emotions, and seeking language to express them, speak more truthfully or more beautifully than

the author of this psalm? "The work of thy fingers" is imaginative language, but is it therefore untrue? Is it not the nearest approximation which an imperfect instrument can fashion to the conception which cries for utterance? Can science, learned in all tongues, suggest a satisfactory substitute for *that thought in that mood*? It is the language of prayer, the language of adoring gratitude, in which the facts of observation, wherewith science is concerned, are transfigured by the light of imagination. And that light reveals a higher truth than the literal statement of the facts. It utters a truth which satisfies at once a more spontaneous, a more universal, and a more elevated demand of the mind than mere reason ever formulates. In the insoluble problem of the destiny of man, in which all speech is faltering, at least it reaches the level of what we feel to be the truth, below which, as Arnold says, the language of science falls. And, so reaching, it proves its own truth by its power to heal and to console. It is *the* expression which was sought for; imagination can essay no higher flight.

Now, assuming this mood, and using the sole form of speech which can even approximately express it, let us try to write the story of creation. Does it not necessarily fall into the moulds of the first chapter of Genesis? First the void, and the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters. Then the various types of order, ascribed by a figure of language, accurately fashioned by the aid of the highest human imagination, to the Presiding Idea, the designing finger—God. "And God called," "And God said," "And God set," "And God created"—surely Reason would pull Truth down from her magnificent eminence if it reformed these symbols in accordance with scientific fact. Surely these phrases remain the supreme and perfect expression of those facts as grasped by imagination, and surely the language of science about them must altogether omit their emotional aspect with its claims on our adoration and our gratitude. Above all, the glorious

refrain, "And God saw that it was good," with its *crescendo* burst of music at the end, "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good," is an inseparable part of any account of creation which shall satisfy the emotions and the intellectual imagination of mankind. The burden of the universe can only be relieved in a religious mood by the fervid statement of the truth, the fervid confession of the belief, that what is, is good. Art and poetry describe it as the identity of truth with beauty; science cancels it altogether, as irrelevant to demonstration; but religion proclaims it from the first in language that carries its own conviction: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. . . . And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." The days, as stages of this work, present no difficulty to belief. No one pretends that they are literal; no one disputes their truth on the ground of scientific inaccuracy. Facts, after all, are imponderable things, and reason is a shifting standard. It changes from year to year, from one generation to another. Facts are very far from the last word which the intellectual emotions can state to spiritual faith.

Whether the problem be attacked as one of verbal inspiration, or as one of the meaning of truth, it is equally illiberal, in my opinion, to presume to settle it on the spot. Transfer the argument for a moment to the less controversial field of classical scholarship. Virgil wrote a line:—

"Sunt hic etiam sua præmia laudi;  
Sunt lacrimæ rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt."

This verse is rendered by Mr. Frederick Myers:—

"Tears waken tears, and honour honour brings,  
And mortal hearts are moved by mortal things."

Sir C. Bowen translates it:—

"Tears are to human sorrow given, hearts feel for  
mankind."

Wordsworth rewrote it :—

“Tears to human suffering are due.”

Tennyson echoed it in his apostrophe to Virgil :—

“Thou majestic in thy sadness at the doubtful doom of humankind.”

Dr. Henry, *optime de Marone meritus*, explains *rerum* as “the world,” and writes on the text that it forms “a general reflection concerning human sympathy, viz. that tears are part of the constitution of nature, and to be met with wherever there are men.”

Professor Tyrrell declares that he is “not sure that all its meaning has yet been fully unfolded. . . Surely in this famous verse Virgil meant more than Wordsworth in the *Laodamia* . . . Surely these words, which seem full of a natural magic, come to us with a diviner air and a grander message than this. . . May not the words, which cannot but strike one as fraught with some new and exquisite fancy, bear a meaning far more definite, weighty, and distinguished? . . . E'en things inanimate (*res*, the material picture) can weep for us, and the works of men's hands (*mortalia*) have their own pathetic power.”

Dr. Mackail, in his brilliant manual on “Latin Literature,” writes with a touch of mysticism: “In the most famous of his single lines he speaks of the ‘tears in things’; just this sense of tears, this voice that always, in its most sustained splendour and in its most ordinary cadences, vibrates with a strange pathos, is what finally places him alone among artists.”

And so forth, and so forth. For the disputations of critics on this verse might be indefinitely quoted. *Res* may be rendered “human sorrow,” or “the world,” or “inanimate things,” and Virgil's meaning in the verse may be totally different from our own. He may have intended a general reflection on the constitution of the universe, or a specific comment on Aeneas looking at a picture. But the point of the analogy is that the credit in either case is

Virgil's. In the process of the suns a newer and a deeper meaning may have been read into his verse. He remains triumphantly its author. He drew it from the well-spring of truth; its truth is his truth for ever. Though he may have been inspired with a message the full sense of which he did not understand, the verbal inspiration is unassailed. Similarly, if the Pentateuch contains verses which later ages invest with deeper meaning than they may originally have borne, it is still no falsehood to proclaim: "This is the Law which Moses set before the children of Israel." The hidden meanings which are revealed are also a part of inspiration.

Let me take a homelier analogy to illustrate the problem of truth. I may say: "This umbrella was given to me by So-and-so in such-and-such a year." The stickler for facts comes along, and asks a series of questions. "Has your umbrella been re-covered?" "Yes." "Have you had a new stick for it?" "Yes." "And a new frame?" "Yes." "And a new ferule?" "Yes." "And a new handle?" "Yes." So he writes his alphabetical appendix to my simple statement of the truth, and draws up a learned scheme of "Umbrella A," "Umbrella B," "Umbrella C," "Umbrella AB," and so forth, the while I continue to proclaim, with the pertinacity of Wordsworth's simple child, and the inconsequence of his boy from Kilve, that "This is the umbrella which So-and-so gave to me in the year such-and-such." I accept all his facts as true, but they do not in the least affect the higher truth of my statement, nor do they shake my faith in the essential identity of the umbrella, enriched by its traditions and associations, with that of the donor whom I name. Similarly, I may admit without demur the evidences of the higher criticism, and yet not relax my belief in the sovereign truth of the words: "This is the Law which Moses set before the children of Israel." It is a very shallow cleverness which confounds the exercise of the imagination with the condonation of a lie.

Enough has perhaps been said to show how far from conclusive, in the opinion of the conservative Jew, is the appeal from faith to reason, or from the spirit to the word. One point only should be added, which the higher critics tend to overlook, or rather, which is immaterial to their argument, and which those who follow them do not realize. An inspired text is not necessarily a text which is inspired in every word. Conservative Judaism, I venture to think, is much more moderate than its opponents. It recognizes at least three elements in the inspired text, as we receive it. First, the message; next, the interpreter; lastly, the audience. The Deity chose human agents to communicate his will, and something doubtless was lost in this first process of transmission. Further, the transmitting agent had to make his communication to a heterogeneous audience, and that second process of removal from the original Voice involved a fresh adaptation of the message. The Pentateuchal formula is commonly: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them." Now, taking the thing quite literally, it is obvious that in any attempt to repeat to a large mixed class the words of a supreme authority, a certain admixture must take place. There is not only the mind of the transmitter, but the mind of the receivers to be considered. Each will colour the message on its way; and there will be in the resultant text the element of Moses and the element of the children of Israel, as well as the original code. The recognition of this fact, which indeed, is nowhere disguised, by no means detracts from the inspiration of the Pentateuch; but it does, I venture to think, tone down the asperity of the dogma, as Mr. Montefiore states it on p. 95: "The truth is that liberal Judaism has ceased to be a legal religion. In a legal religion the central feature is a belief in a perfect and God-given code, all the enactments of which must be scrupulously obeyed and fulfilled. Orthodox Judaism still declares that this belief, with



all its implications, constitutes an essential dogma of the faith."

Personally, though I do not pretend to obey every injunction in the code, it seems to me far more reasonable to take them as they stand, and to fulfil them, than to cry out that Judaism has ceased to be a legal religion because the "higher" critics have discovered by a roundabout way what the author of the Pentateuch states in every chapter of his work, that the Law was removed from the Legislator by a double process of transmission. It is not the business of the "higher" critics to point out the limitation of their arguments, but it is the business of Judaism to make sure how far the proof of contamination affects the claim to inspiration. On all grounds alike, I venture to think, the claim to inspiration can defend itself, without taking recourse to the *noli me tangere* of mere obstinate orthodoxy. By the substitution of imagination for reason, as the proper canon of judgment, by the recognition that the contents of expression are not exhausted by the intelligence of any one generation, by the perception of a substantial truth behind the shadowy appearances of facts, and by the humble realization of the Deity of Exodus xxxiii. 20: "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me, and live"—in this spirit Biblical criticism may be greeted as a welcome guest in the mansion of Jewish faith. It will increase understanding where it dwells, and not disturb the peace of the household; it cannot abuse the hospitality which it receives, for the utmost resources of its art do not touch the fringes of belief. It is not knowledge which is to be feared, but the inferences that ignorance may draw from it.

There is little to be added to this survey. But this at least should be apparent, however imperfectly shown, that the conservative Jew will be far better equipped to meet attacks on his belief and temptations to apostasy than his liberal brother. The liberal Jew of Mr. Montefiore's book

is everlastingly apologizing for himself. On p. 126, "he will not refuse to obey a law, or regard its public observance as undesirable, merely because it is a ceremonial law, or merely because he can no longer believe that it was divinely revealed to Moses by God. Its observance may still be desirable from different motives." On p. 155 he registers the general reflection that "it is impossible to create festivals to order. One must use those which exist, and charge them, where necessary, with newer meanings"; and "providentially," he concludes, on p. 166, "the Sabbath and the Festivals, the Day of Memorial and the Day of Atonement—these can all remain. We can still use them fitly for religious and spiritual ends." To a reverent mind this kind of reconstruction is most objectionable. It suggests that Judaism is a bankrupt concern, with certain fixtures and furniture, which go with the lease of the premises, and that these must be taken over by the new tenant, pending, as Mr. Montefiore writes, on p. 133, "a modification of the Synagogue structure." The conservative Jew, on the contrary, is happily reduced to no such humiliating makeshifts. He does not even subscribe to the *ipse dixit* of the liberal Jew: "We go to Synagogue not to hear a recital of laws or stories, but primarily to pray" (p. 133). The primary object of public worship, he would venture to maintain, is to rivet the links which bind the congregation together, and which bind together the congregations of Israel. No link can ever be forged out of the personal prayers of individual members which shall resist, as Israel has resisted, the persecution of the centuries. Synagogue is a place for prayer, as is every other place—the open field or the bed-chamber—where man attunes his mind to communion with God. But Synagogue is first and foremost the place of public worship, a holy meeting-place and resting-place for the scattered congregations of the Jews. There they assemble to use, to display, and to assert their last common possession of religion, with the aid of a book of common prayer. Certain expressions in that

book may or may not appeal to this or that member of the congregation. His feeling, however, may be disregarded, for the fault most probably lies in his own imperfect realization of the purpose which the Synagogue fulfils. Most probably he misses the sanction in history or tradition which attaches to the usage; and the remedy should first be sought in a careful study of the Prayer-book. Even so, it is inevitable that the forms of public worship will not exactly correspond to the needs of the individual soul. Public worship is bound in a certain degree to be crystallized by sentiment and made rigid by convention. Its "atmosphere," to use a stock phrase, is necessarily different from that of personal prayer, and any experiment which aims at a coalescence of the two must end in destroying the purpose for which the Synagogue exists.

The thrill and the glamour remain. The force which, as Mr. Montefiore writes, draws a number of non-observant Jews to Synagogue once a year, on the Day of Atonement, is not, I venture to believe, to be explained and contemned, as he contemns it. Their attendance does not prove that "they are silly enough to think that by this annual rite they may ward off some of the consequences of misspent lives and evil deeds" (p. 162). This is a harsh saying, which entirely misdescribes the lives and deeds of many who are faithful to the annual rite, and to no other Jewish ceremonial. The true explanation, it seems to me, is in the magnetic attraction of traditional Judaism. On some it acts more powerfully than on others, but the framers of the ancient ordinances of the Jews wrought more surely than they knew. The bonds by which they rivetted a rebellious people to the Law prove their strength by this phenomenon. Once a year at least even indifferent witnesses come to the congregation of Israel, and claim their place with the rest. Once a year at least they testify to the living Law, and are drawn within its fold by the force that is in it. Would a Day of Atonement, stripped of its tradition and ceremonial, denuded of its historical associations, make anything

like the same appeal? Mr. Montefiore writes: "The modern Day of Atonement is purely spiritual. It is true that most Jews still fast for twenty-four hours, but no one ascribes any efficacy to the fast. It is an old custom, which does no particular harm, and is an exercise in self-control. It has some disciplinal and ascetic value. . . . The fast is, however, a minor and subsidiary feature. In every other respect the day has only to do with fundamental religious ideas, with the conceptions of sin, repentance, reconciliation, and atonement. Such a day is absolutely fitted and useful for every human soul" (p. 163). But Judaism, before it concerns itself with the requirements of the human soul, is concerned with the public expression of religious belief. The fast is very much more than "an old custom which does no harm." The fast is the outward sign, the symbol of a common worship; its roots are set in human nature itself. It acts as the trumpet-call of the Synagogue, to draw the congregation together. Atonement is not fasting, for the greater does not contain the less; but a public system of religion, as distinguished from private confessionals, would hardly survive its foundation if it neglected men's bodies in providing for their souls. It was the weakness of mediaeval Judaism, when transported to modern surroundings, to care for the body overmuch, to forget the Law in its symbols. Against this, the Protestant movement in England, of 1842, was a healthy reaction; but a new movement of Dissent, which would abolish the symbols altogether, or relegate them at least to a more subsidiary place, and pack away the ark in the lumber-room, is a very different thing. To put it at its highest, it trusts too much to unassisted spiritual needs.

If I were preaching a sermon, for which I have neither the wish nor the right, the question of discipline in religion would require to be discussed. If this were a treatise on ethnology, it would consider the problem of race, and from both points of view a strong case could be made out for conservative Judaism. But my object in writing this

paper has been at once more modest and more difficult. I have been trying to show how the forms of public worship, as practised by the majority of Jews, may still retain their hold on Jews who do not ignore the results of Biblical criticism. One can speak only for oneself in a context of this kind, and personally, at least, I feel no sense of insincerity, no impulse to set myself right with the critics outside, when I repeat the consecrated formula, with all that it implies: "This is the Law which Moses set before the children of Israel." When I echo Solomon's prayer—surely the most perfect expression of the longing of the human soul—"What prayer or supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands towards this house; then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest"—I deliberately prefer, on spiritual grounds, to preserve the "environment" of Solomon, who "built an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel," and "set there a place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of the Lord, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings viii. 20-21). All this to the conservative Jew is not merely true, but vital. It helps to make a difference between his public and his private worship. It has the essence of commonalty; it is a part of the constitution of Israel, it transcends the life of individuals, and passes into the possession of the race which cannot fail. Granting a share of comparative sanity to these views, the practice of the Jewish religion gains enormously by holding them. Warmth, romance, and imagination; immediateness and directness; tradition sentiment, and association: these qualities which appeal to children, and to the eternal child in man, are added at once to the colder lights of a "purely spiritual" faith. The object-lessons of belief are added to the abstract teachings of morality. And for the searchings of reason,

with which human curiosity concerns itself, surely the whole philosophy of conduct is contained in a verse of Deuteronomy:—

“The secret things are for the Lord our God; but the revealed things are for us, and for our children, for ever, that we may perform all the words of this Law.”

LAURIE MAGNUS.