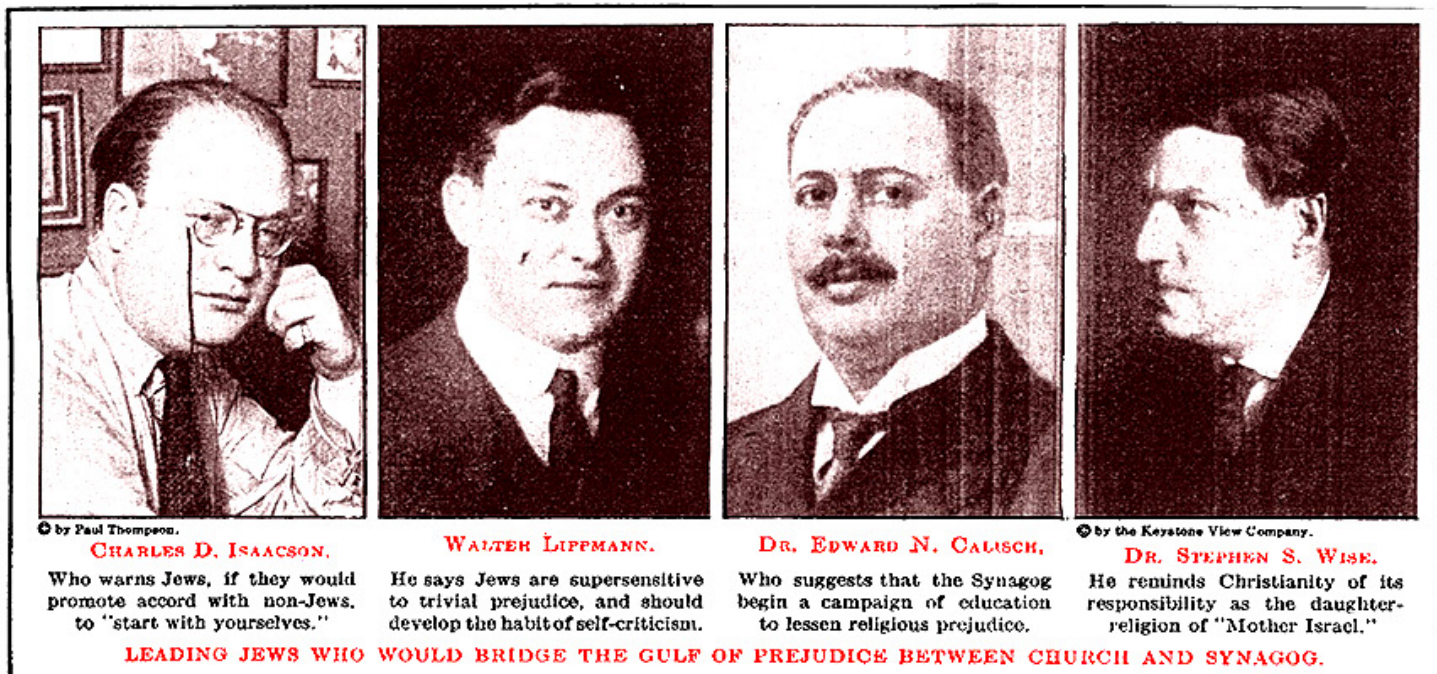


FOR CHRISTIAN-JEWISH FRIENDSHIP HP



CHRISTIAN BLOOD for the Passover was once believed by non-Jews to be an essential of the ancient Judaic rite, and in numerous instances, history records, this carefully fed tradition has been responsible for the ordered slaying of Jews. But ancient superstitions and grudges are being dissipated in the light of knowledge, and here in the Western World, we are assured, the Jew and non-Jew are gradually arriving at a mutual understanding and respect which are clean of religious prejudice. However, there is still much blind antagonism between Jew and Gentile, the responsibility for which, tho not altogether one-sided, rests heavily upon the younger faith. Yet Christianity is the daughter-religion of "Mother Israel," a circumstance alone which imparts "an abiding and inerasable obligation upon the Christian Church in its relation to a people directly descended from those who were the founders and disciples of Israel." Thus writes Dr. Stephen S. Wise, a prominent New York rabbi, in *The American Hebrew* (New York), which devotes its Passover number to a symposium on a means to a better understanding between the two faiths. Jew and non-Jew were invited to a frank discussion, and the result affords a brighter outlook for the settlement of the ancient grudge.

The second responsibility resting on Christianity to which Dr. Wise calls attention is "the obvious one" which grows out of "over-emphasis upon Jews as the slayers of Jesus and the under-emphasis upon Jews as the bearers and bringers of Jesus," and, continues the rabbi:

"I maintain there will be no appreciable lessening of prejudice among Christians as against Jews until Christian churches earnestly and solemnly affirm that the death of Jesus, at whosever's hands, was incidental to the eternal fact of the birth and rise and teaching and influence of Jesus, the young Judean of Nazareth.

"Whatever Christians may have taught or believed touching this in the past, their duty in the present is clear as are the heavens in the noon hour—the duty of affirming that incalculable and eternal is the debt of Christians to Israel, of whose gifts Jesus is treasured as the chiefest.

"And a third reason, perhaps most binding of all, to move

Christian churches consciously to do battle against existent prejudice respecting the Jew ought to be found in that consciousness of reparation owing to the Jew for nearly nineteen centuries of Christlessness, which have been suffered by Christ's people. . . .

"Nothing, in a word, could have been more unmessianic than the attitude of Christendom toward Israel, the people of Jesus—the I do not forget that there have been in every generation Christian men and women who have borne themselves as the new brothers and sisters of Jesus toward his elder brothers and sisters."

But continued oppression has served to evoke from the Jew "a measure of forbearance which no people on earth has ever been challenged to achieve," and Dr. Wise affirms: "We were, we would be, we shall be just to Christendom whatever Christendom be to the Jew."

The basic cause of the gulf between Christians and Jews—whatever other causes, economic, racial, or what not, may be added thereto—is a religious one, says Dr. Edward N. Calisch, President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and he maintains that the Jews did not reject Jesus of Nazareth; but the Christ of a Pauline Christianity that "was formulated more than a century and a half after his death." Happily, he considers, this theology is "losing its ascendancy, and real religion is coming into its own among the children of men. The throne of dogmatism, like many other thrones, has been toppled over, and a spirit of religious democracy is making its way into the heart of mankind. Creeds and catechisms may be useful things in their way, but character and conduct are more important." There are, the writer holds, beautiful ideals common to all religions. "and a recognition of this fact leads to a sympathy and appreciation in whose presence polemics and mere theological hair-splitting are a futile waste of time." It appears to Dr. Calisch, then, that the synagog could profitably undertake a campaign of education along these lines, and he suggests:

"A general expression on the part of the leaders and teachers of the Synagog of deep appreciation of the profound and far-reaching influence of the man Jesus, and of the sweetness and beauty of his life, together with a statement of the lack of historical basis for the accusation by the Church of the responsibility of the Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus will do much toward contributing a finer mutuality and a lessening of prejudice between Jew and non-Jew in America."

What the American Jew needs to develop, writes Walter Lippmann, formerly associate editor of *The New Republic*, is the habit of self-criticism. If the spokesmen of the Jewish people would devote one-half the energy they now expend in answering attacks to attacking the evils that stare every one in the face, he says, "they would make a real contribution to the unity of American life. But, judged by their public utterance, they seem to me supersensitive to trivial prejudice in non-Jews and extraor-

“Start by believing that the non-Jews are human beings and not too much beneath you—or above you! So many of our Jews eulogize the history of the race and assume superiority of the Jew, yet are fearful before the non-Jew.

“Our Jews must clear their minds of their own hate, their own fear, their own belief, that there is a terrible misunderstanding between Jew and non-Jew. I would say to one who was crying about the prejudice he had found everywhere, clean out your mind of that belief. Get it out. Believe that most people don't care what you are or where you go to church or where you were born or what your name might be. What have you for sale, what talent is yours, what have you to

offer in friendship? Don't go hangdogging about when there is a crowd of assorted folks, feeling in your heart that something's between you and the rest.”

“Didn't President Wilson, the Presbyterian, and ex-President Taft, the Unitarian, and Cardinal O'Connell, the Roman Catholic, and Bishop Rhinelander, the Episcopalian, and Bishop Berry, the Methodist, and Russell Conwell, the Baptist, in the name of Christian sentiment, and representing millions of Christian church folk, issue an appeal for fair play?” asks Samuel Purvis, D. D., a Methodist minister and author of “The Romance of the Jew.” With gentle sarcasm Dr. Purvis ridicules the much-heralded story that the Jews are attempting to gain control of the world, and mentions that he has heard similar stories concerning the Masons, Catholics, and Methodists, who are just now “accused of being up to the neck in politics and of taking away the little brown jug from their neighbor's parched and thirsty lips and trying to control these United States.” And from one who is familiar with prejudice, but himself prepossessed with the Jews, comes this note of cheer and warning:

“You are not only Jews, you are American Jews, part of the great American Commonwealth. And, believe me, as a Christian preacher and a man of affairs, you have the good-will of every good American. I'd stake all on that. There would have been race and religious riots and pogroms long since if that were not true. . . .

“If I were a Jew I would minimize my class consciousness and emphasize my religion. It's a great one! Worry less about anti-Semitism and more about the crying indifference of the Jews to Judaism as a religion. Set your spiritual house in order. If you serve faithfully the God of your fathers, no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper. You have the Bible and thousands of years of history back of you to prove that!

“To your tents—and to your knees—O Israel!”