

## LIBERALITY OF THE JEWS.

In speaking thus of the great central teaching of the religion of most of our fellow-citizens it should be remembered that I am here neither to offend nor to defend. I should regret exceedingly if any should imagine that I enter into the present discussion in a spirit of antagonism, or with a desire to apologize for our own faith. I am no admirer and I hope no breeder, of the detestable odium theologicum—that contradiction in terms—"religious hatred." It should be known that we admire our fellow-citizens of other creeds when they deserve admiration. We are happy to co-operate with them in all works of charity, public duty, patriotism, and in all that may tend to perfect our common humanity. This is the plain teaching of Judaism throughout every period of its changeful history. But in matters of conscience, in matters of having regard to eternal truths, in affairs that affect individual and private beliefs we claim the right to hold whatsoever opinions reason urges, even as we willingly grant non-Jewish neighbors the privilege of accepting whatever doctrines they care. The Jew has the same right to worship God after his own mode as has the Christian. The Christian has the same right to believe in the divine trinity as the Jew claims to believe in the absolute unity of God. So too have we the right to discuss our belief, and if by reference to or comparison with another creed we can maintain the truth of our position, we claim the right to debate that creed freely, fairly and honestly, as willingly as we grant to others the right to discuss our faith so long as they keep within the limits of truth, fairness and historic facts.

We say this with special emphasis, for there have been times when Jews have been depicted not as they are, but as their detractors would like them to be; and when Judaism has been spoken of not as it is, but as they would wish it to be. That this spirit of fairness has not always been manifested may be easily seen. I could paint you the picture of fanaticism wallowing in blood, destroying cities and towns, because men differed in belief! I could depict horrid and unnatural scenes where religion called down the blessings of God on the massacre of thousands, because the weak persecuted ones were strong in their faith! I could draw before your mind's eyes, the dungeon, thumbscrew and rack, scavenger's daughter, axe and block; inquisition chamber, auto-da-fe and stake, all used for divine service, because of the absence of that spirit of fairness. I could show you whole communities robbed and pillaged and outraged, hundreds of thousands exiled at almost a moment's notice; whole sects obliterated, Waldenses

and Albigenses, Puritans and Catholics, Jews and Huguenots, drearily and wearily walking the highways and byways of Europe in momentary fear of death, because their religious views differed from those of the predominant church.

It is an old question what is the Messiah, and one about which there is but little new to say. Yet it is one that this season of advent suggested and one that is always worthy of consideration, for in this question is bound up a man's way of looking at life. For if it be granted for a moment that succeeding generations are to inherit the affliction and troubles, the sorrows and sins, the mistakes and failures of the past probably in a magnified form, then must man ever consider life a burden, for the curse of failure stares him in the face. But on the other hand, let him but believe that life's bitterest experiences are not eternal, that the greatest and proudest triumph of Humanity and Religion will be a Religion of Humanity, that the great victories that seem entirely beyond our power will be within easy reach of those who shall come after us; let him but form and nourish the convictions that life must ascend ever higher in the moral scale, that hopes shall not always be frustrated and aspirations shall not always be thwarted and work for mankind's good "shall not always return empty," and at once life assumes a rosy hue crowned with hope. This belief in the advance of humanity, and that of the coming of the Messiah, are but different expressions of the same great truth. They are like two streams that run side by side until, finally, their waters merge into a common channel, and they move onward a more fruitful source of blessing.

RABBI J. LEONARD LEVY.

## THE GENESIS OF NATURE

The parallax of a star is the angle contained between two lines drawn from it, one to the sun, the other to the earth. Before proceeding farther there is one movement of our earth that ought to be explained. It is the procession of the equinoxes, which brings about the great astronomical year of 21,000 years to form a cycle. In the year 1250 B. C. the great winter terminated at the south pole, at the same time the great summer at the north pole culminated. Since that date our great winter has been in progress and the north pole goes on getting colder and colder and in 7,388 years from this date the center of the earth will return to its normal condition which is the center of our earth and the ice and snow will melt at the south pole and the waters will flow north, making a new continent in the southern hemisphere, but this part of

the subject I will leave for another time.

By the parallax we have determined the distance of all the planets as well as many fixed stars. Mercury and Venus are called the inferior planets and have no moons; next in order comes our earth with one moon; Mars comes next and is very interesting and has been studied it more than all others because it is so near to us. It is only one fourth as large as our earth. Its atmosphere is loaded with clouds like our earth and has two little moons. The outer one revolves about the planet in 30 hours at a distance of 12,300 miles and is called Deimos. The inner one revolves around it in seven hours and thirty minutes at a distance of only 3,000 miles and is called Phobos. These words mean Dread and Terror the sons of Mars.

Next in course from the sun is a wrecked planet, or asteroides of which 150 have been counted. Some of these would only make a good sized farm.

We next pass to Jupiter the giant planet of our solar system with its four moons revolving around the sun at a mean distance of 472,000,000 miles. Bowling along through space at the rate of 500 miles in a minute. Next comes Saturn, the ringed planet, the most sublime spectacle of all, with its eight moons, revolving around the sun at a mean distance of 872,000,000 miles. It is left unfinished and shows how worlds were made.

Uranus' distance is 1,854,000,000 miles from the sun, revolving around it once in 84 of our years. Neptune's distance is 2,750,000,000 miles from the sun. The Neptunian year is equal to 165 of our years. The velocity of all these planets decreases as their distance increases from the sun. Can you comprehend these enormous distances? Our sun with all this retinue of worlds is sweeping onward through space at the rate of 150,000,000 miles per year toward a point in the constellation of Hercules. The Pleiades are thought to be the center. But the orbit is so vast and the center so remote, that nothing definite is known.

One of the arguments against the Copernican system, at the time of its promulgation, was that if the earth moved around the sun, there ought to be a change in the direction in which the fixed stars appeared. For at one time we were nearer to a particular region of the heavens by a distance of the earth's orbit than we were six months previously and hence there ought to be a change in the relative position of the stars. They should separate as we approach them, and close together as we recede from them, or in other words they should have a yearly parallax. But at the time the Copernican system

was in vogue, the distance of the earth from the sun was greatly underestimated. Had it been known, as it is now known that the distance was ninety million miles, that argument would not have much weight, for as the parallax of a body diminishes as its distance increases, a star may be so far off that its parallax may be imperceptible. To detect the parallax of a star requires a very fine instrument with which to measure its angle. The blue arch of the sky as it appears to be spread above us, is termed the celestial sphere. There are two points to be noticed here, first, that so far distant is this imaginary arch from us, that if any two parallel lines from different parts of the earth are drawn to this sphere they will apparently intersect. Of course this cannot be the fact, but the distance is so immense that we are unable to distinguish the little difference of eight or ten thousand miles, and the two lines seem to meet, so we must consider this great earth of ours a mere speck or point at the center of the celestial sphere.

Second, that we must even neglect the entire diameter of the earth's orbit, so that if we should draw two parallel lines, one from each end of the earth's orbit to the sphere, although these lines would be 183,000,000 miles apart, they would be extended so far that they would apparently pierce the sphere at the same point, which is to say, that at the great distance, 183,000,000 miles, shrinks to a point. Consequently, in all parts of the earth, and in every part of the earth's orbit, we see the fixed stars in the same place.

The parallaxes of many fixed stars have been determined. Alpha Centauri, a fine double star of the southern hemisphere, is one of the nearest fixed stars. Its parallax was determined in 1832. It is about nine-tenths of a second, hence this star is about 290,000 times farther from us than the sun. Seen from it, if the sun was even large enough to fill the whole orbit of the earth, which is 183,000,000 miles in diameter, it would be a mere point. With its companion it revolves around a common center in 81 of our years. Are all these distant worlds for no other purpose than that assigned by theologians, to give us light? We will see in my next. J. H. FISK.

Get on the lifting side, not on the pulling-down side. A strong pull and a long pull, altogether, will accomplish what we desire.

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