

## Two Perplexed Rabbis

WE trust this title and what follows it will not seem flippant, nor lacking in respect due to gentlemen of the cloth. Their lack of vision is not unusual; indeed it is all but universal.

The two discourses to which reference is now to be made are sermons for the Passover season marking the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. The reverend pastors are Rabbi Rosenblum, of the Temple Israel, and Rabbi Newman, of the Temple Rodolph Sholem, both of this city.

Rabbi Rosenblum believed that the present crisis would bring "an industrial Moses to lead the people out of the economic wilderness." Rabbi Newman said, "No one can look upon the anguish of the unemployed without asking that a new Moses arise who will lead America and the world into a new Promised Land flowing with milk and honey."

May we refer these distinguished rabbis to Matthew 17-12: "But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not."

Moses has come; George is here. At least his message of social deliverance that he gave the world is embodied in imperishable language. As the teachings of Moses were applicable to his time so George's teachings are applicable to this. Their adoption means a new Jerusalem with its unborn populations, a free people, the human race freed from bondage of centuries.

And what does it mean to the church and to the cause of true religion? Contemplate a race freed from want and the fear of want, with men and women free to turn the spiritual side of their natures to the Giver of All Good. Does it mean nothing to these devoted servants of the faith? The Hebrew people are essentially religious; they have suffered to a greater degree than those of other faiths for their religion. What would such a reform as ours mean to these keepers of the synagogue, these teachers of the ancient faith?

There is a curious similarity in the quoted language of the two rabbis. Both express the desire for a Moses to lead the people out of bondage and announce a remedy for the present depression. They seem not to know that Moses more than suggested the fundamental remedy, that allowing for different conditions prevailing in the Mosaic times, he realized the overwhelming importance of the land question. He was careful to preach against the alienation of the land rights of every member of the Hebrew commonwealth and to guard against it in the institutions he proposed. This seemed to Moses the first and most indispensable of the laws on which a stable society may be built. Everywhere throughout the Pentateuch the laws that relate to the social organization are stated as divine laws. Moses knew his people, and with the eye of the seer and the vision of the statesman he appealed to the innate perception, never absent even in the primitive

mind, of the harmony of the social law with the law of the divine wisdom that ordained the world.

Following in our own time came Henry George with his message adapted to a new civilization. Though others had preceded him none had announced so complete a philosophy of social reorganization. His task was at once easier and more difficult than that which confronted Moses in that he did not have to create a new society, but was able to fit his scheme to existing governmental machinery. It was much more difficult in that the system he attacked had the support of immemorial sanction and was rooted in established privilege. It would not yield readily and he knew it. But it must ultimately fall if for no other reason than that civilization must go on. Everywhere we can see a weakening of the defences, everywhere the walls are yielding.

Strange it is that neither of these devoted rabbis whose words are quoted apprehend the message of Moses. Strange, too, that they apparently do not know of Henry George and his proposal to make the message of the Hebrew lawgiver a vital force in our own age and time.

## High Thinking

H. M. TOMLINSON is a well known novelist of England whose style is so unusual that its novelty arouses attention and has provoked comparison with Conrad and the author of "Moby Dick." His thought is devastating to conventional standards and we present our readers with a few extracts from his "The Sea and the Jungle."

"Poplar, you may have read, is a parish in a civilization where an organized community is able through its heritage of the best of two thousand years of religion, science, commerce and politics to eke out to a finish the lives of its members (warped as they so often are by arid dispensations of Providence) with the humane Poor Law. The Poor Law is the civilized man's ironic rebuke to a parsimonious Creator. It is a jest which will ruin the solemnity of the Judgment Day. Only the man of long culture could think of such a shattering insult to the All-Wise who made this earth too small for the children he continues to send to it, trailing their clouds of glory which prove a sad hindrance and get so fouled in the fight for standing room on their arrival. But the savages of the Brazilian forest know nothing of the immortal joke conceived by their cleverer brothers. They have all they want. Experience has not taught them to devise such a cosmic joke as a Poor Law. \* \* \* I even hear that should you find a child hungry in an Indian village, you may be sure all the strong men there are hungry, too. I am not able to prove that; yet it may be there are people today to whom the law that the fittest must survive has not yet been helpfully revealed. \* \* \* In Merry England the poor wretch is where riches of the earth are not broadcast largess as they are here, but are stacked on each side of the road and guarded by the police, leaving to him but the inclement highway."

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"My trouble was that I had come out direct from a country where few men are free, and so most of us live in doubt