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THE TALMUD.

By Dr. J. L. LANDAU.

[Series of Lectures delivered at the Grand Theatre, Johannesburg, before the members of the Jewish Guild.]

Ladies and Gentlemen,—The subject of my lecture, *viz.*, the Talmud, is one of immense importance and of intense interest. Important, because Judaism from its every aspect, social and religious, moral and intellectual, has not only been based and built up upon the foundations of that marvellous book, but is actually its product. Judaism has drawn its vital sap from its soil and owes to it every shape and form of its historical development. We to-day are not Bible-Jews, but Talmud-Jews. Even the Reform Jew must admit this, although he battles against and tries to belittle and to paralyse its influence. And this subject is interesting, because no book in the world's literature has met with so much opposition, hostility, and relentless persecution as has the Talmud. In this respect it has shared the fate of the nation which produced it. From the very time of its inception to the present day the Talmud, like the Jewish people, has been constantly forcing and fighting its way through a world of prejudice and animosity. In spite of its intrinsic value and importance, it has been but little known outside the walls of the Beth-Hamidrash, and therefore misunderstood and misjudged. And, ladies and gentlemen, notwithstanding the multitude of books that have been written about it, it is still most difficult to define. If you ask me what the Talmud is, it is impossible for me to answer your question in one short condensed sentence.

"The Talmud," says Graetz, in his "History of the Jews," "must not be regarded as an ordinary work; it possesses absolutely no similarity to any other literary

production, but forms, without any figure of speech, a world of its own. The most talented could therefore hardly hope to succeed in sketching its character, even though he had penetrated deeply into its nature. It is, however, of less consequence what the Talmud is in itself than what was its influence on history, on those generations whose education it chiefly controlled." I shall, however, attempt to fulfil my task to the best of my ability. I gladly accepted the invitation of your Society to lecture on this subject, as my experience teaches me that the prejudice against the Talmud, against that unfailing well-spring of our moral and immortal strength, has now become more pronounced among our own people than even among non-Jews.

The technical definition of the Talmud is as follows: It consists of six main divisions called Orders. Each Order contains a number of treatises (tractates), and each treatise is divided into chapters. Each chapter is headed by a Mishnah—*i.e.*, some legal decision as transmitted by the senior rabbis, the Tanaites, and finally fixed by Rabbi Judah the Patriarch. Every Mishnah is followed by a full discussion by the junior rabbis, the Amorites, who lived after Rabbi Jehudah, and that part is called Gemara, study. Both together, the Mishnah and the Gemara, are designated as the Talmud. In the latest edition published in Wilna, with the best-known commentaries, it fills eighteen large folio volumes.

Let me, however, try to illustrate its significance by calling it a kaleidoscope or cinematograph of thought, of spiritual progress. We can now by a great stretch of imagination think of the possibility of seeing the historical development of a nation during many centuries portrayed by a cinematograph. Those rapidly changing life-like pictures might show us a nation in the process of its development, how it gradually grows and progresses by commerce and industry, by its political defeats and victories, and other similar phases of its national life. But no kaleidoscope has as yet been invented that could illustrate the process of the spiritual, intellectual, and moral development of a nation. The Talmud might be likened to such an apparatus. It is a work whose compilation and completion occupied almost seven centuries, and which engaged the whole intellectual capacity of over 2,000 eminent Jewish scholars. It deals with every phase of human life, and with every branch of

human thought. Geology, botany, medicine, astronomy, physics, mathematics, law and poetry, religion and philosophy. And most of those subjects are presented in the original form of the discussions that had taken place in the various houses of learning, as it were, in the process of their crystallisation. The rabbis themselves compared the Talmud to a mighty ocean, in which the various streams of Jewish thought met and intermingled.

I have said that the Jew of to-day is not a Bible-Jew, but a Talmud-Jew. In what relation does the Talmud stand to the Bible? It is commonly supposed to be a commentary on the Bible, an exposition of its laws, an elucidation of its obscure passages, but, in truth, it goes far beyond the Bible in its conception of the social and religious tendencies of man. A Midrash—that is a homiletic portion of the Talmud—tried to illustrate that fact by the following legend: Moses, on one of his visits to Heaven, found the Lord occupied with the study of the Torah and putting crowns over certain letters. The prophet stood amazed, and asked what it meant. "After many, many centuries," the Lord explained, "a great rabbi, Akiba, the son of Joseph, will complete the crowning work of the Torah by interpreting every letter in the spirit of changed times and conditions; he will spiritualise every dead letter by breathing into it part of his own glowing and immortal soul." Moses unhesitatingly expressed the wish to see that eminent teacher face to face, and accordingly the scene suddenly changed. The heavens turned into a large house of learning, where hundreds of pupils sat at the feet of a hoary scholar, listening to his exposition of the law with great attention and reverence. Moses, at the command of the Lord, took his seat behind the tenth row of the students, and he also tried to follow those learned remarks, but was unable to grasp them. His spirit failed, he felt humbled, and only regained his composure when he heard Akiba remark that all his explanations were based on the Law of Moses. "O Lord," exclaimed Moses, "surely that rabbi seems more deserving of the honour of giving Thy Law to the people." "No," replied God, "even the reason of this, My decree, is beyond thy grasp." This legend is intended to impress upon us and to emphasise the fact that the Talmud is more than a mere commentary, that it forms a further important stage in the development of the Law, that it marks the immense progress made by the spirit of the Jewish people since the days of Moses. Rabbi Akiba was certainly not greater than Moses, nor

was he even as great, but he was the pupil raised on the shoulders of his teacher, his gaze therefore embraced a wider horizon.

In the course of my lectures I shall be able to show you in which respect and to what extent the Talmud advanced beyond the literal meaning of the Torah, and to show you the radical and determined manner of its authors in the pursuit of their aims. And, in order to enable you to get a better insight into the whole fabric of that most complicated and intricate work, I shall divide my subject into three principal parts: (1) Its authors, (2) its doctrines, and (3) its history. Needless to say, I shall confine my remarks to the principal names and facts, as you well understand that it is well-nigh impossible to deal adequately with this vast subject in the limited time at my disposal.

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The first foundation-stones of that imposing and majestic structure called the Talmud must have been laid long before Ezra the Scribe. By foundation-stones I understand unwritten traditions, which, according to a Mishnah, were handed down from generation to generation, from the elders to the men of the Great Synagogue. True, that the Prophets and Hagiographa were also designated as διαδοχή as traditions, but that expression generally and principally referred to laws, doctrines and customs communicated by word of mouth. The names of the men, however, who were responsible for them history passes over in silence. Ezra flourished in the middle of the fifth century B.C.E., and the first man mentioned in the Mishnah as the last of the sages who formed the Great Synagogue is Simon the Just, who, according to Zunz (G.V.), flourished between 221-202 B.C.E., and, according to Herzfeld, he officiated as high priest between 226-198. A Talmudical legend (also mentioned in Josephus Ant. IX., 8) wove a halo of glory round his personality. It relates that when Alexander the Great entered Palestine Simon went to meet him dressed in his white priestly robes, and the great conqueror was so deeply impressed by his personality that he bowed to him and paid him homage. Ben Sirah, or Ecclesiasticus, glorified his memory in a poem, which has been included in the afternoon ritual of the day of Kippur. All accounts agree that he fully deserved the attribute "the Just," and, although historians cannot

agree as to the date of his activity, they all agree that he, by his public life as well as by his profound knowledge and the respect he enjoyed and the influence he wielded, worthily completed a circle of famous learned men, leaders of thought, known as the Men of the Great Synagogue. And yet, of all his teachings only one single saying has been preserved in its original version. One of the most striking features of the ancient Jewish scholar and teacher was to hide his person behind his work. The word popularity either did not occur in his vocabulary or had no attraction for him. His modesty forbade him to enter a place suffused with the glare of glory. His person mattered but little. He regarded himself as a mere instrument in the hands of history or of Providence. He was satisfied that his word and his work remained.

Must it not strike us as most strange that a nation of immense intellectual abilities, of such mental force, which produced Prophets and Psalmists and thinkers like the authors of Job and Ecclesiastes, men of immortal fame, should for centuries have been so barren, mentally so indolent, as to produce no other literary work worthy of preservation? Even the few poetic and Midrashic works, known as Apocrypha, had also been rejected and confiscated by the Rabbis, and bad it not been for the first Christian students and translators of the Bible, those Apocryphal books would altogether have been lost and forgotten. All we have left of the literary activity even of men such as Simon and Antigonus of Soko are short maxims, fortunately preserved in 'the Ethics' of the Fathers. The key to that problem is given partly in that very saying of Antigonus, and partly in the last verses of Ecclesiastes. That saying reads: "Be not as slaves that minister to the Lord with a view to receive recompense, but be as slaves that serve God from pure motives. Let the fear of Heaven be upon you." Professor Taylor remarks on that saying: "Antigonus inculcates disinterested service without expressly enunciating any doctrine, even concerning a future state of retribution." He preached the lesson of selflessness and self-denial in the work for a good cause. And the last verses of Ecclesiastes read: "My son, be admonished not to produce books, to which there is no end, most of which contain much idle talk and tedious nonsense." Not scholarly repute, nor scholarly display, were their ambitions and ideals, but fear of God—*i.e.*, moral improve-

ment, and the happiness afforded by piety. Simon the Just therefore laid down the following three well-known principles (upon which the world is based): "The Torah, the service of God, and the practice of charity."

In the course of my lectures I shall have yet another opportunity to refer to this fact and to discuss it at greater length. Now I only wish to remark that those views of the rabbis on wisdom and virtue and their mode of life remind us vividly of one great, perhaps the greatest, sage of ancient Greece, *viz.*, Socrates. Neither did he leave, nor could he have left, any writings behind him, according to his principles. All we know of and about him is recorded in the writings of his disciples, in the memoirs of Xenophon and in Plato's dialogues. "He devoted himself to his work to the end," says Zeller (History of Greek Philosophy), "even under circumstances of the greatest poverty. His self-renunciation was complete. He asked for no reward. . . . A pattern of a life of few needs, of moral purity, justice and piety, yet at the same time full of genuine human kindliness." Socrates believed in the necessity of acquiring knowledge, because it is impossible to do right without knowledge. Virtue is promoted by instruction, knowledge is a means to right action. Virtue is knowledge, and the object of knowledge is the Good. All virtues thus have their root in wisdom. We shall later be able to see in how far the Jewish sages, the authors of the Talmud, knowingly or unknowingly, practised and propagated the doctrines of that Grecian philosopher.

The first great rabbi to arrest our attention as a statesman, reformer, and revolutionist, is Simon ben Shetach, a brother of Queen Alexandra and brother-in-law of the Hasmonean King and High Priest Alexander Jannaeus. Ben Shetach is also called the Jewish Brutus, as he, like the Roman, once enforced the law at the expense of the life of his only son. His struggle with the Sadducees and against the authority of the priests belongs to the history of the Talmud. Here I only wish to be permitted to mention that it was due to his determined attitude and untiring efforts that the heated and passionate contest between the two parties, Sadducees and Pharisees, led to the ultimate victory of the latter, although the King was the fiercest and most reckless of their opponents. All the scattered members of the party, who had been exiled or intimidated by brute force, and had fled to Egypt or other countries, returned and rallied around

him, and formed that invincible brotherhood which overpowered and outlived not only the Hasmonaean and Herodian Dynasties, but even the Roman Empire. Simon ben Shetach reorganised the Synhedrion, suppressed superstition, and thus merited the title of a reorganiser of the law. It was said that he had restored to the crown of the Torah its ancient splendour. And one of his most memorable meritorious deeds was the establishing of the first public Jewish schools. In all large towns high schools for the use of young men from the age of 16 sprang up at his instance.

More famous and well known even among Christian scholars is Hillel the Elder. He was the author of that Golden Rule in which are supposed to culminate the moral teachings of the New Testament, and which he expressed more than fifty years before the founders of Christianity. It is related that a heathen once came to Shamai, a contemporary of Hillel, with the desire to be converted to Judaism, but under the peculiar condition that that Rabbi should condense its essence in the shortest possible sentence, so that he might be able to learn it *stante pede*. That teacher, who was opposed to proselytism, perhaps so influenced by the reign of Herod, who was an Edomite, drove the stranger from his house. Hillel, however, received him with that gentle kindness which was characteristic of him, and he then uttered those memorable words: "My child, love thy neighbour as thyself, do not unto others what is hateful to thee. This is the fundamental principle of the whole Torah, from which all other laws and doctrines emanate."

Hillel, who lived at the time of Herod, was a Babylonian, and worked himself up from very small beginnings. He came to Jerusalem for the purpose of studying the law under the two great Rabbis Sh'maaya and Abtalion, and in order to earn his living and to be able to pay the necessary entrance fee to the doorkeeper of the school he became a woodcutter. One Friday, we are told, when he had not earned enough to pay that fee, but was still most anxious not to miss any lecture, he climbed up to the roof and listened at the window-sill. And so absorbed was his mind in that lecture that he did not notice the falling snow nor its deadly effect. After some years he himself was privileged to occupy the presidential seat of that high school and of the Senate, not by any political influence, but by virtue of his unrivalled knowledge and ability. Even a powerful and

suspicious sovereign like Herod the Great respected his authority and treated him with marked reverence. He, therefore, was justified in setting up the following principle: "If I am not for myself, who can be for me; but if I am for myself only, what am I, and if not now—when?" Maxims charged with deep philosophical meaning. In the first place, every man must stand for himself. God helps him who helps himself. Only a coward, a man without self-confidence and self-respect, relies upon others. It is for each of us to use his own ability to the best advantage. But woe unto him who is overconfident and whose whole thought is absorbed in selfish aims, who tries to benefit his own position at the expense of others, especially of the common weal. And never postpone a good action. "*Carpe diem*," had said already the Roman poet Horace. Seize the moment quickly, for only the present is thine. No one can tell what the next moment might bring. And, like Socrates, he also impressed upon his pupils: "The empty-headed cannot avoid mistakes, and the ignorant man cannot be virtuous." All these short sayings gain an ever-deeper meaning when illustrated by events of that period, to which they undoubtedly allude, but I do not wish to deal now with the historical moment of the Talmud. It would also occupy too much of our time were I to discuss more fully his life and his work. Let me therefore refer at once to his chief contributions to the Talmud.

Hillel is said to have been the author of the first seven rules of exegetical principles by which the law is expounded. He was the founder of a new system which greatly helped to enrich the mass of traditional lore and to widen its sphere of influence. Those rules made it possible for ancient traditions to be remoulded and to be developed in accordance with the conditions and demands of changed times. They made them, so to say, flexible and fluid. That he was mainly responsible for that system is obvious from the fact, mentioned in the Talmud, that he first had to demonstrate its correctness and legal validity before a large assembly of scholars before it was accepted. That victory, on the eve of a Passover Festival, raised him to the highest position. He was also the first in whose name certain original interpretations of Biblical passages and of Biblical laws are recorded. Little is known of his son Simon; only his grandson, Gamaliel I., who, like his father and

grandfather, occupied the presidency of the Synhedrion. enjoyed a certain fame, and all Jewish communities acknowledged his authority. But he lived in times of political upheavals, which led to the destruction of Jerusalem, and there is no doubt that many literary productions were buried in the ruins of that city.

As the next great striking personality after Hillel I would mention Rabbi Jochanan ben Zaccai, who lived at the time of the Destruction of the Second Temple.

We are told that when the war against the Romans raged before the walls of Jerusalem, when the zealots made their last desperate efforts to defend the last doomed fortifications round the Temple, when hunger and bloodshed, the fury of war, had decimated the inhabitants of the holy city, a few distinguished scholars carried upon their shoulders a coffin to the gates of the city and were allowed to pass, because the corpse was supposed to be that of Ben Zaccai. But that famous Rabbi was not dead. The funeral procession only served to delude the guards. The Rabbi had himself carried straight to the Roman camp and to the tent of the commanding General, Vespassian, whom he asked for permission to establish and to maintain a house of learning in Jamnia. The General, who knew and revered the Rabbi, granted his request, and that school, established and presided over by Ben Zaccai, formed the well-spring of all future spiritual and moral Jewish strength, the fountain-head of Jewish knowledge, the source of that moral force and mental vigour which enabled future generations to resist all relentless persecution. All Jewish scholars who had escaped the sword of the enemy rallied round him, men of rare and eminent abilities, all imbued with the spirit of their mission, mindful of the gravity of their sacred task, and all determined to pursue but one aim, to continue and to develop the traditions handed to them by their great masters. Among them were men like Eliezer the Great, Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi José, and many others, whose legal views, sayings, and especially controversies, fill a considerable part of the Mishnah.

Rabbi Eliezer the Great, the son of Hyrcanus, was the child of very rich parents, who neglected his education and wished him to remain an Am-Aretz, an uneducated peasant. He, however, impelled by a strong desire for study, one day left his home, joined the ranks of the

students in Jerusalem, and, under great privation, pursued his studies with unabated passion, until he was permitted to sit at the feet of Ben Zaccai, and, later, he not only received his father's pardon, but even became a brother-in-law of Gamaliel II., whose sister he married. Gamaliel II. was a descendent of Hillel and a Patriarch of the Exile.

Rabbi Eliezer possessed some excellent qualities, to which he owed his success. He had a phenomenal memory, and was called by his teacher "a cemented cistern, which loses not a drop." According to his own statement, "he always entered the College first, and was the last to leave it." Ben Zaccai had a very high opinion of his abilities, and once maintained: "If all the sages of Israel were on one scale of the balance, and Eliezer, the son of Hyrcanus, in the other, he would outweigh them all." In accordance with his own axiom, he was not easily moved to anger, and treated his colleagues with every mark of respect. But he was affected by one fault, which became to him a source of sore grief and brought upon him painful humiliation. Tradition was to him petrified law. Under no condition would he decide on any legal question if he could not refer to some older authority. And once aware of such a decision, he would not examine its correctness or justification, or the special condition from which it resulted, but accepted it as definite law. He trusted his memory more than his power of discrimination.

One day a serious dispute on an important Levitical question arose between him and his colleagues. He, relying upon a previous decision, clung to it with resolute pertinacity and insisted upon its legality. Joshua, his chief opponent, a man of remarkable sagacity, argued against him, demonstrating by various reasons that Eliezer was wrong. The dispute lasted a whole day, and Eliezer, unable to refute his colleague's arguments, appealed to the walls of the college, to the tree at its entrance, and to the elements to testify to the correctness of his statement. At last a voice from Heaven decided in his favour, and demanded Joshua's submission. But the latter defiantly replied: "The law was given to men, not to angels, and it is subject to our views. Heaven has no right to interfere." And all the members of the college sided with him, endorsed his opinion, and Eliezer was expelled and excommunicated.

I have told you this little story because just its fabulous part is intended and best calculated to reveal to us the methods of study that obtained in those colleges, to prove to us that no blind conservatism, unreasonable submission to unfounded traditions, guided the rabbis in their legal decisions, but their critical sense and minute scientific investigation.

On the other hand, they regarded discipline as one of the most essential conditions for the vindication of the law and the maintenance of its authority. It once happened that the Patriarch Gamaliel II. proclaimed a certain day as the Day of Kippur. Joshua was convinced that the Patriarch had erred in his calculation and fixed another day. When Gamaliel got to know of Joshua's objection he ordered him to appear before him on the day of Atonement according to his (Joshua's) computation, with his staff and purse of money. Joshua was very grieved, as it is unlawful to carry money on that sacred day. He was sure that his view was correct; it thus meant the profanation of the Yom Kippur. But Rabbi Akiba prevailed on him to obey. What the Patriarch had done, he argued, was well done. The Torah itself conferred upon him that authority. Not the Calendar but the acknowledged leader, not the dead letter or an accepted custom but the living guiding spirit, must be permitted to rule.

I have now again mentioned the name of that marvellous man whom Moses had seen in a vision surrounded by his pupils, and whose knowledge he envied. Akiba's life reads like a romance, partly enveloped in the mist of legend and partly hallowed by the halo of religious and national glory. The years of boyhood he spent in perfect ignorance as an ordinary illiterate shepherd. Like all uneducated men of his time, he harboured passionate hatred for men of learning. Then it happened that the daughter of his wealthy master fell in love with him. She married him against her father's wish, and shared with him all the pangs and privations of poverty. One day she conceived the idea of his becoming a scholar and persuaded him to enter a house of learning. As he could not offer her material comfort, she argued, he might, for her sake, acquire knowledge and gain the respect of his fellow-men. He left her, and for many years pursued his studies with every physical and mental effort. When he returned he overheard a conversation, which his wife had with one of her neigh-

bours. The latter sneered at her for confiding in a man who had deserted her for such a long period. If I had my way, his wife retorted, he would stay away longer still, in order to complete his studies. Without showing himself he returned to his college. But after some years he returned to her at the head of a multitude of rabbis and laymen, all of whom acknowledged him as their master. His fame as a rabbi filled the whole Jewish world. When Bar Cochba raised the banner of rebellion against the Romans, in 132 C.E., Akiba was chiefly responsible for his first signal success. He travelled through all the three Continents, all the provinces of the Roman Empire, and all the lands of the Exile, to arouse his brethren to concerted action. And everywhere he was received with great respect and reverence, even by rulers of distant countries. According to a legendary record 24,000 of his pupils and followers joined Bar Cochba's revolutionary army, and when the latter was defeated by the more powerful Romans, they shared his fate. And Akiba himself died the death of a martyr. The story of his martyrdom is an established historical fact. The Roman general inflicted upon him the severest tortures, but the sage, who had attained to a very great age, retained his composure and breathed his last with the words: "Hear, O Israel. . . . the Lord is One."

He was the first to collect the scattered fragments of the Halachoth and traditions, which until then had not been written down, but had been transmitted by word of mouth from school to school and from man to man. He was the first to compile the Mishnah, to codify the law. His memory was, therefore, glorified in legends and in references made to his scholarship, which testify to the admiration in which he was held. His successors said that he had formed all the laws into rings, which he again linked together so as to form one long chain of tradition. At his death the wells of learning suddenly failed, and the honour of the Torah vanished. Even one of his eminent contemporaries once humbly admitted to him: "Akiba, he who parts from thee, parts from life." His knowledge was phenomenal and his penetrating intellect almost irresistible.

One feels very much tempted to mention name after name of those remarkable and noble personages and to portray their interesting lives. But as it is quite

impossible, I would crave your indulgence and attention only for another few minutes, in order to introduce to you two other rabbis, one Rabbi Meir, as a type of rabbinical tolerance, the other Rabbi Judah Hanassy, the Prince, or the Saint, who definitely completed the codification of those laws, which originated from the senior sages, called Tanaim, in six volumes, called the Mishnah.

"The most original personage of his period was unquestionably Meir," says Prof. Graetz. "His great intellect, thoroughness of purpose, and knowledge, remind us of his teacher Akiba." Even his wife Bruria, the daughter of a renowned rabbi, enjoyed the fame of having been thoroughly versed in rabbinical law. She used to have controversies with her husband's friends and pupils. Of him it was said that he was so versatile, so sagacious and ready-witted, that he could vindicate any legal statement he ventured to make. But his modesty was as great as his thirst for knowledge. At that time there lived the notorious Elisha ben Abuyah, also called the renegade, and wrongly styled by some modern writers the Faust of the Talmud. He was a great scholar but was carried away by the Judaeo-Christian, or Gnostic movement; he turned against his former colleagues and openly opposed them and publicly violated the law. One day —it was a Sabbath day—Rabbi Meir met him riding on horseback, and he followed him on foot, consulting him and discussing with him various difficult Biblical passages, and only stopped when the other passed beyond the area limited by the law. When asked why he, Rabbi Meir, tolerated the flagrant desecration of the Sabbath, and even humbled himself to receive instruction from him, he replied: "When Meir finds a pomegranate he eats its contents and throws away the skin," true to the rabbinical principle: "Accept the truth from whomever it comes." He also counted among his intimate friends heathen philosophers. Needless to say that he also mastered the Grecian and Roman literatures, and of his profane literary work it is known that he was the author of three hundred fables, besides his orations, in which he excelled all his contemporaries.

Rabbi Judah (flourished at the end of the 2ud and at the beginning of the 3rd centuries C.E.) was a descendant of Hillel; and succeeded his father in the

office of Nassi. He was very wealthy—according to some historical records, fabulously wealthy—and enjoyed the friendship of a Roman Emperor, Antonius. His admirers used to say that, since Moses, knowledge and authority, wisdom and wealth, had not been united in one person as in him. As the country after the Bar Cochha war was devastated, travelling was fraught with great danger, and the study of the law was still considered as defiance of the Emperor's will, Judah maintained most of the students who attended his college at his own cost. In times of famine he threw open his storehouse to all that needed his help. Yet, notwithstanding his powerful influence and his elevated position, he was very modest and lived a life of proverbial simplicity. After his death it was said that with him modesty and fear of sin had passed away. He was the author of the prayer which we recite every morning: "May it be Thy will, O Lord, my God and God of my fathers, to deliver me this day and every day from arrogant men and from arrogance, from a bad man . . . . and from a bad neighbour, whether he be a son of the covenant or be not a son of the covenant" (Broch. 16).

Ladies and gentlemen, the Romans had a Pantheon, and so have the French people to-day, a temple dedicated to the memory of great men, who had shed the lustre of their fame upon their country and nation, whose lives and lasting merits had placed their fellowmen under a debt of gratitude. The Westminster Abbey in London is the British Pantheon. The Jewish nation could not possibly build such a temple in honour of her spiritual heroes. No Pantheon could be so vast as to accommodate all the monuments which we would have to erect, considering that our history covers a period of four thousand years. Our Pantheons are—the Torah and the Talmud. Every sage of those hundreds of rabbis, who carried together the bricks from which was formed the structure of the Talmud, has inscribed his name with indelible letters on the pages of our history. Each deserves the reverence and appreciation of the Jewish nation, and, I make bold to state, of many another nation. One might exclaim with Isaiah II.: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations, spare not, lengthen thy cords, strengthen thy stakes, for thy sons shall break forth on the right hand and on the left."

I, therefore, thought of addressing you in the words once used by the Grecian philosopher Heraclit: "εἶναι γὰρ ἐνταῦθα. θεούς," Enter, for there are gods here, too! I wished, by the short sketches I have given you of a few of those eminent men, who were responsible for the corner-stones of that remarkable structure, to prove to you that they were men not only of great learning, but also of pure character and of noble principles, whose only thought was the propagation of truth and knowledge and the promotion of their nation's welfare.

That the doctrines they taught and the laws they framed fully justify such eulogy I shall endeavour to demonstrate in my next lectures.

II.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my first lecture on this subject I stated that we to-day are not Bible-Jews but Talmud-Jews. My to-night's lecture on the History of the Talmud will justify that statement and conclusively prove that it is based on the results of a long-drawn-out struggle between Rabbinism and its opponents. The Torah, when viewed from a strictly orthodox standpoint, had no history. It certainly records historical events, but the laws it teaches, and the doctrines it embodies, are divine.

Maimonides expresses this idea in the eighth and ninth principles of our Faith, which read as follows: "I believe with perfect faith that the Torah in our possession is the same that was given to Moses our teacher, that it never was changed, and that there will never be any other Torah from the Creator, blessed be His Name."

A book that is the product of one mind, and is subject to no changes, can have no history. On the other hand, it must be clear to every thinking man that a volume of 150 pages, in the small edition published by the Bible Society, cannot possibly contain all those, even most necessary, laws that are intended to regulate the life of an individual, and much less to guide and to instruct millions of men throughout the ages. Our demands and needs, our ambitions and

aspirations, even in a primitive state, could not possibly be condensed in so small a volume. Besides, if the letter of the law were to be taken as absolute, as petrified, as admitting of no further interpretation; it could not claim the authority of categorical imperativeness for a race which is continually developing and progressing according to the laws which govern individual and national life. The remark that was made by a Grecian philosopher thousands of years ago, namely, that all things are in constant flux (πάντα ῥεῖ), that nothing remains unchanged, has ever been true, and how could a petrified law be applied to ever-changing human conditions?

This was the view of those sages who were responsible for the inception and production of the Talmud. Let me illustrate the meaning of this statement by a few examples. The Torah (Ex. xxi., 24) says distinctly: "If men strive, and one hurts the other, he who caused the mischief shall be punished, 'Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, etc.'" The rabbis maintained that those verses must be explained according to the higher, living spirit of Jewish tradition. It could not mean that if one injured his neighbour's eye his own eye should actually be put out. That was barbarous. And what, they asked, if the culprit died under the operation? It would then be an act of ordinary, unpardonable revenge. It would mean life for an eye. That could not have been the intention of the lawgiver. And they, therefore, placed upon that verse a different interpretation. The Torah, again (ib. xvi., 29) says: "Behold the Lord hath given you the Sabbath. . . . abide ye every man in his place, let no man leave his place on the seventh day." The rabbis say the Sabbath is not only a day of rest but also one of moral happiness, of spiritual edification and of joy, as it is written (Is. lviii., 13): "And thou shalt call the Sabbath a delight." There would, however, be no pleasure for a man, especially a poor man, who lived in a humble cottage, to be imprisoned within its walls for twenty-four hours. That could, therefore, not have been the view of the lawgiver. And they explained that it really meant that every Jew could walk on the Sabbath two thousand cubits in every direction, and by a certain legal arrangement, the Erub, that distance could easily be extended. The two thousand cubits were further not applied to the area round one's residence, but round the inhabited

town, because within a town, even of the colossal extent of a London, one is permitted to walk without any restriction. In order to prove the correctness of their interpretations, they employed certain exegetical principles, by which the laws were to be expounded, and which are said to have first been introduced by Hillel the Elder. For instance, the inference from minor to major, the inference from similar phrases, etc. By such methods based on logical rules the rabbis were able to support every innovation, and to enforce every new law by the authority of the Torah, and to prove that it was rooted in that divine book, from which it drew its vital sap. The rabbis thus achieved a double purpose, In the first place, they invested their innovations or interpretations with the sanctity of the Divine Book, and in the second they kept the word of the Lord alive—in a state of flux, to use that philosophical expression. To-day, being in possession of the recently discovered Code of Hammurabi—the work of a Babylonian Sovereign who lived about four thousand years ago, or more than two thousand years before the compilation of the Mishnah, we are even in a better position to appreciate the principles by which the rabbis were guided, the motives by which they were inspired; and can better understand why they took up such a resolute attitude in defence of those principles. Nay, we to-day can hardly realise why they should have met with such determined opposition. And it was more than mere opposition. It was a struggle for life or death, the historically well-known struggle that had lasted first for 150 years between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and later for many centuries between the Rabbinites and Karaites.

The struggle in the first case affected doctrines which were of an infinitely more serious nature than ordinary legal questions. For instance, was the soul of man immortal, was the Jew justified in hoping for a future life? was the wicked after his death made responsible for his sins in this world, and was there a Providential power? In all the five books of the Torah there is not a single verse that answers one of these questions. The Torah promises the just and pious worldly blessings, such as heavenly dew, fertility of the soil, long life and prosperity, while the sinner is told that he will suffer in this life all the consequences of his wicked actions. The Sadducees, there-

fore, flatly denied and refuted all doctrines regarding the future of the soul, as recorded in many verses of the book of Ecclesiastes: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, responsibility or knowledge in the grave whither thou goest" (9, 10), and "The future of the sons of man is the same as that of the beast, the one dieth as the other, they all share one fate" (3, 19). Whereas the rabbis, the leaders of the Pharisaean party, tried to prove by half-veiled hints given in various verses of the Torah that the belief in the immortality of the soul and of the responsibility of man after death was as ancient as the Torah itself, that it formed one of the fundamental doctrines of Judaism; that the latter, not being a purely political institution, stands or falls by that doctrine. Later rabbis went even further, and maintained that not only the soul but that the mortal frame of man was not altogether perishable. The body, too was the work of the Lord. God is immortal, consequently his work too is imperishable. The work of God must be everlasting. From that belief originates the doctrine of Resurrection, which Maimonides included in the thirteen creeds. That this belief, too, is rooted in a deep philosophical thought need hardly be pointed out to a modern audience, especially to those who are conversant with ancient and modern philosophical problems.

Let me now show you by another example the admirable foresight of the rabbis and the breadth of their views. In their efforts to adapt the law to the changed conditions of the life of their people they went so far as to repeal, and to declare invalid, a whole book of the Torah. Each of you knows that the Sacrificial Code, the Book Leviticus, had throughout the centuries during which the First and Second Temples were in existence, been considered as the very basis of Judaism, as the very essence of the Jewish religion. The Temple formed the centre of Jewish life. All the laws concerning the sacrifices were observed with the most scrupulous minuteness. The whole spiritual and political salvation of the nation seemed to depend upon the service within its walls, and to have its source in that sacred edifice. Legend surrounded it with a halo of heavenly glory. That belief was too deeply rooted in the hearts of the people to allow of any direct attack on it. The prophets at the time of the First Temple already

criticised both, priest and sacrifice, with all the vehemence of their satire, but to no effect. Priest and sacrifice gained even more popularity, and became invested with even greater sanctity, at the time of the Maccabees, who wore the double diadem of heroism and holiness, of sovereignty and priesthood. But in spite of that fact, the rabbis made strong efforts to minimise the influence of the representatives of the Temple and to undermine their authority. And when the Temple was destroyed by the Romans, in 70 B.C.E., they considered the moment as most opportune to abrogate the sacrificial system altogether and to place study and prayer in its stead. The House of Learning was to take the place of the Temple. Rabbi Jochanan ben Zacai, therefore, asked the Emperor Vespasian not to spare the Temple, but to grant him the right to establish a school. With these few remarks I have indicated the vast influence of the rabbis and the vast sphere of their activity, their dominating authority, and the loftiness of the task they had set themselves. And no one will be surprised to hear that the struggle I have mentioned, that occupied so many years, led at last to the complete victory of the Pharisees and to the triumph of the ideas which emanated from pure conviction and selfless piety.

Already Ezra, who was a priest, is introduced to us as "Hasopher," the Scribe. In the book which bears his name, he is applauded as teacher and restorer of the law, instead of as priest who helped to restore the Temple. At the glorious period of Hasmonean rule, at the time of Hyrcanus the Great, the leaders of the Pharisees were aroused to the danger of their new position, as that Prince, like his father, combined in his person both dignities, that of Sovereign and of High-Priest. They could not allow the priest to regain with political help his influence of old. At a royal banquet, at which Hyrcanus himself presided, one of the rabbis had the courage to call upon him to renounce his High-Priesthood. The man is said to have unfortunately used a shallow pretext which was easily disproved. The Hasmonean Prince, however, guessed the true motive of that political move, and openly turned against the rabbis, whom he treated with relentless hostility. But although the Sadducean party was composed of the most influential sections of the people—the soldiers, the priests, and the magnates, they suffered defeat after defeat, while the influence of

the rabbis grew stronger and stronger. On a certain Day of Atonement—the most distinguished day of the Jewish year, when the High-Priest posed as the hero of the nation—it happened that when the King and High-Priest Alexander Jannaeus left the precincts of the Temple followed by crowds on his triumphal march home, the two leading rabbis of that time, Sh'mayah and Abtalion, were seen at a distance. The people suddenly turned from following the King and followed those spiritual leaders. The anger of the King was kindled, and he indignantly exclaimed: "Let those proselytes go in peace." Those rabbis, the descendants of an obscure family, were said to have been proselytes. But they had the courage to retort: "Peace unto those who, though proselytes, do the work of Aaron, but no peace to the children of Aaron who do not carry out his work" (Yoma lxxi.). The priests themselves helped to undermine their position, to profane the holiness of their functions, at one time by their Hellenistic and later by their Sadducaean tendencies.

The men who were responsible for the development of the law as compiled in the Talmud were guided by the following principle: that knowledge is the basis of all virtue. He who is ignorant cannot serve God, because he does not understand how to serve Him. He cannot be a good Jew because he takes superstition for religion, he neglects essentials and cherishes trifles. Ignorance has, in their opinion, been the source of all evil. In my former lecture I mentioned [illegible] this was exactly the view of Socrates. Still there was a vital difference between the views of the rabbis and those of the Grecian sage. To him knowledge was the ultimate aim of human effort, to them knowledge was but a means for the teaching of Judaism, or for the cultivation of character. True to that principle, consistent with the practice of their teachings, they placed the learned man above the aristocrat. A bastard if learned they considered to be superior to an ignorant High-Priest. Shemaya and Abtalion expressed the idea in their reply to King Alexander Jannaeus. Knowledge is not hereditary. It cannot be handed down like gold and silver from father to son. It must be acquired by personal effort and perseverance, by ability and industry. A man who possesses ability and displays much energy deserves more credit than one who owes his position to birth, or to the labours of others. A man who distinguishes himself by perseverance and

experience, whose every action emanates from conviction, also deserves more confidence than he who follows his master blindly, whose only merit is thoughtless obedience to the law.

This principle alone was enough to arouse against them infuriated opposition. The rich and the mighty, as well as the vast uneducated masses, rose against them in undisguised hatred. We have it from Rabbi Akiba himself that when he was an Am Aretz, an ignorant shepherd, his hatred of the rabbis was so great that, had he been in a position, he would have torn each of them limb from limb. Their position was thus not a very enviable one. That they still succeeded was partly due to the moral depravity that prevailed throughout the Roman Empire, and partly to the loftiness of their purpose, the selflessness of their labours, and the purity of their motives. The doctrines of the Jewish religion began to triumph not only in Judea, but also in all distant parts of the Roman Empire. Sovereigns and men of high rank, near relatives of the Emperors, men and women, devoted themselves to the study of Judaism and openly confessed their adherence to it. A religion which taught lofty idealism, which inspired faith in a Highest Being, and elevated its followers to a higher plane of thought, wrought miracles in the course of but a few decades. We have it on the best authorities, from famous Roman writers and poets, from Tacitus, Cicero, Horace, and others, that the spirit of the Jewish religion was dominant in all the Grecian islands and beyond the seas. Institutions like the Sabbath and doctrines such as the immortality of the soul appealed to all those who had longed for a nobler conception of life, who had craved for a redemption from the vices of paganism. On the other hand, I must ask you not to lose sight of these two facts. Firstly, that there still were even in Judaean provinces, especially in Gallilee, enormous masses of uneducated people, who found the practice of the law according to rabbinical demands onerous and repulsive. Secondly, that the rabbis did burden their followers with observances and restrictions which demanded their whole moral strength and often also self-denial. These two facts explain the rapid growth of Christianity and the ultimate success of Paul, in spite of the strong opposition of his own fellow-apostles. It is an historically established fact that the rabbis,

of course indirectly and impelled by a spirit of opposition, helped Paul more than his own co-workers.

It is too well known to need any proof that the secret of the first successes of Judeo-Christianity was the adherence of those uneducated men and women, mentioned in the New Testament as publicans, whom the rabbis are said to have despised and repelled. That reproach was in so far correct as the so-called publicans felt themselves repelled by the laws, which the rabbis enjoined on every Jew with all their rigour and with all the vigour at their command. Although it is beyond all doubt that the ceremonial and moral laws proved to the majority of the nation a source of joy and gratification, that most of the people clung to those laws with sincere passion and practised them with much affection, a fact that is borne out by many ancient literary documents and historical events, it is none the less true that there were people to whom the law was a burden. We thus read in Matt. (ix., 10-11): "And it came to pass as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it they said unto His disciples, why eateth your master with publicans and sinners? But when He heard that He remarked. "They that are well need not a physician, but they that are sick." And in another passage we are told that he exclaimed: "Woe unto you learned men, Pharisees, for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men" (ib. xxiii., 17); and: "Woe unto you, rabbis, for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers." These and similar utterances, which are ascribed to the creator of Christianity, although dating from a much later period, show that with the movement of proselytism there grew a tendency to sacrifice essentials of the law in order to make the acceptance of Judaism easier, simpler, and pleasanter. It is true, that in spite of those utterances the apostles of Christianity still adhered to and defended the law against the vehement attacks of Paul, but the latter determined to reject it all and to preach a Judaism without Jewish tradition, to sacrifice the chosen few in order to gain the thousands to whom he preached his new religion. He himself was brought up at the feet of Pharisaean teachers, and, to use his own phrase (Acts), was taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, but

on his way to Damascus he changed his mind, and from a zealous pupil of the rabbis he became one of their relentless enemies. It is not within the scope of this lecture to show how Paul was opposed, and even persecuted, by his own colleagues, who held different views on the future of their gospel, and who attributed a different policy to their Master; I merely wish to emphasise the fact that the growth of Christianity in the first and second centuries was greatly due to the effort to preach Judaism, but at the same time to relieve all proselytes of the yoke of the law. This fact will explain the attitude of the rabbis during those centuries when the foundations of the Talmud were based and so firmly established as to resist all future storms.

The rabbis could not fail to see the great danger of those new religious tendencies, they could see that the propagation of Judaism without the Jewish religious traditions must lead back to paganism. So many different sects arose in those days among the Jewish people, each of which tried to interpret the Torah in its own spirit, that Judaism was on the point of being drowned in a flood of false religious conceptions, of pseudo-philosophical theories. That danger was even greater, as the spiritual leaders of the nation had lost their hold upon the scattered fugitives who had fled to distant deserted lands, where they hoped they would escape the sword and the hatred of the Romans. The Temple was a heap of ashes, and no authority could effectively control all the dispersed units of the captivity. The rabbis, therefore, in order to minimise the influence of foreign elements, strongly opposed proselytism. Ideas rarely improve by popularisation. Plato's, or Kant's, or Spinoza's philosophical theories would soon sink to a farce, and be mercilessly mutilated, were they left to the interpretation of the multitude. And to keep the Jews aloof from their heathen neighbours, and to protect the ideals of Judaism from profanation and distortion by the new sects, they drew the circles around them closer and closer, and built the fences around the law higher and higher. And as their zeal grew stronger, the greater were the efforts of the Judeo-Christians at proselytising and at spreading their new doctrines. The Law, the Torah, was the only link that was left to unite the children of Israel in all the lands of the Exile. And if you read books like the travels of Ben-

jamin of Tudela, or of Rabbi Pessachya of Ratisbon, both of the 12th century, you would be surprised to hear how powerful was the magic influence of rabbinical law, how invincible its living spirit, and how impregnable the fences they had erected centuries before. The Jews, as long as they observed and respected the restrictions of the rabbis, remained a separate and morally unassailable body. Their neighbours sank deeper and deeper into the morass of paganism, or moral depravity; but they in their isolated ghettos, in their poor homes and modest places of worship, kept alive the purer flame of Monothéism, and cultivated that nobler faith that had been taught by the prophets, and towards which the civilised world is gradually moving. I shall soon prove to you that it was rabbinical influence that was instrumental in arousing that non-Jewish spirit, to bring about that memorable religious revolution of the 16th century, whose effects have not yet been sufficiently realised:

However, long before the 16th century the Talmud was again put to a severe test by members of our own race, who disputed its authority.

In Babylonia the Jews had established strong, important and prosperous communities, headed by two schools, centres of study and of Jewish spiritual life, viz., at Sora and Pumbeditha. The united communities appointed their own political chief, who bore the title of Prince of the Captivity, and whose appointment was usually confirmed by the King of Persia. The Prince or Exilarch, a descendant of the House of David, shared his judicial power with the Gaon, the head of the School, as the Talmud was respected by the whole community. When the victorious flag of Islam penetrated all the countries between India and the North of Africa, and spread its folds over three Continents, it also paved the way for the students of the Talmud, the torch-bearers of Rabbinical Judaism. But suddenly there arose, in the second half of the 7th century, an enemy of the Talmud out of the midst of the Babylonian community, in the son of a Gaon, a certain Anan who after his father's death had aspired to that office, and, when he failed, turned against his opponents and against the Talmud itself. He must have been a man of unusual ability, as he succeeded in establishing an independent anti-Talmudic community in the Holy City. That new religious sect is known by the name

of Karaites, i.e., people who acknowledge the authority of the Bible but not that of the Talmud. In some cases they returned to the literal meaning of the Bible verse, in others they adopted different interpretations and produced a Talmud of their own. So, for instance, do they adhere to the strict letter, which forbids the Jew to leave the house on the Sabbath or kindle a fire on that day. They consequently spend their Friday eve cheerlessly in darkness. It is impossible for me to include in this lecture a short treatise on Karaism, as it would by far exceed the time at my disposal. I only wish to mention that, although the struggle between Rabbinism and Karaism grew in extent and bitterness for many centuries, it proved to be the salt, provided by history, to save Judaism from corruption. Those who had been indifferent, and especially the students of the Talmud, aroused themselves to face their opponents, to parry their attacks, to refute their new exposition of the law, and thus displayed mental forces which might otherwise have remained latent. The study of the Bible, and especially of the Hebrew language, which had been sorely neglected, were again taken up with great zest and vigour. That struggle brought to light a genius like Rabbi Saadia Gaon. In his fierce attacks he had to refer to subjects which till then had not been scientifically treated. He was thus the first to write a philosophical treatise on the problems of the Jewish religion. Others took up the study of Hebrew grammar, and published the first essays on that important subject. These studies gave also a greater impulse to some poetical attempts. Rabbi Moses Maimonides, who flourished four centuries later (1135—1204) still found a powerful and influential community of Karaites in Egypt, who seized upon every opportunity to make their Rabbinical antagonists feel the sting of their hatred. But he, with his immense ability and unparalleled knowledge of Judaism, soon forced them to the background and crushed their opposition. Since then they have dwindled more and more into small scattered fragments, and from a religious point of view have sunk into utter insignificance. To-day one must travel to the Crimea or to some forgotten corner in Galicia or some other distant part of the world in order to find some of their remnants. And their vast literature belongs to the lumber-room of the museums, and is studied by specialists as historical documents of forgotten ages.

while the Talmud and its exponents and adherents, in spite of all dangers and unparalleled trials, wield to-day throughout the world, and in every field of human activity, an influence they have never before enjoyed. The Karaites, the official and scientific opponents of the Talmud, are, according to Harkavy, estimated to number about ten thousand in Russia and two thousand in other countries. The Russian Government took due notice of their historic hatred of the Talmud, and bestowed upon them, as a mark of recognition and gratification, speciál political privileges.

But whatever were the motives that prompted the founders of Karaism, their followers, it must be frankly admitted, were sincere. With all their fanaticism they in most cases confined their attacks to the domain of literature; their disputes, as a rule, bore the stamp of religious sincerity. The Talmud, however, was to be subjected to the test of still greater trials—to the test of fire. Like the Jew himself, the Talmud was destined to prove its immunity from the flames of the stake. In the first half of the 13th century a certain Donin from La Rochelle openly expressed his doubts about the authority of the Talmud. We are not told whether as a new disciple of the Karaites or as a heretic. The rabbis excommunicated him, according to ancient custom. Donin, embittered and exasperated against his own brethren, embraced Christianity and resorted to calumny and violence. He appealed to Pope Gregory IX., laid his grievances before him, and received from the head of the Church the satisfaction for which he thirsted. After many examinations to which leading rabbis had been subjected, a Papal Edict was published which decreed the destruction of all existing copies of the Talmud. It was most fortunate that the Princes of the Provincial Churches in Spain, England, and in other countries, disregarded that Papal command. Those high dignataries were perfectly convinced that that Edict was not justified, and refused to carry it into effect. In France, however, the fanaticism of the monks triumphed, and in June, 1242, four-and-twenty cartloads of Talmudical writings were burned in Paris in one spot and on the same day. When I remind you of the fact that printing offices did not yet exist in those days, that copies of such a voluminous book could not easily be reproduced, you will better be able to realise the whole tragedy of that Auto-da-fé.

At the end of the 15th century a baptised Bavarian Jew, a butcher by trade, a certain Pfefferkorn, embraced Christianity in order to escape the consequences of social crimes, and to wreak vengeance upon his own people, who would not tolerate him in their midst. In order to achieve his purpose he accused the Talmud of being a book that incited the Jews to all social and religious transgressions, of being a source of heresy and hypocrisy. To prove his accusations he fabricated quotations and misrepresented various doctrines of that book, which he placed before the Dominicans of Cologne, who were unable to read one single letter of the original. They, who even appealed to a sister of the German Emperor for her personal intervention, first gained the ear of the Pope Alexander IV., and then the influence of the Emperor Maximilian, to examine the Talmud, in order to prove that all those accusations were true. The Dominicans thought they would thus be able to deal a death-blow at the Jewish people, to lay the axe at their very roots, to stop the well-spring of their spiritual life. Although the Commission that had been appointed by the Pope decided in favour of the Talmud, the Emperor, yielding to new representations by his own sister, ordered a new trial, and issued an Imperial decree by which Pfefferkorn was empowered to achieve his purpose. That manœuvre against the Jews was, however, again intended by Providence to bring about unforeseen results which helped to strengthen the position of the Jews and to undermine the foundations of the Catholic Church. The rule repeated itself, the smallest sinful efforts, most insignificant causes, often have most detrimental effects. The results produced by that attack on Judaism partly helped to change the social and religious aspect of Europe.

The hero of that drama was John Reuchlin (born 1455, died 1522), a man of upright character and of unequalled knowledge among his contemporaries. He is said to have "delivered Germany from the reproach of barbarism." He was an admirer of the Hebrew language, and in order to complete his Hebrew studies he twice engaged the services of Jewish teachers. First, when at the court of the Emperor Frederic III., he was assisted in his studies by the Jewish Imperial physician, Jacob Loans, and when Ambassador at the Court of Pope Alexander VI. he made the acquaintance of the well-known Rabbi Obadia Sforno, who lent

him similar assistance. As the integrity of that famous scholar was beyond suspicion, and as he was the only Christian Professor who had a slight knowledge of the Hebrew literature, he was appealed to to express his opinion on the Talmud, which he did in glowing terms. The Dominicans, who felt sorely disappointed, then turned against him. A storm of indignation burst upon the aged scholar. Pfefferkorn published a pamphlet against him in which he suggested that Reuchlin was bribed by the Jews. But Reuchlin was a stylist of rare skill and power, and he retorted with similar vehemence. This controversy aroused Reuchlin's devoted pupils, among them men who later took a leading part in the Reform Movement, Crotus Rubeanus and Ulrich von Huten, and the latter published the famous "Epistolae virorum obscurorum," a satire of irresistible and destructive effect, which revealed the whole moral depravity of the Dominican Order. It is of great interest, and deserves to be specially mentioned, that while engaged in that painful struggle with his enemies, Reuchlin, the sincere and devoted Catholic, appealed to a Jewish physician at the Court of Pope Leo X. to use his influence on behalf of the Talmud.

Reuchlin spent the last years of his life in strife and grief. The struggle lasted for years, and it would occupy too much of our time were I to relate even the chief events in Germany, France, and Italy, the scene of that memorable struggle. But the Talmud and the Jews, and with them their Christian advocate of glorious memory, triumphed at the end. Not by any official, Papal, or Imperial decree, but by the dictum of history. The Dominicans themselves admitted that that controversy had brought them into hatred and disrepute. It did more—it created an irreparable breach between the lay heads of the Church, it divided the representatives of Papal authority into two hostile camps, and thus formed the prelude to the great drama of the Reformation which immediately followed. On the other hand, it aroused universal interest in the study of the Bible, the Hebrew language, and its literature. The way was paved for the ancient spirit of the prophets, and the gates of the Universities were burst open for the ideals of ancient Judaism, which had been forcibly suppressed for many centuries.

Needless to say, the attacks on the Talmud have since then never ceased. Besides continual pin-pricks; some attacks were made with much éclat which stirred the public to its depths. In the second half of the 17th century it was Eisenmenger who published his "Entdecktes Judenthum" (Judaism unmasked), which book was confiscated by an Imperial decree. Eisenmenger was willing to suppress it for a sum of 30,000 florins, which the Jews were not prepared to pay. The name of Rohling, who was Professor in Prague, and who published his book, "Der Talmud Jude" in 1871, is still fresh in every man's memory. He in most parts copied Eisenmenger's quotations, which, I need not say, were unscrupulous fabrications. Dr. Bloch, an Austrian rabbi, then publicly offered to prove in open court that that Professor of Oriental languages was unable to read the Hebrew of his own quotations. The most eminent Orientalists of European Universities emphatically declared that Rohling was an ignoramus and a liar, and he was thus morally annihilated. But notwithstanding all these indisputable historical facts, there still are men who believe in all those calumnies that have been published against the Talmud. And not only among non-Jews, but even among our own people. Heine, in his book on "Germany," or on "Religion and Philosophy," stated that Moses Mendelssohn had destroyed the prestige of the Talmud and established a pure Mosaism. As Luther overthrew the Papacy, so Mendelssohn overthrew Talmudism, and that, too, by a similar process. He discarded tradition and declared the Bible, which he translated into German, to be the only well-spring of the Jewish religion." Heine himself could hardly read one line in the Talmud. And he was mistaken in his opinion regarding Mendelssohn's conception of and attitude towards that Book. But he judged that philosopher by his disciples, by men like David Friedländer. David Friedländer's whole family, however, and his intimate friends did not adhere to the religion of the Bible. They all embraced Christianity, as did Heine himself, and all those who revolted against the authority of the Talmud. Not because of inner convictions; Heine was honest and truthful enough to admit it publicly. He also accused Friedländer of similar low, unpardonable motives. In my next lecture on the teachings and doctrines of the Talmud I shall be able to show that the rabbis were inspired

by the noblest ideals; in fact, that they often taught and propagated principles and morals too advanced not only for their own time but even for this modern age. But the Talmud, like the Jewish people who produced it, can afford to wait.

Some historians relate that when Caesar was attacked by his enemies, and almost mortally wounded, he still remained calm and firm, but when his own Brutus attacked him he exclaimed, in Greek: "Καὶ σὺ, τέκνον." Shakespeare, in the first scene of the third act of his drama, makes Caesar exclaim: "Et tu, Brute. Then fall, Caesar!" And he died. The Talmud when attacked by its own children does not die. Those children die morally, they disappear from the Jewish scene. But the Talmud and its adherents, who have waited for so many centuries, will continue to wait for the day when full justice will be meted out to both.

III.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

We are told that when Rabbi Akiba was awaiting his execution, a certain man Pappus, a political opponent of Bar-Cochba, entered his prison cell and strongly advised him to reject the Law and to abandon the study of the Torah, which was strictly forbidden by the Roman authorities, in order to save his life. The aged sage then told him the following fable: "A fox once cunningly tried to persuade some fishes to leave their lake and to share his cave, where he would protect them from the snares of men. But they instinctively foresaw the danger and retorted, 'If we are not quite safe in our own element, how can we hope to be so on dry land'?" That great Rabbi thus declared the study of the Law to be the very mainstay of the Jewish people, and that view has dominated the lives of the Jews throughout the ages of the exile. The doctrines of our religion, or, what amounts to the same, the doctrines embodied in the Talmud, form the very element of the Jew. They were calculated to influence every moment of his life, from the cradle to the grave. "His every emotion and every feeling, the most fugitive as well as the most profound, are foreseen, noted and embodied in a formula. In the most solemn moments of life as in

the most vulgar, the believer finds himself in the presence of a commandment, of a Mitzwa to be accomplished, recalling him to heavenly things, sanctifying the present hour and keeping him in perpetual communication with the divine." It would, however, be a grave mistake to assume that the strict laws of the Talmud closed around the Jew like spiritual Ghetto-walls, that the ritual and ceremonial Mitzwoth formed the links of an iron chain that weighed his life down and turned his world into a "Valley of weeping," as some Christian scholars would have us believe. I shall soon prove to you by quotations from the Talmudical literature that the various laws were framed by the Rabbis with a view of ennobling the life of the Jew, of raising him to a higher plane of thought, of cultivating in him the loftiest moral principles, and of filling his life with that joy and happiness which a world of prejudice and hostility had denied him. The Psalmist expresses this view in the verse (119, 92): "Had Thy Law not been my delight, I should have perished in mine affliction."

In order not to exceed the limited space of time at my disposal and to enable you to review these laws with greater facility, I shall arrange them in three distinct groups, viz., those dealing (1) with the individual Jew, (2) with the family, and (3) with the community.

1.—The Individual.

The Rabbis, in accordance with Jewish tradition, invested man with the highest dignity, and imposed upon him the noblest tasks. Rabbi Akiba used to say: "Distinguished is man that he was created in the image of God" (Ethics of the Fathers III., 18), and therefore, "whosoever sheddeth human blood it is reckoned to him as if he diminished the likeness of his Creator" (Bereshith Rab. XXXIV.). For the same reason it is man's duty to imitate the ways of God to be gracious and merciful (Sab. 113b), and Hillel condensed all the laws concerning man into the one well-known verse: "Love thy neighbour as thyself," or: "Do not unto others what thou wouldst not have done unto thyself" (Ibid. 30b). The same sage impressed upon his hearers and followers: "Be of the disciples of Aaron, love peace and pursue peace, love thy fellow-men, and draw them by thine own example near to the Torah" (Ethics I., 12). Needless to say, that he who insults his neighbour

commits a grave sin, "he has no share in the future world." "He should rather throw himself into a heated furnace than expose his friend to shame in public" (B.M., 59a).

All men are alike, all are the descendants of one father, of Adam. And when God created the first man, He had the dust, from which he formed his body, gathered from all corners of the earth (Pirke D'Rabbi Eliezer XIII), so that if a man from the east should choose to settle in the west, or *vice-versa*, no part of the world should be closed to him (Cf. Sanh. 38a). Man must not be restricted to one country, to one social or political sphere, nor limited to one place, his birth-place. Man is a cosmopolite, a citizen of the whole world. But the greater his privileges the graver his duties and responsibilities. A man's greatest privilege is his personal liberty, his independence, and his most sacred duty is to guard it, to make every physical and moral effort to retain it. To-day it is generally admitted that slavery has been the most corruptive and destructive element in social life; it has had the most baneful influence on the development of human morals. The sense of human dignity lies at the foundation of our morals and that sense must be deadened by the relations which, as a rule, prevail between master and slave. Besides it cultivates brutish feelings and promotes immoral habits among the masters. "The results of the institution of slavery—says Lecky (History of European Morals, Vol. I.)—were probably even more serious. In addition to its manifest effect in encouraging a tyrannical and ferocious spirit in the masters, it cast a stigma upon all labour, and at once degraded and impoverished the free poor. . . ." In Rome "The slave population was itself a hotbed of vice, and it contaminated all with which it came in contact." It is quite superfluous to-day, especially when lecturing before a Jewish audience, to dwell at greater length on the vice of slavery. But I may be permitted to mention that even a philosopher of the fame of an Aristotle declared slavery to be part of the law of nature, so deeply rooted was the notion of serfdom in the social system of ancient nations. And that vicious system remained in vogue throughout the Christian world with the consent of Christian Governments until almost the middle of the eighteenth century. England was the first to pass a Bill for its abolition, only in August, 1833,

other countries followed but slowly, and the Southern Provinces of America only in 1862, forced by the victorious armies of President Lincoln after sanguinary battles.

Ladies and gentlemen, these few brief remarks will serve to explain the attitude taken up by the Rabbis towards this social evil, and will enable us better to appreciate their various doctrines on the subject.

No one can be blamed for yielding to violence. When conquered by an enemy, when taken captive, very few prefer death to the loss of their liberty. The number of Jewish captives at the destruction of the Second Temple is estimated at nine hundred thousand. They could not all seek death in battle or commit suicide. The Rabbis, therefore, considered the ransom of captives as the greatest act of charity (B.B. 8b). Even money collected for the building of a place of worship could be utilised for such purpose. He who hesitates in the performance of that Mitzwah violates a distinct law of the Torah, which reads: "Thou shalt not view with indifference the murder of thy neighbour" (Lev. XIX., 16). If a slave escaped from his master and sought refuge in the land of Israel, the Torah already enjoined upon the Jew to offer him a safe asylum (Deut. 23, 15-16): "Thou shalt not deliver a slave to his master, he shall dwell with thee, in the midst of thee, *in the place which he shall choose within one of thy gates, where he liketh best, thou shalt not oppress him.*" The Rabbis remark on these verses that they refer even to a Canaanite slave who had escaped from his Jewish master who lived outside Palestine (Gitt. 45a). Wheeler Robinson (Century Bible a. loc.) remarks: "This stands in marked contrast with the severe enactments of the Code of Hammurabi concerning runaway slaves, from Babylonian territory." That law of Hammurabi reads: "If anyone harbours in his house a runaway male or female slave from the palace or the house of a noble, and does not bring them out at the command of the majordomo, the master of the house shall be put to death." Mr. Robinson might have added, that the Jewish law marked a great contrast even with the laws which obtained in Christendom up to modern times. According to the Rabbis (Gitt. 43b), if a master who resided in Palestine sold his slave to another man who lived in a foreign country, the slave regained his liberty *ipso facto*. And the Torah already decreed, that if a

Jewish master treated his Canaanite slave cruelly and caused him permanent physical injury, he had no right to retain his services; the slave had to be set free at once. Any bondman or bondmaid who embraced Judaism regained his or her liberty. I need not mention that the Hebrew slave, who was not permitted to serve his master longer than six years, had to be treated with every kindness, as an equal, as a brother. Hence the saying: "He who buys a Hebrew slave buys a master for himself" (Kid. 20a).

One of the main causes that place a man in a state of dependence, that bend his free will and compel him to seek the help of his fellow-men is poverty (Erub. 41b), as Proverbs expresses it: "Man transgresses for a piece of bread" (28, 22). In order to counteract that great evil the Rabbis impressed upon their followers: "Happy is he who prefers the bitter bread of God to the dainties of men" (Erub. 18b). But hard work alone can save one from dire distress. "A famine that had lasted for seven years never affected the artisan" (Sanh. 29a). No work should, therefore, be considered too degrading, were it even to flay a carcase in the market place (B.B. 110a). On the contrary, nothing honours a person more than honest work (Ned. 49b); and helps one more even than noble pedigree (Beresh. Rab. 74). Rabbi Judah therefore used to say: "Whosoever teaches not his son some handicraft trains him for robbery" (Kid. 29a). It is undoubtedly the sacred duty of every parent to have his child educated, well taught and trained in the spirit of the Torah and in houses of learning, under the strict control of God-fearing teachers. In my previous lectures I repeatedly pointed out to you this fact, and tried to show that our Rabbis laid great stress on study, and impressed upon us its necessity with every possible emphasis and with the whole weight of their authority. But "excellent is the study of the Torah when combined with some trade (worldly pursuit), for the practice of them both makes iniquity impossible; and all Torah without work must fail at length, and occasion iniquity" (Ethics II., 2). The Rabbis practised what they preached; the more so, as they considered it a sin and altogether undignified for scholars to make their knowledge of the Torah a source of income, to accept any remuneration for their services. An eminent sage, like Hillel the Elder, was in his early manhood a wood-cutter. Rabbi Joshua was

a smith, and Rabbi Jochanan a shoemaker. And other Rabbis were engaged in similar avocations. During the Middle Ages the Rabbis chose, as a rule, medicine as a profession.

2.—The Family.

But whatever be one's profession, it is every man's duty not to live the life of a hermit, not to separate himself from the community (Ethics II., 5). Our knowledge and our ability should be employed in the service and for the benefit of our fellow-citizens. Rabbi Eliezer ben Azaria used to say: "Whosesoever wisdom is in excess of his work, to what is he like? To a tree whose branches are abundant but its roots scanty. When the wind comes it uproots and overturns it. But whosesoever works are in excess of his wisdom, to what is he like? To a tree whose branches are scanty and its roots abundant, though all the winds come upon it, they stir it not from its place" (Ibid. III., 27). Neither a man's views nor his intentions are of much consequence. Even God, to whom are revealed our inmost thoughts, judges us by our deeds, according to our public activity (Pes. 50b, Kid. 39, 40a).

A man's first duty is to establish a home. This view of the Rabbis was extremely opposed to that of Paul, who in his "Epistles to the Corinthians" (I., vii., 1-7) says: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman. For I would that all men were even as I myself" (*i.e.*, unmarried). The Rabbis insisted on the advisability of early marriages, and needless to say, for purely moral reasons. But, they also maintained, God created this world not to be deserted, but to be inhabited and cultivated by the propagation of the race (Jeb. 61a). And he who lives without a wife, lives a life void of blessing, joy, and happiness (Ibid. 62b). Of course, one has no right to marry before he has provided a home for his wife. The Torah already taught us this important lesson, that one should first build a house and plant a garden, *i.e.*, one should first acquire the means of subsistence and then try to gain the heart of a woman (Sota 44a). Every man should honour his wife even more than himself, and cherish her, for she enables him to avoid sin, to live a life of moral peace and happiness (Jeb. 62b). She also watches over the education of the children and promotes their spiritual welfare and intellectual progress (Ber. 17a).

In due consideration of all these facts, Lemuel, King of Massa (Prov. XXXI.), sang the praise of the brave woman, whose price was far above rubies, whom her husband trusted and her children called blessed, but whose virtues and fear of God surpassed her grace and beauty. "For grace is deceitful and beauty vain." The doctrines of the Rabbis concerning woman emanated from a similar spirit. Rabbi Pinchas, the Priest, used to say, "a virtuous wife is like an altar in the house, to pacify, to propitiate and to make atonement." (Tan. Gen. 34). One should, therefore, make every sacrifice in order to marry the daughter of a learned man, though she be very poor. He who prefers a large dowry to education pays the penalty of his shortsightedness as pater familias (Pes. 49b). And the same rules apply to a girl who has reached an age of maturity. Paul said (I. Cor., vii., 34): "There is difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit, but she that is married careth for the things of the world. . . ." Rabbi Akiba said, whosoever allows his daughter to remain unmarried, exposes her to the dangers of an immoral world (Sanh. 76a), and another sage added: "If thy daughter is of age it is better for her to marry one beneath her station than remain unmarried" (Pes. 113a). But no father has a right to dispose of his daughter against her will; he thus defeats his own ends (Kid. 41a). Even a bondman is not permitted to remain unmarried. And if he is partly a slave and partly free, and on account of his unsatisfactory position unable to marry either a free woman or a bondwoman, his master is compelled to set him completely free and to accept a bond for his claim. On this point the School of Hillel agreed with their opponents, the School of Shammai (Gitt. iv., 5).

That the Rabbis were right and not the advocates of celibacy, has been evidenced by the history of the Catholic Clergy. Most eminent Christian historians have unrolled pictures of clerical life, even among the noblest princes and highest dignitaries of the Church, that are most repulsive as documents of human depravity. Graf von Hoensbroech in his book on "Das Papstthum, in seiner sozial-kulturellen Wirksamkeit" (Leipzig, 1902), Vol. 2, ch. XVIII, "Der Zoelibat," says: "Die Sitten der ehelosen Statthalter Christi, der

ungeheure Einfluss dieser Sitten auf die christliche Welt im allgemeinen, und auf die Geistlichkeit im besondern, warten noch auf einen Darsteller." "Whole centuries hear the impress of those papal morals, which remind one more of the worst times of Athens and of pagan Imperial Rome than of Jerusalem." (p. 496). In 1490 the number of immoral women in Rome alone amounted to 6,800 (Ibid.). William, Archbishop of Paris (d. 1249), complained: "One finds not virtue but filth and vice among the clergy; they are not sinners but criminals, so that the Church reminds one more of Babylon, Egypt and Sodom" (Ibid., where the author mentions his authorities). I could quote many documents in support of this statement (Comp. H. C. Lea "History of Sacerdotal Celibacy," Philadelphia 1867, as also Bebel, "Die Frau," 49 Aufl. p. 70), but I resist the temptation for obvious reasons, and merely wish to point out that all those thousands of priests were the victims of the doctrine of celibacy. I need hardly mention that the same doctrine and its deplorable consequences were greatly responsible for the rapid growth of the Reformation. Luther's refrain: "Wer nicht liebt Wein, Weib and Gesang, bleibt ein Narr sein Lebenlang" (Who loves not wine, woman, and song, remains a fool all his life long), found a rousing echo in all German provinces.

But the Rabbis are strongly blamed for having gone to the other extreme. They, we are told, advocated the ridiculous custom of early marriages, and silently tolerated the barbaric custom of polygamy. These seem to be serious objections, supported as they are by weighty reasons and historical, indisputable facts. The Christian Church claims the credit of having established and enforced the principle of monogamy.

As to early marriages, no other religious institution has helped to save our race from decay and degeneration more than this. Lecky, in his History, etc., Vol. I., says: "The nearly universal custom of early marriages among the Irish peasantry has alone rendered possible that high standard of female chastity, that intense and jealous sensitiveness respecting female honour for which, among many failings and some vices, the Irish poor have long been pre-eminent in Europe. . There is no fact in Irish history more singular than the complete, and I believe, *unparalleled absence among* the Irish priesthood of those moral scandals which in

every Continental country occasionally prove the danger of vows of celibacy." Volumes of apologetical essays could not better demonstrate the justification of that Rabbinical view and ancient Jewish custom, than these few dry but true statements of the English historian. Had he known the proverbial chastity of the Jewish Ghetto-woman, the moral purity of the Jewish Ghetto-home, he would have paid his tribute of admiration to both. The institution of early marriages saved our race from extinction during the ages of fierce persecution, when tens of thousands were annihilated by fire and sword, and wars and diseases, which raged through Europe during the Middle Ages. And to the same custom our people owes that high moral standard that enabled the Jew to resist persecution and pestilence.

The promotion of early marriages has saved the Jewish community from another abominable evil, which shames the annals of other nations, ancient as well as modern. The word prostitution fills every Jew with a feeling of horror and disgust. Immoral houses never existed among Jews, would never have been tolerated in the Jewish Ghetto. It would lead me too far were I to refer to ancient nations, especially those of the East, which encouraged immorality as part of their religious worship. The Torah refers to that vicious custom in the following words: "Whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls of the transgressors shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance that ye defile not yourselves therein. . . . " (Lev. xviii., 29, 30.) Even Solon "established houses of prostitution (dicteria) which were a State monopoly." Dr. Shadwell, in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," s.v. (11th ed., Vol. 22, p. 459), says: "The Church was not severe upon prostitutes, to whom the altar was open upon repentance, and some of the fathers explicitly recognised their trade as a necessary evil." And in spite of all organised institutions for the rescue of the thousands of legal and social outcasts, immoral houses sprang up throughout the Christian countries of Europe and vice flourished throughout the Middle Ages. "Public brothels on a large scale were established at Toulouse, Avignon and Montpellier. At Toulouse the profits were shared between the city and the university; at Avignon and Montpellier the trade was a municipal monopoly." That the moral conditions of later generations, and even of our own civilised times, have grown worse, and are

continually growing more and more deplorable, is borne out by Dr. Shadwell's article, from which I have just quoted, by other similar articles bearing on this subject, which are based on modern statistics and by books such as Bebel's "Die Frau" and Amos's "State Regulations of Vice." In Berlin alone, the number of registered immoral women increased during the years 1886 to 1897 from 3,006 to 5,098, and they represent but a small percentage of prostitutes, whose number had been estimated at 50,000 (Bebel, Ibid.).

I have mentioned these facts, which arouse in us feelings of shame and disgust, in order to prove to you how very deep was the knowledge of our Rabbis of human nature. Their principle was: The law must be so framed as to enable every man to live as a law-abiding citizen, and not to be forced into crime. It is written (Lev. xviii., 5): "And ye shall keep my statutes and my laws, which if a man do he shall live by them." The law has thus been given to promote man's happiness (Yom. 85b). The Sabbath is a most sacred religious institution, but it may be violated for the sake of a man's health. It may be desecrated to lessen the pain of a newly-born infant, though not in honour of King David after his death (Sabb. 151b). Indeed, any law may be overridden to save a human life, with the exception of three laws, viz., idolatory, murder, and fornication, which must be observed at all costs, even at the risk of one's life.

The various utterances of our Rabbis regarding marriage and married life leave no doubt on one's mind, that they loathed the idea of polygamy. No great Rabbi is known to have married two wives. And did not the Torah impress upon the king himself, "Not to multiply wives to himself"? (Deut. xvii., 17). But, say the Rabbis, "the Torah has been given to mortals, not to angels" (Br. 25b). Most of those wretched women who have sunk to the level of the brute, who are treated as the outcasts of society, are the victims of impossible laws, or of barbarous customs, to use a modern expression, the victims of white slave traffic. Princes from the days of Justinian and Charlemagne to the most Catholic protectors of Christianity, Louis XIV. and XV., have openly violated the law of monogamy. Even priests of the Church could not resist the impulse of nature. "The Anabaptists insisted on freedom in the matter, and Bernardino Ochino conditionally defended

plurality of wives. When, in 1540, Philip the Magnanimous, the reforming Landgraf of Hesse, determined to marry a second wife, Luther and Melanchthon approved as his personal friends, though not as doctors of theology, while Martin Bucer assisted at the marriage" (Enc. Br. 11th ed. s.v. Polygamy). I make bold to say that a re-organisation of our social conditions according to Rabbinical doctrines, would reduce the number of the victims of lust, of the agents of immorality, to a tolerable minimum, and would restore to many a Jewish community that pride of race and sense of chastity that distinguished our ancestors in former centuries. In this connection I may mention that Rabbi Gershom ben Jehudah, who flourished in the tenth century in Mayence, strictly forbade polygamy, and as his authority has been recognised and his measures for the public welfare have been religiously respected and observed by the Jews throughout the Christian world, no case of polygamy has since been tolerated in any Jewish community. At a Synod of Rabbis held in Troyes, in the second half of the twelfth century, over which Rabbi Tam presided, it was again decided that that ordinance of Rabbi Gershom regarding polygamy could be abrogated only for most weighty reasons and by unanimous consent of a hundred rabbis from three different provinces (Graetz: Geschichte, etc., Vol. 6, p. 182).

The enactment of divorce formed another effective deterrent that served to minimise the spread of immorality. The Torah already decreed: "When a man taketh a wife and marries her, then it shall be if she finds no favour in his eyes, because he found in her some moral delinquency, that he shall write her a bill of divorcement and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife" (Deut. xxiv., 1-2). In contradistinction to that Biblical law, the founder of Christianity is reported to have said (Matt. v., 31): "Whosoever shall put away his wife saving for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery, and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery." Paul made that rule of his master even more stringent. He said (I. Corinthians, vii., 10-11): "And unto the married I command . . . Let not the wife depart from her husband, but if she depart let her remain unmarried." The canon law of Rome,

therefore, decided there could be no divorce "a vincule matrimonii," and this vital social question has for centuries been the cause of strife and bitter controversy among the various sections of the Church, and the consequences proved very fatal. "The law of servitude in marriage," says J. S. Mill, "is a monstrous contradiction to all the principles of the modern world and to all the experience through which these principles have been slowly and painfully worked out . . ." And Gabriel Ernest Legouvé, in his "La Femme en France," writes: "What accounts for so many cases of polygamy among the people? The indissolubility of marriage. To what shall we attribute the ever increasing number of illegitimate children? Again to the indissolubility of marriage. What stirs up dissension between husband and wife and often leads even to murder? Again the indissolubility of marriage." The school of Hillel, therefore, maintained a man may divorce his wife if she disgraces him in any way, and Rabbi Akiba went even further in his explanation of the Biblical verse, and argued that one may divorce his wife if he no longer loves her, as it is written: "If it happen that she found no favour in his eyes" (Gitt. 90a). In his opinion, ethical reasons alone were strong enough to render a marriage invalid. That view of the great Rabbi, which has puzzled many a Talmudical student, is better understood in our modern time, and would be better appreciated by writers on modern social problems such as Ellen Key.

The Rabbis did not think lightly of a man's matrimonial obligations. They said: "The altar sheds tears when a man divorces the wife and companion of his youth" (Gitt. 90b). "There is compensation for everything in life, except for the loss of one's first wife" (Sanh. 22a). But they based their laws and enactments on moral principles, and their motives have now been vindicated by the codes of most modern civilised countries.

3.—The Community.

The arrangement that wherever ten Jews reside they must at once form themselves into a congregation, has greatly helped to promote among our people a sense of public duty. Hillel used to say: True I must rely upon myself, but if I am for myself only, what am I? (Ethics I., 15). Especially at a time when the com-

munity is in distress, no Jew must say, I shall stay at home, eat and drink, and my soul shall be at peace. He who is guilty of such callousness two angels place their hands upon his head and say: "This man, who has separated himself from the community shall not live to see its prosperity" (Taan. 11a). Maimonides in his chapter on Repentance remarks: "Such a man, although he in his private life carries out the laws, he shall have no share in the future world." Even a scholar, who is always engaged in study, must take his share in the work of the community and contribute towards its needs (M.K. 6a). One's first public duty is towards the poor, for charity outweighs all other meritorious actions (B.B. 9a). And he who saves one of his people it is accounted unto him as if he had saved a whole world (Sanh. 37a).

The true spirit in which one should dispense charity is that the recipient should be unaware of the donor (B.B. 10a). Rabbi Eliazer used to say, "he who distributes charity secretly surpasses even Moses" (Ibid. 9b). Of the poor the orphan has the first claim upon our generosity, especially the female orphan, who is the less resourceful (Ket. 67a). Of course, one should be effectively assisted before he sinks to the degraded position of a beggar, as it is written (Lev. xxv., 35): "If thy brother be waxen poor and fallen in decay, then thou shalt relieve him, though he be a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, nor any kind of increase, but fear thy God, that thy brother may live with thee." I am glad the English version, from which I quoted, is correct, following our best Hebrew commentators. The Sep. and the Vulg. misunderstood our text. The former translates ὡς προσηλίτου καὶ παροίκου and the latter "Quasi advenam et peregrinum." This translation is false; neither the letter nor the spirit of this verse justify such interpretation (Cf. Kalisch a. l). And the Rabbis commenting on this law add: "Thou shalt support thy fellow-man even four and five times, as often as he appeals for help, unless he uses the money for some unlawful purpose" (Siph. a. l.). Some critics raise the objection that this law to help people in reduced circumstances and to assist them with loans without any interest, was meant only for the Jew, that it was, however, not unlawful to take interest from a stranger. They seem to overlook the fact that every

law is based on the principle of reciprocity. No stranger would have lent the Jew any money without any demand for profit. The Rabbinical court possessed no executive power or authority among non-Jews. But they impressed upon the members of the Jewish community to treat their non-Jewish business friends with equity, even at the expense of their legal demands, for the sake of peace (Cf. Gitt. 59b).

Acts of charity, however, and the advancing of timely loans, must be prompted by a spirit of kindness and of brotherly love (Sanh. 49a). It is not what one gives, but how he gives it. And monetary assistance does not constitute the highest form of charity. The poor have yet other needs, moral and spiritual, which demand our immediate and whole-hearted attention. To teach, say the Rabbis, is the noblest act of charity (Ibid.). The verse (Dan. xii., 3): "And they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever," is said to refer to those who teach little children (B.B. 8a). For even the poorest is bidden to study. He who is ignorant cannot be truly pious, he is unable to carry out his religious obligations (Ethics II., 6). The Rabbis advocated strongly the education of the poor, "because from them goeth forth the Law" (Ned. 81a), and from their ranks had arisen great masters like Hillel and Akiba. They therefore impress upon us (Eth. VI., 4): "This is the way that is calculated to promote study; eat bread with salt, drink water by measure, sleep upon the bare ground and live a life of privation and devote thy whole thought to study; if thou doest thus, thou shalt be happy, and it shall be well with thee." However paradoxical this Mishnah may sound, it only expresses a hackneyed truth, borne out by hundreds of well-known facts. The greatest minds worked themselves up from small beginnings, and forced their way to prominence out of the deepest obscurity.

The idea of free tuition was first conceived by Simeon ben Shetach, a brother of Queen Salomea, to whom I have referred in my first lecture. But he had established schools for young men of the age of seventeen. The High Priest Rabbi Joshua ben Gamala, who flourished before the destruction of the Second Temple, enjoys the distinction of having established in every Jewish community elementary schools for children from the age of six (B.B. 21a). The guiding motive of those

pioneers of free education was: "As the Lord has given us the Law as an act of favour, so must we teach it gratuitously" (Bech. 29a).

The community should be governed in a perfectly democratic spirit, by lay and spiritual leaders, all to be appointed by the will and with the consent of the community (Br. 55a). The Parnass, the President, must not usurp power, "he must not himself place the crown upon his head" (Aboth de Rab. Nath. ch. 11) "He who treats the community with overbearing pride, God weeps over him" (Chag. 5b). Needless to say the representative of the community must be a man of piety and ability (Eth. iii., 9). In order that his influence and the honour he enjoys may not corrupt him, he should be assisted and controlled by two colleagues (Jer. Pe. viii., 6).

But above them stands the Rabbi, the spiritual leader, who wields even greater influence, and whose authority is unassailable. His mission is to teach, to instruct and to advise, and to decide on all momentous questions, both social and religious. He too is assisted by two assessors, but his is the most exalted position in the community. He ranks above the ruling prince. Any Jew of ability might aspire to the royal dignity, as did Saul, David, and others, but very few could adequately fill the position of a Rabbi (Hor. 13a). Rabbi Akiba maintained that the Bible verse (Deut. vi., 13): "Thou shalt reverence the Lord thy God," was also intended to emphasise the respect and reverence due to the Rabbi. He is the representative of the Law, and the torch-bearer of learning. Those of you who have some knowledge of Jewish communal life in former centuries, I might even say of former decades, in certain parts of the Jewish world, know that those enactments and doctrines of the Talmud were carried out in letter and in spirit.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the course of my lectures I have tried to give you a bird's eye view of the Talmud, but I feel that I have hardly touched the fringes of this immense subject. I have, for instance, been unable to include an at least equally important part of its literature, viz., the Hagadah, "whose chief subjects consist in explaining historical events, prophetic utterances, and in bringing to mind the past and treating of the future of Judaism." But I hope I have been able to

vindicate the honour of both the book and its authors, that I have succeeded in showing that our great teachers were men of keen foresight and inspired with deep love of their faith, their people, and, indeed, of the whole human race, and that they were guided by motives of justice and equity. They themselves, as if to sum up the whole essence of their teachings in two main doctrines, opened the first chapter of the first treatise with the law regarding the reading of the Sh'maa, the proclamation of the Unity of God, and concluded the last chapter with the Mishnah: "'The Holy One, blessed be He, found no better blessing for Israel than peace, as it is written: 'The Lord will give strength unto His people, the Lord will bless His people with peace.'" Maimonides concluded his great encyclopaedic work on the Talmud with the remark, that at the time of the Messiah all the Israelites will be wise and learned, as it is written: "And the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea." The expression "Wisdom" characterises the spiritual trend of that great sage who was a disciple of Aristotle, while the word "Peace" expresses the ideal of the Rabbis, who saw in the ultimate fraternisation of men the highest achievement of all human effort, when

> "the war-drum throbb'd no longer,
> And the battle-flags were furl'd,
> In the Parliament of men,
> The Federation of the World."