

# The Talmud

W. Kelly.

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If the writer of a recent article in the "Quarterly" meant to catch men by a sudden surprise, his friends have reason to congratulate him. High-churchmen have paid homage; low-churchmen, and no-churchmen, down to the most cynical of sceptics, have lavished no ordinary praise. Protests have not been wanting and these have about them this character damaging to the Review, that they come from persons who know somewhat more of the portentous sea of Jewish tradition than those who have been equally precipitate and lavish with their eulogy. No doubt the mind of man is readily excited by a plausible apology, where evil is skilfully hidden, and, what panders to the spirit of man in general, and particularly of the present age, is set forth with no small cleverness. Into this trap people fall the more readily where ignorance has strangely imagined that a vast body of writings, the storehouse of ages on all subjects from the veriest common-place to the most momentous and awful, by men, some of them of mind and feeling, could be without glowing thoughts and bright coruscations of fancy and counsels not wanting in wisdom and prudence. It was also forgotten that these active spirits were seeking to refine on and supplement such materials as no men or ages could have who knew not the scriptures of truth. What then accounts for an acceptance so ready and general among partisans who are usually arrayed in deadly strife?

Doubtless, a variety of causes may operate. First there is the great amount of interest which the writer, by dint of a lively style and allusions to poetry, history, biography, antiquities, jurisprudence, and philology, contrives to cast over a theme insufferably dull in dull hands, but which he knows well enough how to set forth in the best colours and to adorn with worldly taste and judgment from without. Next, there is the national characteristic, this country's love of fair play, especially for that which has been popularly thought good for nothing, which too often disposes the crowd to applaud an able defence of what is really indefensible. Thirdly, the seeming indifferentism\* but real unbelief of the day disposes a vast number of men, who discuss religion as a science without any renewal of heart or conscience toward God, to hail anything which tends to weaken the uncompromising authority of revealed truth. Witness the avidity with which a pretended pre-Adamite man is caught at, or transmutation of species, or a blank in an old sacred codex, or a faulty reading (provided it differs from what is the received text). But lastly, there is another and if possible graver consideration for those who believe the inspired prophecies. Scripture is plain and positive that the end of this age will see, first, the apostasy, and, then, the manifestation of the man of sin. Christendom will be betrayed far and wide, and the main active agents of this spiritual but infidel declension will be Jewish. Whatever, then, tends, like this article, to bridge over the yawning cavern which severs Christianity (and even yet Christendom) from Judaism, whatever lowers the unutterable value of the New Testament by an illusive exaltation of Rabbinism, prepares the direct way for the lawlessness and lawless one of the latter day — for the amalgam of west and east, of Christendom and Judaism in a universal brotherhood, bound together by the lie to which God will retributively consign those who refused the love of the truth that they might be saved.

\*"A mighty change has come over us. We, children of this latter age, are above all things utilitarian. We do not read the Koran, the Zend Avesta, the Vedas, with the sole view of refuting them. We look upon all literature, religious, legal, and otherwise, whensoever and wheresoever produced, as part and parcel of humanity. We, in a manner, feel a kind of responsibility for it. We seek to understand

the phase of culture which begot these items of our inheritance, the spirit that moves upon their face. And while we bury that which is dead in them, we rejoice in that which lives in them. We enrich our stores of knowledge from theirs, we are stirred by their poetry, we are moved to high and holy [!] thoughts when they touch the divine [!] chord in our hearts.

"In the same human spirit we now speak of the Talmud. There is even danger at hand in this chivalresque feeling — one of the most touching characteristics of our times — which is evermore prompting us to offer holocausts to the Manes of those whom former generations are thought to have wronged, may lead to its being extolled somewhat beyond its merit." It is hard to say whether the folly or the profanity of this extract is the more deplorable. How can such sentiments pass muster in a periodical even nominally christian?

It is hardly worth while pointing out the exaggeration of the writer. He puts antithetically against each other the frequent allusions to the Talmud in discussions doctrinal, philological, archaeological, classical, scientific, legal, etc., and contrasts this universal talk with the universal neglect of the Talmud. But is this fair or fact? There may be, for all that, a sufficient and sure knowledge of the character of the Talmud from those who judge of it chiefly through Selden or Buxtorf, through Lightfoot or McCaul, through Grätz or Jost, through Frankel or Gfrörer. Prideaux is popular enough, Stehelin and Steinschneider not unknown; and periodicals too have diffused their information. Have all these sympathy with controversialists such as Wagenseil or Eisenmenger? There are perhaps a thousand Greek scholars for one competently versed in Rabbinical literature; yet among the mass of educated men who are tolerably familiar with the Aristotelian syllogistic system, how few have even read the Organon! What would be thought of parading some parish priest who mistook this famous logical collection for an instrument of music? Page 419 breathes more of a scribe's contempt for the unlearned than of good sense to say no more

The fact really is that, though students in general may be ignorant of a thousand details as to the printed editions and MSS. of the Talmud (as they are of most works, save a few more about the scriptures), they have had a far truer conception, in our opinion, of the Talmud than this new article, with all its charms, is calculated to impart. And if we know less of the Talmud than of the Koran, whose fault is this? How comes it to pass that the Jews have done so little to furnish a critical edition of their boasted oracle? It cannot be for want of means or literary ability, nor, if the reviewer is to be trusted, for lack of value to almost every province, moral and intellectual, of art, science, literature, laws, and religion. Why has no Rab, Rabbi, or Rabban done for this incomparable treasury what the Reviewer allows has been constantly done for the merest trash in Greek or Latin, Sanscrit or Persian? Why was a critical essay two years ago left off? Why have the two distinct versions of the Talmud brought forth no more than a first volume? To shun the light may have influenced. Lack of sufficient encouragement does not often, in this world, hinder the publication of things good, bad, or indifferent. Even had the Jews been altogether unaided, would it not be strange and humiliating indeed, if this were their true and sole reason why recension and translation have hitherto proved abortive? It is a long while since the blame could be laid at the door of the censor (pp. 420-4); and as to papal denunciation (p. 422), the Talmud only shared with its neighbours. What did popes spare of good or bad unless it served themselves?

It is a curious coincidence, but no more, that the first edition of the Talmud appeared in Venice in 1520 A.D., the same year when Luther burnt the pope's bull at Wittemberg.

Has the Reviewer, then, answered his own question, "What is the Talmud?" Wherefore all this marshalling, if not multiplying, of difficulties (pp. 424-430)? Why this mystification of the reader? The

desire is evident to fill the imagination with airy notions of its vast depths and wondrous treasures, its ethics, ceremonies, doctrines, physics, metaphysics, medicine, etc. Then he would have us believe that it is fair to compare it with such a work as the Justinian Code!\* Is this, then, a fair answer to the question which he tells us, "no one has yet satisfactorily answered?" Is this the excuse for its prurient indecency? "But the Talmud is more than a Book of Laws. It is a microcosm, embracing, as does the Bible, heaven and earth. It is as if all the prose and the poetry, the science, the faith and speculations of the Old World were, though only in faint reflections, bound up in *nuce*." Is this an answer to "What is the Talmud?" An advocate, however zealous, ought to be more careful.

\* Had the Reviewer forgotten that there is such a book as the Bible? In this ignoring of scripture for tradition about it, however, he speaks truly of the Jews, if not his own feeling. Tradition in Judaism, as in Popery, superseded the scriptures in fact.

We are next told (p. 426) that the origin of the Talmud is coeval with the return from the Babylonish captivity. The Rabbinical theory is, that the oral law was coeval with the written law, and that both, however differently transmitted, date from Moses at Sinai. And so it is allowed in pp, 430, 431. There seems no reason to doubt that from their return the traditional system grew up. But it is not true that the little company of returned captives were "transformed into a band of Puritans." The notion of "a fierce and passionate love" thenceforth for the scriptures (if "the scanty records of their faith and history" mean them) is a romance. The prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi disclose with unerring distinctness a wholly different state. Our Lord explains it parabolically but with transparent clearness. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and finding none." The unclean spirit of abominations did then disappear; and so they have continued ever since. But as surely as the Jews still continue a Christ-rejecting generation, that spirit of idolatry will overspread and prevail once more, little as they expect such a catastrophe. "Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished." Such was its condition after the captivity, such when Jesus was rejected, and such it is still. And therein lies their danger. There is no power of God that has filled the house. There is essentially a negative theology, than which nothing more exposes to Satan. So will it be with Israel. "Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation." (Matt. 12: 43-45.)

At any rate, the post-captivity state of the Jews might be more truly called poverty-stricken than Puritan; and it was during this dearth, when the house was "empty" and "swept" that it had the "garnishing" of tradition — the ground-work of the Mishna, which is supposed to have been copied by R. Jehuda about the end of the second or the beginning of the third century. This in its turn gave rise to its "complement," or comment, the Gemara, of which two remain: that formed by the school of Tiberias, called the *Jerusalem Talmud* (one vol. folio), as the larger compilation founded by the school of Babylon is published as the *Babylonian Talmud* (12 vols. folio). It is hard to see why so great a mountain should be constructed out of matters so commonly known by all who take interest in the sons of Israel and their history. Dr. Edersheim has given a popular yet sufficiently exact compendium of all that most persons will care to know of the subject in his "History of the Jewish nation since the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus" (Edinburgh: Constable; London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co., 1856). The reader will find information both abundant and trustworthy in his pleasantly written book (already recommended in these pages) which sacrifices neither the glory of Christ, nor the truth of the Bible, but blends them with real love to the Jews.

The traditional system is either ritualistic or rationalistic, and often both together: so it was

among the Jews; and so it is more than ever showing itself in Christendom at this very hour. Hence the moral significance of this paper, and the ominous import of its fitting into the taste and feeling of opposite factions just now.

The apologist allows that the process of drawing new precepts from the old may have been too freely applied. "Yet, while the Talmudical Code practically differs from the Mosaic, as much as our Digest will some day differ from the laws of Canute, and as the Justinian Code differs from the Twelve Tables, it cannot be denied that these fundamental laws have in all cases been consulted, carefully and impartially as to their spirit, their letter being but the vessel or outer symbol. The often uncompromising severity of the Pentateuch, especially in the province of the penal law, had certainly become much softened down under the milder influence of the culture of later days." (p. 432.)

No christian reader can weigh the spirit of this extract without feeling that it betrays infidelity as regards the Old Testament; and the man that slights the divine authority of the Hebrew scriptures will never be found true to the claims of the New Testament, as will soon be evident in the reviewer. Who but an unbeliever would dare to compare the statutes of Moses (even those relating exclusively to the people and land of Israel) with the laws of Canute or the twelve tables? It is not merely the notion of development into the Talmud (like the civil law of the empire, or the British Digest some day) which is so evil, but the blindness which fails to apprehend the essential difference between the Mosaic institutes, and every other law of every other nation. Was not the law given by Moses God's law? — God's law throughout? Was it so with Canute's? or the twelve tables?

Again, the idea of development, natural in the growth of the human mind and of the collective wisdom of ages, is precisely negatived by the fact of a divine revelation. It is here that ritualists and rationalists find their common point of meeting. They are both of them infidel as to God's word and in disparagement and dislike of its unswerving authority they sympathize: the one setting up the ever accumulating traditions of men, mainly of the past; the other asserting their own right of free handling in virtue of human progress.

But God's word, whether for Israel in their rudimentary place, or in its fulness of light for the Christian is itself and refuses admixture. Marvellously adapted by human instruments for man's heart and conscience, it is the revelation of God, as nothing else is. It may be explained, well or ill, but it admits of no development. Its divine perfectness is such, that to add to God's word what is of man is to be found a liar. The teacher may unfold, the exhorter enforce; but the truth is there fully revealed for unfolding and enforcement. The Lord works by those He raises up and sends to minister; but the thing ministered is His own word, the only source and standard of truth.

Of the truth the Church is the responsible keeper, not the teacher but the guardian of it. The Church is taught by instruments given of the Head; the Church never teaches: otherwise development would follow to the denial of a complete revelation from God. The Church is bound to be the pillar and ground of the truth; but it is of truth not latent in the Church or to be evolved by human skill; it is of truth revealed of God. Hence the written word is the resource for the believer in the perils of the last days, not the Church, nor a teacher, not even the blessed Spirit of God, but scripture, though the Holy Spirit alone makes wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. 3.)

To return, however: the believer will not admire the estimate which insinuates the contrast of the mildness of later Judaism with the rigour of the Pentateuch. The truth is, that in divine things the enemy's effort (alas! too successful) is to enfeeble the absolute authority of God's word by every means and at all cost; hence, to bring in changes and shifts, development and tradition, anything rather than what God says — needless ceremonies where God has left liberty; and laxity, more or less, where He

demands uncompromising severity. Thus, in result, faithless man, in contempt of the divine revelation which it is his privilege to possess and his responsibility to obey, claims credit for the softening down of old barbarism, especially in the penal law, under the milder influences of the culture of later days. Alas! for poor proud man. Does he not know that as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law? How will the plea of "later days" with their boasted improvements stand in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ the Lord?

It is not necessary here to trace the process of this development of the law in the hands of the scribes. Let us turn to the reviewer's statement of the relation of the Talmud to Christianity.

"Were not the whole of our general views on the difference between Judaism and Christianity greatly confused, people would certainly not be so very much surprised at the striking parallels of dogma and parable, of allegory and proverb, exhibited by the gospel and the Talmudical writings. The New Testament, written, as Lightfoot has it, among Jews, by Jews, for Jews, cannot but speak the language of the times, both as to forms, and, broadly speaking, as to contents (!) There are many more vital (!) points of contact between the New Testament and the Talmud than divines yet seem fully to realize; for such terms as 'redemption,' 'baptism,' 'grace,' 'faith,' 'salvation,' 'regeneration,' 'Son of man,' 'Son of God,' 'kingdom of heaven,' were not as we are apt to think, invented by Christianity, but were household words of Talmudical Judaism, to which Christ gave a higher and purer meaning."

Is it not manifest that it is the reviewer whose notions are both confused and dishonouring to Christianity through his desire to apologize for Rabbinism? He that dooms himself to explore the weary waste of the Talmud will travel far to discover a real parallelism to the gospel in dogma and parable, allegory and proverb, save where drawn unquestionably from the Old Testament. Almost all the terms cited are borrowed directly from the earlier volume of inspiration. The main difference is that the rejection of Jesus by the Jews gave occasion to the Holy Spirit to bring them out in a new and incomparably deeper light, so as to be the form of expressing christian privilege before "that day" dawn when the old promises in their primary import shall be fulfilled to the restored and repentant people of Israel, then looking on Jehovah-Messiah whom they pierced.

Thus "redemption," which in the Old Testament is mainly the application of God's power to deliver His people from their foes, is, as characteristically though not exclusively, in the New Testament by the *blood of Christ*. Take Psalm 14 and Isaiah 59 and compare their connection in the Old Testament with the use made in Romans 3. In the psalm, the awful picture of the people's sin ends with the desire that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion, and the anticipation of their joy when Jehovah brings back the captives. In the prophecy, a similar picture of their moral ruin closes with the distinct prediction that the Redeemer shall come to Zion. In both it is redemption by power. But if we examine what follows the citation of these scriptures by the apostle Paul, it is plainly God's gratuitous justification by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. But how? Is it His coming in power and glory to deliver? Nay; "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood "

Similarly we might trace how each of the terms quoted is transfigured when seen on the holy mount with Jesus in their midst, as compared with their use in that vast collection of mummies, the Talmud. Founded on the Old Testament, if not directly borrowed from it, the Rabbis degraded what the inspiring Spirit of the New Testament transformed with vivifying power and made them to be, as Christ said, spirit and life. Even the advocate of the Talmud is compelled to own the power of His name in this respect. What was ἀγάπη in the dialect of Attica before the Holy Ghost made it to be the chosen expression of such love as was seen in Christ, and described in 1 Corinthians 13 or 1 John 4? It is the

truth conveyed which is the real matter, and not the words as employed by Greeks or Jews. Who ever used them as they are used in the New Testament?

We are next told that "no less loud and bitter in the Talmud are the protests against 'lip-serving,' against 'making the law a burden to the people,' against 'laws that stand on hairs,' against priests and Pharisees! The fundamental mysteries of the new faith are matters totally apart; but the ethics in both are, in their broad outlines, identical. That grand dictum, 'Do unto others as thou wouldst be done by,' against which Kant declared himself energetically from a philosophical point of view, is quoted by Hillel, the president, at whose death Jesus was ten years of age, not as anything new, but as an old and well-known dictum 'that comprised the whole law.' The most monstrous mistake has ever been our mixing up, in the first instance, single individuals, or classes, with a whole people; and next, our confounding the Judaism of the time of Christ with that of the time of the wilderness, of the Judges, or even of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Judaism of the time of Christ (to which that of our days, owing principally to the Talmud, stands very near) and that of the Pentateuch are as like each other as our England is like that of William Rufus, or the Greece of Plato that of the Argonauts." (pp. 437, 438.)

Can anything exceed the calm unbelief of such sentiments as these? the constant glorifying of man and his progress? the solemn fact, along with this and not very consistent with it, but most true, that the Judaism of today morally identifies itself with the Judaism of the time of Christ? The believer at once feels how fatal is the confession; for the rejection of Jesus demonstrates that "that generation" thereby manifested to the full their hatred of the Father and the Son, as His own lips of grace and truth laid to their charge. (John 15.) Nothing more certain! But in an organ which, though said to be at present edited by an Independent, is the staunch support of the established religion, and boasts of articles by Anglican bishops, professors of divinity, and other eminent functionaries, who could have expected that a paper should be received, approved, and applauded, which dares to single out for a favourite stage of programs and attainment, singularly like the state of our day (the usual theme of vaunting to the human mind), the age which crucified the Lord Jesus, and sealed its guilt in blaspheming the Spirit's testimony to the suffering but exalted Son of man? Had he owned that the Jewish nation (save the remnant that received Jesus and so escaped) become then, through their unbelief and God's judgment of it, a pillar of salt, and that the Talmud has largely contributed to perpetuate to this hour so awful a monument of sin and shame, it had been nearer the truth.

That there are in the Talmud beautiful moral apothegms of right and wrong borrowed from Moses, no man who values and upholds the honour of God's law could or would deny. But it is utterly false that the New Testament does not go far beyond, not the Talmud only, or any other code of religious tradition, but even the inspired Old Testament. The presence of a divine Person, a man, on earth among us was in itself the introduction of what was necessarily new and beyond all past experience: still deeper was the change for others in virtue of the mighty work of redemption He wrought on the cross, made known and made good in the faith of those who since then are born of God, by the operation of that other Paraclete, the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Thus, what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The very ground of proper christian holiness was unknown before the death and resurrection of Jesus; and the power was wanting till the Spirit of promise was given. Hence, in Old Testament times, however we may delight in ways of faith, and love, and obedience (which far transcend mere power, be it what it may), no saint before Christ did or could count himself dead to sin and alive unto God, as every real Christian is privileged and exhorted to do. None then could take the place of a worshipper once purged and having no more conscience of sins;

none was called as we are to imitate God as dear children and walk in love as Christ loved us. How incalculably this distances loving one's neighbour as oneself, good and right as this was! Christ is the measure as well is pattern now for the Christian, not self.

This suffices to show how entirely the reviewer overlooks the real character of Christianity as well as the awful condition both of the Jews that crucified Jesus and of the Judaism of our day that is confessed, through the Talmud's influence, to resemble it strongly. "The misconception (we are assured) as if a God of vengeance had suddenly succeeded a God of love, cannot be too often protested against. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' is a precept of the Old Testament, as Christ Himself taught His disciples." No Christian doubts that God is and has always been both love and light, as Scripture speaks; but government by a law, however righteous (and this unquestionably was the principle of His dealings in Israel), is as different from His display of grace in Christ, as earth is from heaven. It is a just demand that man should not steal, murder, or covet; but what is the law that justifies the ungodly through the faith of Jesus? which quickens those dead in sins, raises them up, and seats them in heavenly places in Christ? Certainly it is the one and only true God; but it is God now, not merely dealing with the propensities of the first man, 'but blessing in His mercy the merest sinners because of redemption in Christ, the Second Man. It was not by the law, but by the grace of God, that the Saviour tasted death for every man.

Even this reviewer owns that the "law was developed to a marvellously and perhaps oppressively minute pitch," though he is bold enough to say "only as a regulation of outward actions." What will the christian reader think when he next hears that "the 'faith of the heart' — the dogma prominently dwelt upon by Paul — was a thing which stood much higher with the Pharisees than this outward law?" Was Paul then in error? or the Lord Jesus? Is the Christian who reads Matthew 3, 9, 12, 15, 23, to believe these scriptures? or should he take the reviewer's word that the wholesale denunciations of scribes and Pharisees have been greatly misunderstood? "There can be absolutely no question on this point, that there were among the genuine Pharisees the most patriotic, the most noble-minded, the most advanced leaders of the party of progress." It would have been more to the point if he could have affirmed with truth that they bowed to God in a just estimate of their sinfulness and fled for refuge to that only name given under heaven whereby we must be saved. Christianity does not deny many and excellent qualities in Pharisees. Mark 10 lets us know how Jesus beheld with love the rich young ruler who had a good conscience as to the law, but turned away in sorrow from Jesus who claimed a self-renunciation and a following of Himself in His path of suffering and shame, which nothing but the mighty power of God's grace can give any soul to take and keep. Does the reviewer believe the Lord's declaration that the tax-gatherers and harlots go into the kingdom of God before those most patriotic, noble-minded, advanced leaders he admires? What is the good of a "party of progress" which deceives the soul in this world and turns you into a deadlier rebel against God's kingdom than the most despised of men and dissolute of women?

Alas! it is evident where the heart is from the sentence that follows: "The development of the law itself was nothing in their hands but a means to keep the spirit as opposed to the word — the outward frame - in full life and flame, and to vindicate for each time its own right to interpret the temporal ordinances according to its own necessities and acquirements." A more dangerous and delusive fancy there cannot be. There never breathed the man who walked and taught in the spirit of God's will as Jesus did; yet none ever honoured as Jesus the word of God. And Jesus branded the scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem with setting aside the command of God because of such traditions as fill the Mishnah. They were not temporal ordinances, but injunctions of God, which the Judaism of Christ's age annulled, from no necessity whatever save the licentious will and pride of man. No time, no man,

has a right to weaken the authority of God's word. This is no question of "black sheep" among the Pharisees, but of the principle of human tradition which made them all a party of declension from scripture. The Talmud must inveigh against its own existence if it upheld divine revelation against the traditions of men.

The reader will have noticed the indifference already betrayed by our reviewer, as by worldly men in general, for the mysteries of Christianity as compared with its morals. It would be too gross to deny the practical fruits which the faith of Christ has manifested in the face of the narrow selfishness of the synagogue and the bolder impurity of heathenism. Two methods of neutralizing the weight of such a testimony are usually adopted by the enemies of the gospel: one the divorce of christian morals from the revealed dogmas; the other, the insinuation that as good morality was taught by Jews — that the New Testament and the Talmud are therefore well-nigh identical in what affects life and godliness. Indeed in one place at least (cited before) the writer's zeal carries him so far as to speak of "the striking parallels of dogma and parable, of allegory and proverb, exhibited by the gospel and the Talmudical writings . . . . There are many more vital points of contrast between the New Testament and the Talmud than divines yet seem fully to realize." We have seen how unfounded are his instances in proof of this intrepid assertion, and that the use of "redemption," "baptism," "grace," "faith," "salvation," etc., if more thoroughly looked into, point to a conclusion precisely the reverse of this superficial estimate. It would rather go to prove that, while the inspired writers of the New Testament were led in God's wisdom to employ the Hellenistic dialect and phraseology, already familiar to Jews in their widely used Greek version of the Hebrew scriptures, they employed some terms, common to them and the compilers of the Talmud, in senses as contrasted as the scope of the Talmud is with that of the New Testament. They differ as time and the earth that now is differ from eternity — as far as man does from the God of grace and holiness.

Christianity essentially consists in the revelation of a divine person, who was man withal as truly as He was God, and who, suffering on the cross, wrought the mighty work of redemption. This alone conciliates perfect light with perfect love, a sin-hating and a sinner-pitying God who deigns out of His own pure grace to save guilty man by faith, and yet so as not only to justify, but to glorify His own character in the very righteousness which justifies the believer. This (though not this only) is revealed in the New Testament. It is not the law merely but the truth; and the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven is the power both of enjoying and of testifying this admirable display of our God and Father in Christ the Lord. The Old Testament prepared the way for this new thing which was to fill up the interval between God's rejection of the earthly people Israel till they repent and own the Messiah whom they rejected, and then the old hopes of the chosen nation (sown in a generation to come born of God) shall revive, and Israel shall come forward, under Messiah and the new covenant, and inherit the land long promised to their fathers, and thus shall they be a blessing to all families of the earth, instead of a curse, as their unbelief has proved far and wide to Gentiles for eighteen centuries at least.

It must be evident, therefore, that it is folly as well as wickedness, to sever the ethics of Christianity from its fundamental mysteries. To attempt it is to seek to cut off the head from its body. It is nothing but mutilation and death. It is false that the distinctive christian truths "are matters wholly apart." The morals of a Christian cannot be found, save with the faith and confession of the Lord Jesus. For though the δικαίωμα or righteous import of the law is only fulfilled in him who is *not* under the law and who walks after the Spirit, not after the flesh, it is not true that the fulness of christian morality is contained even in that. Love is the fulfilling of the law; but nowhere is it said or meant that love, as revealed in Christ and made good in the Christian, does not now go far beyond. "If," says the great apostle of circumcision, "when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable [not

merely righteousness, but grace] with God, for even hereunto were ye called ["ye" Christians, not Jews]; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously," etc. Christ is life as well as truth, and these things are inseparable in fact, though in thought they may be distinguished. He was the manifestation of what God is toward sinners as well as His own children in an evil world. The law, and beyond this no Jew can go, is but the claim of what *man should be*. Christ, not the law, is the image of God, and the exemplar of the Christian who is called to imitate God and walk in love as Christ did, who loved and gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. The law can but condemn and kill the guilty. In Christianity God commends His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. From faith in this, and more than this, in His infinite death and resurrection, flows the morality of the gospel. What has Hillel or any other comparable? They cannot rise above self and man. The ethics of the Christian have their source in union with a Christ who died and rose, and is now on the throne of God — in God Himself thus manifesting Himself in Him. Are they then "totally apart from" the mysteries of the christian faith? Are they, in form or substance, in breadth or depth, identical with the sayings of any Rabbi that ever breathed?

The reviewer protests against the notion that the Jewish sabbath savours of grim austerity. It was (says he) a feast day, honoured by fine garments, by the best cheer, by wine, lights, spices, and other joys of pre-eminently bodily import. Does this illustrate the parallel between the morals of the Gospel and of the Talmud? Entirely is it granted that the Puritans are no more to be trusted as expositors of law and gospel than they of the broad-church school, who take advantage of the New Testament doctrine as to the sabbath, in order to deny the divinely sanctioned character of the Lord's day, mistaking their own license for christian liberty. In truth the essential distinctness of the two days illustrate well the difference between (not merely the corrupted Judaism of the Talmud, but) the Mosaic institution in its best estate, and Christianity. "The sabbath was made for man," especially for Israel when that people was called and formed. It was the last day of the week, when man having toiled six days ended with the seventh as a solemn and beneficent sign, the present benefits of which the Israelite shared not only with the stranger but with the dumb brutes that served him. But the Christian begins with his first day — his, did I say? It is rather the *Lord's* day, but given to them that know and love Him, the day of new creation and of grace on which His Saviour and Lord rose from the grave to which man, and pre-eminently the Jew had consigned Him before and throughout that fatal sabbath, which was "an high day," in their guilty infatuation. Thus Christians enter on each week of their pilgrimage here below with songs of resurrection, that the first day may shed its heavenly light on each day that succeeds, and govern the conscience and cheer the heart of those who through much tribulation must enter into the kingdom of God. And fully am I persuaded that the last or seventh day will be for Israel a day of joys and of import far higher than those bodily delights with which they now essay to cheer themselves in their protracted exile from the "pleasant land." I say not that God will not vouchsafe them, then and there, joys of an earthly and natural kind; for God means to vindicate Himself from the old libel of His enemy, and will yet bless this earth delivered from every vestige of the curse, with that exception indeed which but proves the rule and keeps up the witness that its deliverance will be of His mere mercy, after all had been lost by sin and Satan.

And when that bright day dawns on this world, will not the Jew be there? Assuredly he will; and in the highest seats here below, when God will delight to pour out His blessing bountifully on every creature of His hand then living, but holding fast His order, that Israel shall be the head and the Gentiles the tail. Not His people only, but all nations shall then bless Him with one accord and add

their cordial Amen. Above in the heavenly places will the world then behold the Church of God that is now (since redemption and the descent of the Holy Ghost) being called out to the confession of the Crucified, the sharer of glory with Christ on high, Head of the Church, King of Israel, and Son of man, whom all people, nations, and languages shall serve as long as the earth endures. For God has made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself for the dispensation of the fulness of times; namely, to head up all things in the Christ, those in the heavens and those on the earth, — in Him in whom we have also obtained an inheritance. But as we then shall be glorified above, joint-heirs with Him as His bride, so Israel shall be the inner circle of blessing, His inheritance here below, and the nations that are spared, blessed according to His goodness and sovereign will each in its due place. Alas! poor Israel is toiling for rest as yet, but the true sabbath will surely come at the end. The Christian has entered intelligently on his blessing by faith; at least it is his deep shame if it be not so. Christianity supposes that for us the Deliverer is come and has finished the work by which our sins are blotted out on the confession of His name; but that He has gone on high, having made atonement. There the Christian follows Christ in faith; for the Holy Spirit meanwhile has come down to be the witness of accomplished redemption and the earnest of the glory we shall have with Christ where He is. But Israel must wait without until He, the great High Priest, comes forth; and then shall they, astonished and afflicted but delivered, learn that He is none other than the Nazarene. "They shall look upon *Me* whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son." (Zech. 12.) They shall find in Jesus thus seen their sacrifice as well as their Saviour, their Priest, Prophet, King, yea Jehovah the God of Israel.

Thus truly read, the Sabbath and the Lord's day are strikingly distinctive, and each of them a sign and pledge of blessing respectively for Israel and man, and for the Christian. On his portion the Christian enters at once by faith, possessing all things, yet having nothing in appearance of what he knows to be his in and with Christ, till He comes again. It is for him the first day of the week, and in this light he is called to walk now. But the Jew awaits the last day for his blessing when Jesus shall appear to his salvation; though not without tears of bitter sorrow, joy will come in that cloudless morning. Eternal praise to Him who has already done such things for us though known now only to faith, for they are unseen! Eternal praise to Him who, in the day when we shall appear with Him in glory, will make Israel glad in His salvation, and swallow up the face of the covering that covers all people and the veil that is spread over all nations!

From such hopes in both Testaments it is a descent to take up the account of Hillel and Akiba striving unsuccessfully to arrange the oral traditions of the Rabbis, or of the equivocal success of Jehuda "the saint," who is said to have reduced them, though still unwritten, to one code about A. D. 200.

But it is in vain to justify the reign of tradition which superseded the Mosaic law by the fact that Magna Charta is not the general appeal in English law courts of the day. (p. 443.) Rather does it evince the unbelief that everywhere lies under, and often on, the surface of this paper. The law given by Moses was the law of *Jehovah*: has Magna Charta to boast of such an origin or character? Alas! so far gone is the Jew that the Christian has to remind him of his own singular and exceeding privileges. "For what nation is so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things, that we call on him for? And what nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?" The writer excludes God from the case and evidently sees a progress from barbarism to civilization in the appeal of modern Jews to the Mischnah, rather than the Pentateuch.

There is nothing to surprise in the absence of hell from the Mischnah. Even the Old Testament

treats of the eternal scene in good or evil but dimly. Light and incorruption were brought to light by the gospel as the apostle expressly tells us in 2 Timothy 1, and as is evident in fact. God acted on the souls of the fathers by promises. His dealings with the children of Israel were in view of present government in the world, though passages in Job, the Psalms, and the Prophets went farther, till Christ came telling all things, and the Holy Spirit was sent to guide the apostles into all the truth. Now it is not temporal judgments which are executed or spoken of, but wrath is revealed from heaven, no less than God's righteousness in the gospel. If it be merely a question of dealing with wrongs, death closes all questions.

On the other hand, to make the highest virtue lie in study of the law, if thereby be meant the oral tradition that overlaid it, is the proof of the degradation to which the holy nation was reduced. For such an exaggerated value attached to Rabbinic micrology one must look to the scholastic disputes of the dark ages, or the place assigned to Chinese literature in later times, to find a counterpart.

Further on, I may show how far there is room for boasting of the "humane, almost refined, penal legislation of the Talmud." Once they had God in their midst judicially enthroned, and the Lex Talionis was no dead letter of the law. Him they had lost; and if Sadduces would retain the letter when the spirit was there no more, the Pharisees, who were covetous, were content to make bodily injuries redeemable by money. Both were insensible to their dismal loss, and I can see no ground for congratulating one party more than another. (pp. 444-6.) But the serious thing to note is the constant undisguised preference of man to God, as is plain in the following extract: "Practically, capital punishment was abrogated even before the Romans had taken it out of the hands of the Sanhedrim. Here again the humanizing influence of the 'traditions' had been at work, commuting the severe Mosaic Code." (p. 448.) A similar process goes on now among men who have no respect for God's word nor sense of the responsibility of those who bear the sword in civil government. (Gen. 9, Rom. 13.) In their eyes it would seem that the blood of a murderer has more price than that of his victim; and God's vindication in the matter is the last thing in their thoughts. The Christian, I need scarce add, who knows his calling on high, is outside such questions; but it is a serious one for those it concerns.

The reviewer next sketches the growth of the vast mass of discussion and exegesis, which followed the collection of the Mishnah, and much of which afterwards entered the Talmud, as the Gemara or commentary on that text: and this in a double form — the Palestinian in East Aramaean toward the end of the fourth century, the Babylonian in West Aramaean which was not closed till about the beginning of the sixth century. But it is natural to tradition to add interminably; and so the Talmud in its turn led to new comments.

Two elements enter here (p. 451) into the apology: first, an apparent measure of shame with the desire to save the Jews from being absolutely tied to the Talmud; secondly, an effort to account by an extraneous cause for the plain fact that nothing else can compete with its authority as regulating the Jews in law and religion. "Only this much we will add, that the Talmud, as such, was never formally accepted by the nation by either General or Special Council. Its legal decisions, as derived from the highest authorities, certainly formed the basis of the religious law, the norm of all future decisions; as undoubtedly the Talmud is the most trustworthy canon of Jewish tradition. But its popularity is much more due to an extraneous cause. During the persecutions against the Jews in the Persian empire, under Jesdegerd II., Firuz, and Kobad, the schools were closed for about eighty years. The living development of the law being stopped, the book obtained a supreme authority, such as had probably never been dreamt of by its author."

Alas! man knows himself no more than he knows God. The nation did formally and universally

accept the law of God before it was written, and, as their first recorded act after it was heard, broke it in its most fundamental precept, by making and worshipping the golden calf, before Moses carried it down from the mount written by the finger of God. They were thus ruined in principle at the starting-point of their history; for assuredly to proclaim their idol worship a feast to Jehovah did not mend matters. The long-suffering patience of God was most admirable and instructive: though not without solemn judgments on evil, how full of pledges of blessing both in the wilderness and in the land for those who had eyes to see and ears to hear! But for the mass all was vain; and this is so true that, when Amos announced the captivity that was slowly but surely approaching, he let them know that divine judgment takes account of the first sin, though it may wait till the last degree of insult against God makes patience itself no longer tolerable. "Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is The God of hosts." (Amos 5: 25-27.)

After their political ruin and with increasing force as they felt themselves shorn of the witnesses of their ancient power and glory, grew up the Rabbinic system. Extraneous circumstances no doubt helped it on, when it became instinctively and more than ever the idol of the scattered people. No formal assent was needed; no general or special council gives effect to that which commands the evil heart of unbelief. To be credulous where man speaks goes along with lack of faith in God — to slight His law or revere the Talmud, as of old to lead Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium while not entering themselves that they might eat the passover undefiled! — such is man, such the Jew. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." (Acts 7: 61-53.) May we profit by the solemn lesson! Having the selfsame nature, though (thank God) not this only, we are exposed to similar danger; and Christendom is the humiliating proof how soon and far and wide it has carried souls away. Nor is any time, condition, or character exempt from the snare. Nothing delivers from it but absolute submission to God and the word of His grace, and this in liberty of heart by the power of the Spirit.

The reviewer ingeniously tries to palliate the Haggadistic or legendary part of the Talmud, as *poetry*, "a thing beloved by women and children and by those still and pensive minds which delight in flowers and in the song of wild birds. The 'Authorities' themselves often enough set their faces against it, repudiated and explained it away. But the people clung to it, and in course of time gave to it and it alone the encyclopaedic name of 'Midrash'." Will this plea stand? Were not the 'Authorities' the authors and compilers and editors of the Haggadah? Did not the writer know that the Talmud itself (chag. 14) applies Isaiah 3: 1 to this question, comparing the Halacha to bread and the Haggadah to water, because the latter was even more frequently required, and refreshed more than the former? Their explaining it away is no more than they continually do to scripture: is this too "poetry," a thing beloved by women and children, etc.? It is a perilous task to extenuate man's word, which invariably, though unintentionally and unconsciously, supplants the revelation of God. Scripture became a mere *point d'appui*, as is notorious for the Halacha and the Haggadah alike. Nor is it correct to say that the authority silently vested in the Talmud belongs exclusively to its legal or Halachistic portion. The Rabbins feigned that God Himself prosecuted their legendary investigations and decided according to their legal determinations. Difference of interpretation only gave occasion to wit; for it was accepted by the sages that diverse comments might legitimately belong to the same text, and one be as right as the other. A wild mysticism was the result, erroneous metaphysics, and absurd physics, false history, and

ridiculous geography, heathen myths and spurious morals, by dint of allegorising the letter and literalizing the figure of scripture. Not the fancy of women and children, but the famous R. Gamaliel framed thirty-two exegetical canons for the Haggadah.

The reader may well be spared the detail, as well as the special pleading, in the review from pp. 452 to 455.

Coming to views of creation, we are told that the gradual development of the Cosmos is fully recognized by the Talmud, which assumes "destruction after destruction, stage after stage." We need not travel beyond the inspired record for three patent facts of great and manifest importance. 1st, the original creation (Gen 1: 1); 2ndly, the chaos to which, somehow, the earth was reduced (ib., 2); and 3rdly, the various stages of formation that succeeded when man was to be morally tried. (ib., 3, et seq.) Of "destruction after destruction" the passage does not speak, of a chaos after original creation, it does. There may have been of course a variety of intervening changes; but scripture is silent here at least. It hastens to its great aim — the moral displays of God and man, and hence dwells far more on putting the universe in order for man's dwelling on the earth and God's ways with him. The notion of God destroying former worlds because they did not please Him, and saying 'This pleases me,' when He made the Adamic earth, is worthy of the Talmud. It is to count God such an one as ourselves. He was wise in all. This scene, with everything He had made, is pronounced very good; and the rather as man was about to fall under the power of evil and to drag down the subject creation in its fall.

The Haggadistic view of God's providence was quite as unworthy. God clothed or unclothed Himself, wore phylacteries, armour, etc. He did not concern Himself with man's affairs, but left the nations to the rule of this star or that. Israel was the theatre of His concern. He spent in study three out of the twelve hours of the day, three in exercising mercy to the world, three in providing food for it, and three in amusing Himself with Leviathan, save indeed that since the Romans destroyed Jerusalem there was no more amusement above, and these three hours were devoted to instructing such as had died in infancy. With three exceptions (life-giving, rain, and raising the dead) God as chief Rabbi conferred with His angelic Sanhedrim, which in cases of dispute consulted the sages on earth. May the Lord pardon one's recounting such profane absurdities!

The Persian philosophy left its traces on the Talmud, as did the reveries of the Greek cosmogonists, and there is much in common with the Gnostics who troubled and corrupted early Christians, especially as to angels and demons. It is hardly necessary to say that Rabbinism denies a Mediator between God and man (p. 457). Credulous as to that which even if true could not profit, they believe not the truth which alone can purify the heart by faith. They were only consistent in opposing divine revelation, old or new: they give up the Divine unity for idols; they refused the incarnate Word, their own and only Mediator, but loved fables about Samael, and Naama, and Lilith, and Asmodi, which could only do harm to women and children, and turn still and pensive minds to dreams of some things worse than flowers and the song of wild birds.

Their notion that miracles were beings created before the seventh day, and among them the art of writing, must be left to the reflections of every sober mind. In a miracle the laws of nature, as they are called, are not changed, but the divine will which formed them is pleased to operate sovereignly. Nor is a miracle, as others say, a more general law, but the action of God's will and power in some given way without suspending the laws of nature outside the particular case. Lazarus is raised, Bartimeus sees, a leper is instantaneously cleansed. They are the objects of miraculous intervention; they are withdrawn from their previous condition — from the law of death, blindness, leprosy if you will; but the law itself is not changed. Infidelity here, as everywhere, is simply an exclusion of God from man on earth — at

least of God as a real living One acting as He will though ever in view of adequate moral ends. A God Epicurean, or Stoic, may be the representation of the Koran or the Talmud, but assuredly is not the God of the Bible in any of its parts. Pantheism characterizes their immutable laws of nature, as well as their psychology.\* So the punishment of sin is made temporary, even Satan himself being saved at last. The Sohar (M. Ex. 85) even taught that the Messiah in Paradise (!) took and bore the sins of Israel. But they took care to deny the two capital truths which Christianity insists on as bound up with Christ's person — the descent of God to earth, and the ascension of man to heaven. How intent is man on denying what most of all displays and exalts the moral glory of God, though to his own eternal ruin.

\*"Miracles are considered in the Talmud — much as Leibnitz all the movements of every limb of our body — as only possible through it sort of preabilitated harmony — i.e., the course of nature was not disturbed by them, but they were all primevally 'existing' 'preordained.' They were 'created' at the end of all other things in the gloaming of the sixth day . . . . The Laws of Nature went on by their own immutable force, however much evil might spring therefrom" (p. 457). Platonism is plain here, and as to souls.