

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE MORE SPIRITUAL SIDE OF MODERN JUDAISM.

BY CANON A. LUKYN WILLIAMS, D.D.

THE title of this article will, no doubt, displease all Jews and not a few Christians.

The former will be offended that a Christian should dare to imply that Judaism is other than perfect. Dr. Gaster, the head of the Sephardic Jews in our country, says: "Jews have still a great mission to perform, and those of them who have studied the various phases of Christianity and measured them by our own standard would know that we stood far above them, and that it was for us to carry the light into the future, and salvation into the world."¹ Christians, on the other hand, will say that the Jewish religion to-day is of so formal a character that its spiritual side is negligible. For, alas, there are still missionaries and workers among the Jews who believe this. But it is improbable, to say the least, that a religion which has enabled its votaries to endure throughout these many centuries does not contain much, very much, of true spirituality.

On the contrary, great harm has been done, and is still being done, to the spread of Christianity amongst the Jews by the failure to recognize the better side of Judaism.

By "Modern Judaism" is here intended the religion of Judaism as it exists to-day in all the chief divisions of the Jews, viz. the Chassidim, the Liberal Jews, the Reformed Jews, the Zionists, and the Orthodox.

I. Who are the Chassidim? They are the followers of one Israel ben Eliezer of Poland (c. 1700-60) who attained such distinction as a worker of miracles by the use of the sacred Name (Shem) that he was called Baal-Shem-Tob (בעשט Besht), "The Master of the Good Name."² He was grieved by the formalism and petty superstitions of the ordinary Polish Jews, and was attracted by the mystical teaching of the Cabbalists. He thus insisted on a pantheistic omnipresence of God, and on our communion with Him.

"Man," he says, "must always bear in mind that God is omnipresent, and is always with him; that He is, so to speak, the most subtle matter everywhere diffused. . . . Let man realize that when he is looking at material things he is in reality gazing at the image of the Deity which is present in all things. With this in mind man will always serve God even in small matters."³

Naturally there are differences among the Chassidim; they are not all alike. Some of them, following Besht's grandson, R. Nachman of Bratzlaw, despise those who would be rich, hold that the

¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, Jan. 14, 1927.

² L. Ginzberg in *Jew. Enc.*, ii, 383.

³ Dubnow in *Jew. Enc.*, vi, 252 sq.

poor are God's favourites, and have a high respect for manual labour. "Happy is he," they say, "who lives by the work of his hand: he knows the majesty of God better than the angels." Truthfulness and simplicity of life rank high among them. Prayer and joyfulness are all important, and assist each other. "Joy increases holiness, and Joy enlightens thought." Dancing may assist prayer—as even Zinzendorf proposed religious dancing in Divine service.¹

The fullest investigation into Chassidism is that by Mr. Paul Levertoff, a Hebrew-Christian, now Vicar in East London. He tells us the Chassidim say that Repentance brings the Messianic redemption nearer. Not only do gross sinners need repentance, but also they who are pious. For they too are burdened by sinfulness and their distance from God. There are three kinds of repentance, first, the negative, when a man gives up sinning; second, the positive, when he also does what is right; third, when he unites himself wholly with God the source of all, for "one can keep all God's commands and transgress none, and yet be far from God Himself."²

Mr. Levertoff has also embodied some of the Chassidic teaching in his little English book *Love and the Messianic Age*.³ In it he says in a passage which also hints at a more superstitious side of Jewish thought: "To the Hasid, Scripture is full of spiritual truth, and even the Hebrew letters of the Book are considered to be 'vehicles which bring to the upper and lower worlds life from the Divine centre.' He who comprehends the spiritual meaning of the Word of God and receives it into the innermost chambers of his heart is called 'the friend and brother of God, and the holy temple of the Divine Spirit.' The deepest longing, therefore, of the genuine Hasid is to become a 'living Torah.' The keeping of the Law is to him only a means to an end—union with God, and for this reason he tries to keep it scrupulously, for 'God's thoughts are embodied in it.'" ⁴

Again, "Fear and love are wings by which the soul is carried to heaven. . . . Just as all the riches of the world are as nothing in comparison with the love that we have for our own life, so the accumulation of good works, through the keeping of the Law, is nothing in comparison with the natural love of the soul for God. The fellowship with God which comes from such a love is so all-pervading, and leads to a self-surrender so complete, that the result is joy ineffable. Such love cannot, at times, endure the limitations of the body, the heart cannot contain it."⁵

This is very delightful, but would that the Chassidim had always lived up to it! For their insistence upon the emotions in religion has led them into many excesses, and in spite of much of the spirituality of their teaching they are often strangely superstitious. They depend far too much on their "righteous men" (*Zaddikim*), whom

¹ A. Jeremias, *Jüdische Frömmigkeit*, 1927, p. 51.

² P. Levertoff, *Die religiöse Denkweise der Chassidim nach den Quellen dargestellt*, 1918, pp. 30 sq.

³ 33, Bedford Square, London. [1924.]

⁴ P. 17.

⁵ P. 27.

indeed they often regard as almost divine, and on whose intercessions they conceive their own salvation to depend.

But they form a large proportion of the Jews in Eastern Europe, and we Christians ought to know more of them, and at least try to help them. We have made little attempt to do so.

II. From the Chassidim to the Liberal Judaism of a few English Jews is a startling change. The former insist on the inspiration of every word and letter of the Books of Moses. The latter have serious qualms whether Moses ever existed, and pay to the writings that pass under his name a very qualified respect. Certainly they still are Jews, for they observe circumcision and keep the sabbath more or less, but they hold the Dietary Laws as of little account, and esteem the Prophets as in reality of much more importance than the Law. Needless to say that they do not expect the coming of a personal Messiah, and if they do look forward to a return to Palestine (and they hardly do) they certainly do not pray with most Jews for the rebuilding of the Temple.

The Liberal Jews are, it will be observed, to be distinguished from the Reform Jews in general, who are the direct heirs of a movement in Germany dating from the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. For the English Liberal Jews are the outcome of the thoughts and efforts of one man who is still among us, and is perhaps more respected in England to-day than any other Jew, Mr. Claude G. Montefiore. He is a learned man himself, and had for his intimate friend and colleague the very remarkable scholar Dr. Israel Abrahams, whose death last year all Cambridge lamented.

The object of the Liberal Jews was stated very plainly by Mr. Montefiore last February at the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the movement—for it is as recent as that. He says, "The movement from the first has been a Jewish movement, a religious movement; its object was, and still is, to quicken religious life and faith in our community, to make Judaism more vital for many Jews, and to make Judaism itself more vital. (These two aspects, Mr. Montefiore adds, of the movement are obviously one and the same, for if there are no Jews whose faith is living, there can be, and there is, no living Judaism.) It was, and it is, a missionary movement to Jews from Jews—from those who realized the need to those who realized it also, or who realized it a little, or who did not realize it at all. It was, and it is, a movement from seekers to other seekers, from those who had found it at least a *little* to those who had perchance not found even *that*. It was, and it is, a movement from those who themselves felt the necessity for something new to those who also felt the necessity, or who were subjected to the *results* of that necessity, but had not consciously experienced it themselves. It was a movement of reclamation, of regeneration, of religious uplift and vitalization. It was a movement *to combat drift and indifference* and apostacy, it was a movement to bring back many to Judaism, and to bring Judaism back to many. . . . Orthodoxy is losing its hold, though the shell, the framework, may

remain. . . . More and more, the younger generation in these countries . . . is becoming alienated from Judaism as a religion, and very often alienated from religion altogether."

At the same meeting, Mr. Mattuck, the Rabbi of the Liberal Synagogue, said: "Liberal Judaism stood for the idea and the spread of a knowledge of Judaism which should combine the influence of the past with the realities and needs of the present." . . . It "wished to combine the teachings of Judaism with modern thought, and to adapt the great institutions of the Jews to the present conditions of the life of the Jew. Its principles were that Judaism was a living and universal religion."¹

Brave words! But at least Mr. Montefiore and his friends have done their best to bring about their ideal. His Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels in two volumes (1909) was inspired by a sincere desire to understand the life of our Lord, and to show Him to other Jews. It has called forth, not unnaturally, the strongest possible opposition from many Jews, who detest his expressed opinion that every Jew ought not only to know the Gospels, but also to adopt whatever good teaching they can find in them. After being out of print for many years the Commentary has recently been issued in a second and enlarged edition.

Dr. Israel Abrahams, to whom reference has already been made, collaborated somewhat in that Commentary, and a third volume was to have contained notes by him on many points. That was found to be too troublesome a task, and the volume was never issued. But Dr. Abrahams did publish two independent but quite invaluable books, entitled *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*,² in which he illuminates by his Rabbinic learning many details of the Gospel story. He was a man of singularly deep personal religion, who, while still remaining a Jew, gave expression to his opinions about our Lord and His teaching with the utmost reverence.

In an essay on Philo, he writes as follows: "The divine Law is not something mechanically imposed on us from without; it corresponds to an inner law of our being."³ "'The business of man,' says Philo, 'is to follow and to imitate God . . . to abide in God is man's highest blessedness.'"⁴

The last book that Dr. Abrahams published before his death is full of sayings—both quoted and original—which show the more spiritual side of his Judaism. "Judaism," he says, "has always laid great stress on the communal aspect of morals and religious practice. But it is possible that in no other matter does it more earnestly attempt to harmonize its Communism with individualism than in its treatment of the personal contact with God. Every one is an individuality, unlike all others. [Yet] on all and on each is thrown the corporate responsibility. . . . [If] you lose the Glory yourself . . . you steal it from others."⁵

¹ *Jewish Chronicle*, Feb. 25, 1927.

² 1917 and 1924.

³ *Some Permanent Values in Judaism*, 1924, p. 58.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁵ *The Glory of God*, 1925, pp. 78 sq.

Again, " 'The invisible, spiritual Shekinah is with every born Israelite, and with every possessor of the true religion, pure in conduct, clean of heart, and with soul untainted in its relation to the God of Israel.' " ¹

Again, " God created the world for His glory. This is the essence of the idea—it runs through every phase of it, through God's glory in Nature, in the Law, in every Revelation of the spirit, in the whole universe of men and of things animate and inanimate. . . . Creation was thus necessary to make the Glory of God manifest. And God has faith in His world—finding it very good, and gaining new satisfaction whenever men justify his faith. . . . It is left to us to vindicate God's love for His world and His hope in us. We must be ever ready. There is no other time but here and now. . . . Man must not waste his opportunities. He must ever be ready to receive the vision, in a sense to deserve it by surrendering himself—when the vision is offered—' for Thy sake, O Lord, not for ours.' Honour God with thy very substance. There must be no reluctance of expenditure, no limitation of preparedness to give." ²

III. It was said above that Liberal Judaism is held by English Jews, and by very few of these. But it is in close touch with movements of a similar kind in America, which, however, must be passed over here for lack of space.

There are, however, many more Jews in England who have not actually joined the Liberal Union, and yet sympathize with much of its teaching. They call themselves Reform Jews, i.e., Jews who, before Liberal Judaism as we know it was thought of, urged many details of Reform, particularly in the conduct of the Synagogue services.

Dr. Morris Joseph has been one of the most remarkable of these, and his volume entitled *Judaism in Creed and Life* (1903) is very helpful to all religious minds. But to-day it is well to quote something more recent, viz., a paper by Dr. Joel Blau, minister of the Reformed Berkeley Street Synagogue, entitled *Two Types of Reform*. In it he is trying carefully to distinguish himself not only from Orthodox but also from Liberal Jews. " A man may intelligently ask himself: how can I, as an individual Jew, secure the survival of this [Jewish] people, help preserve the continuity of its flowing, growing life, contribute towards its enhancement and ultimate perfection? . . . The living Jewish people is, humanly speaking, the most clearly manifest embodiment of the spirit of the Living God. . . . Now, personally, if I were convinced that Orthodoxy is the one and only form of Jewish life best calculated to secure the preservation of my people, I would instantly turn orthodox. If I do advocate the mild type of Reform as represented by the Berkeley Street Synagogue, it is because I believe it can best assure, at least for us in this country, the continuity, in its integral essence, of the Jewish tradition as a distinctive form of life to be lived by the Jewish people

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 83, quoted from Jehuda Halevi, *Cusari*, III (beginning).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 87 sq.

as a distinctive individual entity. I advocate this type of Reform, not because I love Orthodoxy less, but because I love Judaism more."

Again, "When I was a student, I had to swallow the Teutonically pedantic characterization of Judaism as an Ethical Monotheism. But I knew then, as I know now, that Jewish martyrs did not die for Ethical Monotheism. A people like ours, moving by the breath of God, does not die for a philosophy, but for a faith. Who would die for an abstraction? Our people went to the stake for a Living God, for hearth and altar, not for the pale creation of German theologians. God was *real* to the Jew, inasmuch as he realized Him in his own life and identified himself with His vaster being."

Again, "My type of Reform—the Berkeley Street type—aims at preserving the Jewish character of the service by a generous retention of Hebrew in the service, and also by following faithfully the traditional structure of the liturgy."

Again, "I want the Jew to possess and preserve his *background sense*. It is this sense that makes for the greatness of peoples; the knowledge that they have sprung from somewhere and make for somewhither; that they have an origin and a destiny. . . . We are of the ages, ageless. When we say that we worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we mean just that our origins stretch away back to the dimness of time, yet are real to us. . . . Ours is an ancient but not an antiquated, outdated life; ours is a flowing growing life, a tradition not rigidly fixed, yet continuous and coherent." ¹

It may be worth while noticing the nature of the demands made even in Orthodox circles, for they recall a quaint phase in the history of the Presbyterian Church. An anonymous writer in the *Jewish Chronicle* for February 25, 1927, signing himself "Outsider," asks that the Chief Rabbi may sanction the following reforms: an organ, the Triennial Cycle of the Law, a shorter liturgy, a certain amount of English [for there is none now except in the prayer for the King and Royal Family], and the elimination of such prayers as now are meaningless.

These requests seem to members of the Church of England extraordinarily slight and conservative, but they do show that even the bulk of the Jews are moving towards more personal and practical religion.

Yet with all our inclination towards Jews of a Reformed or even of a Liberal type we must remember that, unless the voice of history deceives us, the future of Judaism does not really rest with them. It is, surely, no accident that of all the descendants of the famous Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86), who did so much to awaken Judaism out of its slumbers, not one has remained a Jew. His grandson, the musician, is a typical example.

One cannot wonder, therefore, at the fierceness with which the Chief Rabbi deals with the American Scholar, Dr. Emil Hirsch, who

¹ *Jewish Chron. Supplement*, Jan. 28, 1927.

banished the Roll of the Law from his synagogue, and the glee with which he quotes the dictum of the scientist, Professor W. M. Haffkine, "Is there a Jewish community anywhere, however safely domiciled, which has relinquished the *Torah* for even one generation and survived that separation? Those who forsake the *Torah*, bringing it into disrepute and weakening the hold it has on us, are working at the destruction of the brotherhood that cradled and sheltered our fathers and forefathers through all the vicissitudes of the bygone ages, to whom they owe their own life and presence on earth."¹

IV. What then of Zionism, that most extraordinary movement of our time, in which the promises of God through the Prophets are in process of fulfilment before our very eyes? The chief founder of Zionism, as we know it, was Theodore Herzl (1860-1904), a Viennese playwright and journalist, who was chiefly a materialist with but little faith in God, as we reckon faith. And many of the prominent leaders of Zionism, it is said, have been like him. But, in any case, they have not had it all their own way. For there has always been among the Zionists, among both its financial supporters and those who have gone to Palestine, a strong contingent of sincere and pious souls.

Most of these indeed are mute. They have not the gift of literary power. But there was one famous writer who, though not indeed belonging to the more pious side, has at least seen the importance of the higher as contrasted with the merely political and social aspect of Zionism—Asher Ginsberg (1856-1927) who wrote under the name of Achad Ha'am ("One of the People"). He is noteworthy, partly for his Hebrew style (a great contrast to the "Hebrew as she is wrote" of some modern authors), but above all, for his insight into the Jewish character and the necessity for developing this in the best direction.

Before Herzl's pamphlet (1896) Achad Ha'am was already interested in the movement of "the Lovers of Zion" (*Chôbebê Zion*), and has always insisted that on their basis alone—the Love of Zion connected with the service of God—can political Zionism really succeed.

No doubt one must be careful not to read into Achad Ha'am's utterances more "spirituality" than he himself intended. For the word "spiritual" in translations from German or Hebrew is apt to mean much less than it does in ordinary English. But, allowing for that, Achad Ha'am does take the higher side of life, and insist on the necessity of it if work is to succeed.

Notice, in the first place, his clear statement of the meaning of the Balfour Declaration about Palestine. "When, then, the British Government promised to facilitate the establishment *in Palestine of a national home* for the Jewish people—and not, as was suggested to it, the reconstitution of Palestine as the national home of the Jewish people—that promise meant two things. It meant in the first place recognition of the historic right of the Jewish people to

¹ *Jewish Chron.*, Dec. 25, 1925.

build its national home in Palestine, with a promise of assistance from the British Government, and it meant in the second place a negation of the power of that right to over-ride the right of the present inhabitants and to make the Jewish people sole ruler in the country." ¹

Notice also Achad Ha'am's feeling about the injury done to Judaism by life in exile.

"Have we a right to regard the rebuilding of Palestine as an ideal for the whole nation, and its success as vital to the hopes of the whole nation?"

"We have! For *galuth* [exile] is twofold—it is material and spiritual. On the one hand it cramps the individual Jew in his material life, by taking from him the possibility of carrying on his struggle for existence, with all his strength and in complete freedom, like any other man; and on the other hand it cramps no less our people as a whole in its spiritual life, by taking from it the possibility of safeguarding and developing its national individuality according to its own spirit, in complete freedom, like any other people." ²

Again in 1897 he wrote:

"Why deceive ourselves? Of all the great objects of *Chibbath Zion* [the love of Zion] (or, as they call it now, 'Zionism') there is only one towards the accomplishment of which we have at present the strength to approach in any appreciable degree, and that is the *moral* object—the emancipation of ourselves from the inner slavery and the spiritual degradation which assimilation has produced in us, and the strengthening of our national unity by joint action in every part of our national life, until we become capable and worthy of a life of dignity and freedom at some time in the future." ³

Lastly, so long ago as 1889, he wrote in substance:

What then must we do? . . . We must sanctify the first fruits of our work to giving new life to our hearts; to increase our love for the welfare of the community, to glorify the desire for its prosperity, until our better inclination be aroused and the workmen work faithfully ⁴ . . . But indeed this task is hard and long; it is not for one year nor for ten, and it is done not by talk alone but by all those ways by which hearts are won. ⁵

It is at this point that mention must be made of Dr. Joseph Klausner, for like Achad Ha'am he represents Jewish workers in Palestine. He made his name as far back as 1904 by his very able and suggestive study of the opinions about the Messiah held by the teachers of the Mishna, ⁶ but recently has become much more famous by his life of our Lord entitled *Jesus of Nazareth, his times, his life*,

¹ Achad Ha'am. 1920 Preface. Leon Simon's Trans. 1922, p. xviii.

² Achad Ha'am, 1906, *The Time Has Come* (Leon Simon's Translation), 1922, p. 96); Hebrew iv. 62.

³ Translation, pp. 95 sq.

⁴ [cf. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12.]

⁵ Hebrew i. 6.

⁶ *Die Messianischen Vorstellungen des Jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter der Tannaiten*, 1904.

*and his teaching.*¹ It is a painstaking and learned book, but owes the sensation that it caused among the Jews to the fact that it was written by a Jew. So much does it say of the excellence of our Lord, and the duty of all Jews to try to understand Him and His teaching that many Jews even asserted that it was written at the prompting of the missionaries! It would be strange indeed if it had been, for it is often very painful reading for a Christian man, being, as it is, largely a réchauffé of rationalistic books, French and German. But in any account of the forces that make for the spiritual uplift of modern Judaism it must not be omitted.

It is indeed often short-sighted, and one-sided. For example, he says that Jesus' "negative attitude" towards property "led the Jacobins, during the French Revolution, to hail Jesus as 'le bon sansculotte,' and the Bolsheviks to style him 'the great communist'; though it is very doubtful [!!] whether Jesus, who opposed fighting against evil, would have consented to the terrible murders during the great French, and the still greater Russian, Revolution. But it is unquestionable that throughout his entire teaching there is nothing that can serve to the upkeep of the state or serve towards the maintenance of order in the existing world."²

A remarkable comment, betraying, surely, extraordinary ignorance of the methods of Jesus, and of the social and political success they have attained.

More pleasing quotations, though far from satisfactory to us, are the following:

"The influence of Jesus upon his disciples and followers was exceptional. In Galilee masses of people followed him to the danger zone, to Jerusalem; they remained faithful to him both during his life and after his terrible death. Every word he spoke—even parables which they did not understand, and the more enigmatic figures of speech—they treasured like a precious pearl. As time went on his spiritual image grew ever more and more exalted, till, at length, it reached the measure of the divine. Never has such a thing happened to any other human creature in enlightened, historic times and among a people claiming a two thousand years old civilization."³

Again: "Though exaggerated self-confidence can at times be repellent, yet Jesus was so often tender, gentle and humble as to mask his self-confidence."⁴

Again: "The contradictory traits in his character, its positive and negative aspects, his harshness and his gentleness, his clear vision combined with his cloudy visionariness—all these united to make him a force and an influence, for which history has never yet afforded a parallel."⁵

¹ Published at Jerusalem in Hebrew, 1922, and translated into English by Canon Danby, 1925.

² Hebrew, pp. 409 *sq.*; English, p. 376.

³ Hebrew, p. 442; English, p. 408.

⁴ Hebrew, p. 443; English, p. 409.

⁵ Hebrew, p. 445; English, pp. 44, 411.

The last page of Klausner's book contains the following sayings : " Jesus is, for the Jewish nation, a *great teacher of morality and an artist in parable*. He is *the moralist* for whom, in the religious life, morality counts as everything. . . . In his ethical code there is a sublimity, distinctiveness and originality in form unparalleled in any other Hebrew code. . . . If ever the day should come and this ethical code be stripped of its wrappings of miracle and mysticism, the Book of the Ethics of Jesus will be one of the choicest treasures in the literature of Israel for all time." ¹

And so Dr. Klausner's work ends, upon a note that sounds excruciatingly discordant to the ear that has been trained in the Divine harmony. Yet it is serving its purpose in making the Person of Jesus less abhorrent to many Jewish minds, and in leading them to try to understand something of the reason for the Christian's adoration of Him.

V. Frankly, it is a relief to turn from the rather patronizing literature of whole classes of modern Jews to the definite opposition of the Orthodox. For, after all, as was said above, it is with these that the future of Judaism really lies. True that many even of them are studying Jesus as never before, but they do not attempt to combine with their Judaism any obedience to Him.

Yet a great deal of their teaching is bound up with a high standard of spiritual religion—so far as that is possible for those who reject the Lord Jesus.

It might almost be sufficient to quote many passages from the Jewish Prayer Book, used regularly in the synagogues of the Orthodox,² but it seems preferable to illustrate our subject from utterances of our own day.

Dr. A. Jeremias, the well-known Christian professor at Leipzig, tells us in a recent book that when he was in Warsaw a few years ago he wanted a *droszky*. He went to the stand—there the *droszkies* were, and the horses, but no men! " I knew," he says, " where the men would be if I were at home," i.e., in Germany! But a young Jew guided him, and took him to an upper room in a back street, and there he found all the drivers reading large folios and discussing the contents. It was the Talmud, and these cab-drivers were debating the meaning of God's statutes. So it was with all the trades there; the bakers, the butchers, the tailors, all had their own room or club for the study of the Talmud.³

Nor is this peculiar to poor Jews. For Jeremias tells us on another page that Amschel Rothschild, the founder of the famous Frankfurt house, who died in 1855, during all his long life spent two whole nights a week studying the Talmud.⁴

Only the Talmud! Yes, but think what the regular study of the Talmud implies! A sincere desire to know what is right, and

¹ Hebrew, p. 448; English, p. 414.

² See my paper on this subject in the *International Review of Missions*, April, 1926, pp. 205-17.

³ *Jüdische Frömmigkeit*, 1927, p. 26.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

to learn how to regulate one's life in the smallest detail in accordance with the will of God.

For, as the very learned but very Orthodox Dr. S. Daiches says, " 'To be religious' means to the genuine Jew to fear God and obey His law. The study of the Torah and its proper interpretation, including the adaptation of its enactments to varying and changing conditions, form part of the duty and prescribed activity of . . . the guides and leaders of Israel of all ages. Prayer and public worship are prescribed as means to an end—the end being right conduct—and are intended to prepare the Jew for submission to the Divine will and for the faithful practice of the precepts and ordinances of the Divine law. In the same way, the ceremonial and ritual observances are intended to strengthen the Jew in his endeavour to suppress his lower self, to place his whole being in the service of God and man, to remember his association with Israel as an ethnic entity, and to pursue the aim which the Lawgiver has set before him as an individual and a son of his people." ¹

Again, after saying stiffly, " We cannot revise our Prayer Book," Dr. Daiches adds, " But we can visualize its greatness, beauty and holiness, and can catch something of its splendour. If we will understand our Prayer Book, if we will understand all that Judaism means, then we will feel the full thrill of the words, ' And who is like Thy people, like Israel, a nation one on the earth ? ' " ²

Let us now listen to Dr. Hertz, the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, who has been giving two series of Lectures, one in direct opposition to Liberal Judaism, and the other in exposition of the Affirmations of Judaism. He adds to each lecture copious illustrations from writings which he is attacking, or which he draws upon for support, and is himself very outspoken in his defence of Orthodoxy. We are only concerned with the way in which he insists on the higher teaching of Judaism.

" Judaism," he says in the Lecture on the Revelation at Mount Sinai, " embraces the whole of life. And because it has at all times and in all lands embraced and regulated the whole life of its loyal children, Judaism is far more than a creed or a theology, greater than a denomination or a Church. *Judaism is a religious civilization*, a spiritual culture aglow with a passion for righteousness; a national complex of language, literature, history, customs and social institutions, organized round the beliefs in the unity of God and the reality of Divine Revelation." ³

Again, the Chief Rabbi quotes with approval the words of Dr. Loewe of Cambridge and Oxford, " Possibly the most misunderstood of all our ordinances are those which regulate carrying and travelling on Sabbath. Sabbath is the home festival, it is the strength and glorification of home life, home worship, and home rest. Theatre-going, golfing, cycling, harmless and even desirable though they be, are alien to the Sabbath spirit. The moment that riding

¹ *Jewish Chron. Supplement*, March 25, 1927.

² *Ibid.*, Feb. 18, 1927.

³ *Ibid.*, Apr. 9, 1926.

[i.e., in tram or train, etc.] is tolerated, the whole Sabbath spirit is changed; it becomes something absolutely different. It is quite impossible to draw a line and say 'I will permit this violation, but observe that; thus far, but no further.' Practical experience has shown the futility of such distinctions. Jewish life rests on refraining from riding. Whosoever begins by riding will end by losing the Sabbath altogether."¹

Dr. Hertz ends his Lectures thus: "Let my last word be: Whenever we overcome callousness to human misery, whenever Jewish brotherhood, human brotherhood, moves us to deeds of pity and beneficence, we *imitate God*, we experience eternity in this life, and enrol our names among the children of Him who revealed Himself unto Moses in the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. Amen."²

Now these utterances of Orthodox Jews of recognized authority may seem to be rather disappointing, and not representing a very high degree of spiritual teaching compared with the words of many Christian preachers. But at least they represent a side of Judaism infinitely superior to the idea of it which is so common among non-Jews, that Judaism is a formal and sterile system, the votaries of which are singularly deficient in the aspirations of true religion. These quotations will have shown how very wide of the mark such a belief is. That fact is that, though often not according to knowledge, the religion of modern Jews is permeated through and through with a sincere desire to learn of God, and to follow His will.

It is up to us Christians to consider how best we may help them to do so.

"The Canon of Tears," said Raymond Lull in his *Blanquerna* [c. 1300 A.D. N.B., Bp. Blanquerna had given certain duties to each of his Canons], "passed by the Synagogue of the Jews, and saw many Jews entering therein that they might pray to God; so he sat at the door of the synagogue. The Canon remembered how that the Jews had been the cause of the Passion of Jesus Christ, and how they dishonoured Him in the world, and believed not in Him but maligned Him daily. While the Canon thought upon these things, and on the damnation whither the Jews through ignorance go, he wept right bitterly, saying these words: 'Ah, Charity and Devotion! How is it that ye go not to honour our Lord among these people who think that they honour Him, yet do Him dishonour? Ah, Pity! How is it that thou hast not mercy upon these people who daily through ignorance journey towards the fire that is everlasting?' Many other words spake the Canon, and long did he weep in that place, and many times came he to weep in that place, to the end that Divine grace might enlighten those that had strayed, and give devotion to Christians, that by the virtue of God they might have greater diligence than now they have, in enlightening the unbelievers."³

¹ *Jewish Chron. Supplement*, July 23, 1926.

² *Ibid.*, Feb. 4, 1927.

³ Cap. lxxi. Translated from the Catalan by E. A. Peers, 1926.