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## THE DOGMAS OF JUDAISM.

THE object of this article is to say about the dogmas of Judaism a word which I think ought not to be left unsaid.

In speaking of dogmas it must be understood that Judaism does not ascribe to them any saving power. The belief in a dogma or a doctrine without abiding by its real or supposed consequences (*e.g.* the belief in *creatio ex nihilo* without keeping the Sabbath) is of no value. And the discussion about certain doctrines is not whether they possess or do not possess the desired charm against certain diseases of the soul, but whether they ought to be considered as characteristics of Judaism or not.

It must again be premised that the subject, which occupied the thoughts of the greatest and noblest Jewish minds for so many centuries, has been neglected for a comparatively long time. And this for various reasons. First, there is Mendelssohn's assertion, or supposed assertion, in his *Jerusalem* that Judaism has no dogmas—an assertion which has been accepted by the majority of modern Jewish theologians as the only dogma Judaism possesses. You can hear it pronounced in scores of Jewish pulpits; you can read it written in scores of Jewish books. To admit the possibility that Mendelssohn was in error was hardly permissible, especially for those with whom he enjoys a certain infallibility. Nay, even the fact that he himself was not consistent in his theory, and on another occasion declared that Judaism *has* dogmas, only that they are purer and more in harmony with reason than those of other religions; or even the more important fact, that he published a school-book for children, in which the so-called Thirteen Articles were embodied, only that instead of the formula "I believe," &c., he substituted "I am convinced,"—even such patent facts did not produce much effect upon many of our modern theologians. They were either overlooked or explained away so as to make them harmonise with the great dogma of dogmalessness. For it is one of the attributes of infallibility that the words of its happy pro-

priotor must always be reconcilable even when they appear to the eye of the unbeliever as gross contradictions.<sup>1</sup>

Another cause of the neglect into which the subject has fallen is that our century is an *historical* one. It is not only books that have their fate, but also whole sciences and literatures. In past times it was religious speculation that formed the favourite study of scholars, in our time it is history with its critical foundation on a sound philology. Now as these two most important branches of Jewish science were so long neglected—were perhaps never cultivated in the true meaning of the word, and as Jewish literature is so vast and Jewish history so far-reaching and eventful, we cannot wonder that these studies have absorbed the time and the labour of the greatest and best Jewish writers in this century. Indeed, we cannot be grateful enough to such scholars as Zunz and Graetz, who have furnished us with the history of the Jewish literature and people. For what use is it to have a literature embracing all branches of human thought without understanding it in the right way, and how shall we recognise Judaism in all its glory and significance for the world so long as its history remains a secret to us?

There is, besides, a certain tendency in historical studies that is hostile to mere theological speculation. The historian deals with realities, the theologian with abstractions. The latter likes to shape the universe after his system, and tells us how things *ought to be*, the former teaches us how they *are* or *have been*, and the explanation he gives for their being so and not otherwise includes in most cases also a kind of justification for their existence. There is also the *odium theologicum*, which has been the cause of so much misfortune in the history of the world that it is hated by the historian, whilst the superficial, rationalistic way in which the theologian manages to explain every thing which does not suit his system is most repulsive to the critical spirit.

But it cannot be denied that this neglect has caused much confusion. Especially is this noticeable in England, which is essentially a theological country, and where people are but little prone to give up speculation about things which concern their most sacred interest and greatest happiness. Thus

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<sup>1</sup> *Jerusalem*, in Mendelssohn's *Sämmtliche Werke* (Vienna, 1838), especially from page 264 onwards, and a letter by him published in the *Monatsschrift*, 1859, p. 173. For Mendelssohn's position, see Graetz, *Geschichte*, xi. 86 *seq.*, especially p. 88 and note 1; Kayserling, *Leben und Wirken* of M., 2nd ed., p. 394; Steinheim, *Moses Mendelssohn* (Hamburg, 1840), p. 30 *seq.*; Holdheim, *Moses Mendelssohn* (Berlin, 1859), p. 18 *seq.*; L. Löwe's pamphlet, *Jüdische Dogmen* (Pest, 1871).

whilst we are exceedingly poor in all other branches of Jewish learning, we are comparatively rich in productions of a theological character. We have a superfluity of essays on such delicate subjects as eternal punishment, immortality of the soul, the day of judgment, &c., and many treatises on the definition of Judaism. But knowing little or nothing of the progress recently made in Jewish theology, of the many protests against all kinds of infallibility, whether canonised in this century or in olden times, we in England still maintain that Judaism has no dogmas as if nothing to the contrary had ever been said. We seek the foundation of Judaism in national economy, in hygiene, in everything except religion. Following the fashion of the day to esteem religion in proportion to its ability to adapt itself to every possible and impossible metaphysical and social system, we are anxious to squeeze out of Judaism the last drop of faith and hope, and strive to make it so flexible that we can turn it in every direction which it is our pleasure to follow. But alas! the flexibility has progressed so far as to classify Judaism among the invertebrate species, the lowest order of living things. It strongly resembles a certain Christian school which addresses itself to the world in general and claims to satisfy everybody alike. It claims to be socialism for the adherents of Karl Marx and Lassalle, worship of men for the followers of Comte and St. Simon; it carefully avoids the word "God" for the comfort of agnostics and sceptics, whilst on the other hand it pretends to hold sway over paradise, hell, and immortality for the edification of believers. In such illusions many of our theologians delight. For illusions they are; you cannot be everything if you want to be anything. Moreover illusions in themselves are bad enough, but we are menaced with what is still worse. Judaism, divested of every higher religious motive, is in danger of falling into gross materialism. For what else is the meaning of such declarations as "Believe what you like, but conform to this or that mode of life," what else does it mean but "We cannot expect you to believe that the things you are bidden to do are commanded by a higher authority; there is not such a thing as belief, but you ought to do them for conventionalism or for your own convenience."

But both these motives—the good opinion of our neighbours, as well as our bodily health—have nothing to do with our nobler and higher sentiments, and degrade Judaism to a matter of expediency or diplomacy. Indeed, things have advanced so far that well-meaning but ill-advised writers even think to render a service to Judaism by declaring it to

be a kind of enlightened Hedonism, or rather a moderate Epicureanism.<sup>1</sup>

I have no intention of here answering the question, What is Judaism? This question is not less perplexing than the problem, What is God's world? Judaism is also a great Infinite, composed of as many endless Units, the Jews. And these Unit-Jews have been, and are still, scattered through all the world, and have passed under an immensity of influences, good and bad. If so, how can we give an exact definition of the Infinite, called Judaism?

But if there is anything sure, it is that the highest motives which worked through the history of Judaism are the strong belief in God and the unshaken confidence that at last this God, the God of Israel, will be the God of the whole world<sup>2</sup>; or, in other words, Faith and Hope are the two most prominent characteristics of Judaism.

In the following pages I shall try to give a short account of the manner in which these two principles of Judaism found expression, from earliest times up to the age of Mendelssohn; that is, to present an outline of the history of Jewish Dogmas. First a few observations on the position of the Bible and the Talmud in relation to our theme. Insufficient and poor as they may be in proportion to the importance of these two fundamental documents of Judaism, these remarks may nevertheless suggest a connecting link between

<sup>1</sup> This hygienic explanation of the dietary laws is not at all modern. It is refuted already by an author who wrote at about the end of the 13th century. See Jellinek's Appendix to the Dialogue of R. Shem-Tob Palquera (Vienna, 1875). As a modern refutation, we shall only mention here that of Reggio, in his book *התורה והפילוסופיה* (Vienna, 1827), p. 156 *seq.* See also Joel's *Beiträge*, I., p. 99, note 2. We cannot here enlarge on this subject, which deserves a special study, but shall only direct attention to two passages in works of the 13th century. The *Zohar*, IV. 221a (ed. Krotschin), runs as follows:—**אנן (הננים) אכלינן כל מה דבעינן ואנן תקיפין בחילא בבריאותא—** ואתון דלא אכלין חלשין כלכו במרעין בישין ובתבירו יתיר מכל שאר עמין: Compare the commentaries on the Haggadoth by R. Salomon ben Addereth, edited by Dr. Perles, in his biography of that Rabbi (Breslau, 1863), p. 31a, where the following passage occurs:—**וחלק הקדושה שאמרת גם המניעה מן—** המאכלים האסורים נכנסת באותו חלק ועליו אנו נקראים קדושים :

<sup>2</sup> This is the explanation given by the *Sifré* (ed. Friedmann, p. 73a) on the verse "Hear, O Israel," Deut. vi. 4. Compare Rashi's remark on this verse. We venture to suggest that on this passage from the *Sifré*, is founded the prayer from the *תנא דבי אליהו* (I. 21), which forms part of the daily Liturgy, and in which occur passages relating to the belief in the final recognition of God by all mankind, and also to the sanctification of His name throughout the world. See Oppenheim in *Beth Talmud*, I., p. 373, on the high antiquity of this prayer.

the teachings of Jewish antiquity and those of Maimonides and his successors.

We begin with the Scriptures.

The Bible itself hardly contains a command bidding us *to believe*. We are hardly ordered, *e.g.*, to believe in the existence of God. I say hardly, but I do not altogether deny the existence of such a command. It is true that we do not find in the Scripture such words as: "You are commanded to believe in the existence of God." Nor is any punishment assigned as awaiting him who denies it. Notwithstanding these facts, many Jewish authorities—among them such important men as Maimonides, R. Jehuda Halevy, Nachmanides—perceive, in the first words of the Ten Commandments, "I am the Lord thy God," the command to believe in His existence.<sup>1</sup>

Be this as it may, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt that the Bible, in which every command is dictated by God, and in which all its heroes are the servants, the friends, or the ambassadors of God, presumes such a belief in every one to whom those laws are dictated, and these heroes address themselves. Nay, I think that the word "belief" is not even adequate. In a world with so many visible facts and invisible causes, as life and death, growth and decay, light and darkness; in a world where the sun rises and sets; where the stars appear regularly; where heavy rains pour down from the sky, often accompanied by such grand phenomena as thunder and lightning; in a world full of such marvels, but into which no notion has entered of all our modern true or false explanations—who but God is behind all these things? "Have the gates," asks God, "have the gates of death been open to thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? . . . Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof? . . . Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? . . . Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? . . . Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?" (Job xxxviii.) Of all these wonders, God was not merely the *prima causa*; they were the result of his direct action, without any intermediary causes. And it is as absurd to say that the ancient world believed in God, as for a future historian to assert of the nineteenth century that it believed

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<sup>1</sup> See commentaries to Maimonides' *הספד* *המצות*, I., especially R. Simon Duran in his *זוהר הרקיע*; cf. also old and modern commentaries to Ex. xx. 2, and the treatises on the division of the Decalogue.

in the effects of electricity. We see them, and so antiquity *saw* God. If there was any danger, it lay not in the denial of the existence of a God, but in having a wrong belief. Belief in as many gods as there are manifestations in nature, investing them with false attributes, misunderstanding God's relation to men, lead to immorality. Thus the greater part of the laws and teachings of the Bible are either directed against polytheism, with all its low ideas of God, or rather of gods; or they are directed towards regulating God's relation to men. Man is a servant of God, or his prophet, or even his friend. But this relationship, man obtains only by his conduct. Nay, all man's actions are carefully regulated by God, and connected with his holiness. The 19th chapter of Leviticus, which is considered by the Rabbis as the portion of the Law in which the most important articles of the Torah are embodied, is headed, "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." And every law therein occurring, even those which concern our relations to each other, is *not* founded on utilitarian reasons, but is ordained because the opposite of it is an offence to the holiness of God, and profanes his creatures, whom he desired to be as holy as he is.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the whole structure of the Bible is built upon the visible fact of the existence of a God, and upon the belief in the relation of God to men, especially to Israel. In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, the Bible *does* lay stress upon belief, where belief is required. The unbelievers are rebuked again and again. "For all this they sinned still, and believed not for His wondrous work," complains Asaph. (Ps. lxxviii. 32.) And belief is praised in such exalted words as, "Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." (Jer. ii. 2.) The Bible, especially the books of the prophets, consists, in great part, of promises for the future, which the Rabbis justly termed the "Consolations."<sup>2</sup> For our purpose, it is of no great consequence to examine what future the prophets had in view, whether an immediate future or one more remote, at the end of days. At any rate, they inculcated hope and confidence that God would bring to pass a better time. I think that even the most advanced Bible-critic—provided he is not guided by some modern Aryan reasons—must perceive in such passages as, "The Lord will reign for ever and ever," "The Lord shall

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<sup>1</sup> *Sifra* (ed. Weiss), pp. 86b and 93b.

<sup>2</sup> *Baba Bathra*, 14b. Compare Fürst, *Kanon*, p. 15.

rejoice in his works," and many others, a hope for more than the establishment of the "national Deity among his votaries in Palestine."

We have now to pass over an interval of many centuries, the length of which depends upon the views held as to the date of the conclusion of the canon, and examine what the Rabbis, the representatives of the prophets, thought on this subject. Not that the views of the author of the "Wisdom of Solomon," of Philo and Aristobulus, and many others of the Judæo-Alexandrian school would be uninteresting for us. But somehow their influence on Judaism was only a passing one, and their doctrines never became authoritative in the Synagogue. We must here confine ourselves to those who, even by the testimony of their bitterest enemies, occupied the seat of Moses.

The successors of the prophets had to deal with new circumstances, and accordingly their teachings were adapted to the wants of their times. As the result of manifold foreign influences, the visible fact of the existence of God as manifested in the Bible had been somewhat obscured. Prophecy, as the highest degree of direct communion of God with man, ceased, and the Holy Spirit (רוח הקדוש) which inspired a few chosen ones took its place. Afterwards this influence was reduced to the hearing of a Voice from Heaven, which was audible to still fewer. On the other hand the Rabbis had this advantage that they were not called upon to fight against idolatry as their predecessors the prophets had been. The evil inclination to worship idols was, as the Talmud expresses it allegorically, killed by the Men of the Great Synagogue, or, as we should put it, it was suppressed by the sufferings of the captivity in Babylon. This change of circumstances is marked by the following fact:—Whilst the prophets mostly considered idolatry as the cause of all sin, the Rabbis show a strong tendency to ascribe sin to a defect in, or a want of, belief on the part of the sinner. They teach that Adam would not have sinned unless he had first denied the "Root of all" (or the main principle), namely, the belief in the Omnipresence of God.<sup>1</sup> Of Cain they say that before murdering his brother he declared: "There is no judgment, there is no judge, there

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<sup>1</sup> *Synhedrin*, 38b. The phrase כפר בעיקר occurs for the first time in the *Sifra*, 111b. See also *Pessikta* (ed. Buber), 163b, and *Mechilta* (ed. Friedmann), 22b. In this last case it is doubtful whether we should read כפר or וכפר. In another version of this Baraita, the whole passage is wanting. Compare Hofmann, *Magazine*, xiii. 192.



is no world to come, and there is no reward for the just, and no punishment for the wicked.”<sup>1</sup>

In another place we read that the commission of a sin in secret is an impertinent attempt by the doer to oust God from the world. But if unbelief is considered as the root of all evil, we may expect that the reverse of it, a perfect faith, would be praised in the most exalted terms. So we read: Faith is so great that the man who possesses it may hope to become a worthy vessel of the Holy Spirit, or, as we should express it, that he may hope to obtain by this power the highest degree of communion with his Maker. The Patriarch Abraham, notwithstanding all his other virtues, only became “the possessor of both worlds” by the merit of his strong faith. Nay, even the fulfilment of a single law when accompanied by true faith is, according to the Rabbis, sufficient to bring man nigh to God. And the future redemption is also conditional on the degree of faith which will be shown by Israel.<sup>2</sup>

It has often been asked what the Rabbis would have thought of a man who fulfils every commandment of the Torah, but does not believe that this Torah was given by God, or that there exists a God at all. It is indeed very difficult to answer this question with any degree of certainty. In the time of the Rabbis people were still too simple for such a diplomatic religion, and conformity in the modern sense was quite an unknown thing. But from the foregoing remarks it would seem that the Rabbis could not conceive such a monstrosity as atheistic orthodoxy. For, as we have seen, the Rabbis thought that unbelief must needs end in sin, for faith is the origin of all good. Accordingly, in the case just supposed, they would have either suspected the man’s orthodoxy, or would have denied that his views were really what he professed them to be.

Still more important than the above cited Aggadic passages is one which we are about to quote from the Tractate Synhedrin. This tractate deals with the constitution of the supreme law-court, the examination of the witnesses, the functions of the judges, and the different punishment to be inflicted on the transgressors of the law. After having enumerated various kinds of capital punishment, the Mishnah adds the following words: “These are (the men) who are excluded from the life to come: He who says there is no

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<sup>1</sup> *Targum Jerushalmi*, Gen. iv. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Mechilta*, 33b. Innumerable passages of a similar character occur in the Rabbinic literature.

resurrection from death; he who says there is no Torah given from heaven, and the Epikoros."<sup>1</sup> This Mishnah was considered by the Rabbis of the Middle Ages, as well as by modern scholars, the *locus classicus* for the dogma question. There are many passages in the Rabbinic literature which exclude man from the world to come for this or that sin. But these are more or less of a poetic legendary (Aggadic) character, and thus lend themselves to exaggeration and hyperbolic language. They cannot, therefore, be considered as serious legal dicta, or as the general opinion of the Rabbis.<sup>2</sup>

The Mishnah in Synhedrin, however, has, if only by its position in a legal tractate, a certain Halachic character. And the fact that so early an authority as R. Akiba made additions to it guarantees its high antiquity. The first two sentences of this Mishnah are clear enough. In modern language, and, positively speaking, they would represent articles of belief in Resurrection and Revelation. Great difficulty is found in defining what was meant by the word *Epikoros*. The authorities of the middle ages, to whom we shall again have to refer, explain the Epikoros to be a man who denies the belief in reward and punishment; others identify him with one who denies the belief in Providence; while others again think the Epikoros one who denies Tradition. But the parallel passages in which it occurs incline one rather to think that this word cannot be defined by one kind of heresy. It implies rather a frivolous treatment of the words of Scripture or of Tradition. In the case of the latter (Tradition) it is certainly not honest difference of opinion that is condemned; for the Rabbis themselves differed very often from each other, and even mediæval authorities did not feel any compunction against explaining Scripture in variance with the Midrash, and sometimes they even went so far as to declare that the view of this or that great authority was only to be considered as an isolated opinion not deserving particular attention. What they did blame was, as already said, scoffing and impiety. We may thus

<sup>1</sup> The words מן התורה are undoubtedly a later interpolation, though it is not impossible that Rashi had them in his text of the Mishnah. See Rabbinowitz, *Variae Lectiones*, IX., p. 247, note 1. The Cambridge MS., published by Mr. Lowe, also omits these two words. See also Weiss, *Beth Talmud*, II., p. 287.

<sup>2</sup> A collection of such passages may be found in Schlesinger's notes to his German translation of the *Ikkarim* (Frankfurt, 1844), p. 677 *seq.*; but his list is incomplete, and might be largely extended by quotations from the *Sifré*, etc.

safely assert that reverence for the teachers of Israel formed the third essential principle of Judaism.<sup>1</sup>

I have still to remark that there occur in the Talmud such passages as "the Jew, even if he has sinned, is still a Jew," or "He who denies idolatry is called a Jew." These and similar passages have been used to prove that Judaism was not a positive religion, but only involved the negation of idolatry. But it has been overlooked that the statements quoted have more a legal than a theological character. The Jew belonged to his nationality even after having committed the greatest sin, just as the Englishman does not cease to be an Englishman—in regard to treason and the like—by having committed a heinous crime. But he has certainly acted in a very un-English way, and having outraged the feelings of the whole nation will have to suffer for his misconduct. The Rabbis also did not maintain that he who gave up the belief in Revelation and Resurrection, and treated irreverently the teachers of Israel, severed his connection with the Jewish nation, but that, for his crime, he was going to suffer the heaviest punishment. He was to be excluded from the world to come.

Still, important as is the passage quoted from Synhedrin, it would be erroneous to think that it exhausted the creed of the Rabbis. The liturgy and innumerable passages in the Midrashim show that they ardently clung to the belief in the advent of the Messiah. All their hope was turned to the future redemption and the final establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Judaism, stripped of this belief, would have been for them devoid of meaning. The belief in reward and punishment is also repeated again and again in the old Rabbinic literature. A more emphatic declaration of the belief in Providence than is conveyed by the following passages is hardly conceivable. "Everything is foreseen, and free will is given. And the world is judged by grace."<sup>2</sup> Or "the born are to die, and the dead to revive, and the living to be judged. For to know and to notify, and that it may be known that He (God) is the framer and He the Creator, and He the Discerner, and He the Judge, and He the Witness," etc.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Besides the ordinary commentaries to the Mishnah, account must be taken of the remarks of Chasdai Crescas, Duran, Albo, and Abarbanel on the subject. Of modern writers, I mention Kämpf, in the *Monatsschrift*, 1863, pp. 144 and 376; Oppenheim, *ibid.*, 1864, p. 144; Friedmann, *Beth Talmud*, I., pp. 210 and 296. Compare also Rapoport, *Erech Millin*, p. 181, and Talm. dict. sub voce אִשְׁתֵּי קִרְוִיִּים. The explanation I have adopted agrees partly with Friedmann's, partly with Oppenheim's view.

<sup>2</sup> *Aboth*, III., 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Aboth*, IV., 22.

But it must not be forgotten that it was not the habit of the Rabbis to lay down either for conduct or doctrine rules which were commonly known. When they urged the three points stated above there must have been some historical reason for it. Probably these principles were controverted by some heretics. Indeed, the whole tone of the Mishnah is a protest against certain unbelievers who are threatened with punishment. Other beliefs, not less essential, but less disputed, remain unmentioned, because there was no necessity to assert them.

It was not till a much later time, when the Jews came into closer contact with new philosophical schools, and also new creeds, that were more liable than heathenism was to be confused with Judaism, that this necessity was felt. And thus we are led at once to the period when the Jews became acquainted with the teachings of the Mohammedan schools. The Karaites came very early into contact with non-Jewish systems. And so we find that they were also the first to formulate Jewish dogmas in a fixed number, and in a systematic order. It is also possible that their separation from the Tradition, and their early division into little sects among themselves, compelled them to take this step, in order to avoid further sectarianism.

The number of their dogmas amounts to ten. According to Jehuda Hadassi (1150), who would appear to have derived them from his predecessors, their dogmas include the following articles:—1. *Creatio ex nihilo*; 2. The existence of a Creator, God; 3. This God is an absolute unity as well as incorporeal; 4. Moses and the other prophets were sent by God; 5. God has given to us the Torah, which is true and complete in every respect, not wanting the addition of the so-called Oral Law; 6. The Torah must be studied by every Jew in the original (Hebrew) language; 7. The Holy Temple was a place elected by God for His manifestation; 8. Resurrection of the dead; 9. Punishment and reward after death; 10. The Coming of the Messiah, the son of David.<sup>1</sup>

How far the predecessors of Hadassi were influenced by a certain Joseph Albashir (about 950), of whom there exists a manuscript work, "Rudiments of Faith," I am unable to say. The little we know of him reveals more of his intimacy with Arabic thoughts than of his importance for his sect in particular and for Judaism in general.<sup>2</sup> After Hadassi I shall mention

<sup>1</sup> I have followed the exposition of the late Dr. Frankl, the greatest Karaite scholar of our time. See his article "Karaiten" in the *Encyclopädie* of Ersch and Gruber, section II., vol. 33, p. 18. Compare Jost's *Geschichte*, II., ch. 13, where the articles of Bashazi are given.

<sup>2</sup> Concerning this author see Frankl's *Ein Mutazilitischer Kalam*, and his *Beiträge zur Literaturgeschichte der Karäer* (Berlin, 1887).

here Elijah Bashazi, a Karaite writer of the end of the 15th century. This author, who was much influenced by Maimonides, omits the second and the seventh articles. In order to make up the ten he numbers the belief in the eternity of God as an article, and divides the fourth article into two.<sup>1</sup> In the fifth article Bashazi does not emphasize so strongly the completeness of the Torah as Hadassi, and omits the portion which is directed against Tradition. It is interesting to see the distinction which Bashazi draws between the Pentateuch and the Prophets. While he thinks that the five books of Moses can never be altered, he regards the words of the Prophets as only relating to their contemporaries, and thus subject to changes.<sup>2</sup> As I do not want to anticipate Maimonides' system we must refrain from giving here the articles laid down by Solomon Troki in the beginning of the 18th century. For the articles of Maimonides are copied by this writer with a few slight alterations so as to dress them in a Karaite garb.<sup>3</sup>

We must dismiss the Karaites with these few remarks, my object being chiefly to discuss the dogmas of the Synagogue from which they had separated themselves. Besides, as in everything Karaitic, there is no further development of the question. As Bashazi laid them down, they are still taught by the Karaites of to-day. We return to the Rabbanites.

As is well known Maimonides (1130—1205) was the first Rabbanite who formulated the dogmas of the Synagogue. But there are indications of earlier attempts. R. Saadjah Gaon's (892—942) work, "Creeds and Opinions," shows such traces. He says in his preface, "My heart sickens to see that the belief of my co-religionists is impure and that their theological views are confused." The subjects he treats in this book, such as creation, unity of God, resurrection of the dead, the future redemption of Israel, reward and punishment, and other kindred theological subjects might thus, perhaps, be considered as the essentials of the creed that the Gaon desired to present in a pure and rational form. R. Chananel, of Kairowan, in the first half of the 11th century, says in one of his commentaries that to deserve the eternal life one must believe in *four* things: in God, in the prophets, in a future world where the just will be rewarded, and in the advent of the Redeemer.<sup>4</sup> From R. Jehuda Halevy's "Kusari,"

<sup>1</sup> See אדרת אליהו, (Goslow, 1835) p. 48, where whole passages are verbally copied from Maimonides.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopädie*, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> See אפרין, p. 17a, edited by Dr. Neubauer, and our Appendices A and B.

<sup>4</sup> Rapoport, *Bikkure Ha'ittim*, XII., p. 48.

written in the beginning of the 12th century, we might argue that the belief in the election of Israel by God was the cardinal dogma of the author. Abraham Ibn Daud, a contemporary of Maimonides, in his book "Emuna Ramah," speaks of *rudiments*, among which, besides such metaphysical principles as unity, rational conception of God's attributes, &c., the belief in the immutability of the Law, &c., is included.<sup>1</sup> Still, all these works are intended to furnish evidence from philosophy or history for the truth of religion rather than to give a definition of this truth. The latter task was undertaken by Maimonides.

I refer to the thirteen articles embodied in his first work, "The Commentary to the Mishnah." They are appended to the Mishnah in Synhedrin, with which we dealt above. But though they do not form an independent treatise, Maimonides' remarks must not be considered as merely incidental.

That Maimonides was quite conscious of the importance of this exposition can be gathered from the concluding words addressed to the reader: "Know these (words) and repeat them many times, and think them over in the proper way. God knows that you would be deceiving yourself if you think you have understood them by having read them once or even ten times. Be not, therefore, hasty in perusing them. I have not composed them without deep study and earnest reflection."

The result of this deep study was that the following Thirteen Articles constitute the creed of Judaism. They are:—

1. The belief in the existence of a Creator.
2. The belief in his Unity.
3. The belief in his Incorporeality.
4. The belief in his Eternity.
5. The belief that all worship and adoration are due to him alone.
6. The belief in Prophecy.
7. The belief that Moses was the greatest of all Prophets, both before and after him.
8. The belief that the Law was revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai.
9. The belief in the Immutability of this revealed Torah.
10. The belief that God knows the acts of men.
11. The belief in Reward and Punishment.
12. The belief in the coming of the Messiah.
13. The belief in the Resurrection of the dead.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See אמונה רמה, pp. 44 and 69. Compare Gutmann's essay on this author in the *Monatsschrift*, 1877-8, especially 1878, p. 304.

<sup>2</sup> For the various translations of the Thirteen Articles, which were originally composed in Arabic, see Steinschneider, *Cat. Bod.*, p. 1887, where references to modern literature may be found. Compare Rosin, *Ethik des Maimonides*, p. 30, note 4. In Appendix A will be given the version of Alcharizi from an Oxford MS. See also Chajoth, תורת נביאים, and his תפארת למשה, p. 17a. His reading of Article 13, given on De Rossi's authority, is an interpolation from Maimonides' מאמר תחיית המתים. See מאמר תחיית המתים ed. Cassel, p. 93. Compare Weiss, *Beth Talmud*, I., p. 330, *Ben Chanajah*, 1863, p. 942, and 1864, pp. 648 and 697. See also Dr. N. M. Adler's Introduction to לנר, נתינה, ch. 4.

The impulse given by the great philosopher and still greater Jew was eagerly followed by succeeding generations, and Judaism thus came into possession of a dogmatic literature such as it never knew before Maimonides. Maimonides is the centre of this literature, and I shall accordingly speak in the remainder of this essay of Maimonists and Anti-Maimonists. These terms really apply to the great controversy that raged round Maimonides' "Guide of the Perplexed," but I shall, chiefly for brevity sake, employ them in these pages in a restricted sense to refer to the dispute concerning the Thirteen Articles.

Among the Maimonists we may probably include the great majority of Jews, who accepted the Thirteen Articles without further question. Maimonides must indeed have filled up a great gap in Jewish theology, a gap, moreover, the existence of which was very generally perceived. A century had hardly elapsed before the Thirteen Articles had become a theme for the poets of the Synagogue. And almost every country where Jews lived can show a poem or a prayer founded on these Articles.<sup>1</sup> R. Jacob Molin (1420) speaks of metrical and rhymed songs in the German language, the contents of which were the Thirteen Articles, and which were read by the common people with great devotion.<sup>2</sup> The numerous commentaries and homilies written on the same topic would form a small library in themselves. But on the other hand it must not be denied that the Anti-Maimonists, that is to say those Jewish writers who did not agree with the creed formulated by Maimonides, or agreed only in part with him, form also a very strong and respectable minority. They deserve our attention the more as it is their works which brought life into the subject and deepened it. It is not by a perpetual Amen to every utterance of a great authority that truth or literature gains anything.

S. SCHECHTER.

[*To be concluded.*]

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<sup>1</sup> In Appendix B will be given a collection of such poems both from MSS and rare printed books. Appendix A will contain a bibliographical account of the commentaries on the Thirteen Articles from similar sources.

<sup>2</sup> See Maharil, ed. *Sabionetta*, 113a. Compare Landshut, *Amude Ha-Aboda*, p. 231.