LIBERAL JUDAISM

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BY

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE scope and object of this essay are sufficiently explained in the text. It does not represent the views of any existing organisation or party. Its composition was not suggested to me from without, and no one but myself is responsible for any of the statements and opinions which it contains. For help in the revision of proofs I am much indebted to two friends, but their help was strictly limited to enabling me to express my own ideas with greater clearness and precision. Pages 194 to 207 are taken, with slight modifications, from an article published by me in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* about three years ago.

C. G. M.

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CHAPTER I

THE object of this book is to offer a few notes and suggestions about a particular phase of a particular religion. The religion is Judaism, and the phase is commonly known as "liberal" or "reform" Judaism. But even this description of my object is not sufficiently limited. It is not liberal Judaism as a separate organisation, or liberal Judaism in its history and development, of which I wish to speak, but that particular and individualised form of liberal Judaism which I myself happen to hold. The personal element is not brought in because the writer attaches any importance to himself, but in order that it may not be supposed that he is speaking in the name of liberal Judaism as a whole, and still less in the name of Judaism generally. No authority attaches to this book. Though statements will be frequently found such as "Judaism teaches" or "Judaism rejects" such and such a particular doctrine, it will be easily seen from the context whether the

doctrine is one which is taught or rejected by practically all Jews at the present time, or whether all that is meant is that the Judaism in which the writer believes teaches or rejects it.

We have to remember that Judaism as a living religion is not contained in any book or expressed in any document, but that it is the religion professed by Jews, just as Christianity is the religion professed by Christians. As there are many forms of Christianity, so there are many forms of Judaism. A Roman Catholic would, I suppose, say that the only true and complete form of Christianity was Roman Catholicism, and so, too, a form of Judaism could be found which would say that the only complete and true form of Judaism was itself. Perhaps some other form of Christianity could be found which would also make the same exclusive claim, and perhaps more than one form of Judaism could be found to do likewise.

Again, there is at least one form of Christianity which many Christians would deny to be rightly so called. By this denial they imply that there are certain doctrines which are so essential to Christianity that any person who rejects them cannot properly be called a Christian.

The number of these "essential doctrines" has gradually diminished. Five hundred years ago a person would have been regarded

by the vast mass of Christians as not justly or properly calling himself a Christian if he did not believe in many doctrines which he now may reject or explain away, while still being considered by the great majority of educated Christians as rightly entitled to the name. And those persons who, by their rejection of a few "essential doctrines," are still held by most Christians improperly to retain the name of Christian, themselves stoutly defend their position and their claim. They call themselves Christians, and they feel themselves Christians. Is, then, a man a Christian who so calls and feels himself, be his religious beliefs what they may? We should at last seem to come to a palpable absurdity. There must ultimately be *some* limit where Christianity ceases. The rejection of certain doctrines and the acceptance of others must at last make it absurd for the title of Christian to be any longer used. Its use would ultimately be an abuse.

Precisely similar is the case with regard to Judaism and the Jews. I am not alluding here to the obvious fact that the word "Jew" is also used to describe or denote a person who belongs to a particular race. It is clear that such a person may become a Christian or an Atheist or a Mohammedan, and yet, from the point of view of race he remains, and must remain, a Jew. I throughout use the word

Jew to denote a person who holds certain religious opinions, be his race what it may. Such a person may be descended from non-Jewish ancestors, or he may himself have been born a Christian, but in my eyes he is none the less a Jew.

Using the word, then, in this religious sense, and in this sense only, the parallel with Christianity holds. There are some Jews who would say that if a man does not hold certain doctrines and fulfil certain rites he is no longer a Jew. (I add the words "fulfil certain rites," because some Jews lay far more stress on rites than on beliefs.) Just as in the case of Christianity, so, too, in the case of Judaism, the number of these essential and qualifying beliefs and rites has gradually become smaller. But there are persons who call and feel themselves Jews, who in the eyes of other Jews are not rightly and properly to be considered Jews at all. Again, as in Christianity, so in Judaism, there must be a point at which the mere assertion that a man is or feels himself to be a Jew is not enough to substantiate his claim. Common sense, for instance, might say that a man who denies that such a person as Jesus Christ ever existed cannot legitimately call himself a Christian; common sense might say that a man who denies that God exists cannot legitimately call himself a Jew.

Even so, however, the matter is not so simple as it might seem. Some of the writers, for example, in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, hold so much of the Gospel narrative to be unhistorical that they can hardly be said, in any ordinary sense, to believe in Jesus as a historical figure. Yet they would indignantly repudiate the charge that they are no Christians. So, too, a man may adopt a Spinozistic attitude towards the conception of God, and yet claim to be a Jew. In fact, some good Jews are in the habit of claiming Spinoza for Judaism. In short, definitions become more and more difficult as men's opinions become more delicately shaded, and the colours run inseparably one into the other. It may, perhaps, be argued that a man's religion is what he himself feels it to be, and that just as dogmatic tests applied by authority may produce hypocrisy, so tests of classification applied by any other than the person classified may produce absurdity and injustice. On the other hand, a man may quite conceivably make a wrong diagnosis of his own religious beliefs. He may be a Jew, or have ceased to be a Jew, without realising it. It seems, therefore, safest to rely on neither test exclusively. When, however, a man's own view of his religious position coincides with the view formed by outside observers, then the question of inclusion or exclusion may

be settled with reasonable, though not with absolute certainty.

Yet it must be admitted that the doubt as to the propriety of a man's calling himself Christian or Jew tends at present in one direction. The doubtful persons are those who are often called "liberal," "latitudinarian," "heretical"; the persons who would deny them the right to use the title are often called, or call themselves, "orthodox," "conservative," "traditionalists." The liberals do not deny that the conservatives may rightly be called Jews or Christians as the case may be; it is the conservatives who doubt the right of the extreme liberals to this denomination. And we have seen that if the liberalising process, that is, the denial of certain doctrines and the assertion of others,—for there is assertion of the new as well as rejection of the old involved,—goes on beyond a certain undefined and perhaps undefinable limit, then the doubt of the conservatives becomes justifiable. By "justifiable" I mean that a jury of completely informed and completely impartial outsiders would so regard it. But it would be necessary to add the proviso that such a jury must attach considerable weight to the evidence of the suspected person as to his own religious position. Outsiders in so internal and subjective a matter as a man's religion do not necessarily see the truth most clearly.

If, then, Judaism as a living religion is the religion professed by Jews, there are as many varieties of Judaism as there are varieties of religious belief among the persons who, within the limits indicated above, may justifiably call themselves Jews. This may seem a hard saying. It might seem as if Judaism, or any other religion, ought to be easily describable on paper. Such and such doctrines are Judaism; such and such doctrines are Christianity; such and such creeds and articles constitute Judaism; such and such creeds and articles constitute Christianity.

For instance, in the ordinary Jewish prayer-books there is a document which is called the "Thirteen Principles of the Faith," and in a footnote these principles are called "Articles of the Jewish Creed." Is not Judaism these articles? Certainly not. Judaism as a living religion is not any series of articles, but a state of the mind; if there were no Jews, there would be no Judaism. These articles may be believed in by a number of Jews, but, even then, the way in which they are believed, the manner in which they are interpreted, may include an enormous number of differences and varieties. Moreover, not all Jews believe all these articles. The present writer, for instance, disbelieves in five or six of them. Thus, here again, there is room for wide variety.

A Jew may believe in a number of doctrines which many other Jews call "superstitions." It may be shown scientifically and historically that these "superstitions" have been picked up and borrowed from some other religion, and then it will be argued that they are non-Jewish or un-Jewish, and that if the entire religious belief of every Jew is to be called a phase of Judaism, a great injustice to Judaism will be done. But such reasoning is inaccurate. From the point of view of the living and actual religion, the date at which a particular belief or superstition was adopted is of very minor importance; all the observer can say is that such and such beliefs are now held by persons who justifiably call themselves Jews. The Judaism of these persons includes those beliefs. The beliefs may be inconsistent with other beliefs which they also hold: they may be accretions of recent date and of un-Jewish origin: none the less the Judaism of these persons is not accurately described if those beliefs are omitted.

It may, indeed, be found that certain beliefs are common to all, and that other beliefs are common to the vast majority of Jews. Some beliefs may be described as accretions of foreign origin. Of these, some would seem consistent with, or developments from, the native or ancient stock of beliefs; they have

been thoroughly assimilated, and they have come to stay. Others seem inconsistent with "essentials," and are therefore likely to drop off and decay. But we cannot argue that a doctrine held by a numerical majority is therefore an "essential," and likely to remain for all time a constituent feature of the religion. For instance, the belief that Moses wrote the Pentateuch is held by a numerical majority; yet it may reasonably be argued that it is not only not an "essential" doctrine, but that it will gradually disappear altogether. For though the Judaism of any particular Jew includes all *his* religious beliefs, it may also be true to say that some beliefs are essential to Judaism, while others are not. The test of "essentiality" will naturally vary; the "essential" doctrines of one age will not be essential in the belief of another. And, in any one age, different doctrines will seem essential to different persons, and some persons will maintain a larger number to be "essential," and others a smaller. Yet a few doctrines might be found, such as the Existence and Unity of God, which all Jews now living would regard as essential, and which have been considered essential in every age.

Within the innumerable minor and individual varieties of Judaism, there are certain broad types or phases. There is a broad type

of Judaism which may be called "orthodox"; there is a broad type of Judaism which may be called "liberal" or "reform." The Judaism of which I shall here mainly speak is an individual variety of the liberal type.

It is often said by modern Christians that Christianity is not a creed but a life. The same thing is said by modern Jews about Judaism. What is meant is, that both religions lay great stress upon conduct and feeling, and upon the spirit and temper in which a life is lived. Beliefs may be held in a nerveless and feeble manner without influencing conduct, without giving colour and tone to the whole of life. That is true, but none the less is it true that at the back of the life which such Jews and Christians declare to be Judaism and Christianity respectively, there are opinions and doctrines about religion and morality which would admit of being stated and described. If it be said that Christianity is not a creed but a life, this very assertion implies a particular doctrine: a belief that a certain kind of life may fitly be called Christian, and that the state of mind which issues in and directs that life is true Christianity. The religion as it exists and is realised in that mind and life is capable of being described in words, although we must always remember that such words are an inadequate representation of the *real thing*.

The actual, living religion is not the written page, but the person—as he thinks, wills, and feels.

As human nature is extremely complex, it is not easy for any one to set forth his own religion fully and truthfully. It is still more difficult to know the religion of another. A man can give a historical account of the religious opinions of others, so far as these have been described in writing, or observed in action, or heard in speech, but it is not easy to penetrate far into the recesses of another's soul. What is pregnant with meaning to one mind is meaningless to another. A philosophical system of religion except to a philosopher is mere words.

The present writer is no philosopher, and his book is unphilosophic and unsystematic. But for that very reason it may have greater meaning to every-day folk. He writes as a liberal Jew, but the Judaism he is about to speak of is just *his* conception of Judaism, and his only. He claims and feels himself to be a Jew, and he calls his own religion Judaism, but whether it can justly be called Judaism is not for him, but for others to decide. Nevertheless his own claim and feeling must be reckoned with in arriving at a decision. I again acknowledge that there must be a point at which it becomes absurd to docket such and such religious opinions with the label

"Judaism." Because a man is in a small minority it does not *follow* that his chosen label is inaccurate; but, clearly, if ninety-nine per cent of existing Jews deny that the label can be given with propriety to those opinions, the man who holds them must either be in "advance of his age," or self-deluded on the question of nomenclature.

Yet if the Judaism of which I shall here speak is only my Judaism, I believe that it is also something like the Judaism of many other persons, and that it *will* be something like the Judaism of very many more. I trust, too, that it may, to some small extent, interpret other people's states of mind to themselves. There are many persons who do not quite know what they believe or disbelieve. They are uncertain whether, or how far, they still are Jews. They are doubtful whether there can still rightly be phases of Judaism answering to their religious needs and consistent with their religious opinions, so far as these latter are articulate or known to themselves. They hesitate what to teach their children, and often abandon the task to others or to chance. If I had not the case of such persons in mind, and if I did not hope that I might help two or three of them, this book would never have been written. My own religious opinions and my own conceptions of Judaism are of no importance whatever. They are

only important if they can be of use for others, and thereby of use to Judaism. For if to the State no single one of its citizens is of no account, far less should a Religion consider a single soul that professes it a negligible quantity. Judaism must desire that every one born within its pale should be saved for itself.

CHAPTER II

THOUGH a man's personal religion is not what he has read about religion, but what he himself believes, feels and experiences, it is doubtful how far any one could rightly be called a Jew who knew *nothing* of the past history of Judaism. It is clear that he must somehow be linked on to the past; he cannot start with an absolutely clean slate, devise his own religion, and call it Judaism. He must therefore possess a certain *minimum* of *knowledge*. This minimum he may have obtained either orally, from parents, teachers, and environment, or through books. No man, in sheer loneliness or independence, creates his own religion. He is a link in a long and very strange chain which stretches back to vague beginnings. Hence, too, a writer on Judaism or on Christianity, however much he may profess and desire to speak unofficially and unhistorically, or to describe his own personal religion and no more, must nevertheless say something about the past. For Judaism and Christianity are historical

religions; and there are certain periods of their history which are of special or even of supreme importance. They are also literary and documentary religions; the story of their foundation and early growth is recorded in a particular book—the "Bible"; and part of the religion of every Jew or every Christian to-day is the view he takes and the belief he holds about this particular book. If a man had never heard of the Bible and of the Bible heroes, he could clearly not call himself, with any reasonable justification, a Christian or a Jew.

Nevertheless it is only incidentally that any questions of history can here be dealt with. I cannot attempt any sketch of the history of Judaism, or an account of the origin and development of its various doctrines. These doctrines must be discussed without any adequate presentation of their history and growth. Nor can I venture upon any systematic treatment of fundamental questions. What religion means, how it can best be defined, is beyond the sphere of the present book as it is beyond the power of the present writer. Fundamental doctrines will be spoken of unphilosophically. And I must start with the most fundamental and difficult of all, namely, with the conception of God and of his relation to man.

I shall essay no "proof" of "God's"

existence, for I must assume that I am writing for the benefit of persons who could honestly say that they "believe in" God, though of what they mean by "God" they could give no coherent or consistent account. They are not philosophers. To such persons, for whose benefit I write, I also belong. Yet we are not ashamed of our own incapacity. We call God infinite Spirit, though we have no wholly clear idea of what we mean by spirit or by infinity. We are not frightened by the double limitation of our human nature and of our unphilosophical training. We know what we mean when we say we "believe in God" sufficiently well for all religious and practical purposes. And, therefore, sketchily and unphilosophically, with no attempt at completeness or system, I now proceed to speak of certain aspects of the Divine Being, so far as my own personal religion conceives them.

"God is Spirit." By this we primarily mean that he is incorporeal. All Jews are united on this point: it has been a dogma of the Synagogue from the second Isaiah onwards. It is a striking fact that whenever we try to explain God's nature to ourselves, we fall into saying what God is not. In seeking to define the positive statement, "God is Spirit," we almost inevitably tend to say that it means "God is not a body."

Maimonides long ago held that the only attributes applicable to God are negative. While (as will be maintained later on) we feel that there is a generic likeness or even kinship between God and man, we can sometimes best explain our conception of God by contrasting his nature with man's nature, and by denying that God possesses certain qualities which are possessed by man. So, too, when we say that God is omnipresent, we mean that he is *not* "locally" nearer one part of the universe than another, but as infinite Spirit is spiritually all-pervading; he is "near" to all spirits, and they can spiritually draw near to him, their origin and creator.

"God is self-conscious Reason." Here, too, all Jews are agreed, and they mean by the words something like this. Man is self-conscious and rational. Goodness and knowledge in any of their higher forms are inconceivable by him except as immanent in or pertaining to a self-conscious and rational mind. Who can conceive what the divine reason may be like? Who may venture to conceive the divine self-consciousness? Yet if the words "reason" and "self-conscious" are not *strictly* applicable to God, that is only because God is more than they, not because he is less. "He is a person, but not like ourselves; a mind, but not a human mind; a cause, but not a material cause, nor

yet a maker or artificer. The words which we use are imperfect expressions of his true nature; but we do not therefore lose faith in what is best and highest in ourselves and in the world."[1]

"God is eternal Reason." To conceive a life without end is very hard; to conceive a life without beginning makes our human faculties reel; yet we believe God to be eternal in both directions. And the backward eternity of the Infinite Reason and Spirit is important because it implies, as I fancy all Jews would hold, that God is eternal not only in the sense that there never was a time when he was not, but also in the sense that he is exempt from the limitations which to us make past, present, and future exclusive each of the others.

"God is spirit," "God is mind," "God is reason." These words denote the same thing. For if God, as all Jews hold, be one, then the many aspects of his unity are yet all essentially the same. His being is infinitely rich, and yet absolutely one. That is the marvel and the glory of it, the last and the final explanation and consolation for all the problems of evil.

"God is the Creator of the World." The first article of the Thirteen Principles of the Jewish Faith, which were drawn up by Moses

[1] Jowett: *Dialogues of Plato*, vol. iv. p. 43 (third edition).

Maimonides in the twelfth century, declares that "God is the author and guide of everything that has been created, and that he alone has made, does make, and will make all things." In the sense of this article, many of us no longer believe the dogma. The old idea was that God "made" the universe out of nothing: he created the very material with which, workman-like, he "made" the whole world of "things." There are obvious objections to such a theory, which even they who are not philosophers can easily understand. God is not outside the world as the watchmaker is outside the watch; we rather regard him as the Spirit of the world, immanent in it as well as transcendent. Whether this belief also implies that God and the Universe are both eternal I do not pretend to know. All we are concerned to maintain is that matter was never self-existent or independent of mind; in other words, that the "world" was always guided by God.

As we believe in an immanent as well as in a transcendent Deity, the laws of nature are the laws of God. It would seem true to say, that in these laws God reveals or manifests himself. They are an aspect of the divine nature. If God is reason, then God himself is, as it were, a sort of eternal guarantee that two and two will always be

four and never five. Just in the same way is he a guarantee that any other piece of ascertained truth will remain eternally true. He is one ; truth abides. Therefore what are commonly called " miracles," if these mean interferences with the laws of the universe, seem inconsistent with the divine nature. It seems a sort of contradiction in terms to suppose that God suspends or changes a part of his own self-manifestation, an aspect of his own being. The Biblical miracles are great stumbling-blocks on quite other grounds than this, but, on purely religious and theoretic grounds, many of us cannot fit them in with the purest conception of God to which we can attain. Liberal Judaism must live without miracles, or it will not be able to live at all. It is perhaps scarcely necessary to add that liberal Judaism is keenly responsive to that sense of awe and wonder which a contemplation of the recurrent marvels of nature must as constantly arouse.

Far more important for us than any other aspect of the Divine Being is his relation to man. Our view of this relation is best prefaced by the conception of God upon the ethical or moral side. It is very odd that the Thirteen Principles take all this side so much for granted, that, except incidentally, they say nothing whatever about it.

" God is goodness," " God is righteous-

ness," "God is love." All these statements seem to say the same thing. Christians lay great stress upon the third: "God is love." The words themselves come from the New Testament, and are found in the First Epistle of St. John iv. 8. They express ethical perfection in one particular light. The argument, "Love one another, for God is ethical perfection," would not be so clear and cogent as the argument, "Love one another, for God is love." But whatever be the terms and words which we use to indicate the divine goodness, the same remark will hold of them as of the divine reason or self-consciousness. God's goodness must immensely transcend our own, but it transcends it as including it and passing beyond it, not as denying it. If we have the right to say anything more of God than that he is, then his reason and goodness must not be wholly alien to our own. If his righteousness is wholly alien to our righteousness, the statement that God is righteous becomes unmeaning.

It seems to me an essential feature of Judaism that God's righteousness, justice, mercy, goodness, and love should be regarded as identical. All these different words mean the same thing looked at from different points of view. For God's unity is absolute and incomparable. With us men there may be some conflict between justice and love, between

righteousness and compassion: in God such conflict is impossible. The mere idea of it is absurd. It is always the one God who, in all his operations and relations, in all his judgments and dealings, is perfect, immutable, the same. Upon this doctrine of Unity, Self-sameness, and Immutability, it is reasonable to lay the greatest stress. The opposite pole to it is conveniently illustrated by Milton's *Paradise Lost*, where God the Son pleads and argues with God the Father, and the divine justice in the Father is traversed and even conquered by the divine pity in the Son. From such grotesque conceptions of Deity, which possess religious and ethical dangers as well as grotesquery, the Jewish dogma of the Unity has kept the Jews almost wholly free.

Between our conception of God as pure reason, or perfect intelligence, and our conception of him as perfect goodness or love, lies our conception of him as truth. For truth has a double aspect, looking towards knowledge and looking also towards goodness. God is truth as much as he is love. He is fidelity, changeless and undeceiving. Therefore, since God is truth, the human life which is spent in the service of truth must be acceptable to him, an imitation of the Divine. Hence, too, as a further outflow from the conception of God's unity, there

can be no possible opposition or conflict between Religion and Science. All truth is a revelation of the God of truth, and all truths must, in the last resort, be consistent with each other.

Now if God is not a mere figment of the brain, and if the statements that God is reason, or spirit, or goodness, or love, have any resemblance to reality, it follows that there must be some sort of kinship between God and man. Moreover, religion depends upon communion, and there can be no communion between two entirely disparate and utterly heterogeneous beings. The greater might understand the less, but the less could have no knowledge of the greater. If man has any knowledge of God, must he not in some way or other be related or akin to the Divine?

Whatever the original meaning may have been of the Biblical statement that "man was created in the image of God," it is commonly interpreted by modern Jews of all schools to signify that the human spirit has some likeness to the divine spirit. Because of this likeness, the divine goodness and reason are not absolutely alien to our own. God and man are distinct and separate, as creator and creation; God's goodness and reason infinitely transcend, and will always continue to transcend, the reason and goodness of man. God could never become man,

and man can never become God, but nevertheless, in spite of perpetual separation, there is yet the possibility of constant and growing communion. In some way which we can never hope to understand, human goodness and human reason contain a touch of the Divine, and this touch gives us the possibility of knowing and worshipping and coming in contact with God. The argument is doubtless circular, yet faith asserts that it is not vicious. We know and commune with God because of this relationship; because we know and commune with God, this relationship must be.

The essence and validity of religion depend upon the belief that there is a living and active relationship between God and man. This relationship can be conceived of in a more outward or in a more inward manner. A merely external manner is inadequate and unsufficing. Christian theologians often ascribe this external way of conceiving the relationship to Judaism. It would need a separate book to discuss how far the charge is accurate and how far it is false. The external way is the way of the child. It is not, therefore, in itself as irreligious or as "distant" as, for party purposes, it is often represented; for the child, in spite of his grotesque ideas of God, by no means thinks of the Divine Being as either unconcerned with him or as unapproachable by him. But, nevertheless,

what is suitable and productive of good results for the child is not *necessarily* suitable and productive of good results for the man.

The external way thinks of God as knowing man's thoughts and as hearing man's prayers in virtue of his divine attribute of perfect omniscience. Through this divine omniscience man can commune with God. And because God is omnipotent, he can influence man from afar. He can help him to be good; he can strengthen him in times of trial. Thus even the merely external way of conceiving the relationship between God and man establishes the worth and validity of prayer and communion. The child *and the childlike man* may be intensely religious even upon these external lines. Some Christian theologians do not realise this; perhaps they are not eager to realise by how many different pathways men can draw near to the one God.

Nevertheless the method is inadequate. First of all, it depends upon a conception of God that is anthropomorphic, suitable to a child, but unsuitable to the majority of thinking adults at the present time. God is regarded as *somewhere*, *e.g.* in "heaven"; only he is so very powerful and wise and good, that from "the place of his residence" —far off though that be—he can also hear and see and help all his human children at

one and the same time. This simple and childlike conception of God is unsuitable to grown men. They may not be able to substitute for it any complete and coherent system of the relationship between God and man; they may indeed shrewdly suspect that even the philosophers' and theologians' systems are an inaccurate representation of the actual truth in all its depth and complexity, but, nevertheless, they are bound to make up for themselves a few working ideas which will enable them to maintain the *religion* of the child though they are compelled to abandon its *theology*. For (and this is the second objection to the merely "external way") if they do not do this they are liable to lose the religion as well as the theology; in other words, prayer and communion become more difficult, less frequent, less real. They can no longer regard God as "dwelling on high," but "looking down" with loving care and knowledge upon his human children upon earth, yet they have nothing to substitute for the old conception. They still believe in God, but God has become distant. Because he is no longer in "heaven" he is no longer "Our Father." He is a necessity of thought, the condition of knowledge, the Creator, the Sustainer, but he is mysterious, unapproachable, so purely and wholly divine that man cannot communicate or commune

with him. Nor is it realised how God can communicate with man.

It is at this point that the more internal way of conceiving the relationship steps in and saves the situation. For the communion of man with God, and the action and influence of God upon man, are essential elements of true religion. The "internal way" declares that communion and influence are possible because of the kinship and affinity—at however great a distance—between man and God. This conviction or doctrine is sometimes expressed by saying that God is *within* man as well as *without* him. The phrase goes too far if any parity is meant between the divine reflection within and the divine Reality without.[1] Man is not God. Yet, in some mysterious but real sense, man is not wholly devoid of God. The wiser, the better he is, the more of God he contains. Upon that element within him which is akin to the Divine, the "God without" can operate. That is the door—all metaphors will serve—through which the divine influence can pass, and which man by his own effort can more closely shut, or more widely open. If we had not something divine in our very being God could not help us. But this divine help

[1] Another objection to the metaphor is that people almost inevitably fancy that their souls are situated somewhere "within" their bodies, and that "within" these semi-material souls there resides a divine spark, particle, or germ.

is one of the most important doctrines of religion.

Directly we begin to speak of the divine Spirit as operating in man we trench upon the province of psychology. Thus one who is not a psychologist and has not studied psychology can only write on this subject in a loose and tentative sort of way, and he is liable to make dreadful blunders. We commonly speak of man as made up of body and soul, or of body and mind. We all realise that his mental activities have their physical concomitants or antecedents, and that the interdependence of the material and the spiritual is of the subtlest possible kind. We speak of man's higher and his lower nature, of the spirit warring against the flesh, of duty at conflict with desire. I assume and believe that all these rough phrases answer more or less inaccurately to some highly complex reality. What has actually happened when man is conscious to himself of having done right or wrong I will not pretend to say. Nor do I know what faculties are active in man when he is conscious of communion with God, when he lifts up his soul in prayer, and believes that this spiritual activity has given him a new or "heaven-sent" strength.

The terminology we use is not of much practical importance so long as, on the one hand, we hold to the doctrine that there

is a real influence of God upon man, which is conditioned and made possible by the divine element "within" man, and so long as, on the other hand, we reject the doctrine that this divine element, which is the "soul" or "spirit," is something distinct and separable from the mind or reason. For in that case there would be persons who, by their very constitution, are capable of rational life, but are wholly incapable of spiritual life. Such a dualism, I am glad to say, is uncharacteristic of Judaism in any of its forms. There is one common human nature, and all men alike possess mind and spirit, reason and soul.

Reason, as I would use the word, is Spirit looked at from another point of view. It is a wider term than Intellect or Understanding. And, as so used, I would say that it is the same divine element which produces, on the one hand, a learned man of science, and, on the other, an unlettered saint. Because, in the divine original, spirit and reason are merely two aspects of the same ineffable unity, therefore liberal Judaism contends that there is no class of men who, possessed of reason, are not also, at least germinally, possessed of spirit as well. The words spirit and spiritual (like the words reason and rational) may be used both in a narrower and in a wider sense. In the

narrower sense spirit seems to mean divineness or spirituality, and spiritual means a peculiar sensibility and alertness to religious feelings and ideas. In the wider sense spirit means all that in man's make and nature render him distinctively human. In this distinctiveness lies our kinship with God, and we may call it indifferently "spirit" or "reason."

Some religious teachers, if I understand them aright, have taught that men are divided into classes, and that some are spiritual—the children of light, while others are merely rational—the children of darkness. This doctrine seems unsupported by facts, and leads to conclusions hardly consistent with the goodness of God. For while the sphere of reason and spirit, in the *narrower* sense of the words, are by no means identical (a very "intellectual" man may be but scantily "spiritual"), in the *wider* sense, reason and spirit in their nature and origin are one and the same. This seems to me very important. If we could imagine a "reason" which was not "spiritual" that reason might be wholly evil; its supernatural source might be not God, but Devil. Logically, therefore, do those teachers who hold that some men possess reason, but not spirit, regard such persons as children of darkness (*i.e.* of the Devil). But liberal Judaism emphatically repudiates the doctrine of a Devil, that is, of a personal, self-conscious

principle of Evil. The reason of all rational beings not only comes from God, but is akin to the divine reason. In God reason and spirit are one. There can, therefore, be no opposition in kind between the two. Moreover, the divine goodness implies as a necessary corollary that *all* mankind are his children, and that *all* carry within them, however obscured by sin or ignorance, by vice of blood or taint of nature, a spark of the divine fire. If one man has a "soul," then we all have souls. If one man is spiritual, then are we all.

CHAPTER III

THE doctrines that man is not without affinity to God, and that God in some mysterious manner can and does "influence" or "strengthen" man, are closely connected with our conceptions of good and evil, of righteousness and sin. It is the Divine in man which makes him capable of goodness and capable of sin. The consciousness of the contrast between what he is and what he ought to be is only possible because of that element in him which links him with God, and which the divine Spirit without can influence and quicken. We may not wholly *identify* this divine element with reason, but we may say that it is not conceivably present except in a rational being. For the consciousness of goodness and sin is inseparable both from reason and from the divine element alike: the two are only separable in thought.

The rich but single nature of God is split up into minute and manifold reproductions within man. The divine "spirit" and the divine "reason" are two aspects of the same

unity. The consciousness of good and evil has arisen to man because he possesses spirit and reason, and because, in and through his spirit and his reason, he shows his affinity with God. In dealing with this affinity and its manifestations it is therefore necessary to say a few words about goodness and sin.

How and why a man does right and does wrong is a matter for the psychologist and the philosopher to explain to us. It is the philosopher, moreover, who must tell us what right and wrong ultimately mean, and what is their history and genesis. In this place it is desirable to pass at once beyond the limits of morality into the domain of religion. For when we look at good and evil, or right and wrong, from the religious point of view, they become transfigured. Goodness becomes holiness, an imitation of God, obedience to his perfect will, while wrongdoing becomes sin. For God, who is himself the supreme ideal of absolute righteousness and love, has willed that man, within his lower and human limits, should also be righteous. The belief that God has this desire, and that man, with God's help, is capable of more or less successfully fulfilling it, constitutes a chief feature of the particular religion which I am seeking to explain. But God has ordained that human goodness should be both attained and

hampered by imperfection, ignorance, and sin. The more intensely a man realises God the more hateful will sin appear to him. Yet it is not given to any man to avoid sin altogether. Human nature is so constituted as to contain within itself the potentiality, never wholly unrealised, of sin, as well as the potentiality, never wholly unrealised, of righteousness. Man, looking into his own nature and comprehending it, loathes this sinful potentiality, and loathes, too, the actual sins which it has caused. This very hatred of sin is itself an evidence of man's relationship to God. It were otherwise inconceivable. But the divine element in man can be weakened or strengthened by man's own power. Though none can say that God's saving and redeeming help may not, at any moment, suffice to transform the soul, and make it break through the bondage of sin, it is also true that repeated wrongdoing dulls and dims the spiritual faculties, so that the sense of God grows weaker, and the likelihood of the divine element within being quickened by the "God without" becomes gradually less and less. Contrariwise, the purer and better a man is the stronger will be his power of realising God and of communing with him. We are again confronted with a circular argument which is not vicious. Righteousness makes us realise God better; the better we realise God the more righteous we shall be.

Why is it that we feel that wrongdoing is a *religious* offence? What is the meaning of the phrase to "sin against God"? The oldest Jewish explanation would, I believe, be, that God in revealed words has bidden us do some things and avoid other things, and that foremost among the things we should do are deeds of mercy and justice and love, and that foremost among the things we should avoid are deeds of hatred and cruelty and lust. He has bidden us in our very thoughts and words be pure and truthful and loving. We can, however, no longer look at the matter in quite so simple or child-like a way. The highest commands of the Bible are divine because they are very good; they are not (so most of us now think) very good because they are divine. Yet we still believe that he who sins, sins against God and violates his law. Only the law is rather general than special; it is attained from within rather than imposed from without. Just as God is the God of truth, and as the laws of nature are his laws, so is God goodness and love, and the laws of goodness and love, as man is growingly able to discern them in increasing purity and fulness, are his laws,—laws which, by his very nature, he must wish us to discover and to obey. If he helps us at all, he has helped and helps us in this discovery and obedience. Thus to sin against God is

to sin against goodness: the one implies the other reciprocally, for to sin against goodness is to sin against God.

People talk of conscience as the voice of God; and whatever the genesis and history of conscience may be, this phrase represents a truth. For if *any* part of us recognises good and evil, and urges us to do the right and to avoid the wrong, and if there is in man *any* element which may rightly be called divine, then conscience is a manifestation of that divine element. It is not the voice of God in any magical sense, but in sober earnest, in the very make and constitution of our human nature.

There is a higher and a lower Jewish doctrine on the subject of sin. Yet the lower doctrine was never taught in isolation: it is only so presented and isolated for controversial purposes by modern Christian writers. So far as the sinner and his own character are concerned, the essence of sin lies not in the deed as done, but in the sinfulness of it and in its effect upon him. There is many a sin which does not issue, or is not expressed, in deed. Yet it may be no less a sin. From a social point of view the essence of the sin may probably lie outside the sinner and in his deed. A man steals. From a social point of view the sin lies in the committed act, the consequences of which may be wholly and

eternally irreparable. From the point of view of the sinner the essence of the sin lies in himself and in its results *upon him*. Sin and crime "deserve" punishment, and from more than one point of view we may conceive both society and God legitimately "punishing" the evil-doer. But from a strictly *religious* point of view punishment has no necessary connection with or effect upon sin. Punishment is desirable if it make the sinner less sinful; it is undesirable if it make him more sinful; it is religiously indifferent if it leave him the same.

The lower and inadequate view of sin looks upon it in causal relation to punishment. On that view a prayer to God for forgiveness means only, "Remit the punishment due to the offence." But the only *religious* prayer is, "Grant me punishment, if it will cure my sinfulness. Give me strength and aid by which to conquer it." Religion is concerned not so much with sin as with sinfulness, the sinful nature, the sinful tendency. For a man cannot think, will, or do sinfully without a deposit being, as it were, left upon his character: in that sense each piece of sinfulness adds a stain; it adds weight to weight, and leaves at last a burden hard to shake off. The act is one thing, its recoil upon the doer is another.

About all these ideas and conceptions

Judaism has happily, so far as I know, never laid down a hard and fast theory. For such a theory will always be unjust to some of the facts. It cannot account for all the subtle complexities and varieties of human nature.

We still accept the truth of the old Biblical adage : "There is no man that sinneth not." But what is meant by sin may be extremely various. If a man was never conscious of imperfection and sin he would have no knowledge or consciousness of righteousness. For human righteousness implies an ideal towards which the best of us strain and strive, but to which, just because it *is* an ideal, we never can attain. Of his own distance from that ideal, and of his lapses in his journey towards it, every one is conscious. He who felt no imperfection would be either below or above the human level. His very *nature* would be either sub-human or superhuman ; or, if he is conscious of no sin, and thinks he has reached perfection, what can this be but self-righteousness and pride ? We may safely assert that for any *human* being to consider himself as good as he can be is itself a sin. It indicates a perverted intelligence, or a darkened heart, or an incapacity to realise God. But if it be true both that no man is wholly good, and that no human goodness is perfect, it is also true that no man is wholly wicked. It is not wholly true of any man that evil is good to

him and good evil. Man can neither become God nor Devil. He oscillates between two extremes, of which the one is the Supreme Reality, the other a figment of his own brain.

Here the important question arises, How do men conquer and prevail over sin? The question is closely connected with the doctrine of man's relationship to God and of God's saving influence upon man.

It may at once be noted that different persons are differently affected by their sinfulness and sins. Yet we cannot argue that those who have the most constant consciousness of sin, and the most passionate loathing of it, are always and necessarily the best persons, or the most likely to become heroes and saints. Some people are frequently troubled about their sinfulness and imperfections, and yet seem scarcely the better for their anxiety. Some are intensely and vividly conscious of the defiling nature of sin, and the consciousness helps them forward. Some go through a crisis. By God's grace and their own effort they break through what they feel to be the bondage of sin; and though they do not live faultless lives thereafter, yet their sins trouble them far less, both because they are smaller and less frequent, and also because they feel their souls are now in general harmony with the will of God, and their lives are not passed in constant conflict with evil. Others experi-

ence no such conflict, but pass through life doing their best, humbly, cheerfully, faithfully, as in the presence of God. They grieve for their sins, but are not disheartened, for they know that "to err is human"; yet none the less do they seek to get the mastery over their sinful tendencies; they repent and ask sincerely for the help of God; they become better because they believe that God has forgiven them. Some find it harder to be good than others, and which of these is the better, God only knows. Some seem good by "nature," and some by law. If the law is accepted and realised by their own souls and minds as the noblest and the best, their eager devotion to it may lead to the most superb goodness, and their failures to be true to it to the most passionate consciousness of sin. They who are good by "nature," without law or the need of law, are often sweet and radiant souls, whose nature or instinct seems itself the very seal and stamp of the Divine.

No one theory of goodness or of sin will fit all these varying types of human goodness and human frailty. What is generally wanted seems to be: on the one hand, a keen realisation and loathing of sin as a defilement and a burden, a separation from God and a barrier to free communion with him; and, on the other hand, a fearless confidence, which, relying upon God's aid and strength, moves boldly

forward and does its best. Religious carelessness and religious scrupulosity seem equally bad. It is often said that the best way to attain happiness is not to seek it; it might also be said, by way of paradox, that the best way to lead the highest life is not to *think* too much how to lead it.

The man who thinks most of what he can do for others has by this very means done best for himself. Of course this does not imply that we should not often look into our lives, bring our sins before our consciousness, and deeply consider how we may best overcome them; but it does imply that a constant anxiety about our own measure of attainment or deflection may degenerate into selfishness, scrupulosity, or externalism. A man may be more careful about avoiding wrong than about doing right, or he may estimate the right by a low measure. He may forget that goodness and sinfulness are not, so far as *he* is concerned, and from the *religious* point of view, so many acts done and so many acts avoided, but the character as a whole, in all its complexity, as God alone can see it and judge it.

Judaism, which up till the present time has been what is commonly known as a legal religion, was *liable* to the perversions of legalism. Every religion has the defects of its qualities; each one has its own peculiar dangers. In any historical narrative it would

be necessary to discuss this matter at length, and to show why Judaism has sometimes suffered in this particular way. But here I am only concerned to give my own views, and may leave history on one side. But of one irreligious conception, of which Christian theologians commonly accuse it, Judaism, throughout its long and varied history, has *never* been guilty. It has never taught or believed that man becomes good or conquers sin of his own unaided strength, by his own unaided understanding. If that were the case, what would be the meaning of the old prayers, still rightly preserved in every prayer-book: "O favour us with knowledge, understanding, and discernment from thee. Blessed art thou, O Lord, gracious giver of knowledge"? Or again: "Cause us to return, O our Father, unto thy law; draw us near, O our King, unto thy service." Or this: "Lead us not into the power of sin; let not the evil inclination have power over us; subdue our inclination so that it may submit itself unto thee." We therefore believe, and we shall continue to teach our children to believe, that no man can do without God, and that there is a real, though undefinable influence of the divine Spirit upon the human soul.

But Judaism (as it seems to me most wisely) does not theorise about this influence, and does not one-sidedly exaggerate it. It

does not attempt to explain how precisely this influence is exercised. It is reasonable to believe that the purer the human soul, the more susceptible it is to the divine aid, the more efficacious its prayer. But beyond this we need not and cannot go. The Psalmist says: 'By thy light, we see light," and this statement we can still accept. "Through his strength we are strong." While, however, we lay just stress upon what God, in answer to or even without our prayer, may do for us in our efforts towards goodness, it seems foolish and inaccurate to ignore what we ourselves contribute to the total result. Whatever philosophers may tell us, and however they may explain it, or limit it, or even explain it away, we Jews must still continue to believe in "free will," in the sense that man, within varying degrees, is responsible for his actions, and that he "merits," from a certain definable point of view, approbation or blame. Here again we lay down no theory. All we insist on is that the simple adage, "God only helps those who help themselves," contains a truth. Man can and must strive towards the ideal, and the unity of his action and being is composed of mysteriously blended elements, which may justly be called human and divine. So, in the Jewish liturgy, the statement, "Thy right hand is stretched out to receive those

who return," is frequently combined with the prayer, "Bring us back to thee, and we will return."

The conquest of sin, whether sudden or gradual, is in either case the combined result of human endeavour and the divine grace. The particular features in it upon which Judaism has always laid the greatest stress are repentance and atonement. Here, too, we cling to the belief that part is the work of man and part is the work of God, and here, too, no single theory would seem to fit the facts.

Man was not unredeemed up to a certain date in his history. The conception of a Fall is at variance with what we know of human development. It has seemed consonant, and therefore, to faith, it *is* consonant, with divine goodness and wisdom that man should have developed out of lowliest beginnings. His ancestors were probably mere animals, and ages upon ages of savagery intervened between the brute ancestor and anything which we should now call civilisation or enlightenment. Why this had to be God only knows. Why have there to be such persons as the aboriginal savages of Australia, who, at the approach and contact of civilisation, can only learn its vices, decay, and disappear? These are puzzles which no Theistic philosophy can explain; it is the

burden which Theism, and all who believe in Theism, must bear. The divine pity must be equal to the immensity of its task. The explanation may lie behind the veil.

Man is liable to sin. Is the ultimate reason of this that it was only through sin that human goodness could have been attained? Vile sins have been committed at every date in man's history, by Christians, by Jews, by believers, and by unbelievers. But man can also attain to a high degree of holiness and purity. He may attain to it gradually without any crisis or sudden change; he may also cease to be a "sinner," and become almost suddenly a "saint." But, in either case, there will have been room and necessity for the mental and spiritual phenomenon of *repentance*.

The desired result of repentance is atonement. Man wishes to feel at one with God, reconciled to him. This atonement can be conceived both outwardly and inwardly. Outward atonement is the feeling that God has "forgiven" our sins. If we desire this feeling merely to avoid the *punishment* of our sins then the outwardness reaches a low religious ebb. In such a case God is merely regarded as supreme power, and not as ideal perfection, or the Good. The desired feeling may, however, shade off into the higher wish that God may be at peace with us in order that

we may feel at peace with him. In this way the outward atonement becomes inward. In old days the outward atonement was an intense reality, and it did not cease to be a reality when the inward atonement was also desired likewise. But we no longer pray for outward atonement to-day, partly because we do not believe that God is ever "angry" or "unreconciled" in a merely human sense of the word, partly because we are convinced that in this life, or in any future life, we shall only suffer for our sins what it is good *for us*, what it is our highest interest, to suffer. In this respect the doctrine of Plato, as enunciated in the Gorgias, has completely triumphed.

But we do desire inward peace—to feel at one with God and reconciled to him. This we can obtain through repentance. Repentance lies partly in our own power, and yet we do well to pray: "Help us to repent." God, in human language, inclines himself to us as we strain forward towards him. By a law of his being which we can never hope, and which we do not need, to understand, he, as it were, imparts of himself to us if we honestly and eagerly desire to be at one with him. Reconciliation is neither purely human nor purely divine. It is both in one.

The "at one ness" and the sense of it are never complete and not always permanent. We can make no hard and fast theory. As

I have already indicated, repentance may in some lives produce an "atonement" of such a magnitude and constancy as to constitute an epoch. The inward peace then achieved is never subsequently disturbed. The quondam sinner feels reconciled with God. By a false apprehension of religion, or by a misconception of a common and even wholesome doctrine, a man may have continually striven to do his duty and yet continually be agonised by the sense of failure. In spite of this error, or even because of it, a crisis occurs by which his whole attitude towards God (and, perhaps, as he mistakenly thinks, God's whole attitude towards him) becomes changed. He feels a new creature; he has begun a new life. He is now full of a child-like confidence in the goodness of God, and petty faults cannot shake him from the quiet and blessedness of that trustful conviction.

Repentance and reconciliation may be felt in quite another way than this, a way less decisive and trenchant, but not necessarily less ethical or religious. For, as I have already said, in thousands of good and noble lives there is no one, big, religious crisis at all. Life marches on with a fairly even flow, and, on the whole, some religious and moral progress is made. But, intermingled with this progress and retarding it, there is also some wrongdoing and sin.

There is no one big repentance or one critical upheaval, but many little repentances and many little reconciliations. Yet it would be unjust to say that they are shoddy and unreal. The old Rabbis spoke well when they said: "He who says, 'I will sin and then repent,' his repentance will not avail him." If the validity of a revolution is to be judged by its success, so, within certain limits, may we test the purity of repentance. Yet if a man commit a sin twelve times in a year and feel repentance after each committal, who but God can know whether, without those seemingly flimsy repentances, he might not have transgressed twenty-four times instead of twelve? Who but God can read aright the complex subtlety of the human soul? If a man moves forward one foot and slips back eleven inches he yet makes progress. He, too, may feel at peace with God, because he believes that God is merciful and loving, that he understands the frailty of man, and realises how much harder it is for some persons to be good than for others. And specially he may feel at peace with God in moments of sincere contrition and repentance,—moments which, in one sense, he knows should be less frequent, but which, in another sense, he is aware had better come frequently than not at all.

Atonement, then, according to this Jewish teaching, is a matter between God and our-

selves. On the one side is man, aspiring, struggling, sinning and repenting; on the other side is God, immutable, righteous and alone. Between them and their dealings with each other there is neither intercessor nor barrier. God, the eternal giver, is ever ready to receive us. The streams of his influence are ever issuing forth from him: it is for man to put himself by effort and repentance into an attitude in which he can partake of this influence and move forward by means of it. Even as he strives to put himself into this attitude—in the very process of effort or repentance—the influence already comes to him as saving help and cheering strength. God joins forces with him. The two agencies work together. It is only with vague metaphors such as these that we can represent what happens to our own minds. But anything less than these metaphors seems to fall behind a truth, which may surely be none the less a truth because, in its subtlety, it cannot be expressed in formulæ or reduced to words.

What has hitherto been said seems to indicate that the communion between God and man is a fundamental doctrine of religion. Deny that man and God communicate with each other, and you destroy the possibility of the deepest religious experience. If God does not influence man, and man is not "heard" by God, such experience is a delusion. It is

this communion which gives meaning and reality to prayer. We might indeed offer adoration and praise to God as the Creator and Ruler of the world, even if he did not enter into conscious and living relations with every individual soul, but the deeper phases of prayer would be impossible and absurd.

Most of us have felt difficulties about prayer. Perhaps the main reason for these difficulties is that we too closely confound prayer with petition. Now to pray is not the same thing as to pray for, though he who utterly disbelieved in the validity of "praying for" would probably before very long cease also to pray. By "praying for" I mean asking God to give you something which you have not got. Liberal teachers of all religions would, I fancy, agree that it is idle or even wrong to pray for external and material things. To pray that it may be fine to-morrow conflicts with our highest conceptions of God, who is revealed not in capricious lawlessness, but in abiding law. Drink prussic acid in sufficient potency and quantity, and no prayers can save you.

It has often been said that the highest prayer is contained in the words "Thy will be done." In one sense the words state a truism. All that happens, hard as it is to acknowledge it sometimes, happens by God's will. What the words rather mean

is: "Whatever befalls me I shall accept in resignation and faith as God's will, and therefore as right." It is the mood of Job when he said: "The Lord gave, the Lord took: blessed be the name of the Lord." It is the mood of Socrates, who was convinced that naught could befall a good man but what was ultimately to his good. Religious faith demands that we should even go farther, and believe that the ultimate destiny of every man, bad or good, will tend towards his own final welfare. But the words "Thy will be done" must not be understood as the paralysis of human effort or as the expression of indifferentism. The general on the eve of battle may pray "Thy will be done" as regards his own personal life, but he will none the less passionately desire that the victory on the morrow may be his and his country's, and he will none the less do all in his power to achieve it. Nor will he for a moment accept failure as the inevitable will of God. He will do all he can to reverse it on the next occasion.

The case is very different with regard to praying for spiritual results. It may indeed be argued that we should only pray for that which lies partly within our own power. Yet even this does not mean that prayer is vain. Our moral achievements are partly due to our own effort, in the narrower sense of the word,

and partly to the grace of God. So, too, our prayers for strength or for repentance may tend to put us into that condition of mind and soul when, according to the law of his nature and ours, the spirit and grace of God can more potently act upon us. Such a prayer is not, then, ineffective of result, and yet it is also true to say that such prayer is its own answer. Moreover, prayer is not mere petition; it is also aspiration, resolve and communion. "No other action," it has well been said, "is so mysterious; there is none in which we seem, in the same manner, to renounce ourselves that we may be one with God."[1] He who neglects prayer while yet believing in God would seem, in the truest sense of the words, to be "sinning against his own soul."

As a practical corollary, all parents should realise the need of cultivating in themselves and in their children the faculty of prayer. Here is one reason (among many others) for regular family worship, inasmuch as the average person who ceases to pray in public may gradually cease to pray in private. The divine spirit, we may assuredly assume, is still within us, whether we believe and remember it to be there or not. We may also assume that the divine grace comes even to those who neither

[1] Jowett: *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Romans*, vol. ii. p. 247 (second edition, 1859).

ask for nor recognise it. But it does not follow that those who consciously seek most for God (and live a life that corresponds with their search) do not find him most, or, if we may use so material and inadequate a metaphor, have not most of him. Amid the temptations of the world many can only remain unsullied by asking strength from the source of strength and of all good—by putting their trust, as the homely phrase runs, wholly upon God.

CHAPTER IV

So much, then, as regards the relation of God to man within the limits of man's life on earth. It is in our view of this relation that our conception of the true nature of the Divine Being is expressed. We can only realise God by reference to our own lives, or by what we suppose that he does in us, to us, and for us. And even what is commonly regarded as the central doctrine of Judaism takes its importance for us from precisely the same point of view. Ever since the prophetic period Judaism has laid great stress upon the Unity of God. That unity has been very differently conceived at different times. At first Jehovah, or Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, was the One God in the sense that there was no other God like him, and especially none whom his people Israel might worship. He was "one," too, in the sense that he had not, like the Baals of Canaan and Phœnicia, a variety of local manifestations. Later on he was "one" in the sense that he was the only God, that there was no other God

than he. After the rise of Christianity, when the dogmas of the Incarnation and the Trinity were introduced, the "Unity" again assumed a different aspect. Then it was taken to include the Jewish disbelief in those dogmas, our emphatic dissent from the view that God ever became man, and that a man was God. All Christians assert that they believe in God's unity quite as much as Jews believe in it. Only they say that *their* unity is less barren, meagre, abstract, remote and transcendental than the Jewish unity. We, on the contrary, still maintain that our unity is better, simpler, truer than theirs. We still deny that any man was God, and the necessity or possibility of the Incarnation. We admit that God may have not merely three "aspects," but three million. We can appreciate a philosophic interpretation of the Trinity; we can understand what is meant by God in man, God in history, God in nature; the divine Spirit in man, the divine Spirit in nature; God "reaching down" to man, God "returning" to his own infinitude. All these are partial expressions of valuable truths; they only cease to be valuable when their partial and metaphorical character is forgotten, and they become stiffened into theories and hardened into dogmas. But while we, too, believe that man contains within him a fragment of the Divine, we deny that any par-

ticular man was also "very God" and of "one substance" with the Father.

Nor are these differences between Judaism and Christianity merely differences of dogma upon abstruse technicalities of metaphysical theology. They touch the religious life of the individual. Both sides would agree to this, and Christians would say that only they fully know the Father who know the Son, and that the blessedness of redemption in and through Christ constitutes a religious joy and religious experience deeper and more glorious than can be known to the members of any other faith. And Jews would say that none can feel so near to God as those who in their communion with him recognise and require no intercessor and no mediator. Judaism (whatever it may have been in the past) is now a religion without priests: no mystic rites or words intervene or mediate between man and God. When we are told that the Jewish God is distant, we smile with astonishment at the strange accusation. So near is he, that he needs no Son to bring him nearer to us, no intercessor to reconcile him with us or us with him. The child needs no one to bring him into the very presence of the Father.

We are to-day more exercised about our life with God on earth than on what will happen to us after that dissolution of body from soul which we call Death. This does

not mean that our earthly life may not be a mere brief preparation for a purer and better life hereafter, a life with possibilities of knowledge and of love transcending aught that we can now realise and conceive. But into the nature of this other life God has not permitted us to see. We may think of it as a life of progress and increasing purity; we may be convinced that God will take care of us always, and that upon the good and the bad alike he will always exercise his purifying righteousness and his redeeming love; but beyond this general and comforting conviction we do not and we cannot go.

In old days the attitude of many persons towards a future life was very different. They thought less of purification and opportunity than of punishment and reward. They believed less in the immortality of the soul than in the resurrection of the body. They were greatly concerned as to their own future prospects. What would happen to them after death? Were they "saved"? If they "rose" again, would they be "punished" in hell or "rewarded" in heaven? Could they attain "salvation" by "works," or must it be by "faith"? And if by "faith," then what exactly constituted a living and a saving faith?

Few people trouble their heads about such matters to-day; liberal Judaism, at any rate,

has passed beyond them. That is not because we do not believe in a life after death. It is true that we do not believe in what the thirteenth "Principle of the Faith" calls the "resurrection of the dead," if indeed these words were intended to mean a bodily resurrection, which many scholars deny. But none the less do we hold that the earthly life is not the end. As to what happens to us after death we have no conception, and we form no theory. It is reasonable to assume that the lot of the wicked and the righteous will not and cannot be the same, but what the "punishment" of the one may mean, or the "reward" of the other, is known to God alone. This only we hold: that no punishment can be other than remedial, disciplinal, or educational, and that therefore no punishment can be "eternal." How any one can believe in eternal punishment, or in endless damnation, or in any soul which God has made being "lost," and yet also believe in the love, nay, even in the justice, of God, is a mystery indeed. But the human mind is capable of believing at one and the same time the most inconsistent dogmas, and there is no doubt that there have been and that there are thousands of persons who believe both in God's love and in "everlasting punishment."

What the divine tests of goodness may be are unknown to us. God sees a thousand

delicacies of character which we do not see. He alone can truly judge; he alone can make full "allowance," or, on the other hand, read fully the evil heart. But we cannot believe that God's tests are more clumsy and less ethical than man's. And if to us a man is not good according to the religious dogmas which he believes, but according to his deeds, his will, his thoughts, his character, it will not be otherwise with God. It seems almost superfluous to mention that liberal Judaism rejects the conception that a preliminary test to "salvation" is to believe in any particular religious dogma or to have undergone any particular religious rite.

"Justification by works" and "justification by faith" can each be made to wear a religious or ethical character, but the perversion of the second is worse than the perversion of the first. To hold that a man who, owing to intellectual and moral difficulties, does not believe in God and yet leads a pure and noble life, will be "punished" for his unbelief, or even "damned eternally," seems a calumny upon God. The evils which "justification by faith" has caused in the history of Christianity would need the most impartial and well-informed of historians, for justice would have also to be done to its good side and to the benefits, both moral and religious, which it has undoubtedly conferred.

"Justification by faith" seems at bottom to be a healthy protest against a perverted conception of justification by works. It may be taken to signify "justification by character." It is a ludicrous idea to suppose that you can buy salvation by doing a certain number of rites, fulfilling a certain number of laws—even moral laws—or avoiding a certain number of sins. No human judge would assess character in such an external way: he would not add up the items of "good" and the items of "evil," subtract the one from the other, and strike a balance. Character is more subtle than money. If you try to fulfil a thousand laws, of which even five hundred are "moral," with the object of "reward," you may really *deserve* "punishment." Your heart may be full of conceit, self-righteousness, or pride; you may be selfish and timorous, thinking only of your own "salvation," unloving, pitiless, and sullen. Here is one of the dangers of "legalism." Man cannot acquire *merit* in relation to God. Do your best, and you fall far short of the ideal. And the better you do and are, the more fully you realise the size of your gaps and your failures. No man on the score of his works has a *right* to "salvation." Rights and merits are conceptions which have meaning as between man and man. They are valueless and inapplicable between man and God.

Justification by works seems a healthy protest against a perverted conception of justification by faith. It may be taken to signify "justification by morality," so that finally the two conceptions will coincide, because morality and character mean for the individual the same thing. It is a ludicrous idea to suppose that so long as you *believe* truly, you may *do* what you please. It is still worse to suppose that, even if a certain set of dogmas can be labelled "true" and another set "false," a man who sincerely holds the latter, and lives a noble life, is not far more acceptable to God than the man who sincerely holds the former, and leads a life less excellent. But all these discussions about terms and formulæ are becoming musty and outworn. When we die, all of us, good and bad alike, are in the hands of God, and nothing will befall us which will not be in absolute accordance with supreme righteousness and supreme love. Redemption and purification; fuller knowledge, deeper righteousness, nobler love; with what other conceptions and hopes of the future life, if God grant that life to us with our human personality retained and revived, can we move forward to the death which shall lift the veil?

To the average man the difficulties of believing in God, and more especially in a God to whom it is worth while and not pre-

sumptuous to pray, are twofold. First, there is the difficulty that the only proof or verification of the reality of communion with God is that communion itself. If a man say, I cannot see how there can be any active relation of the infinite and divine Spirit with the finite spirit of man, it is impossible to prove to him that he misjudges alike the power of God and of man. You can point to the wide consensus of opinion on this particular subject among so many great and good men of many ages and many lands, but this consensus is no proof, and it can, moreover, be explained away. This is what the late Professor T. H. Green meant when in his famous address on Faith he said: "You cannot find a verification of the idea of God and duty; you can only make it. . . . Though the failing heart cries out for evidence, at the worst live on as if there were God and duty, and they will prove themselves to you in your life." Try and (in most cases) you will find.

The second difficulty of belief to the average man is quite different. It is the old problem of Evil, which, in one or other of its protean forms, has puzzled and agonised men's minds from Job's days and before him. Evil as misery, idiocy, or madness,—evil as undeserved misfortune, desolation, and ruin,—above all, evil as sin,—has ever harassed and

burdened the heart of man in its struggles to find and rest in God. This is not the place, and I have not the knowledge, to give even the meagrest outline of the history of the problem, nor of the various solutions and palliatives which religion and philosophy have attempted to discover and suggest. Nor can I treat of the varying attitudes which, in the course of its long history, Judaism has taken up towards the grim mystery. Judaism has theorised little, for no hard and fast dogma will serve our turn.

Whatever was thought about the matter before the conception of an eternally righteous Deity had been clearly and firmly attained, is of no present interest. It was not unnatural that when the idea was reached that God only acted on principles of righteousness, suffering and evil were at first strictly regarded as the invariable results of sin. Now some evil may be and is the result of sin, but the dogma that this is true of all evil caused unfortunate consequences. A heavy or sudden calamity led either the sufferer or the spectators to infer that owing to his own, or possibly to his father's sin, he was the victim of God's justified wrath. As there is often no relation whatever between suffering and desert, the frequent consequence of this crude and outward dogma of "tit for tat" was scepticism or despair. By its other aspects it also pro-

duced self-righteousness, morbid scrupulosity, shallow externalism, and cruel misjudgments.

An immense change in the whole subject took place owing to the growth of the doctrine of a future life. It was now far easier to abandon the false conception that suffering was always the consequence of sin. Even before, a few higher minds had realised that *some* suffering, at any rate, might be disciplinal and purifying, and not a punishment. It was far easier to maintain and enlarge that conception when death was no longer regarded as the end to joy and to the life with God. A life in "heaven," or a life after the resurrection upon a renovated earth, could be considered as the more than adequate compensation for any quantity of mortal ills. Moreover, the whole character and estimate of material joys and evils became cheapened when the limit of existence was no longer marked off by death. And the prosperity of the wicked ceased to be a trial to faith, when in another world their punishment could be carried out more effectually and on a mightier scale. Evils were no longer confused together: moral and physical evil were separated to the mind.

Rabbinic Judaism produced no consistent theory upon the problem. This fluidity of opinion had a good as well as an evil side. It allowed progress, but it also allowed old

and outworn errors to continue. The Rabbis never quite shook off the dogma that all calamities must be the punishments of sin. Absurd examples of this doctrine still figure in the orthodox prayer-books. They occur happily in quotations only and not in the prayers themselves. Thus in a passage quoted from the Mishnah we are told that "seven kinds of punishments come into the world for seven important transgressions. If some give their tithes and others do not, a dearth ensues from drought," with other nonsense to the same effect. But, on the other hand, the absence of fixity permitted other and nobler doctrines to be taught at least as widely. The future life served to the Rabbis, as it serves to ourselves, as the key by which the problem will ultimately be solved for all. They spoke, as we too speak, of the chastisements of love. And they felt, as we too feel, that to the mere *understanding* the problem was in the last resort incapable of solution. "It is not in our power," they said, "to comprehend the calamities of the righteous or the prosperity of the wicked."

Faith can accept as a harmony what the understanding must always regard as dissonance: a righteous God and an evil and suffering world. Those who have seen and battled with most evil, both in its physical and moral forms, are usually the profoundest believers in righteousness and in God. The

most strenuous fighters with degradation and sin are usually the most passionate believers in a God of love. A wonderful phenomenon, and one which in itself seems a witness to the reality of the Divine. Reason can indeed suggest palliatives, but faith and love ask for no palliatives; they dare to know all and still they believe.

Elsewhere I have indicated what these palliatives are and in what branches of evil they fail us, so that we are left, as it were, to battle with the problem alone. "Some forms of suffering can be shot through with explanatory and ennobling light which makes them bearable and even good; but other forms remain dark and inexplicable. The sufferings of sentient animals, and more especially the sufferings inflicted upon them by thoughtless and cruel men, continue to be a hopeless puzzle. Among mankind there are evils such as idiocy, madness and moral degradation, which seem beyond explanation. There are problems respecting the relation of civilised to uncivilised races; there are problems respecting the endless individuals who have lived and died without any approach to that mental and moral stature of which mankind is capable. There is not merely the strange difference which oppressed the mind of Job between the happiness of this man and that; but we ask, and ask in vain,

what can be the meaning of that suffering and squalor which do not ennoble or purify, but lead in many cases almost inevitably to sin and depravity? To these and many similar problems no answer can be given; we, no less than Job, must simply trust in the infinite wisdom and righteousness of God.

"On the other hand, for certain aspects of suffering there are ennobling alleviations. Suffering may be and often is a warning and a discipline. This use of suffering may be expanded almost indefinitely. We all of us have seen how in times of trial and trouble people are frequently at their best. Unexpected reserves of goodness and self-sacrifice are then displayed. The brave endurance of misery at home, the ardent struggle to relieve it abroad, and the good fight against degradation and sin, have provided, and still provide, the noblest opportunities for the exhibition of human patience, pity and human love. A world in which there was no wrong to redress, no evil to conquer, no misery to heal, would destroy some of the best possibilities for human greatness at a blow. Where would be the opportunity for compassion, for sacrifice, for love?

"Again, we may rightly argue that moral and mental excellence are entirely incom-

mensurate with all outward prosperity or adversity. The one true good is righteousness; the one true evil is sin. Hence the prosperity of the wicked is no more a 'problem.' For if they be wicked, then they possess in their wickedness the greatest evil. Hence, too, a rigorous Stoic would say that the afflictions of the righteous constitute no problem. For if he be righteous, he possesses in himself the greatest good. If punishment is calculated to cure a man of his wickedness, the most severe misfortune that can befall a wicked man is that he should not be punished. For then, *ex hypothesi*, he will still continue to possess in himself the greatest evil. And if righteousness be the greatest good—unique and *sui generis*—then it does not materially add to the good fortune of a righteous man whether he meet with so-called 'prosperity' or so-called 'adversity,' for in either case he already possesses in himself the greatest good.

"Put thus baldly these assertions are paradoxical, yet every one must see that there is contained in them some element of ennobling truth. And in fact these paradoxes have had a great influence for hope and comfort in the history of the world.

"And, again, there is much suffering which is voluntarily undergone by one person for

the sake, or the place of another. Suffering for the sake of others seems to give it a high and holy place in the scheme of God's world. If it be true, as George Eliot says, that men 'still own that life to be the highest which is a conscious voluntary sacrifice,' we must also admit that this highest would be unattainable if there were no such things as sorrow and pain. Without suffering no sacrifice, and this thought gives to a great quantity of suffering a peculiar glory and a distinctive worth. It says in the Talmud, 'Of those who suffer humiliation but do not inflict it, who are reviled but revile not, who do all from the love of God, and rejoice at their sufferings, the Scripture says: They that love him are as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.'

"Looked at from this point of view suffering, which in one sense was man's direst problem, becomes in another sense man's chiefest prerogative. Suffering and pain can be regarded as the condition of progress, both of the individual and the race. We rise on stepping-stones of suffering and pain to 'higher things.' And not only we individually, but also humanity as a whole. This, again, is a thought which has been much dwelt upon in modern times, for it seems to go hand in hand with, and to transfigure, the modern doctrine

of evolution. From the lowest, crudest beginnings man has slowly risen and is slowly rising still. All that he, by the will and by the grace of God, has achieved in his long history has been achieved at the cost, and through the means, of struggle and of suffering. This view of suffering and even of evil as a great educational instrument in the progressive movement of the human race from the lower to the higher (whether the progress be in the sphere of truth, of beauty, or of goodness) can also be illustrated from the poets. But strengthening and stimulating as this thought may be, it does not really give a satisfactory solution to the problem of misery and evil unless, together with this gradual evolution and education of the human race in the mass, there is also a gradual evolution and education of each individual human soul. Thus, for the last and most potent 'alleviation' of all, we come to the great hope of hopes—that the self-conscious life of man is not terminated by death.

> What hope of comfort or redress?
> Behind the veil, behind the veil.

"'And Death once dead, there's no more dying then' (Shakespeare, sonnet cxlvi.) If this hope of England's greatest poet be justified, then indeed the problem of evil

may also ultimately be solved. Then the idiot or the savage may also have his chance, and gain his insight into truth and goodness and God. Then the flotsam and jetsam of humanity, its sinners and its deformities, need not be merely regarded as the price of ascending civilisation, but each of them, with his own place and value, will justify his Creator. Only if man be immortal can we justly say with Browning :—

> And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
> For the fulness of the days? Have we withered or agonised?
> Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence?
> Why rushed the discords in but that harmony should be prized?

"Now this belief in the immortality of the soul is dependent upon our faith in God, and therefore the answer suggested by the speeches of the Almighty to Job is our answer still. Rightly and solemnly has Jowett said : 'Thus the belief in the immortality of the soul rests at last on the belief in God. If there is a good and a wise God, then there is a progress of mankind towards perfection; and if there is no progress of men towards perfection, then there is no good and wise God.'[1] And let us note his words, 'a progress of mankind towards perfection.'

[1] *Dialogues of Plato*, vol. ii. p. 180 (third edition).

That is what we want the future life for. We do not want it for 'punishment,' still less do we want it for 'reward'; we do not even so very greatly want it for the redress of this life's inequalities in outward prosperity; we want it for the progress of men towards perfection. We want it, if I may say so, for the sinner even more than for the saint. And yet shall the soul of the righteous be, as it were, limited to earth, and then perish utterly? We would fain believe that

> transplanted human worth
> Will bloom to profit otherwhere.

"And therefore we echo the Hebrew sage's trust: 'The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God: their hope is full of immortality.'" [1]

Such seems to me to be the attitude which liberal Judaism may assume towards this eternal problem of Evil. It is a simple and childlike attitude, we may be told, which hardly befits the problem's hugeness and complexity. But, on the other hand, it does not attempt to explain what is inexplicable; it does not say that every form of evil can be solved by one and the same solution, or indeed that the problem as a whole and in

[1] I have taken these paragraphs from my *Bible for Home Reading*, vol. ii. pp. 201-207.

all its aspects can be solved at all. It may not explain, but at all events it does not explain away. It makes a great demand upon faith, but, so far as the utmost of human agony is concerned, and through the long drawn-out story of their varied sorrows, the Jews have never proved themselves unequal to the strain. And so indeed it would seem to be: God has not put upon faith a greater burden than faith can bear. A knowledge and experience of evil often increase faith instead of lessening it; amid the darkness of sorrow and sin the divine goodness seems to shine more brightly.

The love of God to man is often compared to the love of a father for his child. Hence both Jews and Christians speak of "Our Father who art in heaven." And the relation which we may feel towards God is also most aptly figured in the relation of a child to his father. The metaphor, like all metaphors, has its limitations; it *is* a metaphor, and must not be pushed too far. To begin with, God is perfect and self-sufficient. There are many duties of a son to a father which have no parallel whatever in the relation of ourselves to God. A son may serve or benefit his father; in what sense can we render service to God?

In olden days men "served" the gods from

very mingled motives. Such service might be a kind of bribery or, if it savoured of wizardry, it went even near to compulsion. In one way or another material advantage was sought as the price of rites or prayers. Outward religion was a bargain between man and Deity. These coarser and cruder notions became gradually spiritualised. Men still hoped to secure God's favour in return for service rendered, but the service was looked upon as a privilege to them as well as a glory to God. The general conception of the Old Testament is that Israel's duty and prerogative consist in making the world at large acknowledge the greatness and unique excellence of Israel's God.

This conception is sometimes interpreted more widely and spiritually, sometimes in a more particularist and outward form with which at the present day we can feel only partial sympathy. It may be, and we believe that it is, the divine intention that all the inhabitants of the world should acknowledge the one and only God, but this goal of history is devised in man's interest and not in God's. God was, and is, and will be eternally perfect and self-sufficient. He needs nothing for himself. He was perfect and self-sufficient before our earth began, he will remain perfect and self-sufficient when the life of earth has ceased.

The glory of God may be the goal of our endeavour, but it is *our* glory to show forth that glory ; it is not *God's* glory that it should be shown forth by us. "God doth not need either man's work or his own gifts." We may humbly believe that the divine Father is pleased by the adoration of his human children, but we must be on our guard against the developed use of any metaphor which would imply any want to be satisfied in the absolute and eternal perfection of the divine nature.

But there are various other aspects of man's relation to God which are well symbolised or indicated by the metaphor of father and sons. It expresses, first of all, our glad dependence upon God. He is the author of our being ; to him we owe every gift we enjoy, every power we use. We feel gratitude towards God. But, secondly, the metaphor expresses what we have already observed to be the radical and necessary truth by which alone religion can exist. There is a kinship between God and man. Between two beings wholly unlike each other there can be no communion or sympathy. Man can commune with God, only if, at however great a distance, he is like God. The son is created in the image of the father. That image is but the fraction of a fraction of the father's perfection ; but it *is* a fraction.

Truth and goodness, as man conceives them, are not wholly other than truth and goodness as God conceives them.

Man, therefore, is not merely the creation but the child of God, and the wiser and better he is and the more he knows and loves, the more is he God's child. Here, then, we have a second and very important meaning in the metaphor. And there is yet a third. The relationship between a son and his father, in its highest and best form, is a remarkable mixture of intimacy and reverence. The son is happy and fearless in his father's presence, but he never forgets what is due to a father from a son. He knows his father, and his father knows him, and the fuller the knowledge the greater is the son's affection and intimacy. He is not afraid that the father should read his very soul; even for his faults his father will "make allowance," and in loving justice and righteous love he will reprove or forgive them. It will be easily seen how much of all this seems applicable and transferable to the relation between man and God. Here, too, the highest and purest relation contains intimacy (in a special sense) and reverence. Man is happy and fearless in the realised presence of God, but he always remembers the whole measure of the difference which separates, and eternally will separate, the

human from the divine. God is very near to him, but he is man and God is God. The better and the more intensely he can realise God, the greater will be his love for God, and the more continuous and the more vivid will be the "intimacy" between them. The man pours out his soul in unperturbed communion with the Father in heaven. Alone with the alone, without mediator or intercessor, he enters the presence of God. Though he is mere man and the Father is very God, he needs no mixture of human and divine intermediary to act as go-between or messenger; he makes his way, God-aided but alone, to the presence of the Father. He has no fears before God. He is not sinless, and he hates his sins. Yet even before the divine purity he does not seek to hide them. God "makes allowances" with more righteous love, with more loving justice, than any human father. And he prays unto God that he may be purified of his sins by any suffering that God may send him. He feels near to God and is at peace.

There are other metaphors besides that of father and son by which the relationships of God to man and of man to God can also be expressed. None, however, seem to fit and suit so well. Christian theologians commonly argue that the father and son relationship was first developed and realised by Jesus.

They often say that the Christian feels himself to be God's son, while the Jew feels himself to be God's servant. The Christian feels near to God, happy and fearless with him. The Jew is ever conscious of the immense distance which separates him from God; he does obeisance; he feels no intimacy. The one communes, the other serves; the one loves, the other fears.

It is probably true that no one has ever felt more purely and intensely than Jesus the Fatherhood of God, and that the doctrine is nowhere expressed in simpler and better words than in the Synoptic Gospels; but that to the Jew God is "far," that he feels no intimacy, that he does not commune or love, and that to him God is not a Father, but only a Lord, a Master and a King, is a falsehood.[1] One great aim of Christian theologians seems to consist in finding contrasts, and they make free use of the fact that light looks all the more brilliant with dark shadows as its foil. Liberal Judaism need not imitate these unhistoric practices. We may freely absorb and adopt whatever is good and true in the New Testament; it is a one-sidedness about equal to that of the Christian theologians themselves, when old-fashioned Jewish critics,

[1] A favourite verse, often quoted in the Jewish liturgy, is Jeremiah xxxi. 20: "Is not Ephraim my dear son?" It is given an individualistic application.

on the plea that whatever is new in the Gospels is not true, and whatever is true is not new, declare or imply that there is no religious profit and spiritual gain to be obtained from their perusal.

Yet, on the other hand, the metaphor of subjects and king is not without its value. In fact, the important thing is not so much the metaphor in itself as the way in which it is interpreted. The son and father metaphor may be interpreted objectionably, and so may the subject and king metaphor. If the king be regarded as a despot, whose commands the subjects seek to obey in slavish and cringing fear, what can be more objectionable and irreligious? But if the king be conceived as the living and self-conscious ideal of Righteousness and Wisdom, what greater privilege and joy can be conceived than that of fulfilling his commands? What can such commands be than perfectly wise and good, if they are the outflow of divine perfection? It is man's glory to perform God's will, when he realises who it is that gives the order. The command is no *arbitrary* ukase; it is accepted by the conscience and the mind as necessarily and assuredly good. Obedience is rendered willingly, because *God* is the King. The law of God is the law of goodness. In its service is happiness and freedom. One can get as much "joy" and "nearness,"

as much devotion and *abandon*, out of the subject and king metaphor as out of the father and son metaphor. For the subject is no mere subject: he feels towards God what the enthusiastic clansman feels for his chieftain and lord. It is no mere grudging and calculated obedience which he renders—so much work for so much reward. It is the dedication of the whole life, together with the willingness to sacrifice life, in the service of a beloved master, whom reason and feeling alike acclaim to be perfect in wisdom, righteousness and love.

That, let me here parenthetically observe, is the old Jewish conception of the Law. Obedience to the law is not a mere external duty imposed from without upon reluctant and unwilling slaves. But fulfilment of the law is a glad service rendered to divine perfection; if it is man's duty, it is also his joy. Man accepts the law as the pure product of perfection, and therefore itself perfect. To fulfil the law, or even to seek to fulfil it, is of necessity the most complete self-realisation of which man is or can be capable. We shall meet with this conception again in dealing with the Bible. I only notice it here in order that liberal Jews may not be puzzled by the plausible rhetoric of Christian theologians. They must not think that a felt nearness to God, a glad communion with him, and the willing dedi-

cation of life to his service, are the prerogatives of another creed. Orthodox Judaism, too, is as capable of these essential religious experiences as orthodox Christianity. The metaphor of the son and the father is not limited to Christianity, and the metaphor of the subject and the king is not necessarily prejudicial to the higher developments of personal religion.

The "service" which we may render God, like the relation in which we stand to him, may be expressed and displayed in all the three great departments and divisions of our human nature. Feeling, willing, and knowing are all implicated in our relation to God, and the service of God asks from us their conscious exercise and discipline.

According to the famous passage in Deuteronomy we have to love God with heart, soul, and might. The list is less clear and accurate than a modern enumeration might be, but it means the same thing. The whole man is asked for in the service of God. To begin with: Knowledge. It is obviously impossible for the majority of us to be philosophers or critics, but, on the one hand, every one must serve God by cultivating his intellectual powers, while, on the other hand, those who claim and reach a certain level of culture and knowledge in other departments of thought must not

leave religion and Judaism on one side. They owe it to themselves and to their community, they owe it to man and to God, to think about these solemn and all-important matters, and thus not to let religion slip out of their lives and their children's lives for lack of consideration and reflection. They must not give up the habit and practice of prayer because they have never thought out the question whether prayer is or is not an illusion, whether it is or is not one of the highest exercises of the human mind. They must not slip away from Judaism because they have never given themselves the trouble to think whether Judaism can and should still be a living religious force among the religious forces of to-day. They must not, in short, neglect God and his service because they are too lazy to think about him. And they must not hold unworthy notions about God because they are too indolent or too timid to clear up their minds, or to grapple with the problems, so far as these problems fall within their power and ken. God and religion are either worthy of our utmost thought, or they are empty figments of the mind.

Then, secondly, the Will. By saying that the service of God requires our wills, we imply the close relation of religion to morality. The essence of God, according to our purest conception of him, is that he is the

ideal of Righteousness and Love. He is the source and condition of morality, as he is the source and condition of knowledge. If there were no God there would be no goodness. They who recognise or believe that, must also logically perceive and allow that the service of goodness should also be the conscious service of God who is the source and condition of goodness. And we can also invert the statement, and truly say that the service of God is the service of goodness. The most characteristic and most essential service of God is the service of our fellow-men. The life of active and social righteousness, the life of redeeming and regenerating love, the life of beneficence and of justice,—such lives, lived as a conscious self-dedication to God, render him the highest and purest "service." It is the eternal glory of the Hebrew prophets that they announced and emphasised this great and superb truth. One God and one only to be acknowledged and adored, and the "service" of this God to be shown and expressed in justice, mercy and loving-kindness,—that was the essence of Judaism as proclaimed and promulgated twenty-six centuries ago, and that is the essence of Judaism to-day. We need and can render no service to God for *his* sake and benefit; all our service is for our own sake, for our own benefit. He needs not our worship

and praise; but it is good for us to worship and praise him. He needs not our prayers in order that he may "remember" us or "forgive" us: the righteousness, the mercy, the love of the supreme and perfect God cannot be increased by man. "Canst thou love creation more than he who created it?"

But, thirdly, the service of God demands not only our "wills," but our Feeling. The truly religious man is he who *feels* that God is near him, who *feels* the divine presence, who *feels* joy in the thought of God and bliss in the fulfilment of the divine will. Such feeling may lead to grave aberrations; untempered by reason and morality it may end in lazy dreaming. Or, again, it may be degraded into sensual excesses, foolish hallucinations, or wild absurdities. The history of mysticism in all religions may furnish proof of these aberrations. Nevertheless here too one might cite the proverb, *Corruptio optimi pessima corruptio*, and one might argue that if the degradation of mysticism is religion at its worst, the purest mysticism is religion at its best. Religion and morality must be blended together. When the moral law is felt to be the will of God, and when at the same time the man's desire is to make his will subservient to the divine will, this necessary blending is accomplished. And when, again, the man feels that what is best in him is from

God and of God, that his soul is not without kinship with the Divine, and his will is not without divine support and sustenance, then the highest stage of religion is being achieved. Man is not lost in God, but when he feels most himself, he is also least severed and separate from God. He humbly believes that he is "at one with" the Divine. "Not my will"—not the lower human will, with its personal and selfish aims—but "Thy will," the higher human will, which desires nothing but what is consonant with truth, righteousness and love. Of such a mysticism, which never loses its hold upon facts, which is never forgetful that God is Pity and Righteousness and Truth, and that nothing which does not promote the reign and the triumph of pity and righteousness and truth can be consistent with or pleasing to God, there is small likelihood of danger or excess.

Such are the ideas of the general relations of God and man to one another, which I would venture to put forward as an individual phase of liberal Judaism to-day.

CHAPTER V

We have now to turn to matters more controversial. A Jewish parent who had read the foregoing pages might say: "There is nothing specifically *Jewish* in them. The doctrines, thus far set forth, might be held by a Unitarian or a Theist. To hold these doctrines does not constitute a Jew." But the argument is false. For cardinal doctrines of Judaism are contained in the preceding chapters, *even although other persons who are not Jews believe them too.* Judaism came first. If offshoots from Christianity abandon essential and differentiating doctrines of Christianity, and thereby construct faiths similar to our own, it is surely, at least, as rational to argue that the adherents of these newer faiths have reverted to or adopted the main tenets of Judaism as to assert that, because their tenets are like ours, therefore ours are not Jewish and our own. Let no one be dispossessed of his Judaism because another man holds it under a newer name.

Yet there are other tenets of Judaism (and

more especially of orthodox Judaism) which, though less important than the main doctrines about God and his relation to man, are specifically Jewish in the sense that none but Jews cherish and maintain them. And there is one special doctrine relative to the Jews themselves as a separate religious brotherhood, charged with a peculiar mission, which may be justly regarded as essential to every phase and type of Judaism.

This portion of our subject is delicate and difficult. Some persons feel more deeply about matters wherein they differ from others than about matters of even graver moment wherein they agree with them. And it is in relation to the questions with which we have now to deal that many persons feel puzzled and uncertain, so that some are inclined to give the whole of Judaism up through sheer doubt and despondency. For it is here that the greatest difference is felt to exist between the old Judaism and the new. It is here that people are beginning to ask themselves, "Can we still be Jews?" For the old Judaism taught that God had specially revealed himself to a particular race and to this race only; that this revelation was accompanied by miracles and wonders, and that the contents of it were contained in a Law which was perfect, immutable and divine. The old Judaism taught that the words of the Hebrew Bible were all

"true," that its "miracles" really happened, that its writers, and more especially Moses, the author of the Pentateuch, were divinely and supernaturally inspired. Thus of the thirteen "Articles of the Jewish Creed," the sixth declares that "all the words of the prophets are true"; the seventh that "the prophecy of Moses was true," and that he was the "chief of the prophets, both of those that preceded and of those that followed him"; the eighth that "the whole Law as we now possess it" (in the Pentateuch) is the "same that was given to Moses"; and the ninth that "this Law will never be changed."

Now the new Judaism, it must be frankly owned, believes none of these articles. Reason, the source of which is God, creates the disbelief. Thus the new Judaism does not believe that *all* the words of the prophets are true, it does not believe that Moses was the chief of the prophets, or that the whole Law is Mosaic, and it does not believe that the Law is eternally binding upon Jews. It believes that in disobeying and modifying a great deal of that Law it is acting in accordance with reason, and therefore with the will of God. Is, then, the difference between the old Judaism and the new too great to be bridged over? Does the new Judaism require not merely the distinguishing adjective, but also a new substantive in place of the old? To the old

Judaism the Jews were a peculiar people in the fullest sense of the words; how far is that doctrine still held by those who wholly believe in the impartial equity of God?

While recognising the magnitude and bearing of these differences we must not exaggerate them. The new or liberal Judaism may still, I think, call itself *Judaism*, and not merely liberal and new.

The meaning of "inspiration" has greatly changed and widened, but it would be erroneous to say that we no longer believe in it. It has been already stated that the essence of religion consists in the influence of the divine Spirit without upon the human spirit within. We can open the windows of the soul to the divine light, and the saying of the Psalmist is true: "With thee is the fountain of light: through thy light do we see light." Two things are predicable of this communion of man with God and of this influence of God upon man. They take place according to law, they vary in clearness and power. Moreover, the divine will and the divine law are necessarily the same. They are different expressions for the same thing. Hence there is no incongruity in saying, for example, that Isaiah was specially inspired by the divine will. There was no infraction of law. The special inspiration of Isaiah is not so much a theory as a fact. We may express

this by saying that Isaiah had a great insight into religious and moral truth, and that he expressed this remarkable insight in a remarkable manner. Or, again, we may say that the prophet was specially receptive to the divine Spirit; the light of God shone into his soul. But it does not, therefore, follow that *all* he said was true or new, or that there has not been much which is both new and true taught and learnt since his death. God does not allow man, whether in science or religion, to learn at any one period all that may be known. He holds back reserves of truth for advancing humanity.

But what this view of inspiration depends on is a belief that God really rules the world, hard as it may sometimes be to believe it. For if God rules the world by his will and through his laws, then we are bound to interpret, so far as we can, the facts of history in the light of that belief. A great many of those facts yield no interpretation; we cannot discern their purpose or significance. But if we may rightly hold that the highest good is specially of God and is the expression of his will, then we must surely believe that the Hebrew prophets were of God, and that fundamental elements of their teaching are the clear expression of his will. The great doctrine of the One God, who is absolutely true and righteous, and the great doctrine that religion,

or the service of God, consists in the acknowledgment of the divine Unity and in the practice of righteousness, compassion and humility, were taught to man, not exclusively, but yet cogently and clearly, by the Hebrew prophets, so that if ever men were justly called inspired it is they. Liberal Judaism can still hold that the Jews were a peculiar people, that they were "chosen" by God for a particular end, and that certain prophets and heroes among them were "specially inspired."

But the differences between the old view and the new must not be ignored. The change in our conception of inspiration has tended to make us take a wider view of it. We no longer say: This particular book is inspired, and no other book is inspired; these particular men were inspired, and no other people were inspired. We no longer confine God's providence so narrowly. We do not say: All religious truth is contained in the Hebrew Bible; whatever is outside it is either not new or not true. More especially liberal Judaism (but here I only speak for myself) does not say: Whatever is new in the New Testament is not true, and whatever is true is not new. It does not say that Jesus of Nazareth was not inspired.

First, then, with regard to the ancient and the modern view of the Law. The ancient

view has been already alluded to. It is summed up in the seventh, eighth and ninth articles of the creed which were quoted above. God gave, so it is held, a perfect code to Moses, which code we now possess. This code contains a number of ritual and a number of moral ordinances; the sum of them constitutes religion. It may be that the ritual ordinances were given for the sake of the moral ordinances, but all of them are equally divine, and all, so far as circumstances permit, must strictly be obeyed. All are excellent; all are of God. It used to be held, and officially it is held to this day, though few educated persons would now venture to maintain or allude to it, that in addition to the written Law, God also communicated to Moses a series of ordinances which were intended to be, and which were, handed down from generation to generation, and that these unwritten commandments constituted the basis of a second and Oral Law. Thus there are really two divine Laws: one contained in the Pentateuch; one forming the substratum of the subsequently written and codified Rabbinical legislation. Few educated persons, as I have just said, would venture nowadays to put in any plea for the Mosaic origin of any of the Rabbinical ordinances, yet official and orthodox Judaism is still bound to the *observance* of these ordinances, and there are thousands

of Jews to whom in ritual matters Biblical and Talmudical ordinances form an inseparable unity, and who would regard the abolition of either as equally destructive of Judaism.

The exaltation, and I might even say the deification, of the Pentateuch proceeded with very rapid strides from the time when the curious process of accretion by which the book received its present form was finally completed. Concurrently with this exaltation went the manufacture, development and canonisation of the Oral Law. The result was that Judaism became, and till modern times has ever since remained, a legal religion, and many of the virtues and some of the vices of legalism attached to it. I need not here make a list of those virtues and vices. The latter have been systematically set forth, and as systematically exaggerated, by Christian theologians in order to make the better foil and contrast to the strongly anti-legal religion which is taught in the Epistles of St. Paul. But it is true to say that religion was held to consist in the fulfilment of the Law, or in the fulfilment of the numerous individual commandments which constitute the Law. Judaism became identified with the Pentateuch and its extra-biblical developments, and from a religious point of view, a Jew was a man who followed and practised the so-called "Mosaic" commands.

It is, moreover, easy to see how it was

natural that great stress came to be laid upon purely ritual ordinances, such as the dietary laws. For a law like "Thou shalt not steal," or "Thou shalt not bear a grudge," formed part of the moral code of other religions as well, so that by a false logic the distinguishing marks of Judaism seemed to consist in those ritual and ceremonial enactments which were wholly peculiar to it. A man who stole and obeyed the dietary injunctions was a bad Jew, but a man who, though he did not steal, transgressed the dietary laws was not a Jew at all. Nor was this point of view entirely irrational. What was dimly felt was that, as regards the ceremonial laws, everybody can observe them if they choose. As regards the *moral* laws, human weakness and sinfulness come in. Thus he who breaks a moral law is *pro tanto* a bad Jew, but even though he yielded to temptation, he regrets and repents of his sin. But he who eats a rabbit or a hare simply does so either because he does not *want* to remain a Jew, or because he does not believe that the prohibitions to eat these animals are of God. And if he does not believe that the prohibitions are of God, he is *ipso facto* not a Jew. But liberal Judaism asserts that a man may eat rabbit, and yet want and claim to be a Jew ; it asserts that Judaism does not involve or imply a belief in the divine origin or the permanent religious value of the dietary laws.

In short, we cannot measure the difference between the new and the old by any ritual details. The truth is that liberal Judaism has ceased to be a legal religion. In a legal religion the central feature is a belief in a perfect and God-given code, all the enactments of which must be scrupulously obeyed and fulfilled. Orthodox Judaism still declares that this belief, with all its implications, constitutes an essential dogma of the faith. If there can be no Judaism without this dogma, then liberal Judaism is falsely named. It may be liberal, but it is not Judaism. But is this dogma, with the legalism it involves, of abiding necessity in any and every phase of the Jewish religion? Let us closely scan the arguments which come from "orthodox" Jews on the one hand, or from Christian theologians on the other. Both are equally interested in maintaining that without the belief in, and the practice of a code acknowledged as divine, there can be no such thing as a religion fitly called Judaism any longer.

To criticise this position I have to attempt the very difficult task of putting the modern or liberal view of the Law within the compass of a few pages.

Essential doctrines of Judaism were proclaimed by the prophets of the eighth, seventh and sixth centuries before Christ. No God but one, and that God perfectly righteous,

perfectly wise. The service of God to be shown not in external rites, but in social rectitude and well-doing. A few prophetic utterances express a large portion of our present religion. "Seek good and not evil. Hate the evil and love the good, and establish justice in the gate. Let justice roll on like water, and righteousness as a perpetual stream. I desire love, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings." When to these sayings we add such verses from a later prophet as: "I the Lord am the first, and with those who come after I am still the same," or, "Before me no God was formed, nor shall there be after me," or, "I am the first and I am the last, and beside me there is no God,"—we realise that a considerable quantity of Judaism is here contained. It is true that a religion must deal with many other matters as well. In these prophetic statements there is no reference to the life after death, to the relation of God to the individual soul, or to the problems of sin and evil. But, nevertheless, the backbone of Judaism is made up of the two doctrines of the one and only God, who rules the world in love, righteousness and wisdom, and of the service of this God, the true worship of him —in other words, religion on its active side—consisting in social rectitude, justice and compassion. Love, righteousness and wisdom

are the supreme attributes of God, and love, righteousness and wisdom, manifested and exercised towards and for the benefit of his fellow-men, are the watchwords and methods of the human service of God. That is religion as the best Hebrew prophets conceived it in their highest moments. In all this, it will be observed, there is nothing of an immaculate and divine code. How then did this code and the conception of it, now embodied in the thirteen articles of faith, grow up?

The sentences which I have just quoted from Amos and Hosea were probably really written by those prophets in the eighth century B.C. Though the "books" which bear their names have been "edited" and interpolated, yet the best scholars are agreed that the bulk of these "books" is the work of the men whose names they bear. But when we leave the prophets, and trace the preprophetic literature backwards, we are immediately confronted with difficulties. Doubtless the doctrine "Thou shalt have no other gods besides me, Yahweh," reaches back to Moses, but it probably meant that no other God must be worshipped in Israel besides Yahweh, not that no other God actually existed. The twin doctrines of the absolute goodness of the divine character, and of the service of God by man being rightly manifested by goodness and by goodness alone, are in their purity and fulness the creation of

the eighth century prophets. Amos and Hosea and Isaiah knew nothing of a perfect law, half moral and half ritual, given by God to Moses; and the reason why they knew nothing about it seems to be that such a law, claiming such an authority, did not then exist. There were laws, and collections of laws, both moral and ritual, so far as one can make out, but there was as yet no Pentateuch, no one "perfect" and universally acknowledged Mosaic code. The prophets of the eighth century and of the seventh century are quite independent of the Law. They speak on their own authority. They never appeal to it or to its Mosaic authorship. Even to Moses himself, the Prophet and Founder, they hardly ever allude.

The Pentateuch as we now possess it is a compilation. Some of it was written before the eighth century; a great deal of it was written afterwards. But the parts which were written before the eighth century were "edited" later, and their editorial accretions and corrections materially add to the complexity of the Pentateuchal problem. The stories about Moses were written down centuries after Moses lived. The true history of his life cannot now be ascertained. If he was the chosen leader who brought the Hebrew tribes out of Egypt, if he gave them a national consciousness and the ele-

ments of a national religion, he was a great and momentous figure, but he was not the Moses of the Pentateuch. Yet if his religion comprised the command, "No other God but Yahweh," and if it linked justice with religion, it contained the seed from which the fruitage of the prophets could spring. Moses remains the founder of Judaism, but we can but see him through a mist. We can never know him as he truly was. The second founders of Judaism, whose doctrine includes some of the very essence of our own faith to-day, are the eighth century prophets—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah.

How then did the Law grow up? That would take too long to explain. At first it was oral. The priests were the earliest teachers and judges, and their decisions on matters both moral and ritual were gradually written down. Moses was priest and judge, as well as lawgiver and prophet; and as his reputation grew, all laws given in his spirit, and in believed accordance with his teaching (a very vague and elastic proviso), were spoken of as Mosaic. They were put in his mouth, and doubtless a younger generation honestly believed that the laws of an older generation were actually his. So things went on, but till the age of Jeremiah there was no general "Law of Moses," no one code acknowledged by the people as a whole. There were

"Mosaic" laws, but not a Mosaic Law. The first Law is not the Pentateuch as an entirety, but the Book of Deuteronomy, and of that book only a core.

Deuteronomy seems to have been the product of an alliance between the prophets and the priests. It was a kind of compromise. Prophetism lost something by this alliance; it lost something by its doctrines being codified and turned into laws. It also lost something because the code (doubtless as a concession to the priests) included many ordinances on subjects about which the prophets were indifferent, *e.g.* about forbidden foods and about sacrifices. Yet these very ordinances about sacrifice were necessary in order to obtain the abolition of all sacrifices except at Jerusalem—a very excellent limitation from both a religious and a moral point of view. It would seem that at a later stage in his career Jeremiah regretted the adoption of Deuteronomy; but from a more comprehensive and impartial point of view, and judging the book in its completed and expanded form, we may unhesitatingly call it one of the noblest of religious codes. For evil as well as for good it gave the Jewish religion that direction and bent towards legalism which it has ever since retained.

Deuteronomy was published and adopted about the year 621 B.C. Thirty-five years later Jerusalem was captured and sacked by

Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. During the Babylonian Exile many fresh legal compilations were put together. Some of these covered ground already touched upon by Deuteronomy; others dealt with details of ritual, which by the authors of Deuteronomy were passed over in silence. These later compilers wrote from a more pronouncedly priestly point of view than the authors of Deuteronomy. The code which Ezra set before the people about 444 B.C., and the adoption of which marked a new epoch in Jewish history and in the history of Judaism, was itself the product of at least two of these priestly compilations. It cured many of the religious evils under which the Jews were then suffering, but it cured them at a considerable cost. Legalism was now definitely and finally triumphant. The new code with its historical framework was gradually welded on to Deuteronomy and the still older narratives of the patriarchal and Mosaic periods, and within, perhaps, a hundred years after Ezra, the Pentateuch as we have it now was completed. It was soon universally acknowledged as the perfect Word of God, the immaculate, unique, consistent and homogeneous code which God had miraculously revealed to Moses, and which Moses had written down at the divine command.

The laws in the Pentateuch relate to a

great variety of subjects. There are injunctions about justice, mercy and kindness; there are laws about the family and slaves and property; there are laws about marriage and divorce; there are laws about judgment and rule; there are laws about the land. Then come the specifically religious laws: there are laws about idolatry and superstition, about clean and unclean, about sacrifices, about the Sabbath, festivals, fasts and sacred seasons, about sacred places, sacred persons and sacred dues. The aim of all these laws to their priestly compilers and adapters is contained in the famous injunction: "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy"—an injunction which it is as unfair on the part of Protestant critics to limit to the ritual and ceremonial elements of religion as it is unfair on the part of Jewish preachers to limit it to the moral and the spiritual. "Holiness" is an inclusive term, summing up all those outward and inward qualities and practices which, from the priestly point of view, are necessary to the members of a nation elected by God and dedicated to his service.

The origin of the ceremonial laws is complicated and obscure. Many ordinances which gradually became most characteristic of Judaism, such as those about circumcision and unclean foods, had originally nothing to

do with the religion of Yahweh. Some belong to a primitive stock of Semitic observances; some were taken over later from Canaanite or other sources. In either case they formed part of the popular religion, which grew up and flourished very much under its own auspices. The eighth century prophets thundered against this popular religion, with its mixture of idolatry and the worship of Yahweh. But they did not attempt to reform it. It was the code of Deuteronomy which first essayed, on anything like an important scale, to substitute a recognised, official and legitimate system of ceremonial for the wayward luxuriance of the popular creed. The priestly codes followed in the same path. But many popular superstitions and ceremonies were too deeply and widely spread to be rejected or eradicated. They were therefore pruned, taken over and legitimised. Doubtless, too, even the better priests regarded many a ceremony as an integral part of religion which the prophets would have spurned or neglected.

In all these ways, and by virtue of all these reasons, it came to pass that the ritual laws of the Pentateuch contain a number of ordinances which are mere variations of a common Semitic theme. They are not characteristic and new as the teaching of the prophets is characteristic and new. They have the

closest parallels among kindred peoples. To us to-day many of them seem relics of religious points of view which have completely passed away. But they are not enjoined in order to *force* God's favour or magically to avoid his wrath. As ordinances of the Law they became the expression and pleasure of God's sovereign will; and since it was believed that they were in very deed and truth the commandments (given both for Israel's benefit and the divine glory) of the absolutely wise and absolutely righteous God, the same qualities of perfection which belonged to the Lawgiver belonged also to his Law.

Thus, with all its excellences and all its defects, the Law determined for centuries the character of Judaism. Its divine origin, its wondrous perfection were more and more emphasised. After the Maccabean revolt legalism was never seriously questioned again.

The Law created jurists, and these jurists spent the leisure of their lives in studying the Law, in elaborating and defining it. A crowd of oral injunctions grew up, intended to make the transgression of the written Law more difficult and to interpret its meaning more closely. Precept was added to precept and command to command, and yet (it must be allowed) the higher spirits in Israel found no burden in all this mass of behests and prohibitions, but rejoiced in them

exceedingly. The Law was a privilege; it was a sign of God's peculiar love for Israel — a token of Israel's sonship and election. The more laws the merrier. The Rabbis said: "The Holy One was pleased to make Israel worthy; wherefore He gave them a copious *Torah* and many commandments, as it is written, It pleased the Lord for His righteousness' sake, to magnify the Law and make it honourable."

So things went on. After the destruction of the Jewish State by the Romans (72 A.D.), a great many ordinances, which the Law itself only allowed to be observed in Palestine and while the Temple worship existed, necessarily became obsolete. But a large number remained in force, and legalism was not less, but rather all the more, the distinguishing feature of the Jewish creed. Yet as the system permeated every class it became endeared to all. The Law was the glory of every Israelite. Those who lived under its yoke were least conscious of its weight. A vast proportion of its commands became as much custom as precept. Not to eat milk and meat together seemed as natural as not to eat horse is natural to ourselves. The one abstention was no more a burden than the other. And thus what Sirach taught about Wisdom grew to be the literal truth about the Law. "She shall be turned for thee into

gladness. And her fetters shall be to thee a covering of strength, and her chains a robe of glory. Thou shall array thee with her as a crown of rejoicing." Outsiders could, and outsiders can, only discern the fetters and the chain; but to the immense majority of those who wore them they were transfigured into the robe of glory and the crown of joy.

CHAPTER VI

SUCH was the origin and growth of the Law and the manner of its dominion. It did not start with any philosophical conceptions of legalism. These were to come far later. Yet from the beginning the aim must have been to apply principles and make them effective. It was not enough for prophets to say: "Worship one God only; do righteousness; love mercy,"—in one word: "Be a holy people unto the Lord your God." This holiness had to be driven into the minds and thoughts of the people by a long process of abstinence and deed. Only detailed laws could produce the desired result. Neither Deuteronomy nor the later Levitical legislation would have been possible without the teaching of the prophets. The prophets would not wholly have approved of the Law. But without the Law there would have been no holy people.

In spite of Christian theologians (who are ignorant of the true effects of the Law and of the inner spiritual life of the orthodox

Jewish congregations of the past and the present) the Law did produce holiness; it did sanctify life. In every generation it did produce a large number of saintly and holy persons—persons whom the purest and most spiritual morality would declare to have been holy. It is true that, mixed up with that holiness, there were conceptions and practices which to us seem to have nothing to do with holiness; and it is true that these conceptions and practices have had evil effects: the ceremonial has sometimes triumphed over or submerged the moral, and legalism, which could and can be a noble and spiritual type of religion, became sometimes cheap, outward and mechanical. But it is also true that these very conceptions and practices which to us seem so distant and so strange were (and are) by the better and more religious minds in each generation wrought into the very texture of holiness itself; instead of spoiling the result, they formed part of its excellence; the outward was transfigured and became also inward. The mechanical forms were shot through with the purest spirituality; they were woven into the very warp and woof of the saintly life.

The Law, then, is to be the producer of holiness. God gave it for that end. As time went on other complementary conceptions regarding it grew up, for the Law stimulated

thought. It was not to be obeyed mechanically. The people whom it trained were to be a wise people; they were to "reflect and consider." The Rabbis were no philosophers by profession, and no *philosophy* of religion or Judaism arose among them. Yet as many of them were able men, and as much of their lives was passed in thinking about the Law, it could not be but that a half unconscious and wholly unsystematic philosophy gradually arose. Philosophic conceptions of the Law, of the function and place of law, in religion and in Judaism, were framed by one man and another. These conceptions and reflections were themselves the product and expression of life under the Law. They were the genuine offspring of facts. Yet, as the summing up by the highest minds of the Highest Life, as they knew it, they influenced life in their turn, and made the actual more ideal. The sayings of the Rabbis are genuine products of real experience, but at the same time they did not keep apart from that experience. Sprung from it, they reacted upon it again.

This half unconscious and wholly unsystematised philosophy of religion, which is to be found in the huge Rabbinical literature, still needs an adequate historian and exponent. In the Middle Ages, meeting, through Arabian intermediaries, with Aristotelian and Platonic

philosophy, it became modified and systematised. But among the people it has continued in a more or less *unconscious* form down to the present time. The Law has produced countless noble lives, and a great variety of religious and ethical excellence. No impartial observer would fail to praise the many examples of moral delicacy and religious beauty which have been produced by and are characteristic of the Law. It had also the defects of its qualities ; if there are types of religious and ethical beauty, there are types of moral and religious deformity which are also its own. Upon neither can I here dilate, for this book is not a history.

But what has to be mentioned is this. The Law not only produced a distinct type of the religious and ethical life—both for good and for evil—but it also produced a religious *Weltanschauung*, as the Germans would say, of great depth and nobility, and very little known to the world at large. It was not the mere *doctrines* which made up Judaism,—or at any rate not those fundamental doctrines which are enumerated in the "thirteen principles of the faith" : these are merely the skeleton ; the flesh and the spirit are other than they. The flesh and the spirit are the particular religious view of life which these doctrines have produced. It is this view of life which constitutes the

warm, living reality. Divorced from it the doctrines become mere dogmas, of little influence upon action, and capable of being stiffened into formalism. So, too, the doctrines might conceivably be held as mere intellectual propositions by anybody: it is the *view of life carried out into action* which made and makes the Jew. In the view of life quite as much as in the doctrines—the Thirteen Principles—consists the *differentia* of orthodox Judaism; here we find its distinguishing marks which separate it from other creeds.

Now, how far is this view of life independent of orthodox dogmas, and how far can it still form part of liberal Judaism? This is a crucial question. For if it can form no part of liberal Judaism serious consequences follow. A very large gap would then sever liberal from orthodox Judaism, and it might conceivably be that the two religions should not properly be spoken of by the same name. Here we have the same difficulty reappearing which was mentioned before. And if this view of life is no constituent portion of liberal Judaism, which also rejects some of the thirteen articles of faith, is not liberal Judaism hardly to be distinguished from one of the more modern phases of Unitarian or Theistic belief?

In so far as this view of life depends upon

the conception of a perfect, divine and immutable Law, liberal Judaism cannot share it. With our changed view of the written and of the Rabbinic law, our attitude towards ceremonial enactments and symbolic rites, and their place and function in religion, must also undergo a profound modification. We shall not experience the evil of these enactments, but we shall also not experience their good. We shall have to seek the same end with fewer or other means. We shall not misuse the old means, but neither can we use them. For in their fulness and completion they can only be used for good *if the doctrines on which they rest are believed.* When these collapse, to use the means is often a hollow mask, an empty formalism, a sheer pretence. Yet in spite of our differences in belief, there can still, I think, remain something of truth and value. There can still remain a view of life—it may be even clarified and ennobled—which will link us with our orthodox brethren and with the historic past, and will stamp our religion with a peculiar Jewish characteristic. It will give substance, warmth and colour to the simple dogmas of our faith ; it will clothe them with flesh and blood. In addition to the fundamental and distinguishing doctrine of the Mission of Israel (of which more will be said later), it may tend to differentiate liberal Judaism from those other Unitarian or

Theistic faiths which in their historic antecedents are developments or recoils from Christianity.

Surely if this be so, the result would add to the richness of the world. Is it not a good thing if each religion should have its peculiar excellences? Can any one creed include and express every aspect of religious and ethical truth? Can it enjoin and stimulate every true and noble form of the moral, religious and spiritual life? There cannot be a single poet who has the excellences of Wordsworth and Keats and Browning and Arnold rolled into one. The world is richer for the many true poets, though one is greater than the other. May not the world be richer in possessing many varieties of "Unitarian" faith? Will liberal Jews lessen that richness by deserting the oldest of these varieties,—the variety which is theirs by right of birth and right of transmission?

What, then, is this view of life, and how may it be described? It is the belief that all life should be sanctified and transfigured by religion. The raw material of life is not to be made less, but to be put to noble uses. We are not to cut off the offending hand, but to curb, practise and employ it in the service of God and man. Man is to humanise himself by order, by rule, by conscious adherence to law, to the moral ideal. Man is neither above nor

below law; neither beast nor angel. He is above the beast because he himself accepts the law which he obeys. He recognises it as the law of his own being, and yet as a higher law. It is the law of God, and its source is God. Man is below the angel, because he has to become holy by adherence to the law. There is that in him which conflicts with law, which has to be brought into conformity with law, before it is in the best sense humanised. To obey the law because it is divine, and for no ulterior motive whatever,—this is the highest which man can achieve.

And this is Judaism. The law which man is to obey and fulfil is both human and divine; God is its source and God enjoins it. It is independent of man and outside him, but it is also within him. He realises himself in accepting the law. He is most a slave when he is most lawless; when he is most lawful he is most free. For every step in the argument there could be ample Rabbinic illustration and proof.

Now to the orthodox Jew the moral law is embodied in the Pentateuch. The ceremonial law is also moral, because it is the good and holy God who has given it, and he has given it for moral and holy ends. To the liberal Jew the moral law is not and cannot be contained in a book; it is an ideal which is progressively interpreted. Its content varies; it becomes

better, larger, more delicate; but its formal and constraining character remains the same. The liberal Jew can no longer regard ceremonial laws as part and parcel of the moral law; they are at the best only its servitors and dependants; but in the *principle* of law, and of self-imposed and glad subjection to law, he is at one with his orthodox brother.

The law is a curb, but man (with God's help) applies his own curb to himself. He is his own rider. Man has desires and impulses which can go wrong and unite him to the beast, but these very desires and impulses are the material of his greatness. Made subject to reason and to the moral law, they are no longer a hindrance to the ideal, but promote and exemplify it. Lust is bestial. But human love in its highest exemplification is only possible on an animal basis made obedient and subservient to law. The beast (if non-moral) knows no conscious order. On the one hand, there is instinct; on the other, the law of man imposed as an arbitrary force from without. Man accepts the law and glories in it. He knows that when he most obeys he is most himself. This, too, is Judaism.

Order and rule form the basis of the moral and the human life. Take such a seemingly indifferent and yet fundamental portion of life as eating and drinking. The beast eats when he is hungry. Man eats at

regular and prearranged intervals. He exercises some restraint upon his own desires. Yet after a time this restraint is no longer felt as such. It becomes a habit, a custom. And this, too, is part of the Jewish conception of law. Life in a great many divisions of it is to become habitual; so moralised, so quickly responsive to law, that law is no longer felt. He who is habitually moral in small things will have time and capacity for great things when the opportunities arise.

Man, moreover, selects and prepares his food. He regards certain kinds of food as abhorrent. Orthodox Judaism has devised a multitude of enactments about food, and in them we see how the application of a sound principle can be carried into extremes with evil results for the religious and spiritual life. Of this side of the orthodox Jewish Law I shall shortly have more to say. Meanwhile we realise that even so ordinary a matter as eating and drinking can be sanctified by religion and law. Only man says "grace" over his food. He renders thanks to God the giver. The Jewish conception is not to say, "The less you eat the better" (Judaism is against so negative an asceticism), but to say, "Eat rightly, with discretion and order, with gladness and gratitude, remembering God."

Thus religion is to enter into all life, sanctifying and ennobling it. The will is

both consciously and unconsciously to conform to the ideal; to conform, in other words, to the law which is both without and within,—without, for its guarantee and its author are God; within, because it is in harmony with the very essence or highest element of human nature, which is itself an "effluence" from or akin to the Divine.

It could be shown that, in many another province of life the Jewish principle was not to cut off or destroy, but to tame, to civilise, to transfigure, to sanctify. The Rabbinic laws about the relations between man and woman are no longer familiar or sympathetic to us. They have passed away, and like the past cannot be recalled. Yet their aim was noble. Man is not to destroy the animal in him, but to consecrate it. While on earth he is man and not angel; but how noble man can be if he conform with law!

Have we not here a truer and nobler asceticism, a real *practice* and *training* in virtue, when we are bidden to use and train our very *passions* for the fuller manifestation of the Divine? Desires and endowments—outward and inward alike—are to be used for the service of man and for the glory of God.

There was another principle at work in the Jewish conception of law, a principle which was set forth by Aristotle as a main doctrine of Ethics. Man becomes a flute-

player not by mere wishing to be a flute-player; aspiration is not enough—he becomes a flute-player by playing the flute. "Practice makes perfect." The character of holiness is acquired by holy *deeds*. Here again the old orthodox position, though fundamentally sound, was in application overdone. The principle of law was too often lost by the multiplicity of laws. Spontaneity and freshness are as necessary to the perfect human character as conscious adherence and habitual conformity to a given standard or ideal. Too often in Jewish orthodoxy one cannot see the wood for the trees. Yet the principle is not unsound. Benevolence, for instance, must be realised in deed. Aspiration and feeling left to themselves may be inadequate. The Law made channels for benevolence. It ordered that a certain large minimum was to be given away to the poor from each man's property; it ordered that on certain feast and holy days further and extra gifts were to be made. Yet the springs of benevolence were not dried up by these prescriptions; on the contrary, they were stimulated. Nor did the Law fail to recognise that, on the basis of this mere giving of property, there was a far higher charity to follow—the giving of self. The *benevolent* man must complete his conformity to the ideal of goodness by becoming the *charitable* man. Giving must

culminate in service, and action in character. But in order to *be*, enough *doing* must precede.

The phrase "a religious habit of mind" contains its truth. Outward forms of religion are partly intended to create, or help in creating such a temper or habit of mind.

Even the highest thoughts and feelings are partly conditioned by habit. We are "creatures of habit," not merely in the low sense in which the phrase is frequently used, but in the higher sense that habit is half of character. Does it seem unreasonable and mechanical that in our thoughts of God and in our prayers to God habit should enter in? Yet it is not so. For what we can always think of and do, we may perhaps never think of or do; too much opportunity is as bad as too little. Therefore the wisdom of man has devised fixed times for prayer, so that at other and unfixed times we may freely and spontaneously pray. Liberal Judaism may readily accept the propriety of certain religious forms for the creation of certain religious habits.

Character is shaped by deeds, and character is partly habit. The best man is not the man who is good with perpetual struggle, but he who is good by the habit which has become second nature. This is the doctrine of Aristotle, but it is also the doctrine of Judaism. Struggle marks character in the forming; of the formed character we say, "He could not do

wrong if he tried." Such a man is perfectly free, but he is the slave of law. God Himself we may regard either as absolutely free or as absolutely bound. Pure chance is pure slavery; so, too, pure goodness is pure liberty or pure bondage. Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty" well expresses the Rabbinic and Jewish conception of goodness. "In the light of truth thy Bondman let me live." So, too, in a cancelled stanza of sound doctrine but poor poetry :—

Yet not the less would I throughout
Still act according to the voice
Of my own wish; and feel past doubt
That my submissiveness was choice :
Not seeking in the school of pride
For "precepts over dignified,"
Denial and restraint I prize
No farther than they breed a second Will more wise.

We may therefore say that the doctrine of making religion commensurate with life and of sanctifying all human activities is thoroughly Jewish. Whatever our business and occupations may be, we lead a Jewish life by hallowing them to the service and the glory of God. Conscious adherence to the ideal law of goodness and duty is the ideal of Judaism. When our lives show the closest bondage to this law we are most free. When our action is, in one sense, most automatic, it is also most spontaneous. When we are most

truly the servants of God we are also most ourselves. For the Law is God's law, but it is also ours. It is imposed upon man from without, and yet it is freely accepted from within. Woe to him if he deny its obligation or attempt to shake it off. He sins against his own soul. He makes havoc of his own self. To love God is to love his Law; and the product of that love, as also its cause, is the fulfilment of the Law for its own sake, with undivided homage and with unselfish love. Deeds will build up character, and character is expressed in deeds. In this conception of Law and Sanctification liberal Judaism possesses a doctrine which should help its adherents to realise the distinctiveness of their own faith, and the validity of its claim upon them for their whole-hearted allegiance. For though liberal Judaism has ceased to be a strictly legal religion, it does not abandon the great Jewish conception that religion is a discipline as well as a faith. In this limited sense, liberal Jews, like their orthodox brethren, belong to a religion of Law.

CHAPTER VII

We have now to return to the Law in the more original and restricted meaning which it bears in orthodox Judaism. Here its first and most important signification is the Pentateuch. The central position which the Codes of the Pentateuch occupy in the religious scheme of Jewish orthodoxy depends entirely upon one particular dogma. If that dogma be true, or rather if that dogma be believed, then the exaltation of the Law is justified. If it is not believed, then a reconstruction of the orthodox position is obviously needful. If you *believe* that the Pentateuchal law, as we have it now, is directly of God, then it *must* be perfect; then, too, it must be wise and right to fulfil it to the utmost of your power. The Law says, "Ye shall keep *all* my statutes: if a man do them, he shall live by them. I am the Lord"; and it says this both about a law like "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and about a law like "A garment of mixed stuff of divers sorts shall not come upon thee." The two laws follow

each other, and there is not a word to show that the one was to be temporary, the other permanent.

The prohibition to eat certain kinds of fat in cow or sheep is spoken of as a "perpetual statute," and every Jew who believes the prohibition to be divine must necessarily hold that the law is as binding to-day as when it was first delivered. If the wise and good God gave these laws, the laws are wise and good; nor has the wise and good God given any suggestion or hint that a time should come when it would be right and proper for the unassisted reason of man to pick and choose among these laws, and to say, "These I will obey; those I will disregard." Can man know better than God what is good for him? Some laws are specially limited to Palestine; others are only capable of being observed in a Jewish "State"; but the remainder, which are independent of place and conditions, must be observed in their entirety by those who believe that they were directly given by God.

But what are those Jews to think of the Law, and how are they to *act* as regards its ordinances, who do not believe in the dogmas which make its observance both rational and incumbent? Judaism has been so long identified with a belief in the divinity of the Law of Moses and with the practice of its com-

mandments that this question is one of grave importance.

The liberal Jew can only look at the Law from the historical point of view. He has to consider its genesis, the process by which it came to be what it is. He will hold that an ordinance which was of value two thousand years ago is not necessarily of value to-day. He will remember that the ritual elements of the Law were perhaps necessary in order permanently to impress upon the minds and hearts of a people certain prophetic conceptions of supreme value and truth. He will realise that provisions such as the distinction of meats, which have nothing to do with the essential doctrines of the prophets, were perhaps necessary in order to preserve and to maintain that nobly stubborn race, which, in spite of secular persecution and slander, has kept watch and ward over the portals of Monotheism. Though he cannot hold that the Law is of God in the sense that his orthodox brother gives to those words, he will nevertheless believe that its disciplinary and cohesive powers have not been without their purpose or failed of their effect. He can appreciate the greatness of the Law although, as a critic and historian, he can trace its compositeness and its origin. In the Law he finds many echoes from the Prophets of deepest value and beauty. Here is the doctrine of the

divine Unity and Uniqueness. Here is the great injunction "to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Here is the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Here is many a wise and gentle ordinance of righteousness, of justice, of charity. Here, too, is the great discovery that six days' work and one day's rest is the best division of human time. Here are the great conceptions of holiness and of a holy people, and of the *imitatio Dei*,—conceptions which, though we who have learnt from our predecessors may have widened and purified them, yet go back for their establishment and their acceptance to Josiah, to Ezra, and to the Law.

But the liberal Jew cannot regard the Law as the centre of Jewish belief and practice. If he were founding a public service *de novo*, he would not make the reading of the Law its central and most important feature. If he were building a synagogue, without reference to past custom, he would not put scrolls of the Law into an ark, and make that ark the most sacred part of the building. If he had such an ark, he would put in it the prophecies of Amos, Hosea and Isaiah, rather than the Pentateuch, for the Prophets are more primary and more essential than the Law.

In respect to their value to-day he can but regard the ordinances of the Law in the mingled

light of reason and of history. In themselves the laws are to him no longer good because they are divine. They are only divine if they are good. But he will not refuse to obey a law, or regard its public observance as undesirable, merely because it is a ceremonial law, or merely because he can no longer believe that it was divinely revealed to Moses by God. Its observance may still be desirable from different motives.

The ceremonial laws of the Pentateuch (as of the Oral or Rabbinical Law as well) may be divided into two classes: those which affect the individual in his home and private life; those which concern the public worship of the Synagogue. The laws of the second class, however, likewise affect the individual. The laws which affect the individual in his home and private life may, for our present purpose, be limited to one single group, namely, those which deal with food.

The dietary laws of the Pentateuch mainly relate to certain beasts and fishes, the flesh of which it is forbidden to eat. To drink blood is also strictly forbidden, and is clearly regarded with the most vehement abhorrence. On the basis of this prohibition the Rabbis developed a number of regulations with regard to the slaughtering of beasts and their preparation for food in order that the greatest possible quantity of blood might be wrung

and squeezed out of the flesh. Here, as in so many other points, they passed beyond the limits of common sense and of reason. All the Pentateuchal law meant was, that pure blood was not to be drunk. The reasons for this law go back to the most primordial beliefs. Blood was considered highly dangerous; it was intensely sacred and intensely "taboo." It was used on solemn occasions for mystic rites, for sacraments and sacrifices. In the blood the life was often supposed to reside. On what grounds the Pentateuchal lawgivers and compilers forbade the drinking of blood it would not be easy to say. Partly they shared these old beliefs; to them too (as on one occasion they say) "the blood is the life"; to them too all blood was something holy, which belonged to God and not to man. But they also forbade blood because it was used in various superstitious and pagan rites, and because it played a great part in the sacraments and sacrifices of neighbouring cults, all of which they desired to remove and keep away from the holy people of Israel. Few people want to drink blood to-day, and therefore the prohibition has little relation to modern life.

It is otherwise with the forbidden meats and fishes. Our neighbours eat pig, hare, and rabbit; lobster, oyster, and crab; and these animals are forbidden in the Pentateuch.

The origin and motive of the prohibition are obscure. It is natural to suppose that they were forbidden because they were unwholesome, but it is almost certain that even in the Pentateuch these food taboos have other reasons and meanings. Such taboos are widely spread over the world: they exist in savage tribes at a low level of knowledge and culture; some of them are supposed to find their origin in phases of totemism. Why the Pentateuchal lawgivers only permitted the flesh of animals which chew the cud and cleave the hoof, and of fishes which have fins and scales, has, so far as I am aware, never been satisfactorily explained. No doubt many animals specially unwholesome in a hot climate are excluded by this rule, and it is quite possible that sanitary reasons may have affected and stimulated the establishment of the law. But the more effective reasons in which its origin is to be sought were probably not wholly different in kind and sphere from those which prompted the prohibition about blood.

How should a liberal Jew regard these laws? Ought he to observe them, and if so, why? I put aside motives of sentiment. Some persons may wish to observe them because their parents observe them, or because they have so long been identified with Jewish practice. Some do not mind eating a hare, but refuse to touch any form of pig. These

are mere individual sentimentalities and idiosyncrasies with which we are not concerned. Nor do I think that the question of health comes in. What we should eat and from what we should abstain are matters which can far more properly and wisely be settled for us by a modern physician or professor of dietetics, than by following the provisions of a law written down more than two thousand years ago, and not even then devised and enjoined for reasons of health. If it is better for our health not to eat pig or lobster, by all means let us refrain from eating them, but it is ridiculous to think that in acting from that motive we are following the "Law of Moses." The Pentateuchal dietary laws must be followed, if at all, as a whole. If we pick and choose, avoid rabbit but eat prawns, we are simply following personal predilections or the doctor's advice. Even if we observe them all from the sanitary point of view, we are imposing a purely modern and secular interpretation upon an ancient and religious code. It may, indeed, be argued that care for bodily health is part of religion, and that no man who grossly neglects his body can expect to do full justice to his soul. He is an incomplete man unless all his faculties are brought to their best. But these principles are only true when stated *as* principles. Translated into detail, they cease to be part

of religion, just as, though it may be said that recreation and physical exercise are part of a man's moral duty, no modern system of ethics would attempt to lay down precise rules as to what exercises are to be practised and what exact forms of recreation are right or wrong.

Again, as these laws do not concern the public life and worship of the community, it may be questioned whether their observance tends to maintain the corporate spirit or the consciousness of Judaism. That consciousness must depend on nobler methods, as it is required for nobler ends. The dietary laws, both Pentateuchal and Rabbinical, have kept the Jews together through the dark ages of persecution and disability, but they have undoubtedly exercised an influence for evil as well as an influence for good. In the first place, they have directly tended towards an unnecessary and unsocial separation. In the second place, they have tended to make personal piety a question of food, cooking, and dishes. A "pious" Jew has too often been one who observed extraordinary precautions in the minutiæ of the dietary laws. The taunt that Judaism is a "kitchen religion" has not always been without its grains of truth.

It may more reasonably be argued that, as these laws exist, and as on the whole they operate for health, and as on the whole they

hinder the centrifugal tendencies of the age and help to bind the atoms of the community together, they should be observed, even by liberals, as a *discipline*. They are a practice in self-denial. I would not seek to minimise their importance from this point of view. The Pentateuchal dietary laws can usually be obeyed without violating any higher civic duty. Under such circumstances, their observance may act as a reminder of our special duties to God and man, and as a simple exercise in self-control and self-denial. When combined with the Rabbinical laws, this exercise has often been purchased at too heavy a cost. We should all acknowledge that English Jews should (and do) contribute their fair proportion of soldiers to the army. The soldier is bound to violate the dietary laws. I have never yet heard any definite pronouncement from the authorities of English orthodox Judaism whether, *so long as he is a soldier*, the Jew may violate the dietary laws with an easy and untroubled conscience. The liberal Jew need have no hesitation on the subject.

It must be left to each individual to balance these conflicting arguments and to decide between them. The future of liberal Judaism, the future of Judaism as a whole, are surely independent of dietary considerations. The dietary laws concern our private

lives. For my part I would neither say that a liberal Jew did unwisely in transgressing them, nor yet that he acted illogically in observing them. But if he observe them, it is of necessity for very different reasons from those of his orthodox brother. For the orthodox Jew believes that God Himself ordered Moses to bid the Israelites obey these laws, while, *ex hypothesi*, the liberal Jew professes no such belief.

Far more important than the dietary laws are those provisions of the Pentateuch which affect *both* private life and public worship. The Law shows its predominance in the very structure of the Synagogue, of which the most important and sacred portion is the Ark. Here the scrolls of the Law are enshrined, and in the ordinary worship of the orthodox synagogues, the reading of the Law occupies the central place, and takes up an unreasonably long time.

It is probable that these features of the Synagogue and its service will gradually be modified if liberal Judaism continues to flourish and expand in the New World and the Old. A three years' cycle for the reading of the Law instead of a one year cycle materially shortens the time devoted to its reading, and leaves more room for true prayer and hymnal song. Abolition of the dilatory system of "calling up to the Law" is also

of advantage from the same point of view. Liberal Jews must realise that we go to Synagogue not to hear a recital of laws or stories, but primarily to *pray*. A modification of the Synagogue structure will be more slow in coming, but will doubtless follow in time. We may regard the Ark with its scrolls as a kind of symbol, and into symbols we can read our own interpretations. So long as the service consists mainly of prayer and singing, with appropriate readings from the Bible (including the best portions of the Law), the structure and equipment of the building is after all a matter of only secondary significance.

CHAPTER VIII

THE control of the Law is not only exercised over the equipment of the Synagogue and the manner of its services, but it also determines the days on which the principal services are held. From the time when the Law was accepted and became predominant, it provided the public and private embodiment for the religion; it was dogma and practice in one. And thus it has remained. One of the special difficulties which liberal Judaism has to encounter and to settle is connected with this question of embodiment. Every religion must possess its embodiment; it must possess, at least on the public side, its ceremonial and manifestation. Now the public worship of the Synagogue to-day is mainly connected with the festivals and holy days fixed and ordered in the Pentateuch. These are the Sabbath; Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles; the New Year and the Day of Atonement. There are other holy days, such as Purim and the Fast of Ab, which, though not mentioned in the Pentateuch,

once played an important part in Jewish life, but which are now dropping into desuetude. Only one non-Pentateuchal festival seems likely to maintain itself: the festival of Chanukah, commemorating the Maccabean revolt.

The Sabbath is one of the most vital and most difficult questions of modern Judaism. A weekly rest, one day in seven, devoted to worship, repose and recreation, is surely one of the greatest of human institutions. Though no divine voice miraculously proclaimed the words "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," the Sabbath, whatever its origin and history, is hallowed by the wisdom and experience of the past.

How we are to observe the Sabbath is a question which each one must settle for himself. The details cannot be considered here. But, speaking broadly, two things are desirable: the first is that it should be a day of rest; the second is that we should spend, whenever possible, one or two hours of it in the public worship of God. Now the present conditions of our life sometimes prevent both the one and the other. The Christian day of rest being Sunday, a large number of Jews, and a considerable number of Jewesses, are more or less bound to "work" upon Saturdays. One of the most important questions, therefore, which liberal Judaism has to

consider is, what attitude it should take up towards this urgent and complicated problem.

It would not be irrational to advocate a transference of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. There is no divine virtue in one particular day. The old orthodox view was that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, and it was undoubtedly believed that if the Saturdays were followed back far enough, you would ultimately come to the very Sabbath upon which God rested. "Time" began on a Sunday. If this were so, and if we still believed that God Himself directly ordered us to observe the Sabbath (that is, the seventh day, the Saturday), and to rest upon it, it would be monstrous to suggest any change or transference. Such suggestion would amount to blasphemy. But for "liberal" Jews this supernatural sanction for the Sabbath has passed away. Thus, if the whole of European and American Jewry could transfer the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, and if all Jews were faithfully to observe the Sunday by rest and prayer and worship, and if they did not lose their Jewish consciousness by the transference, but, on the contrary, deepened and vivified it, then the change, so far from being a loss, might be a benefit.

It is, however, exceedingly doubtful whether these provisos could be carried into effect. It is commonly alleged that where a "Sunday

Sabbath" has been attempted, the speedy result is that neither Saturday nor Sunday is properly observed. In other words, average human nature (I will not say average *Jewish* human nature) has not the self-sacrifice, the strength of mind and the tenacity of purpose sufficient to make the change of religious effectiveness and value. For it is a question of will power. It would need strong resolution and fixed determination for any Jew to transfer to Sunday the feelings which his early training and the lives of his ancestors have centred upon Saturday. Yet by sufficient doggedness and sacrifice, and above all by the most patient care devoted to the education of children, there seems no absolute or overwhelming reason why a new generation could not arise who would observe Sunday with a full and eager Jewish consciousness, and in all religious solemnity and fruitfulness.

Meanwhile for the present—and this book is written to meet *present* needs—there is no question of a transference of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. We have to consider things as they are, and to make the best of them.

First of all, let us regard the Sabbath as a day of rest and change. We are not merely to cease from work, but we are also to make it a *different* day from other days. It is emphatically to be a day of "delight,"

but it is also to be a "holy day," "the holy of the Lord, honourable." It is to be a day of peace, of repose, of "collection," of refreshment. The pleasures of the Sabbath must be other than the pleasures of work days,—less noisy and less mundane, more intimate, retired and inward.

Now, many Jews and Jewesses are unable to give up their work upon the Sabbath. A large percentage of the "working classes" are habitually compelled to violate the Sabbath. This fact is the one great argument for the transference of the day from Saturday to Sunday. I cannot enter here upon the economic and social side of the question in this place. Suffice it to say that both for the "poor" and the "well to do,"—for the "lower," the "middle" and the "upper" classes alike,—it is hard to see how a certain amount of Saturday labour can be avoided. For my present purpose I have the more "well-to-do" sections of the community in mind. It would be impossible to argue that parents should only send their sons and daughters into occupations and professions where the Sabbath can be observed. We are Englishmen, and we must accept the responsibilities and difficulties of complete emancipation. To say, for instance, that no Jew ought to become a barrister or a "civil servant" would be an untenable

proposition, and yet, at the present time, these professions almost infallibly involve labour upon some portions of the Sabbath day. In very many branches of business and commerce it is, I believe, hopeless to achieve success if no work is to be done upon Saturdays.

The conflict must, therefore, for the present be left as it stands. If the Saturday be maintained, the Sabbath must be violated; to the day on which it would not be violated it cannot be transferred. I am far from saying that for many and many a year to come the second statement will not be as true as the first. Only let none of us shut our eyes. We do not improve facts by refusing to look at them. We do not annul them by declining to believe in their existence. On the contrary, the facts must be faced and borne in mind. Only so can their evil effects be palliated, and their solution ultimately be achieved.

If, however, the Sabbath must be violated by many Jews for reasons which none of us can deny or demolish, so much the more urgent is it that those who *can* observe it should observe it, and that those who *have* to violate it should limit their violation to the smallest possible number of hours. Above all, there should be no voluntary desecration and misuse for the purpose of *mere* convenience and *unsuitable* enjoyment.

Nothing is more deplorable and more disastrous than the fact that a number of *liberal* Jews voluntarily and needlessly desecrate and misuse the Sabbath. It is excessively painful that such persons should not be able to see what harm they are doing to themselves, to their children, to Judaism, and to religion. It is mournful and humiliating to think that they have not the courage and self-control to make the very moderate sacrifice which is required of them. It is grievous that they do not realise the baneful significance of their action. No wonder that our orthodox brethren should laugh and mock at liberal Jews and liberal Judaism, when they see that so many supposed liberals have no care or heed for Judaism or religion. For let there be no mistake: the religious life of the community and the religious life of the individual depend on an adequate religious observance of one day's rest in seven.

The Jewish Sabbath lasts from sunset to sunset. Few well-to-do persons, at any rate, need continue their work beyond sunset on Friday evening. The remainder of the day is at their own disposal. These evening hours should be spent *at home*. To go to concerts or theatres on Friday evening is highly objectionable. It is the worst possible object lesson for children when they notice

that their parents make no difference between week day and Sabbath. It is no less objectionable that people should go out to dinner or have dinner parties and card parties at home upon the Sabbath eve. How can these things be regarded as *suitable* enjoyment? Even for the sake of their servants and the non-Jewish world, Jews should be ashamed to act in so unseemly a manner. What can be thought of them? They must be considered as persons who observe neither Saturday nor Sunday, and have no regard for the things of God. It is especially offensive when a Jew voluntarily desecrates *his* Sabbath in a manner in which few Christians would dream of desecrating theirs. The Jew, who should be the exemplar in religious aspiration and practice, is despised and rightly despised by his Christian servants and his Christian neighbour. When will liberal Jews understand that upon them falls a double measure of responsibility? It is for them *by their everyday lives* to disprove the common taunt that liberal Judaism is a mere synonym for convenience or indifferentism.

The Sabbath hours, then, must be devoted to rest, to family reunion, to peaceful and reasonable enjoyment. I would not disallow all games upon Saturday, more especially for those who cannot enjoy them upon any other day. The cultivation of the body is a

religious duty. For a hard-worked clerk to play a game of cricket on Saturday afternoon is one thing, for a rich banker to go out to a dinner party on Friday evening is quite another. The first, under certain circumstances, is reasonable and right; the second is reprehensible and wrong. If any "liberal" Jew should read these pages, I venture to make the most urgent, I would even say the most passionate, appeal to him to observe the Sabbath. For the Sabbath is the one supreme religious "*form*" which the average man and woman cannot dispense with. It is an *efficacious* lever for the religious education of children. Parents will neglect it at the peril of their own spiritual life, and at the too probable peril of the spiritual life of their children. Let them count the cost and weigh the chances. Will they run this peril for the sake of a dinner and a game of cards? Most literally and emphatically the wrong choice is the rejection of Wisdom. And he that "sinneth against" *that* Wisdom "wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate her love death."

But, in the second place, the Sabbath is not merely a day of rest and change. It is also a day on which we should commune with God. A small part of it, at any rate, one hour or two hours out of twenty-four, should be devoted to family or public worship.

One reason why it is reprehensible for persons to use Friday evening for theatre-going or dinner parties is that this season is so peculiarly and conveniently adapted for private and family worship. It is especially suitable to those households where, owing to the exigencies of their business or profession, some members of the family may be fully occupied with secular work throughout the morning of Saturday. Friday evening is convenient both for private and for public worship. It is highly desirable that it should be used for one or for the other.

The Synagogue services are as yet hardly consonant with the beliefs and feelings of liberal Judaism. I have already mentioned the undesirable prominence and the immense proportion of time which is given to the reading of the Law. A second wholly different objection is the absence of instrumental music, the lack of vernacular hymns and of congregational singing. A third unsatisfactory feature is the liturgy itself, which has too many repetitions, and includes many things which are out of touch with the beliefs and feelings of to-day. While it errs by such commission on the one hand, it also errs by omission; there are not enough spiritual prayers in it of a kind and quality which appeal to our deepest wants and aspirations. It is not that such Jewish

prayers do not exist; it is only that they are largely absent from the Sabbath ritual, or are often cast in an oriental and unsuitable form. On every other side of our lives we are pure occidentals; yet the service is almost wholly oriental. How then can it fail to jar upon us? How can it adequately evoke our sympathy and stimulate our prayers? A western service would be absurd and out of place for eastern Jews; why is it not realised that an eastern service is out of place for western Jews? The very separation of the sexes perpetuates an orientalism. The severance of wife from husband and of mother from son in the house of God seems to many of us unnecessary and unnatural. And if the father is unable to attend the Saturday morning service, the youthful son is more liable to increase his own abstention if he may not sit by the side of his mother.

Finally, the language of the service is Hebrew, and the use of a dead tongue operates as a stumbling-block upon a very large number of persons. Many parents do not take the trouble or undergo the expense of teaching their children an adequate quantity of Hebrew; many have not the opportunity or power to do so. Moreover, unless a considerable amount of time is given to its study, or unless the pupil has a special aptitude for dead

languages, it is difficult to learn enough to make the liturgy completely familiar and intelligible. If the language is not very thoroughly learned it is very speedily forgotten. In either case the use of Hebrew becomes a discouragement to attendance at public worship.

It is strange that our orthodox brethren do not realise and recognise these facts. If, indeed, the use of Hebrew were a Pentateuchal law, the situation would be different. Then they might say, "We are sorry, but it is a divine law." But there is no question of a divine law. The arguments for the retention of Hebrew are hardly adequate. Some people like it because they are used to it; some think a sacred language is a good thing in itself; some think the study of Hebrew would die out if Hebrew were abolished in the synagogues. Another argument is that by means of Hebrew a Jew is at home in every synagogue all over the world. But ought we to legislate for the isolated few who travel? To the vast majority of English and American Jews, would not German or French be easier to follow and understand than Hebrew? The most serious argument for the retention of Hebrew is that Judaism would immediately go to pieces if Hebrew were no longer used in the synagogues. Whether a religion which depends upon the use of a dead language is

worth preserving I will not stay to inquire, but I would venture to ask why it is that the Reform Synagogues in the United States, in which English is predominant, are well attended, while the synagogues in London, in which the language used is Hebrew, are badly attended? In fact, though the argument is "serious," it is less argument than assertion. No facts, so far as I am aware, can be brought forward to corroborate or back it up.

The effect of Hebrew upon the class of persons who attend elementary schools is religiously very dubious. The utmost that a girl or boy of fourteen can achieve is to be able to translate in a somewhat mechanical manner the ordinary Sabbath prayers. It may safely be predicted that, within four years of leaving school, seventy-five per cent of the children have forgotten the translation of seventy-five per cent of the prayers they learnt in their school life. Moreover, this transitory Hebrew knowledge was achieved at a great cost. Precious hours were lost for religious and ethical teaching and for Scripture. Many Psalms might have been learnt by heart in English which could come back to the mind in hours of difficulty and trial. Meanwhile to the "poor" as to the "rich" the ordinary Sabbath services are becoming more and more unfamiliar and unappealing.

This I have written not to make any impression "on the other side" (for in religious matters, as in political matters, written arguments have small effect upon "the other side"), but to show that I am in sympathy with liberal discontent. But what I am not in sympathy with is liberal indifference.

If things are bad, try to alter them. If existing conditions do not suit, create other concurrent conditions which will. Judaism is not a State church. Its embodiment is capable of modification and change.

The proper thing to do is to attend the Synagogue services *although* one is not in sympathy with them, and then to use every legitimate means in order to effect a change. It is a question of tenacity, self-sacrifice and persistency. It is also a question of votes.

Another proper thing to do is to start and support services which are compromises, or which more or less correspond with liberal beliefs and aspirations. Here again, where there is a determined will there will be found a way.

Public worship affords the opportunity for private prayer. Be the service never so unsympathetic, one can abstract oneself from what is going on and commune with God.

It is, therefore, the duty of liberal Jews, wherever they can, to attend public worship, even though it be of a kind and type which

in many respects conflicts with their beliefs and their feelings. If they are regular attendants, they have more right to agitate for reform. It is a test of sincerity.

Our duty towards our children is more difficult. It is a doubtful good to make children attend public worship at a very youthful age. More especially must we hesitate to send them to services which are likely to bore or irritate them. What is disliked in youth will be abandoned in manhood. Children's services are now becoming increasingly frequent. They are of considerable value, and opportunities for children to attend them should not be lightly neglected.

In spite of what has been said about Hebrew, it is of great present importance that children should learn it. There is no inconsistency between desiring and even working for an *English* service, and yet taking care that our children should learn Hebrew. For the children are here, while the English service is not; and if the children do not learn Hebrew, they will lose the possibility of public worship with all its great advantages to them, and through them to the community at large. I would, therefore, urge upon my fellow-liberals to agitate for English one hour, and to teach their children Hebrew the next. Whatever we do, let not our children suffer. To prevent them from reaping the benefits of

public worship—so far as existing services allow benefits—is to make them enter manhood and womanhood with a maimed and stunted growth. For what we have to do with our children is to open as many doors for them as possible. Give them the chance (if time and money allow) of enjoying literature, nature and art. Who would not agree to this? But it is far more important to give them the chance of worshipping God in public as well as in private. There are none too many pathways by which we may reach out to God and find him. Let us not close the gate which leads to any one of them.

Coming back now to the Sabbath and its observance, one can but emphatically repeat the advice that a small part of its four-and-twenty hours should be used in public worship. But it will often happen that it is impossible to attend any synagogue upon the Sabbath day. One may be in the country, or the weather may be unpropitious, or the service may be unsuited for children, or the measure of self-sacrifice needed to attend it may be too large. For one or other of these reasons the family may be left entirely to its own resources. Hence the enormous importance of proper family worship in modern Jewish life.

A short daily service is perhaps desirable,

but a service upon the Sabbath is imperative. There should be at least one such service, but if possible two—a very short service on Friday evening, and a longer one on Saturday mornings. Where the father has to attend at his office or business on Saturday morning, the Friday evening service becomes all the more necessary and important. There is no reason why *these* services should not be prayerful and sympathetic,—no reason why, in the highest and best sense of the words, they should not be attractive and pleasing. The language of them will obviously be English, and the Synagogue ritual can be modified and varied according to the requirements and likings of the particular family. One Sabbath need not, and probably should not, exactly resemble another. Sameness to some people is monotony, and monotony is death.

The objects to be aimed at by these services are the following :—

In the first place, they must seek to help the spirit of prayer and the tendency or desire to pray. Though each member of the family may, and it is to be hoped does, say a few words, or think a few thoughts, of prayerful aspiration and communion night and morning, yet these devotional exercises will be strengthened by the weekly family service. Moreover, to pray with others is not quite the same thing as to pray by oneself. Each has its

own characteristics and advantages. There is one difficulty about Jewish family services which it is perhaps not wholly easy to avoid. They tend to become a *reading* of prayers instead of a common prayerful communion. The abandonment of kneeling has possibly proved of some spiritual injury. Those who mingle with Christian families, and have attended their daily and family prayers, know that the joint and collective repetition of the Lord's Prayer, and the listening on bended knee to a few solemn and beautiful collects, may, and sometimes does, have a considerable devotional effect. It might be well if during the recital (by the head of the family) of a few special prayers the rest of the worshippers did not follow in a book, but softly repeated the words after the reader. Some prayers should therefore be known by heart. It is so easy to *follow* the written page, and yet to think of quite other things. What the worshippers have to get into their minds is, that they are not assembled together to *read* prayers, or to follow them as read, but to pray. They are met not for a *reading*, but for *worship*.

In the second place, the weekly services should foster the unity—the spiritual unity—of the family. They not only bring the family

of God, and they join in praising him. They are all his children; in their relations to him their differences in wisdom, capacity and merit fall utterly away.

Thirdly, these services impress upon every member of the family that the day which brings them thus together is a special day, a holy day. A pause is made in the flow of life; a Sabbath consciousness is fostered. We bless the day and hallow it. And its influence hallows and blesses us. We remember that we are not *merely* to rest upon the Sabbath and enjoy ourselves, but to dedicate it to God, to spend it properly, to use some portion of it for higher things, for prayer, for holy thoughts, for communion with the Supreme.

Fourthly, the family service is, at the present time (and especially for all liberal Jews), an important and necessary adjunct to the public worship of the Synagogue. While that worship is still inadequate, containing many things which we should desire to see omitted, and devoid of many things which we should like to see present, the family service, which is wholly in our own hands to fashion as we please, may suffice to keep religion active and living in many a home.

Thus, fifthly and lastly, by the family service on the Sabbath the Jewish consciousness can be vivified and maintained. For it is a

Jewish service. It is *as Jews* that we meet together; it is as Jews that we pray. We shall be less likely to desecrate the Sabbath if on the Sabbath eve we have joined in hallowing it. The service produced and evoked by the Sabbath will also benefit the Sabbath. And it will, as it were, branch out in other directions. Conversations on Jewish subjects may spring from it. The ideals of Judaism should be expressed and reflected in our prayers, and these ideals can be talked about and discussed. In our modern environment there are many non-Jewish elements. Our literature, our schools, our universities, our art, our science, our politics, are all (and of necessity) non-Jewish. The family service is one very important means by which the religious and Jewish consciousness can be preserved. For Judaism must be preserved in the home. The Synagogue can no longer do it. The school can no longer do it. It must be done in the home and through all the agencies of the home. Of these agencies the Sabbath services are among the most effective and the best.

CHAPTER IX

THE first and the most important of the holy days enjoined in the Pentateuch has now been considered. There are fifty-two Sabbaths in the year, but the total number of the remaining holy days is only seven. Of these seven, five are festivals and days of rejoicing, while two are of a more serious and solemn character.

The festivals were originally feasts of nature, and one of them has so remained. They go back to very ancient times, and are of pre-Israelite origin. They were probably all adopted from the Canaanites, and special Jewish meanings were gradually infused into them. They were associated with important historical events in the early history of Israel. In the first of them the historical transformation is complete. The third is still a "nature festival"; its historical reference is somewhat halting and insecure. The second, in the Pentateuch itself, is purely a festival of nature, but in the Rabbinic period it was closely allied to a historical event, so that

its character has been almost wholly changed.

The first festival, comprising two days of rest, is the Passover. It celebrates the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage—the exodus from Egypt. What has liberal Judaism to say to it? Has it a meaning for us still?

A general remark may be made which will apply to all the festivals and holy days. It is impossible to create festivals to order. One must use those which exist, and charge them, where necessary, with newer meanings. It may indeed be that the subject of a festival altogether conflicts with our conception of religion or of our own faith. In that case we may be unable to observe it. But, happily, none of the five Pentateuchal festivals and holy days is of this nature.

There is this further advantage in continuing to observe and make use of them, that they form a link which unites all Jews, of whatever shade, to one another. They bring and bind us together.

The Passover practically celebrates the formation of the Jewish people. It is also the festival of liberty. In view of these two central features, it does not matter that we no longer believe in the miraculous incidents of the Exodus story. They are mere trappings which can easily be dispensed with. A fes-

tival of liberty, the formation of a people for a religious task, a people destined to become a purely religious community whose continued existence has no meaning or value except on the ground of religion,—here we have ideas which can fitly form the subject of a yearly celebration, of two special Synagogue services, and of two special holy days. It is a matter of comparative unimportance whether the practice of eating unleavened bread in the house for the seven days of the Passover be maintained or not. Those who appreciate the value of a pretty and ancient symbol, both for children and adults, will not easily abandon the custom.

The second of the three festivals is Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks. In the Pentateuch it is exclusively a nature festival. It was the celebration of the first-fruits. The Rabbis associated this festival with the giving of the Ten Words and the revelation at Sinai. They supposed that this great event happened fifty days after the Passover. Here again, we do not regard the Decalogue as our orthodox brethren regard it. They believe (we are to presume) in the literal accuracy of the nineteenth chapter of Exodus. They hold that God Himself spoke the Ten Words. We accept whatever view the best scholars may take about the date of the Ten Words, and we do not believe that any divine or mir-

aculous voice, still less that God Himself, audibly pronounced them. But their importance lies in themselves, not in their surroundings and origin. Liberals as well as orthodox may therefore join in the festival of the Ten Commandments. Pentecost celebrates the definite union of religion with morality, the inseparable conjunction of the "service" of God with the "service" of man. Can any religious festival have a nobler subject?

The third and last festival, like the Passover comprising two days of rest, is Tabernacles or Booths. It was originally the feast of Ingathering. In the oldest of the three Pentateuchal codes it is called the feast of Ingathering, at the end of the year, "when thou gatherest in thy labours out of the field." It celebrated the close of the agricultural year. It was specially connected with the fruit and grape harvest, but also with the threshing out of the gathered corn and wheat. The Latin *tabernaculum* means a little hut or booth. The name is first given to the festival in the Book of Deuteronomy, where its celebration is made to extend over seven days. The new name *Succoth*, *Booths* or *Tabernacles*, is best explained from the custom of camping-out in the autumn among the vineyard hills of Palestine in booths or huts of improvised and rustic material. In the latest or priestly code the custom is turned

into a law. The festival is rather arbitrarily connected with the exodus from Egypt and the wanderings in the desert, and all Israelites are bidden to live in booths for seven days, while an extra day of worship and of rest is commanded for the *eighth* day. Hence Tabernacles is now celebrated for eight days: there are two holy days with Synagogue services, one on the first day, and one on the eighth.

For us, to-day, the connection with the wanderings from Egypt, which the latest legislators attempted, has again disappeared. Tabernacles is a *harvest* festival; it is a *nature* festival. Should not a religion have a festival or holy day of this kind? Is not the conception of God as the ruler and sustainer of nature, the immanent and all-pervading spirit, one aspect of the Divine which can fitly be thought of and celebrated year by year? Thus each of the three great Pentateuchal festivals may reasonably and joyfully be observed by liberals and orthodox alike. We have no need or wish to make a change.

The two remaining holy days of the Pentateuch are of a quite different character. They are closely connected with each other. New and wider meanings have been infused into them, so that their value and significance to-day are very far from what they were at their first origin and institution. Of the Day of

Memorial little is said in the Pentateuch. It is called a "solemn rest," "a day of blowing of trumpets"; but in what sense it is a day of "Memorial," or whether it is the people who are to be "reminded" of the approaching atonement, or whether, according to old priestly ideas, God is to be reminded of the people, is not clearly expressed.

Some time after the "Day" was instituted the Jews began to date the beginning of the year from it, and the Jewish *religious* year is still so reckoned. But it is hard to have two "new years"; and for us Europeans and Americans, the only new year possessed of meaning and sentiment will be the new year which we share with others—the first of January. Thus the Day of Memorial can only be regarded as the opening of that solemn penitential season which is to culminate ten days later in the Day of Atonement. Looked at from this point of view it becomes a broadly human day, the celebration of which presents no difficulties to any one. It is a day of holy reflection and preparation; for the ideas of sin, repentance and atonement are so large and solemn that it is not unreasonable that they should have a short season of life reserved and dedicated to themselves. The period which intervenes between the Day of Memorial and the Day of Atonement is a sort of Jewish Lent, commonly known as

the "Days of Penitence." During these days it is customary and proper to lead a life somewhat more reserved and "collected" than usual; dinner parties and theatre-going are out of place. It would be fitting during that week to read a book or two about solemn things,—about sin and death, or about religion and immortality, or about repentance and communion with God. We should then be the better prepared for the Atonement Day, and likely to profit by it more deeply, to remember it more vividly.

No religion, so far as I am aware, possesses a holy day with finer spiritual possibilities than the Day of Atonement. None owns a day more catholic and universal. The day was not instituted or known till after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian Exile. Like the Day of Memorial, it belongs exclusively to the third and latest of the Pentateuchal codes. But what we read about it in that code gives us a wholly different conception of the day from that which most of us cherish at the present time. Elsewhere I have said, and I believe it is true, that "it is not too much to say that the true Day of Atonement has come into being since its own foundation." It needed a long upward development before a day, originally instituted on priestly lines and with old priestly ideas of national sin and collective atonement, could

be transformed into the purely spiritual festival which we celebrate to-day.

The chapter from Leviticus, still read in the Synagogue services, clearly shows the sort of ideas on the basis of which the day was founded. By a series of sacrifices and mysterious rites, by fasting and the "affliction of souls," the sins of the people will on this day be forgiven by God. "On this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the Lord." The original authors of the day did not mean that an individual Israelite might steal or commit adultery in August, and be absolved from his sin in September. Wilful sins could only be "atoned for" after repentance, punishment and restitution. The Day of Atonement, so far as the individual was concerned, atoned for *unconscious* sins only, but its special purpose concerned the community. From all the sins of individuals, the nation, as a whole, would be cleansed and purified by the Atonement Day. No ill effects would ensue to the people; to prevent these ill effects God graciously accepted the ritual and the sacrifices.

How strange and distant such ideas seem to us now! And though the authors of the day did not go so far as to think that its rites and the fasting would procure divine

forgiveness for every individual's sin, there is no doubt that such a gross and superstitious idea quickly arose. Alas, we are by no means free from it to-day! There are some persons who only come to Synagogue once a year, on the Day of Atonement. They would not eat or drink anything on that day for all the world! Why do they come to Synagogue once a year? Because they are silly enough to think that by this annual rite they may ward off some of the consequences of misspent lives and evil deeds. They have to learn the stern lesson, whether in this world or another, that the consequences of evil cannot be changed or diverted by any magic or ceremonial.

> Our deeds still travel with us from afar;
> And what we have been makes us what we are.

Already the early Rabbis had found it necessary to say, "They who think in their hearts, 'I will sin, for the Day of Atonement will bring me forgiveness'—for them the Day of Atonement brings no forgiveness."

The modern Day of Atonement is purely spiritual. It is true that most Jews still fast for twenty-four hours, but no one ascribes any efficacy to the fast. It is an old custom, which does no particular harm, and is an exercise in self-control. It has some dis-

ciplinal and ascetic value. Judaism, perhaps, slightly underestimates the place of asceticism in religion, and therefore it would be a pity to abandon any stimulating ascetic element, where it does no harm to any higher or more spiritual purpose. Liberal Jews no longer believe that God ordered all Israelites to fast upon the Day of Atonement, but there is no reason why they should not fast as a purely voluntary discipline. The fast is, however, a minor and subsidiary feature. In every other respect, the day has only to do with fundamental religious ideas, with the conceptions of sin, repentance, reconciliation and atonement. Such a day is absolutely fitted and useful for every human soul. It is as sacred and holy a day for the liberal as for the orthodox, for reformer as for conservative.

I need not repeat here all that I have said elsewhere about Repentance and Atonement. I would only venture to urge that no liberal Jew, in his desire to avoid superstition, or through his ethical conviction that sin must involve its consequence, need have any scruple in observing the Day of Atonement and in reaping from it all the comfort and peace which it is capable of giving. The day is given to us; God has no need of it. He does not specially forgive us on this day. The prayers of the liturgy speak in old-

fashioned terms: we must modify and translate them in our thoughts. But yet the day is not *merely* one which may do us good because, through the long Synagogue service, we have a chance of calm reflection, of earnest resolve, of strong repentance. Such a day a Positivist might celebrate too, though he does not believe in God. But we celebrate the day because we *do* believe that God helps us to conquer sin, because we *do* believe that this help will come to us more powerfully, if on our part, by prayer, by repentance, by communion, we strain and struggle to receive it. We *do* believe that the divine element in us can be quickened and stimulated partly by our own effort and partly by the grace of God. We *do* believe that by these means a sense of holy calm, a conviction of nearness and reconciliation, may come to us, which may make the day *for us* a veritable Day of Atonement. For atonement is a far more living conception and ideal to us than forgiveness. We do not ask that our past sins may be forgiven in the sense that their effects may be cancelled, for that is impossible; we do not ask that our sins should not meet their punishment, for even if the request had any meaning, we can only regard punishment as disciplinal and advantageous. All we can and do ask for is better insight, purer faith, fuller strength. We want to grow in

holiness of life and in the love of God. For this we ask God's help, for this end we try by earnest prayer to realise better the true vileness of sin, how it separates us from God, and weakens and defiles us; for this end only we make repentance and seek atonement. Surely a day which is used for purposes such as these is suited for all. It involves no superstition; it is based on no assumed violation of law. As our conceptions of God, of sin, of repentance and of atonement are deepened and purified, so is the Day of Atonement deepened and purified too. Its importance and nobility rest with ourselves.

We thus see that, while our estimate of the Pentateuch has widely changed, we are still able to use a great part of the religious embodiment which it has given to Judaism. The Sabbath and the Festivals, the Day of Memorial and the Day of Atonement,—these can all remain. We can still use them fitly for religious and spiritual ends. No one has the right or the justification to withdraw himself from outward communion with his brethren on the inadequate plea that, owing to his liberal views and his "critical" estimate of the Pentateuch, the feasts and holy days of Judaism no longer appeal to him. Providentially, as we may not improperly say, they depend on conceptions so broad and essential, so rooted in human nature, that the

date and manner of their institution are of quite secondary importance.

It is true that the same festival will be celebrated from a different point of view by liberals and by traditionalists. But this difference is not merely unavoidable; it is harmless. Even among the traditionalists themselves, are we to suppose that the cultivated or the philosophic will think of God and of his relation to man in the same way as the uneducated or the simple? Such a sameness of thought is out of the question. Upon the same words different persons will put different interpretations. The prominent references to the Law in the liturgy can easily be given a new and different meaning by "liberal" worshippers. To them the Law is no longer the Pentateuch, but the Moral Law, before whose majesty all men must bow. That is the Law to which they ask God to "open their hearts." That is the Law which they trust may "become pleasant in their mouths." Or, again, the Law is the will of God. That we may know and do God's will we ask him to grant us "understanding and discernment." Or the Law is the Hebrew Scripture as a whole, which still remains the formal and constituent charter of Judaism, and of which we may truly say, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast given it to us." In these various ways,

which, because they are freely acknowledged, are not sophistic or insincere, we may adapt the language of the liturgy to our own beliefs and aspirations.

CHAPTER X

If "the Law" was a difficult and delicate subject, no less difficult and no less delicate is the subject of the present chapter. For a few suggestions must now be made about the New Testament.

How are liberal Jews to think about this famous book? Is it good or bad; is it true or false? Or is it both good *and* bad, both true *and* false? Is it bad and false when it is new, and only good and true when it is old?

No more can here be attempted than to suggest the lines on which we may seek to prepare ourselves to answer these grave and far-reaching questions. Too long have they been shirked or feebly dealt with by Jewish writers. We can, I think, best clear the way if we recall to mind the new conception of the *Old* Testament which liberal Judaism would have us hold. To orthodox or traditional Judaism the Old Testament (and more especially the Pentateuch) is all true and all perfect. There is no *religious* truth accessible to man which is not contained

in it. It may contain errors on questions of science or history, but in morality and religion it is flawless and complete. For its source is God. It is obvious, when such gigantic claims are made and *believed* for a particular book, that no other book can contain any moral or religious teaching at once true and new. The Old Testament is separated by the hardest and fastest line of demarcation from every other book in the world, whether it be the New Testament, the Upanishads, or the Koran.

The new conception of the Old Testament takes a very different view of it. Religious and moral truth, it holds, in their perfection and completeness, cannot be contained in any book. They are only *progressively* revealed to man's heart and understanding. The Old Testament is not homogeneous in faith or doctrine. It has higher and lower elements; true teachings and false teachings; permanently good and noble elements, together with other elements which were good in their own day, but are good no more. What is good and true in it is of God in the same sense that we hold that *whatever* is good and true has God for its author and source. Because of its many good and true teachings, because of its transcendent originality and excellence in matters of religion, because of its immense issues for

good, we call it, and believe it to be, a divinely inspired book.

Clearly this view of it does not separate it by a great gulf from all other "sacred" books. They too, in proportion to their originality, their excellence and their influence for good, may be "inspired" and "divine." The Old Testament contains much truth, but not all truth. Nor is it all true. God may have chosen that the sacred books of other nations and creeds should also contain, together with much error, many elements of new truth, supplementary and complementary to the truths of the Hebrew Scriptures. There is nothing *a priori* unlikely or inconceivable in the idea that he should have done so. In fact, the more we think of it the more we consider analogies in other spheres of his rule and providence, the more is it unlikely that he should have desired *all* truth to enter into the world by a single gateway or channel.

These reflections can be applied to the New Testament. Why should not this book too, written moreover by Jews, contain some new truths about religion and morality supplementary and complementary to the truths of the Old Testament?

To orthodox Jews it would be more difficult to make this admission in regard to the New Testament than in regard to any

other religious book in the world. For they would say that, so far from the New Testament containing supplements and complements to Old Testament teaching, this teaching is in the New Testament frequently revoked and denied. In the first place, the New Testament asserts that the binding obligation of the Law is at an end, and that the death of Jesus was the death of the Law. It asserts that the Law was but a temporary institution, and that with the life, the death and the resurrection of Jesus, a better and more efficacious way began of reconcilement with, and drawing near unto God. It asserts that the Law was even a hindrance to goodness, a stimulus to sin. In the second place, it maintains that the Messiah has come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. In the third place, by its doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Jesus, it modifies and denies the pure monotheism of the Old Testament, and yet it claims to present a higher doctrine of God and of morality. There is therefore nothing for Judaism to learn from the New Testament. The only proper attitude towards it is uncompromising opposition. For if Christianity be true, Judaism is false; but if Judaism be true, and the Old Testament good and perfect, then is the New Testament false and wrong.

What are we liberal Jews to think of

these arguments? How are we to reply to them?

We have to look at the New Testament, not dogmatically, but historically. We have to see it as it is. We must not regard it as a whole—consistent in all its parts—any more than we regard the Old Testament as a whole. Because one book or chapter of the New Testament conflicts with our highest conceptions of God, it does not follow that another book or another chapter may not consort with them. It may even contain some "complementary or supplementary truth." Moreover, *for ourselves*, the sharpness of opposition has largely faded away. Its importance has lessened. Let us take the three fundamental objections raised by orthodox Judaism to the New Testament, and look at them in the light of these general considerations.

The exact attitude which Jesus adopted towards the Law is still a matter of dispute. Books are written about it to this very day. If it were certain and obvious, these treatises would not be written. Much of the religious teaching of Jesus (whether in itself good or bad, old or new) is quite independent of his attitude towards the Law, and can be independently regarded. It would seem that he was disposed to think lightly of some Rabbinic additions to the Pentateuchal law, and in these very points we liberals must admit that

he saw clearly and did well. As to the Pentateuch, he seems, in the true spirit of the ancient prophets, to have urged the greater importance of the moral commandments and the comparative unimportance and secondary character of the ritual and ceremonial commandments. Would not Amos, if he had lived again, have done precisely the same? Jesus seems to have taught that all religion and morality flowed from two or three great and central principles, and that it was well and serviceable to look at religion and goodness from this unifying and centralising point of view rather than to split them up into a number of disconnected and heterogeneous enactments. Any philosophical analysis of religion and morality would, I believe, approve of such a procedure. It is certainly not un-Jewish. There are close and independent parallels in the teaching of the later Rabbis. So far, therefore, as the teaching of Jesus about the Law can still be ascertained, we seem to see in it something of the attitude of the prophets of the eighth century, and (though he started from different premises) something also of our own.

As regards the teaching of Paul, in his chief and presumably authentic epistles, we seem to have passed beyond his contradictions and antitheses. We see the exaggeration of his estimate of the Law; its gross historic inaccuracies. We know that the pride and

the despair, the self-righteousness and the alienation from God, which Paul regards as the necessary consequences of the Law, are for the most part fictions and chimeras. They were not the normal products of the Law, but only its occasional evils and perversions. Moreover, the whole question has become remote to us. For we liberals no longer approach God through the Law; we no longer regard the Law as the unalloyed product of God. We move freely in the divine presence—needing neither the Law nor Christ as intermediary or introduction. But in spite of Paul's historic inaccuracies, in spite of his amazing forgetfulness of the Jewish doctrine of repentance and atonement, in spite, too, of the remoteness for us of the opposition *Law versus Christ*, we may still admire the profundity of his genius, and adopt many true and noble elements of his religious and ethical teaching. If we can exercise a careful eclecticism in Deuteronomy and Isaiah, we can also exercise it in the Epistles to the Romans and the Corinthians. Disentangling it from its temporary setting, we can discern and appreciate the religious truth contained in Paul's doctrine of faith; ignoring his almost wilful misconceptions of his opponents, we can discern and appreciate the nobility of his doctrine of love.

Then, secondly, as to the Messiah. It is

still disputed, and in the last few years there have been quite a number of treatises on the subject, whether Jesus regarded himself as the Messiah or not. And if he considered that he was the Messiah, in what sense did he use the term as applied to himself? Did he believe that at the last moment God would interfere and interpose, and that *before his death* he would fulfil the predictions of the prophets? Is *that* the true meaning of the famous cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Or are the present statements and speeches in the Gospels accurate, and did Jesus really believe that he must first suffer and die? Was his true Messiahship to begin only *after* his death, and did he imagine that the Messianic judgment and reign would be established in their fulness soon after his resurrection from the grave? Are the *unfulfilled* vaticinations ascribed to him those which he really uttered? The notion, now so often attributed to him, that he was to fulfil the old prophecies in a higher and spiritual sense, that whereas Isaiah and the others had prophesied a Messiah who should be an earthly conqueror and deliverer, *he* was going to establish a spiritual reign in the hearts and souls of men, seems to me exceedingly difficult. It is easy for us moderns to separate what we are pleased to call the kernel of the prophetic teaching

from its husk, but could Jesus have done it and yet have believed in the divine inspiration and mission of the prophets themselves? Could he have believed that God deliberately bade them prophesy falsehoods, foretell a Messiah whose special and appointed task it should be to accomplish deeds which the true Messiah, when in the fulness of time he came, was never to accomplish at all? Such a conception seems a psychological puzzle. It would be an application of the doctrine "for the hardness of their hearts" of excessive daring. Is it perhaps more likely that this correction of the prophets should have been made up afterwards to suit the result—*emendatio post eventum?*

But however this may be, and whatever Jesus may have thought about himself and his own position and mission, to us the questions involved have a historic interest only. The whole doctrine of the Messiah no longer concerns our religious life and aspirations. We do, indeed, believe in the conception of the Messianic age, or at any rate in the optimistic faith which underlies it. We believe that God rules the world, and that he means it to become not worse, but better. But we no longer believe in a *personal* Messiah, who will lead back the Jews to Palestine, and exercise the sway and power of conqueror and king. From the visions and the faith of

liberal Jews, to whom Judaism is a religion, and the Jews are not a nation but a religious community, such a belief has wholly disappeared.

Even though we hold that Jesus erroneously supposed himself to be the Messiah predicted by the prophets, it does not follow that he was not a great religious and ethical teacher. Isaiah was wrong in several of his predictions, but he is a great teacher all the same. Jesus may have been wrong as to his Messiahship, but none the less he may have been a great teacher. Doubtless the picture of him drawn in the Gospels is sometimes idealised and inaccurate, but none the less may the teachings attributed to him be of profound religious value, and contain many "supplementary and complementary truths." It is simply not the case that one cannot separate the teaching of Jesus about religion and morality from the claim, only rarely ascribed to him, of thrusting himself between man and God as a necessary intermediary and introducer. To the doctrine contained in Matthew xi. 25-30 liberal Jews will be as opposed as their orthodox brethren. Jews had found rest in God before Jesus came, and without his help we have found rest in God ever since. Our history proves it. Otherwise we could not show more martyrs than all the sects of Christianity put together. But even

if Jesus said the words contained in those six verses, which is extremely doubtful, that does not make *other* words ascribed to him less worthy of our adoption and our praise.

It is this sifting and critical manner of regarding the Gospels and the New Testament which must also be applied to the third difficulty, the alleged higher doctrine on the one hand and its enfeeblement of pure monotheism upon the other. The old oppositions are seen to be erroneous and exaggerated. There may be some new things in the book which are bad, and some new things which are good. The notion that the Old Testament teaches a God of justice, the New Testament a God of love, that the keynote of the one book is retribution, of the other book pity, is childish and absurd. We shall rather say that in some respects some passages of the New Testament show a declension from the *highest* conceptions of the Old Testament, while in other matters there are passages in the New Testament which supplement and complete the doctrines of the Old Testament. I would venture to say provisionally that our conceptions of character and of sin, of our duty to the sinner and the "outcast," and of religious inwardness and spiritual intensity, can be heightened and deepened by a study of the New Testament.

Nobody should be more qualified for a

calm and impartial investigation of this book than liberal Jews. We need have no difficulty in accepting from it whatever is good and true. We need not be excited about it, whether to refute or to advocate. What is good and true in it is divine, because what is good and true is of God. Liberal Judaism does not teach that all goodness and truth in religion are or can be contained within one book; its equilibrium and fundamental tenets are not upset if the Jews who composed the New Testament, amid much error, said also several things that were new and true. The Jews who wrote the Talmud did the same.

Nor can we forget the huge importance of the New Testament in the history of the world. No one who reads it can fail to see that here we have works of genius, *first-class* works, whatever their truth and their goodness. It would be a mournful and irreligious thing if a book which, together with much evil, has also done so much good, which has had such gigantic influence, which has formed the religion of so many noble souls, and which the most different sorts of people in every age—believers and unbelievers alike—have agreed in thinking the greatest and most beautiful of all religious books,—if such a book contained nothing which was both new and true.

But all this does not commit us to any

particular view of the central hero. Jesus, so far as we can gather, was a great and inspired teacher, but what *precisely* he thought and taught will always remain obscure. The Gospels were written by the disciples of his disciples for purposes of edification. They idealise on the one hand; they darken on the other. To increase the lonely greatness of the hero, the disciples must be made stupid, the people ungrateful, hard-hearted, wicked. To estimate the Jewish religion (as Christian theologians do) from the New Testament is to produce a caricature; to find a portrait of Jesus in the Gospels is to look for a photograph in an idealised picture, painted several years after the subject's death.

Nor can the New Testament be acknowledged by Jews as a part of their own Bible. The Hebrew Scripture remains by itself; it is the charter of Judaism. The New Testament is, after all, the charter of another creed. So things must remain for many a year. To read a chapter of the New Testament in a "liberal" Synagogue would provoke misunderstanding, even although to read a piece of a modern religious poem, such as *In Memoriam*, which could not have been written without the New Testament, does not. But, outside the Synagogue, it is right for liberal Jews to read the New Testament; it

is their duty, and it is within their power, to appraise and estimate it correctly without prejudice or passion. What on these lines we appropriate and admire can never make us less devoted to Judaism, because *what* we admire and *what* we appropriate will be itself Jewish, the "supplement, the complement" and the expression of Jewish doctrine and of Jewish truth.

CHAPTER XI

THE outlines of a working conception of Inspiration and of the Bible have now been suggested. We have not minimised or attempted to gloze over the differences between the old view and the new. Yet the conception turns out to be one with which a Jewish embodiment of outward religion is not inconsistent. We have now to consider a matter closely connected with what has just been said, and even more vitally important.

What is the religious function of the Jews at the present time? Can we still speak of a Jewish Mission? Are the Jews in any *religious* sense a "Peculiar People"?

Let me assume, *ex hypothesi*, that the social and political ideal of liberal Judaism had been fulfilled. Let me assume that all religious and national prejudices and persecutions had wholly ceased, that the Jews were as free in Russia as they are in England, and that every Jew in England or America was a complete Englishman or American, and every Jew in Russia was a complete Russian. Let

me assume that the link which united the Jews together was recognised by themselves and by outsiders to be solely a religious link, and that their general position and condition in the world was such that it was no advantage anywhere, and therefore no meanness everywhere, for a Jew to cease to belong to his own community and to join another religious organisation. To-day, unless a man be genuinely convinced of the truth of Christianity, one can hardly think it other than mean in him to separate himself from the community. So long as there anywhere exist persons who are persecuted because they are Jews, so long is it a *mean* thing if any comfortable Jew ignores the bonds which bind him to his fellow-Jews, and drops the duties of brotherhood. The lax (that is, not the non-observant, but the unattached) Jew is now—under the present mournful circumstances of persecution, disability and distress —a merely despicable fellow. It is not now an entirely religious question. We have, therefore, to make up a hypothetical condition of affairs in order that the religious question may be considered by itself and without prejudice. We have to look at it scientifically and without other elements which change, distract and disturb.

The old view of the relation of God to the Jewish people corresponded with the old

view of the Hebrew Bible. It remains, therefore, to be seen whether the new view of the Bible must greatly change our view of that relation. Now the fact is that the Hebrew Bible contains no one consistent doctrine about the relation of the Jewish people to God. It contains a variety of doctrines and implications, some higher and some lower. And it may also be said that traditional Judaism throughout its history has maintained no single and consistent view upon this crucial subject.

Historically we can see how these differences arose. Jehovah or Yahweh was originally a national God, whose pleasure and profit it was to protect and aggrandise his own. That was the popular conception. The wars of Israel were the wars of Yahweh, and Israel's victories were Yahweh's victories as well. The more sacrifices and praises that Israel could render to Yahweh the greater was Yahweh's glory, the keener his satisfaction. Gradually the conception was moralised. Yahweh was the God of justice, and injustice displeased him. He punished the individual Israelite for his sins. But if iniquity displeased him in the individual, it also displeased him in the state. National guilt would produce national punishment. Thus the glory of Yahweh as a *moral* God might be shown, not in Israel's victory, but in Israel's defeat.

This was the new doctrine of the prophets which caused such astonishment and disbelief among their contemporaries. Amos presents it in its purest form. Because Yahweh has a special relation with Israel, *therefore* he requites their misdeeds. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth ; therefore I will visit your iniquities upon you." A noble and notable utterance of epoch-making importance.

But why did Yahweh "choose" Israel? In old days nobody asked the question. The race had its god, as the child had its father. The one relation was as natural as the other. But when the conception of Yahweh was magnified and moralised this naive assurance would no longer suffice. The relationship could no longer be regarded as purely natural and obvious. For Yahweh was different from other gods. As he increased, they dwindled ; as he became greater and purer, they became feebler and less real. Thus Yahweh's relation with Israel must have been due to his own choice. It was a voluntary arrangement, entered into of his own free-will. Why did he enter into it? Various opinions were expressed. It was because of the merits of Israel's progenitors. It was for Yahweh's own glory that there might exist a holy people, dedicated to his service and living in accordance with his will.

The glory of Israel was still the glory of Yahweh, for the other nations of the world would realise in Israel's wisdom and holiness the supreme power of Israel's God. Here the newer view harked back to the older, unconscious realism of the pre-prophetic period. Or, again, it was entered into out of kindness to and affection for Israel. Yahweh in his free choice loves Israel, and though, as the righteous God, he must, sadly enough, chastise Israel for Israel's sin, he will forgive Israel as soon as mercy and equity allow him; he will never forsake his people; he will at the last redeem Israel from all distresses and exalt his "peculiar treasure" above all the nations of the world. Or, again, to Israel God gave his Law; the nation which accepted the Law is worthy of Yahweh's love and shall eternally receive it. For *through the Law* Israel becomes a holy, wise and peculiar people, with close and special relations to God. Lastly, a very few chosen spirits conceived the idea that while Israel was chosen for the sake of Israel, it was *also* chosen for the sake of the world. Israel was chosen to be the light of the nations, to make known to them true religion.

These different views could be maintained concurrently, and fused together in various proportions. The lower views were never wholly eliminated. This continuance of

lower and higher together was due to the fact that though Yahweh became the sole God of the world, he yet never ceased to be the special God of the Jews. Even to the Rabbis he still fulfils this double *rôle*. Religion was still national; patriotism was stimulated by religion, and religion was stimulated by patriotism. Such action and reaction had consequences of grave import both for evil and for good, which we cannot now stay to consider.

As a result, the orthodox or traditional view of the relation of God to Israel is still lacking in clearness and precision. It cannot speak to-day with the naive simplicity of either the Biblical or the Rabbinical ages; yet it cannot move freely among the written statements of the past. Israel is still the "chosen people"; the Jews are God's treasure, specially beloved by "their" God. "He has not made us like the nations of other lands." God has bestowed upon Israel his Law, the performance of which gives a peculiar religious bliss, the possession of which is a peculiar privilege; but this Law as a whole is for the Jews alone. The liturgy looks forward to a time when "all the children of flesh will call upon thy name," but *on the whole* it looks forward to this time (as is humanly natural, considering *when and under what circumstances* the

prayers were written) less *for the sake of* the "children of flesh" than for the sake of Israel and its prosperity, and for the sake of Yahweh and his glory. It is remarkable that the "Thirteen Articles of the Jewish Creed" make the coming of the Messiah a dogma of faith, but are wholly silent as to the Mission of Israel.

But orthodox and traditional Judaism, while it dare not brush away any statement of Bible or liturgy, yet when it speaks on its own account touches a higher note. It believes in Israel's mission, and that mission is made to consist in some service rendered to the cause of Monotheism. The Jews are not to proselytise; their Law is for themselves alone; they are not to purge their religion of its national elements; their public worship is still to be conducted in a language which no non-Jew can understand; but as purely passive "witnesses"—as silent depositaries of a charge and a cause which God himself entrusted to their hands and care—they render a service to Monotheism and to religion. Such, so far as I can gather, is the orthodox view of the relation of Israel to God. It is a view which makes for endurance and for heroism. It is still faithful to the old conceptions: Israel is the best beloved, the treasure, the holy and chosen people; the Law is and ever will be

Israel's own peculiar heritage; but yet the constancy of the Jews to God and to the Law is not *only* for their own sake (nobly as it will be rewarded), but it is *also* for the sake of religion, so that his Unity may at last be acknowledged by all the races of men.

The "liberal" view of the relation of God to Israel is (I venture to think) clearer and more consistent. No liberal "articles of faith" would omit the "Mission of Israel" from the list. But because liberal Judaism can take up a perfectly free and critical attitude towards all ancient documents (whether Biblical or Rabbinic), it can reject all lower teaching upon the subject, and retain only what is higher, catholic and spiritual. Yet its doctrine will be none too sublimated for common use. It is not attenuated to invisibility. It serves for duty. It enjoins. It orders our lives.

As the belief that there is a real relation of God to the individual is the kernel of all religion, so the belief that, in a different way, there is a real relation of God to the Jewish community, is the kernel of *Judaism*.

We must not be driven to abandon this belief because it is hard to realise the mode of its operation, the method of its work. It is hard enough to believe or realise that God rules the world, that he directs it towards a higher end; but in spite of the hardness,

we nevertheless believe. Hard as the world is to explain *with* God, it is harder yet without him. Therefore we throw in our lot with the believers. But if he rule the world, it is almost a necessary consequence that the functions and capacities of different races, nations and communities are guided and determined by him. Greece was no more a chance product than Judæa. The Christian would allow and even assert that the Jews received and fulfilled a divine mission; only to him the mission was concluded at the birth of Christianity. Henceforward (such is the common view) whatever the Jews had to say in religion was known. Christianity absorbed the best of Judaism and went beyond it. It is the completion and fulfilment of Judaism. The Jews would benefit themselves, and thereby benefit the world (because the more believers of the highest truth the better), if they all became Christians to-morrow.

In direct opposition to the Christian estimate of Judaism, the justification to the Jew of his continued separation, and the consolation for all the miseries and malice he has to endure, lie in the belief that his religion is of value to himself and to the world. It is surely not unreasonable to say, "If to himself, then to the world." It may indeed be urged that a given religion is the best for

its adherents at a certain stage of culture, or that a certain race needs a certain religion; yet that the highest truth is not found in that particular religion. The purest truth is not always most suited, from an ethical point of view, to every race at every time. Such was the religious philosophy of Maimonides, the famous Jewish teacher of the twelfth century, and the author of the Thirteen Articles of the Jewish Creed. He thought that a pagan world could not bear the pure Monotheism of the Jewish faith. Christianity, therefore, with its Man-God, its Mother of God, its Trinity, and its Saints, was a half-way house between heathenism and Judaism. It was not the highest truth, but it was the most suitable, and therefore a part of the divine education of the world. Pagan nations could not absorb more, but ultimately the truth of Monotheism would prevail.

The educated Jew of Europe and America could clearly not be *harmed* by adopting any phase of Christianity if it appealed to him as the highest truth. But because he regards Judaism as already containing the purest religious truth it is unnecessary for him to make a change. Judaism is best *for him.* But if Judaism contain the highest and purest truth it is also best for the world, if not *at once*, then *ultimately*. The Jew must, there-

fore, maintain and preserve the truth till the world is able to receive it, and to profit by its reception.

We no longer believe that Israel was called and chosen for its own well-being. History shows that Israel was chosen for suffering and trial. As to the divine glory, we are incompetent to measure it. We can leave God's glory to God, except in the sense that it is *our* glory to give him glory. We no longer believe that God has any partial love for Israel, or that the proportion of Jews in "heaven" will be greater than the proportion of Gentiles. All these lower conceptions have been swept away. The preservation of the Jews has been effected, not for their own future exaltation, but for the sake of religion. Every Jew, whether liberal or orthodox, must believe this doctrine. It is in its application that liberals and orthodox necessarily differ. For the liberal does not believe that the religious duty or mission of the Jew lies in a changeless fidelity to the Mosaic and Rabbinic Law. The mission has always a religious character, but its method and emphasis vary with the exigencies of the time. We can, we should, and we do improve and develop our religion, even while we preserve it and maintain it for the benefit of the world.

The religious conceptions of liberal

Judaism are obviously regarded as true and important by liberal Jews. Pure Monotheism, the direct communion of man with God, the direct relation of God to man, the close connection of religion with morality and of morality with religion, the proper place of forms and ceremonies, the absence of priests and intermediaries,—all these things are in liberal Judaism united together, and, with other complementary doctrines, they form a consistent, harmonious and *historic* religion. We believe in the truth of these doctrines; we believe in their religious, ethical and social value. How then can we not believe that it is our duty and our mission to aid in their maintenance and diffusion? Saints there have been and are of all forms and phases of belief and unbelief, but none the less do we believe that a given set of doctrines are truer than another set, and if truer, then of more ultimate spiritual or ethical advantage to mankind.

Under these circumstances why should liberal Jews, who, *ex hypothesi*, hold these doctrines, be lukewarm in their Judaism?

The religious isolation of the individual cannot be the best possible service to the religious cause in which he believes. It may be a temporary necessity, but the best condition, both for him and for the cause, will be one in which his own religious life both

strengthens, and is strengthened by, the community. Liberal Jews must not think that they best serve the cause of Theism by an abstention from the community in its corporate religious life. It may be that they feel at present unable to join in that life; it may be that circumstances are unfavourable to the creation of a distinct corporate religious life of their own; or it may be that the chosen apostle or teacher to create this life has not yet arisen; but, in any case, the present condition of things must not be looked upon as either normal or satisfying. The individuals of rare religiousness and spirituality who now live aloof and apart are certainly not wasted. Their fair and holy lives, their lofty and noble personalities, influence those who can understand and appreciate them. "The effect of their being upon those around them is incalculably diffusive." Nevertheless they might do all this, and yet do more. The cause of religion, the cause of Jewish Theism, the power and purity of the community as a religious force, would be strengthened and increased if these rare natures were an integral part of the religious organisation to which they now only nominally belong. Their influence would be doubled; it would be not merely individual, but also collective. The power and beauty of such natures would, as it were, be reflected back upon the com-

munity. In helping to transform and develop it they would also be its outcome and expression.

For the majority of mortals aloofness is not merely bad for the community, but also harmful for themselves. For them religious isolation is religious detriment. There is a parallelism, in this respect, between religion and morality. In his excellent little book, called *The Making of Character*, Professor MacCunn discusses with approval the prevailing Greek doctrine, that "character will never come to its best until the day that sees society reorganised as, at once, a school and sphere of virtue." In his chapter on "The Religious Organisation," he points out how "Church membership can do much to quicken individual responsibility." He naturally alludes to the famous passage in Plato's *Republic*, which has its bearing on religion as well as on ethics, about the philosopher whose "lot has fallen amidst adverse and evil social surroundings, and to whom it seems a hopeless struggle to make the society of which he is a member better." He, indeed, "holds his peace and goes his own way, content if only he can live his own life and be pure from evil and unrighteousness." And what he does is well. But it is not the best; for if he had found the right society, the fitting state, "*he would himself have reached a higher stage of growth*,

and have secured his country's welfare as well as his own." Plato's solemn words apply to religion as well as to morality.

Thus the best and ideal thing would be that the liberal Jew, for his own sake as well as for the sake of Theism, should take an active part in the corporate life of some religious organisation. By so doing he would both give and gain. The religious life, as we have seen, is not wholly dissimilar in this respect to the citizen life. Here too there is a giving and a gaining in one and the same life. But it may still be asked, What religious organisation should the liberal Jew join? Should it be Judaism or another?

It must be understood that I am here discussing the subject only and solely from one particular point of view. To abandon the religious brotherhood of Israel now, when the large majority of that brotherhood are in such evil plight; when there is so much to be done; when all should stand by and give, if they can, a hand; when it is of the utmost importance that every good man and woman should emphatically acknowledge their membership in the community, and help by their mere acknowledgment and strenuous life to maintain its honour and its name;—to abandon the community *now* would seem the act of one without imagination or sympathy. All I ask here is, whether *for the sake of Theism*

liberal Jews would do better to join some other religious organisation rather than to remain members of the Synagogue?

And just a word in explanation of the phrase, "For the sake of Theism." Am I making the mission of Judaism to consist in a matter of theology rather than of religion? Not so. But the service and the knowledge of God are reciprocally conditioned by one another. To know God as he is, is beyond man's ken and power. There is, moreover, a deep meaning in the teaching that the service of God produces a knowledge of him. God is, as it were, revealed to man more and more clearly by a certain attitude of mind and will, a certain trend of action. But the will and the life which make man more sure of God, and reveal to him more of the divine character and nature, are themselves not without their theoretic basis. It is a working theory about God which shapes and directs the will and the life, and as this theory varies, so also must they. If a man's conception of God be, for example, that of the self-conscious and eternal ideal of goodness and truth, his service of God will be coloured by his working theory. He will test all stories and books and dogmas about God by his own highest conceptions of righteousness and truth. He will regard no service displeasing to God which is also dedicated to truth or to righteous-

ness, no service commendable to God which impairs the supremacy of either the one or the other.

The nature and existence of God are not merely the subject-matter of theology: they are the essence of religion. For religion without God is a misuse of words. The religious life involves the belief that God is the source of goodness and of truth, or, in other words, that if there were no God there would be no truth and no goodness. Without some Theistic metaphysic goodness and truth cannot, as I believe, maintain themselves. Is it not clear that if there be no God, goodness is a mere earthly episode, a mere transitory chance? Here on this earth man has been evolved from the animal; he exists for a time; after a time he will pass away; he has learned to talk about love and righteousness and truth, but there is nothing beyond the earth which corresponds with these words or has created these conceptions. They chanced to appear; they will chance to disappear—chance creations as they are of varying sensations of pleasure and pain.

And may we not go a step farther and argue that goodness depends not only on the existence of God, but also on the belief in him? If, indeed, goodness and truth owe their being to God, it is impossible to suppose that God will suffer the belief in him to die out

among men. But if, for the sake of argument, we assume that the belief did die out, then, as it seems to me, goodness itself would also gradually dwindle away. People would come to perceive that goodness, in the old sense of the term, had no superhuman or extra-human sanction or source, and with that perception the texture and quality of their goodness would gradually grow weaker and poorer. Woe, then, to the permanent stability of human goodness if man loses the belief in God! And for these reasons the cause of Theism includes, as it seems to me, the cause of morality as well. Moreover, every phase of Theism involves a particular kind of belief about God, and this belief may determine and colour our actions.

If we believe that God not merely hates sin, but also the sinner, that in his universe there is such a thing as everlasting punishment, that he has favouritisms of race and creed, these beliefs can hardly help influencing our character and our deeds; or if we believe that God is near to man, that in some strange way he helps our struggles towards goodness and truth, that the relation of father and child is a true analogy of God's relation to ourselves, that God is One in such sort that in him justice is the same as love, and righteousness the same as mercy,—will this belief not influence our service? It is true that service

deepens the knowledge, but it is also true that knowledge (or, in other words, a working theory about God) directs the service. "For the sake of Theism" therefore includes "for the sake of religion."

There is or should be sufficient unity in man to make his knowledge (or, if you will, his theories) ennoble his action, and his action deepen his knowledge. So too in theology and religion. In the last resort, each religion must surely maintain that the truer the theology (*i.e.* the better and purer the working theory about God) the better the religion. Each religion has its saints and heroes; it is a hard saying that the religious life which one religion dictates and induces is superior to the religious life of another. But the votaries of each religion have to maintain (and they do so logically) that the religious life inculcated by their own particular creed is on the whole the fullest and the best. No less than this must be the claim of Judaism.

It is not denied or deniable that some outside Theisms have certain advantages for "liberals." They are freer, more western, more connected and in touch with the main stream of thought and culture; they make fewer demands upon our patience. To some, Unitarianism may still seem too Christian; to others, "Theism" may seem too cold; but, speaking generally, the advant-

ages which I have mentioned belong to them both. For individuals, therefore, to whom the romance of Judaism and the tribal or historic links which appeal so keenly to many minds no longer afford attraction, to whom, also, the urgent obligation to remain within the community at the present time of stress and storm is unrealised or unknown, the temptation to desert Judaism, and to join some Unitarian or Theistic body, may be very strong. From the purely individual point of view, it becomes a matter of personal inclination and taste, on which there is no arguing. We have, however, to consider it in its relation to the community as a whole, and to the outer world.

Now this is a practical question which is before us, and we must regard it as practical men. It is clear that we have not to deal with large numbers; we have to deal with driblets and individuals. There is no question of the Jews as a body, or even of a collected mass of them, giving up their separate religious organisation and joining another. It is only a question of a few here and a few there. The other religious bodies, then, will not appreciably be strengthened. But, on the other hand, Judaism will appreciably lose; and the loss of Judaism would be the loss of Theism as well. For the Theism in which liberal Jews believe would best be served if

all the eight or ten million Jews in the world were keen Theists in the liberal sense. They are Theists even now. Is their liberalism likely to come the sooner if liberal Jews abandon the community? It is a very serious and evil thing for a religious organisation if its liberal elements become alienated or indifferent. A reforming and transforming force is thereby removed. The steady pressure of a keen and increasing band of liberals must inevitably produce important results, supposing that pressure is maintained for an adequate and continuous time. If all liberal Jews were active members of the Synagogue, could they not make a considerable difference, both in its services and ceremonial, and in the very conception and presentation of its teaching and doctrine? If the liberal forces are withdrawn, can liberals complain of conservatism and sterility? This argument will not be unfamiliar to many persons. It is the argument of the Broad Church party who desire to reform from within instead of destroying from without.

Again, without presuming to criticise either Mr. Voysey's community or the Unitarian Churches, it is reasonable to remember that they too have various difficulties and weaknesses of their own. The one is at present a small and solitary body, of recent origin, with no great historic past, and with small guarantees

for its continuance and expansion. The other, from my Jewish point of view, is perhaps hardly separated with adequate sharpness and decision from orthodox Christianity; moreover, the children of Unitarians often marry into the Established Church, and their offspring is lost to Unitarianism. And liberal Jews, though they can approve and appropriate the nobler teachings of the New Testament, are not prepared to call themselves Christians. They are not prepared to call any man master; and certainly not one of whose life and teaching, great and illustrious though they be, the records are so uncertain and contradictory, and bear such clear evidence of exaggeration and inventive arrangement. They require no mediator between the human child and the divine Father.

Under these circumstances the liberal or nominal Jew, while doing obvious harm to his own community, will confer no benefit upon the cause of Theism by joining another religious organisation. Theism will best be served by two separate contingents, one Christian and one Jewish, each liberal and progressive, each in sympathy with one another, but each distinct, and with its own peculiar differences and modifications. The cause of pure religion will best be served by Jews cleaving to Judaism and liberalising it. Doing most good to our own brotherhood,

we shall also do most good to the world. The second is involved in the first.

If this position be justifiable our separatism is also justified. The Jews can only preserve themselves by refusing intermarriage. Otherwise the tiny minority would gradually be swallowed up by the majority. The true religious reason for Jewish separatism is so often misunderstood that it seems worth while and even necessary to dwell upon the subject in some detail.

It would be acknowledged on all hands that there may be more grounds or motives than one for the same action, and that two men may concur in the propriety of a given deed although they differ as to its justification. This elementary fact may be applied to the question of Jewish separatism. It can be observed and justified from two different reasons. These two reasons may combine; a man may hold them both, but they may also be very sharply dissociated from each other. There is, then, first, the reason of race; and, secondly, there is the reason of religion.

There are persons who want to maintain the Jewish race quite apart from any religious consideration. There are some who would even go so far as to speak of the Jews as a "people" or a "nation," and would desire to keep up, as they call it, the national

idea. Such persons would object to intermarriage on purely "racial" or "national" grounds. There are others who combine these grounds with motives of religion. There are others, again, who, while by no means assenting to the theory that the Jews are a nation, have yet a sort of sentimental, unreasoned, atavistic feeling of race, and dislike the notion of intermarriage. With all these I am in disagreement. If it were not so, I should indeed be guilty of a contradiction when I desire the "denationalisation" of Judaism, and support the counter-theory of an "Englishman of the Jewish persuasion." A man can only belong to one nation at a time. But, heart and soul an Englishman by nation, one can also be heart and soul a Jew by religion. But by religion only. The mere *race* is unimportant; it has no influence upon action. An Englishman may be proud of his Huguenot descent, but that makes no difference to his feelings and actions. A "French" Canadian is a Briton. I may be proud of my Jewish race (though what Jew knows whether his race is pure?), but it makes no difference to my action. In all tastes, feelings, and ideas—apart from religion—I have far more in common with a Christian Englishman than with a Bulgarian Jew. If it were not for religion, there would not, from my point of view, be the smallest objection to

intermarriage. On the contrary, there would be very much indeed in its favour.

But quite different from all race reasons is the reason of religion. There is nothing racial or national about the Roman Catholic objection to intermarriage. It is purely a question of religion. The Roman Catholic authorities object to the diminution of their numbers which unrestricted intermarriage might bring about. In England, at any rate, where they are in a minority, they now make a condition that such marriages can only be allowed if the children are brought up as Catholics. Surely, if Roman Catholics, whose Church is so powerful and numerous, have these apprehensions, it is not unreasonable that Jews, who are everywhere in a minute minority, should have them as well. If the Synagogue were not officially so tied down to the letter of a hard and fast law, and so unable to meet new contingencies as they arise, it might perhaps be desirable to sanction mixed marriages on the same terms as they are sanctioned by Roman Catholics. But there would be two very obvious dangers in doing so. First, there could be no effective guarantees and securities that the engagements would be satisfactorily carried out; and, secondly, the children, even if brought up as Jews, would be themselves extremely likely to contract intermarriages without any safeguarding con-

ditions. The tendency to revert to the dominating religion of the overwhelming majority must necessarily be of enormous strength.

It may indeed be said, Why should a Jew not marry a Unitarian or a Theist? The answer is, Because of the children. If the Unitarian or Theist is willing to join our ranks, then the children are likely to be brought up as Jews and to marry Jews. If the marriage is "mixed," they may marry anybody, and are as likely as not to be merged in the general mass. The Jews must possess and must cultivate a sense of a religious mission not yet completed. We may welcome others to our camp; we dare not ourselves abandon it. In the present religious condition of the world our responsibility to the Theistic cause is enormous. Every Jew who, with the utmost humility, feels that he has at all events *some* religious aspirations, *some* desire for the religious life, *some* living belief in God, should regard himself as a consecrated servant of Deity, and in spite of all difficulties remain faithful to his charge. Till the religious desirability of our dissolution is clearly apparent, let us not ourselves break the only bond which can hold a small and scattered religious organisation together.

And how can the religious desirability of our dissolution be proved? For what

religious advantage can liberal Jews gain to themselves, to their children, or to mankind by deserting their own historic faith for any other creed? It would seem more rational to ask others to join them than themselves to join others. What dogma does liberal Judaism hold which they do not? What dogma do they hold which liberal Judaism does not? What expansion do they desire to which *Judaism* cannot attain?

On the theoretical side we have seen that liberal Judaism does not offer an uncritical *non possumus* to any complementary truth which the New Testament has to offer us. Nor is it bound to any hard and fast doctrine of inspiration, presenting as it does a free and unfettered attitude towards questions of criticism or of miracle. Therefore, on the theoretical side, what has a liberal to gain by desertion?

On the side of practice and embodiment we have seen that the festivals are capable of a large and spiritual interpretation. They are vehicles and advantages for our religious life, not hindrances or obstacles. It is true that there are difficulties in language, in liturgy and in other outward details, but these difficulties it is partly within our power to lessen and remove, and partly they should be tolerated for the sake of a greater and more permanent good. It is true that we are at

present more likely to hear free and fearless discussion of religious and philosophical questions in Theistic and Unitarian churches than in synagogues, but the remedy for this, too, lies partly in our own hands. Thus, if the difficulties and objections are partly imaginary, partly soluble and partly temporary, how can any liberal Jew be justified in abandoning Judaism? How can he even justify a mere listless and nominal adherence to his own conscience?

Because the doctrines of liberal Judaism are broad, capable of being held by others than those of the Jewish race, they are none the less Jewish. Because they are even now held by others, they are none the less *ours*. If, in addition, we hold that the Jews are divinely chosen to cherish and diffuse them, how can any one deny us the right to call our religion by its historic name? All the talk of an eviscerated, denationalised Judaism does very well for loose controversy and party polemics: it does not bear the white light of dispassionate reason and inquiry. It comes from our opponents. Liberals should not be deceived by it.

We need not neglect the immense advantages of an *historic* religion because our own chosen form of Judaism answers to our modern beliefs and aspirations. Religion to us cannot be merely national: we can only belong to

a religion which in doctrine is catholic and universalist. But national and historic are not the same. Christianity and Buddhism are universal religions, but none the less they are *historic*. The continuity, the emotions, the ties, the stimulus of *history* and of a *historic* faith can be appropriated by orthodox and liberals alike. All depends on whether we do or do not believe that God rules the world, and that the great spiritual forces of history have arisen by his will. All depends on whether we do or do not believe that the Jews were "chosen" by God for a religious work, which was not concluded at the rise of Christianity, and which is not concluded now. If any one born a Jew can deliberately and honestly say that he believes the religious work of the Jews and of Judaism to be over, then he has honestly ceased to be a Jew by faith, and he may with a good conscience aver that Judaism has no claim or call upon his conduct and his aims. But if the man born a Jew yet believes in the Jewish "mission," how can that mission be best fulfilled by his indifference, neglect and desertion? The Jews will do an ill turn to Theism and to the cause of liberal religion by abandoning their historic faith and their historic name.

Who, moreover, makes the suggestion? A few discontented and disaffected individuals from our own camp. It is no question of

practical politics. And what could be worse for our religion than that the liberal elements should be removed from it? Let us not be deceived. It is for us to remain where we are and to reform from within. We have to prove the reality of liberal Judaism by the ardour of our attachment, and by the zeal and activity of our religious life. There must be an inward religious life of feeling, aspiration and prayer; there must be an outward religious life of family and public worship, and of Sabbath and festival observance.

A large number of arguments all converge to the same issue, namely, that it is the duty of liberal Jews to remain within the limits of Judaism. Even the philosopher, who tries to put himself above all religions so that he may understand them more impartially, might urge that a variety of Theistic creeds is an advantage to humanity and to religion. Jewish and Christian Unitarianism each possess their peculiar characteristics, and for all Jews to join the Christian wing, or for all Christians to join the Jewish wing, would lessen the richness and colour of religious life. Each branch may contain some special *nuance* of truth, may emphasise and express one aspect of it more clearly and fully than the other. I am at a loss to conceive what good the liberal Jew will do to religion by abandoning Judaism. For the sake of

dubious and temporary advantages he will betray a trust and forfeit the benefits of history. Let him rather develop what he has; let him purify and expand it; but do not let him allow (so far as he is concerned) a religious history and a religious martyrdom of centuries to end in impotence and futility.

A more impassioned appeal may rightly be made to the merely lax and indifferent Jew. For the Jew who, from a religious motive, attends Unitarian or "Theistic" churches, and brings up his children as Unitarians or "Theists," acts honourably if he acts mistakenly. His children will not get all the religious *force* which they might get; he is robbing them of their spiritual heritage; yet his motive is clean. But the Jew who, through laxness and indifference, gives up his public and private religious life without joining any other religious organisation, is in a far worse condition of mind. He is a far greater evil to himself, to his children, to Judaism and to religion. It is because this laxity and indifference often begin nowadays in doubt and hesitation that this book has been written. Theoretically such persons vaguely believe that Judaism is discredited, that the Old Testament is no longer thought "true." Practically they find nothing to stimulate or attract them in the Synagogue services; the "embodiment"

of Judaism is inconvenient and unpleasing. Hence they gradually become more and more detached. Occasional lapses harden into absolute nonconformity.

The purpose of this book is to show to such persons what liberal Judaism really is, and what are the doctrines which it implies. I have tried to show that it still has a "message" and a "mission"—a distinct place in the religious economy of the world. It is not obsolete or obsolescent; it is still capable of progress, purification and development. Like other religious creeds it is not without its difficulties, but these difficulties are not insuperable. Some must be borne for the sake of a greater good; some vanish on closer inspection; some can be removed. The future of liberal Judaism lies partly in our own hands. Under the grace and will of God, it is for us to develop and improve it. If we skulk away and impotently whine and whimper, no wonder that the cause of liberal religion is given wholly to other hands.

Now, if the arguments here advanced seem of any truth and validity to such doubtful and puzzled persons as may chance to read this book, it is not illegitimate to make to them a more emotional appeal. If *to their reason* Judaism should no longer seem an outworn and impossible creed, may one not then speak

to the feeling and the will? If Judaism—in its liberal form—is a *reasonable* creed, then the question of duty emphatically comes in. Unless you reject Judaism by your reason, it has a claim upon your allegiance. Unless your aloofness is justified to your *mind*, that aloofness is a crime. You are guilty of betrayal, of desertion. Judaism cannot dispense with any one of us, little as any one of us can do. We must all hold on to the work, which demands the whole-hearted service of every unit, however small and insignificant he be.

More especially is there a duty laid upon liberals. For we have to show that the combination of Liberalism and Judaism is a working and living reality. We have to rise above the difficulties on the one hand, to lessen them upon the other. We have to use the environment which now exists, but also gradually to transform it. Such is our task. The task needs fidelity, keenness, intelligence and combination. But given the allegiance of the *mind*, it is a task from which none must falter or quail, to which none must be indifferent or aloof.

Such is the appeal I would make for the sake of liberal Judaism, and through liberal Judaism for the sake of religion. But there is another appeal still—an appeal which is also for the sake of religion and humanity—

but also more intimate and personal. The indifferent and the lax are not only doing a wrong to Judaism, but to their children and to themselves.

Can they do without religion? I think not. Nor let it be urged that the average man or the average child can do without a religious *name*, that he can dispense with public or family worship, that he does not require any rites or reminders or ceremonies. "Religion is inward, spiritual: the true religion is above all its manifestations. It lies behind Christianity and behind Judaism. *Because* of religion I will belong to no religion." The argument may serve for angels; it does not answer for children and men.

Eagles boast of pinions—let them soar!
I may put forth angel's plumage, once unmanned, but not before.

Human nature needs a definite religion, not only religion. He who never prays with his fellows may lose the habit of praying alone. Children who observe no forms may lose the thought of God altogether. These and other kindred arguments apply with special force to Jews. Christians have many associations and environments which are of religious efficacy and value. These are necessarily wanting to Jews. We largely depend upon our synagogues and still more

upon our homes. We must create our own religious atmosphere and environment: they will not come to us ready-made. Jews are often said to have materialistic tendencies. The charge is possibly true in this sense that the non-religious Jew is perhaps a more material creature than the non-religious Gentile. If this be so, it serves my turn. For our children's sake how can we dare to be lax and indifferent any longer? Should we not give them a force and a sword with which they may battle against temptation, with which they may keep themselves clean and pure, filled with high aims and holy thoughts? Is it not hard to be pure? God can help us whether we ask for his help or no. But by the very law of his being, so far as man can apprehend it, those who seek him most shall find him most; those who most earnestly yearn for his strength shall most fully receive it. Judaism and religion summon us with the same appeal. For our own and for our children's sake, let us answer to their call.

THE END

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