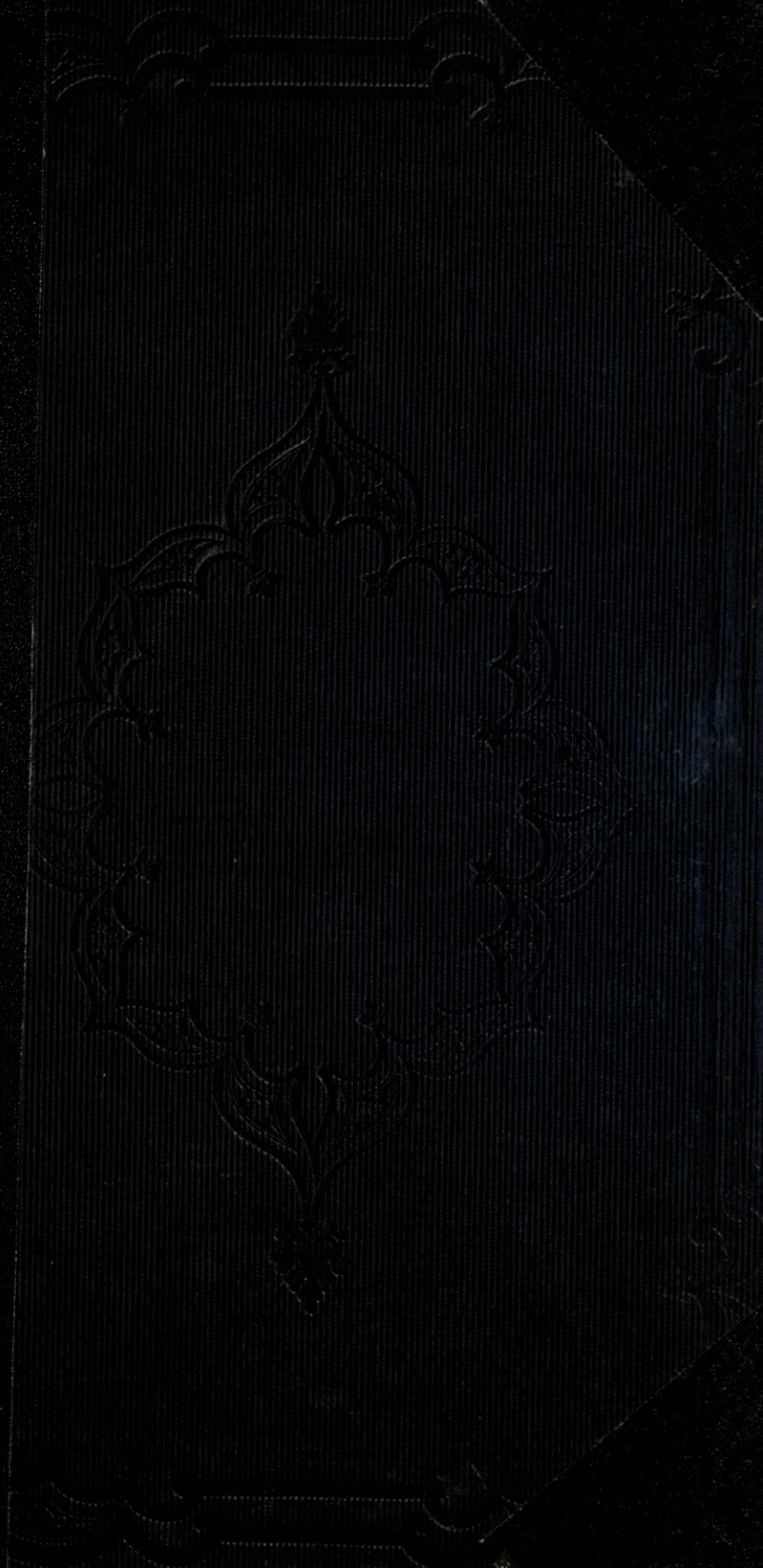


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To the Editor of the
with Dr. Loewe's respectful Compliments

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ÉFÉS DAMMÎM.

A SERIES

OF

CONVERSATIONS AT JERUSALEM

BETWEEN

A PATRIARCH OF THE GREEK CHURCH

AND

A CHIEF RABBI OF THE JEWS,

CONCERNING THE

Malicious Charge against the Jews of using Christian Blood.

BY J. B. LEVINSOHN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW AS A TRIBUTE TO THE
MEMORY OF THE MARTYRS AT DAMASCUS,

BY DR. L. LOEWE,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, OF THE ASIATIC
SOCIETY AT PARIS, ORIENTAL LINGUIST TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF
SUSSEX, AND AUTHOR OF THE "ORIGIN OF THE EGYPTIAN LANGUAGE,"
AND OF "LETTERS FROM THE EAST."

LONDON :

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P R E F A C E.

It is presumed that all well-informed classes of society in this country are, in some degree, acquainted with the late cruel persecution of the Jews at Damascus. That persecution involved a prejudice from which the Jewish people have, at various times during the last six hundred years, suffered much affliction, in all parts of Europe where the progress of civilization and knowledge had been but slow; though it has not existed in any other region, except where Christians had settled whose enlightenment had not kept pace, as in the recent case of the Christians at Damascus, with that which now happily pervades this division of the world throughout. Thanks be to the Almighty! there is no reason to fear that the frightful prejudice will ever again be entertained in this country, which occupies so prominent a station in all that pertains to wisdom, justice, and humanity; here, at all events, the Israelites are safe;* it cannot, therefore, be otherwise than a

* The writer's assertions on this head are fully sustained by the magnanimous meeting of so many influential and learned British Christians at the Egyptian Hall, on Friday, July 3, 1840, for the purpose of expressing their sympathy with the Israelites, and their earnest wishes for the success of Sir Moses Montefiore, pre-

source of delight to all truly enlightened subjects of the British monarchy, to be made fully aware that the kind and fraternal sentiments expressed by them concerning the Israelites on the melancholy occasion referred to, are justified not only by reason, but by the records of the most veracious historians, and the special testimony of some of the brightest ornaments of the world's literature : and it is to serve the double purpose of affording some pleasure to all those who have taken an interest in this cause, and to gratify the innocent pride of his own nation and himself,—such pride as a wrongfully aspersed people cannot help but feel when, after a long period of affliction, a righteous and powerful judge proclaims to the world that they are free from evil, and they are enabled to lay before the world a load of evidence in their favour, in addition to that on which his judgment has been founded—that the writer hereof submits the annexed work to the British public.

It is a translation of an elaborate work written in the form of a series of colloquial discourses between two learned men of different religious creeds, one being represented as a Patriarch of the Greek Church at Jerusalem, and the other a Chief Rabbi of the Jews at the same place ; from which discourses inferences are finally drawn which furnish a complete refutation of

viously to his starting on his mission to the East. This meeting may be considered the most glorious evidence of intelligence and religious toleration that is to be met with in the annals of mankind.

the appalling charge against the Israelites of privily taking the lives of Christians, in order to obtain blood to use in certain of their religious ceremonies: the author of the work is J. B. Levinsohn,* a Jewish subject of his august Majesty the Emperor of Russia, of whose impartial rule, and benign protection of those who submit to his dominion, whatever their faith may be, this is one of the most conspicuous results. I ought not to omit to state, in this place, that the Israelites at large owe a heavy debt of gratitude to his Imperial Majesty, for the kindness of his behaviour to their brethren residing in his territory; and, indeed, all who cherish principles of toleration and justice, must acknowledge that his actions in regard to them must tend to benefit all mankind. I herein allude to the schools which, under his Majesty's auspices, are to be erected in various parts of his dominions, for the instruction of such Israelites as may be too poor to obtain a proper education from their own resources, and in which, all who may choose to enter them are to be placed on a footing equally as advantageous as that of any other class of people within his Majesty's realms: by this measure, the Emperor will teach his subjects in general, one of the most salutary and effective lessons that ever emanated from any ruler whose name is to

* J. B. Levinsohn is now living at Krzemnitz; this work was written by him in the year of the Creation 5594, on the occasion of a persecution being raised at Soslow in Poland.

be found in the annals of the world. Whatever opinions may be held by different classes of society throughout Europe, regarding the Emperor's political conduct in connexion with the most notorious events of his reign, I have nothing whatever to do; no monarch or statesman has ever yet been so fortunate as to secure for himself the commendations of all men; but there are few persons, I presume, that will attempt to deny, that in the management of the domestic affairs of his realms he has been characterised by the strictest impartiality, and that no one kind of people, of the great variety of all religions that acknowledge his power, are placed in a state of humiliation for the gratification of another. Had there been a different state of things in existence in the Russian empire, it is probable that the genius and learning of Levinsohn would never have been stimulated to produce this work, which, to all his nation, is indeed an inestimable boon.

I am aware that in making such special allusions to Russia, I have been digressing from the main and legitimate object of a preface. But, in consequence of what lately came to pass in the East, I consider that it is essential for the cause of the whole of the Jewish nation, that some comments should be made on the actions of those whose influence, either favourable or adverse, is of a nature to affect them; and I conceive that nothing of that kind can be said anywhere so appropriately as in juxtaposition with this work, and the

preface is the only place that I can make use of for such a purpose.

The author of this translation is personally acquainted with most of the sufferers who still survive at Damascus, and was so with those whom their cruel judges tortured into the grave; and their great worth, and respectable station in that city, were often spoken of and testified by him, in his "Letters from the East," published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*, at a time when none of them had the slightest idea of being involved in so dire a calamity: the reader will, therefore, readily conceive how excessively their misfortunes must have excited the writer's feelings, and will be induced to make such allowances for the warmth and discursiveness of his style and sentiments as, under other circumstances, he would not be justified in soliciting. In order to render the translator's motives for undertaking this task still more explicit, and the better to give him an opportunity of making some comments on certain subjects which are set forth in the work, so that the reader may more easily comprehend them, it is necessary to refer to some of the most conspicuous features in the late persecution.

When it became known that the priest Thomaso had mysteriously disappeared, seven individuals were charged with having decoyed him into their power, and with having murdered him amongst them; it was positively asserted that these seven had been seen all together in the afternoon of the day of his disappearance in the

house of David Harari. One of the seven, however, offered to produce, as evidence to disprove this, two persons, one a Mohammedan and the other a Christian, who were sitting with him in his own house all that day and the greater portion of the ensuing evening. A child of his had just died, and, according to the precepts of the Jewish law, he was compelled to remain in his house during seven days from its decease, in a state of mourning: that day was one included in the seven, and these persons came to condole with him on his loss. Had these witnesses been allowed to come forward, the whole of the case must have fallen to the ground at once, in spite of the malicious craft and cunning which the originators of the charge displayed; for as they were in nowise connected with the Jews, their testimony must have been received as valid; and the absence of one out of the seven being proved, the charge, specially implicating the seven, could not have survived for a moment. But this man was instantly put to the torture; and though they were all subjected to the most horrible appliances that the human mind can conceive, yet the mode of torture used with him took effect so speedily, that he died before any of his friends could have any chance of putting forward the witnesses referred to. He was still included in the accusation, for now he could only testify his innocence to his Maker.

There was another remarkable circumstance, which shews how determinedly the charge was carried over

every impediment that truth and justice opposed to it. Three ministers of the Jewish congregation were, at the outset of the calumnious report, commanded by the governor to discover the criminals; these three straightway repaired to the synagogue, and having summoned all their brethren that could come into their presence, made a proclamation that, if any Jew knew aught that might lead to the detection of the criminals, he should instantly communicate it to them, under pain of excommunication, which is the most serious punishment that the Jewish clergy can inflict, and which every Jew contemplates with the utmost dread. The rabbies likewise enjoined all their auditors to make diligent search for the criminals for the honour of the nation at large. In consequence of this proclamation, a young man, a Jew, who kept a tobacconist's shop in the Mooslimin quarter, just without one of the city gates, came forward, and stated that he had seen the priest and his servant pass by his door at six o'clock in the evening of the day on which he was last seen, which he the more clearly remembered as he then solicited them both to purchase *toombak* of him.

In the accusation against the seven, it was stated that the priest was last seen at David Harari's house at half-past four. This evidence, then, tended strongly to refute the accusation; but the ill-fated youth was directly arrested as an accomplice, and hurried into eternity simultaneously with the first of the seven.

Thus the testimony that could not have failed to weigh on the minds of the multitude was entirely suppressed; and the multitude were now induced to raise a clamour against the unfortunate prisoners; and the individuals in office, whose actions can clearly be traced to motives of revengeful jealousy, excited against the most distinguished Jews in Damascus by certain circumstances which had long since occurred, took shelter under this clamour, and gratified their atrocious malice not only with impunity, as regarded the major part of the inhabitants of the place, but with the approbation due only to a rigid act of justice. On nearly all former occasions, when the Jews have been persecuted in consequence of the superstitious impression that they used Christian blood in their Passover ceremonies, similar means have been practised to stifle the voice of truth, and similar feelings of revenge have, without doubt, first kindled the flame of persecution. The reader is particularly requested to note the coincidence between the proceedings of the semi-barbarians at Damascus in the present age, and those of the judges who lived in the dark ages of superstition in other parts of the world.

The translator had the honour of accompanying his truly illustrious friend, Sir Moses Montefiore, in his recent self-imposed, generous mission to the East,*

* It is probable that few people have heard of any other than the last journey performed by Sir Moses Montefiore; by that alone he has certainly obtained the applause of civilized men of all conditions;

and, consequently, was present at his interviews with Mohammed Ali at Alexandria; and, from what thus came to his knowledge, he feels bound to acquit the Pacha of entertaining the prejudice himself. His reception of Sir Moses and the other members of the mission was characterised by great courtesy; and his whole behaviour was such, as plainly evinced that he would have granted all the privileges which were asked for the Jews almost on the very first application for them, had there not been some influence secretly at work, which, for awhile, counteracted the exertions made in their behalf. That Mohammed Ali had not sanctioned the persecution himself was made fully apparent; indeed, the entertaining of the

even many of his own nation are, without doubt, unacquainted with his benevolent exertions in that region on a previous occasion; but the writer thinks that he will be only discharging a just duty by here recording the fact, that two years prior to the lamentable events at Damascus, Sir Moses, and his lady also, as on the late mission, with the writer in their company, explored the Holy Land, and some of the adjacent countries, for the sole purpose of using those things with which God has blessed them for the good of their species inhabiting those regions, without respect to their descent or faith. Where poverty does exist in those places, it is of a most heart-sickening character, and is frequently attended by withering disease; but wherever sickness and want were to be found, Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore made their way; and whoever the afflicted might be, they experienced their bounty. Yet even this was not their first visit to the Holy Land; some twelve years ago they were at Jerusalem, with objects in view similar to those just described. The writer has some reason to fear this record of their philanthropy will not be in perfect unison with the sentiments of Lady Montefiore or Sir Moses; but, by inserting it, he has, at least, satisfied his own conscience.

prejudice would have been quite inconsistent with the Pacha's sagacity and knowledge of mankind; and the only inference that can be drawn from his behaviour in connexion with that affair is, that, in the peculiar position in which he was then placed, he was afraid to do anything which might seriously displease any of the agents of France, lest they should interfere, to his disadvantage, with the negociations he was then carrying on with the hopes of securing France as his political friend. Potentates whose names will live for ever in history, and whose virtues will ever be cited as worthy of imitation, have, when placed in situations of great political difficulty, been compelled to sanction measures which their consciences disapproved of; and there is ample reason for thinking as favourably of Mohammed Ali.

What has just been advanced respecting the ruler of Egypt, implicates, indeed, to a great extent, the French consul at Damascus in the persecution; but it would be a puerile absurdity to affect not to know that that personage took a most active share in the transaction; too much reason have the Jews who survive it to remember his persevering efforts against them. It is really a lamentable thing that, in these days of civilization, a representative of one of the most enlightened nations of Europe should enact the part of a fanatic of the middle ages. But, though it is unhesitatingly asserted that the Egyptian Pacha was for a time influenced by this agent, it cannot for a moment be supposed that his conduct was

authorised or approved of by the French Court, or the French people; for when, on his return from his mission, successfully terminated, Sir Moses, in company with the writer, obtained an audience of the King of the French, and presented his Majesty with a copy of the Sultan's firman in favour of the Jews under his government, his Majesty most warmly congratulated him on his success, and demonstrated the most perfect satisfaction; and his Majesty's sentiments were echoed by every Frenchman whom Sir Moses encountered.

It must be a source of much satisfaction to the Israelites in the Turkish realms, and to all friends of justice and humanity in the world, to find that so wise and considerate a prince as the present Sultan has ascended the throne at Constantinople. The firman which, by the instrumentality of Sir Moses Montefiore, has been issued in favour of the Israelites, sheds more lustre on the Turkish diadem than the brightest gem that was ever placed in it by the artificer in gold and precious stones. The following is a *verbatim* translation of that important document, and there can be little doubt that the reader will peruse it with much interest.

A Firman addressed to the Chief Judge at Constantinople, at the head of which HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY THE SULTAN has written with his own hand the following words:—

“Let that be executed which is prescribed in this Firman.”

An ancient prejudice prevailed against the Jews. The ignorant believed that the Jews were accustomed to sacrifice a human being, to make use of his blood at their feast of the Passover.

In consequence of this opinion, the Jews of Damascus and Rhodes (who are the subjects of our empire) have been persecuted by other nations. The calumnies which have been uttered against the Jews, and the vexations to which they have been subjected, have at last reached our Imperial Throne.

But a short time has elapsed since some Jews dwelling in the Isle of Rhodes were brought from thence to Constantinople, where they had been tried and judged according to the new regulations, and their innocence of the accusations made against them fully proved. That, therefore, which justice and equity required, has been done in their behalf.

Besides which, the religious books of the Hebrews have been examined by learned men, well versed in their theological literature, the result of which examination is, that it is found that the Jews are strongly prohibited not only from using human blood, but even that of animals. It therefore follows that the charges made against them and their religion are nothing but pure calumnies.

For this reason, and for the love we bear to our subjects, we cannot permit the Jewish nation (whose innocence of the crime alleged against them is evident) to be vexed and tormented upon accusations which have not the least foundation in truth, but that in conformity to the Hatti Scherif which has been proclaimed at Gulhane, the Jewish nation shall possess the same advantages, and enjoy the same privileges, as are granted to the numerous other nations who submit to our authority.

The Jewish nation shall be protected and defended.

To accomplish this object, we have given the most positive orders that the Jewish nation dwelling in all parts of our empire shall be perfectly protected, as well as all other subjects of the sublime Porte, and that no person shall molest them in any manner whatever (except for a just cause), neither in the free exercise of their religion, nor in that which concerns their safety and tranquillity. In consequence, the present Firman, which is ornamented at the head with our "Hoomaioon" (sign manual), and emanates from our Imperial *chancellerie*, has been delivered to the Israelitish nation.

Thus you, the above mentioned judge, when you know the contents of this Firman, will endeavour to act with great care in the manner therein prescribed. And in order that nothing may be

done in opposition to this Firman, at any time hereafter, you will register it in the archives of the tribunal; you will afterwards deliver it to the Israelitish nation, and you will take great care to execute our orders and this our sovereign will.

Given at Constantinople, the 12th Ramazan, 1256 (6th November, 1840).

To attempt to analyse the foregoing imperial edict, or to draw any conclusions from the circumstances which it refers to, could not answer any serviceable purpose here; for it would in some measure anticipate the arguments which are set forth against the terrible prejudice in the work that follows, and which are given with more cogency than the translator would be able to invest his own ideas with.

The reader shall not be withheld from the commencement of the work longer than it will take me to make a few necessary observations respecting the manner of the translation. It will be seen that much learning and research are exhibited in the dialogues, and nearly every argument that is advanced in the course of them for the purpose of refuting the atrocious accusation, is extracted from the works of Christian authors whose merit and veracity have been universally acknowledged. Some slight liberties the translator has been compelled to take with the original; but nothing has been done with it that does in any way interfere with the drift of the reasoning, or any one of the sentiments; in nothing has it undergone the slightest alteration that has reference to time, place, or person; but only in those modes of speech which, if

translated literally, would have made the language rather uncouth, and the author's ideas not quite so comprehensible; and in one or two assertions, founded on the author's imperfect acquaintance with the customs of a nation that he has happened to mention: in the latter case, as the proposition had not any connexion with the main thread of the discourse, a slight omission has been made.*

Having given this explanation concerning the following pages. I invoke on my undertaking the blessing of the Almighty, and earnestly commend the work to the reader's most serious attention.

L. LOEWE.

55, MANSELL STREET, GOODMAN'S FIELDS,

The 8th day of Elul, 5601.

(25th of August, 1841.)

The first anniversary of the liberation of the Jews at Damascus.

* The translator thinks it proper also here to state, that he does not always concur with the opinions of the Jewish Rabbi Maimoon; but he has not invariably recorded his dissent in the shape of notes at the particular passages to which he makes exceptions, fearing that by so doing he might divert the reader's attention from the drift of the discourse.

INTRODUCTION.

(MAIMOON ENTERS THE HOUSE OF SIMMIAS, AND ON SEEING SIMMIAS BOWS TO HIM TWICE.)

MAIMOON. God be with thee, Patriarch of the Greek Church.

SIMMIAS. Chief Rabbi of the Israelites, may God bless thee. Friend Abraham Maimoon, may thy arrival in this place prove auspicious. I have been most anxious to see thee, and so have thy brethren that dwell here. Is peace with thee, my friend? And tell me, I pray, how fares thy brother, the Lord Jacob Maimoon? he that is one of the seven ministers of the Sultan at Constantinople.

MAI. I am well, my lord: and so also is my brother Jacob, who has been mindful to enquire after thy welfare. My lord, pray tell me if the Governor of Jerusalem has received the Sultan's firman.

SIM. He received it eleven days ago. The *Shekh el Islam* and myself were summoned into his presence to hear the whole of it read; and it exactly corresponds with the copy which thou didst send me a few days previous to the arrival of the official document. The substance of it is as follows:—The Greek Church, which is

situated opposite our mosque, is to remain undisturbed; the Greeks are to be allowed to perform their religious devotions as usual, free from interruption or annoyance; and if any one shall dare to molest these Christians, or their house of prayer, whether the offence so committed be great or little, the same shall be punished with death. Now, friend Maimoon, how can I sufficiently thank thee for thy good offices with thy brother the minister? and in what terms ought I to thank thy brother for all the good he has effected with the Sultan on my behalf, and on behalf of the Greek Church? The God of your forefathers, who is also our God, alone can give you meet substantial rewards; for myself, I can only offer you my grateful acknowledgments, and those in such a mode as falls short of what this benefit deserves.

MAI. A righteous act is in itself the best reward.

SIM. My brethren at Constantinople have acquainted me with the hatred which the Oolamas bear us, and which they have signified to their Moofti. I have likewise learnt from them that the Turkish prime minister participates in their hatred. But the Almighty is our help; He gave strength to the heart of thy brother, that, through his great wisdom, he might vindicate our cause before his majesty the Sultan, against all those ministers and Moslem priests to whom we are an eyesore: and, from thy brother's maxims, these bigots should learn that a mortal, whose understanding is limited, and must ever be so, should not wage war with his fellow-creatures, merely because they profess a religious creed opposed to his own; that every nation should be at liberty to worship God after its own fashion;

and that, if we had power to control them in the practice of their faith, as they have to control us, our principles would be to leave them in that respect entirely to the guidance of their own consciences. By the Greek Christians at Constantinople, I was informed that thy brother strove for us during many days, and brought all his extensive knowledge into action to gain our cause. His conduct was indeed noble and generous; and how untiring must have been his perseverance in reasoning so long with those fanatics—so long and so well as to prevail against them at last, by means of intellectual arguments alone. This event does indeed reflect glory on the Israelites; though holding to their ancient faith with the most unconquerable tenacity, yet they have risen up to advocate liberty of conscience for strangers. By that example, the world will be made fully aware of your righteous sentiments and humane feelings; and, further, they will be made aware that the Almighty has endowed you with surpassing wisdom. God grant that the learned of all nations may walk in thy footsteps, and dismiss from their hearts the cruel hatred which many such have cherished towards those who think fit to worship the Most High differently from what they do. O triple sword! O dreadful poison! many wise and good men have, through your agency, fallen victims to that hatred; but, O God, devoutly do I pray that an epoch may soon approach when the great light described by the prophet Isaiah may break forth over the whole world, when “The wolf will dwell with the lamb,” &c. Thanks to the Almighty, in the Christian countries of Europe religious prejudices decrease daily, as we hear, so much

so, that we may hope to see, ere long, but a very slight difference between all religious opinions: this state of things was prophesied by a learned member of our church, in a work written by him:* “The time will come when it will be no longer asked in Europe whether a man is an Israelite or a Christian.”

MAL. (*sighing heavily*). The inhabitants of Europe are not yet altogether free from that contagious malady, prejudice. A few days ago I received a letter from my brother Samuel, the spiritual head of the congregation at Cracow, in which it was stated that the Israelites there were grievously oppressed and persecuted by the Christians. They were accused of murdering many Christian children, for the purpose of obtaining Christian blood to mix up with the bread required for the Pass-over; and I regret to say, that many of the most distinguished Israelites of that town and the adjacent places were arrested, and, with their wives and children, were put in irons, and made to suffer tortures of a most dreadful description. Didst ever thou hear of so cruel a case?

SIM. I have also received a letter from the Patriarch of that town, who is my friend, in which he mentions the circumstance; and also, that it was corroborated by the testimony of three Christian women, who acted as servants to Jewish families.

MAL. (*with great emotion*). Ah! doubtless it was an ordinance of the Almighty. If the Patriarch of that

* Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*.
Tome 4, page 41.

place is really thy friend, worthy Sir, I must beg of thee to write me a letter to him, in order that my brethren may be freed from so monstrous a suspicion. Do not, I pray, refuse me this favour : I will not leave thee till my petition is granted.

SIM. It is impossible for me to write this instant ; I must first give the subject much consideration. I advise thee, therefore, friend Maimoon, to go home and repose awhile ; at present thou must be greatly fatigued with travelling. To-morrow let me see thee again, and we will talk further on this matter.

MAI. I thank thee, and will take thy advice. Blessed be the Lord, who again appears propitious to our cause.

Maimoon closed this interview by bowing to the Patriarch with profound respect. The next morning Maimoon returned to Simmias, and, after the usual exchange of friendly salutations, they commenced the discussion of the important subject raised at the conclusion of their prefatory discourse.

FIRST CONVERSATION.

SIMMIAS. After we separated last night, I could scarcely sleep for thinking of the accusation which thou didst mention as having been brought against thy people—that they are accustomed to use Christian blood in the ceremonies of the Passover festival.

MAIMOON. And what is the result of thy meditations on that subject? Tell me candidly; do not conceal from me any one thing which may have entered thy mind.

SIM. I regret to say, that my opinion is that this accusation must have had a stronger foundation than what we may term a trifling circumstance. I hope thou wilt not feel offended with me for thus declaring myself. Thou art aware that I always have been fond of searching out the truth in all things. My opinion does not arise from any blind prejudice concerning thy religion. God forbid that it should. Thou canst not think that my disposition is so uncharitable. I must request that thou wilt give me further information concerning this serious imputation; and if thou shouldst advance anything sufficient to convince me that I am labouring under an error, I shall indeed feel happy to make an acknowledgment to that effect.

MAI. (*Sighing heavily.*) God forbid, my dear friend, that I should imagine that thou wouldst willingly grieve me; yet I cannot conceal from thee that thy words

penetrate to my very soul, and cause every part of my body to shudder. It makes me tremble when I reflect that this frightful falsehood has acquired such influence as to affect in some degree such men as thou.

SIM. Let not thy heart grieve so much; had I known that my words would have given thee so much pain as is manifest by thy countenance, I would not have entered on this subject under any circumstances. However, as a proof of the sincerity of my respect for thee, I shall give thee as serviceable a letter of recommendation for thy brethren as I am able to write; for thy happiness is of more moment to me than princely treasures and mines of gold; the love I bear thee is one of the most powerful feelings in my nature.

MAI. Pardon me, thou dost not justify thyself by speaking thus. The philosopher, as thou knowest, said, "Love Plato, and love Socrates; but love truth more than both;" therefore, I pray, tell me all that thou dost think; keep back nothing. What makes thee think that such an accusation against the Jews can have been founded in truth?

SIM. The reasons which have led me to think so are many.

MAI. Be kind enough to mention one.

SIM. The first is a report which has existed ever since the very beginning of the Christian religion.

MAI. I am indeed surprised that one so learned as thyself, so well acquainted with history, and particularly with the history of the Church, should use the phrase "since the very beginning of the Christian religion." There is not the slightest trace in any historical works of

any such accusation having been made at so early a date. These accusations only began six hundred years ago, in the time of Alfonso, the tenth king of Castile. At that time there was a priest in Spain, who, in his sermons, declared to the public, that the Israelites could not solemnize their Passover unless they had Christian blood; so, at least, says Doctor S. Virga, in his work entitled "Shebet Yehuda."

SIM. I have read a Latin copy of that work, translated by Gencius, and printed in Amsterdam in the year 1651. Virga is well known amongst the learned Christians to have been a faithful historian, and the greater part of what he has published was taken from Christian historical writers, who wrote in Spanish and other European languages.

MAI. King Alfonso would not believe that priest; but the populace threatened the king to commit some outrages on the Israelites; and so violent had the priest made them, that the king became afraid of losing his own life.

SIM. Alfonso was a wise and wonderful man.

MAI. It was he who said in his pride, "Had I been the Almighty's adviser during the creation of the world, surely it would have been a great deal better than it is at this day."

SIM. It was not that he meant to assert that he was wiser than the Almighty; but being the greatest astronomer of that age, his vanity led him to believe that he was the only clever man in astronomy; and he discovered the most excessive of human weaknesses, in affecting to undervalue the powers of the Most High.

MAI. It was indeed the height of human folly; yet

several philosophers have spoken with contempt of the works of Nature ; for instance, the celebrated Burnet, who attempted to demonstrate that there was a great deal of superfluosity in the construction of the earth, especially in the mountains and valleys, and that the defects observable in them are injurious to those parts of the earth that are inhabited. Those philosophers did not possess real wisdom, or they must have acknowledged that deficiencies do not exist in Nature ; that every thing which God has created has been arranged with such regard for its usefulness, as to leave no room for improvement, and that such deficiencies exist only in the imaginations of vain persons, whose minds are too limited to comprehend more of Nature's works than just what are presented to their eyes. A boundary has been fixed to the progress of all things terrestrial, the human mind included ; the Lord has said and proclaimed, " Mortal, thus far shalt thou go, and no further ! "

SIM. Thou art right ; it is so. Alfonso was indeed a learned man, especially an astronomer. He spent more than 400,000 ducats in forming an astronomical society ; he invited Christian, Arabic, and Jewish professors of the science to join it, and maintained those who complied with his invitations in Toledo during four years, while they were making observations ; and that distinguished society was under the direction of an Israelite, who was really the greatest astronomer of the age.*

MAI. That was the celebrated Rabbi Izhak-ibn-Seyd. The astronomical tablets that were arranged by that

* Eichhorn's *Geschichte d. Lit.* B. 2. p. 355.

society have been named after the king, and are known to this day by the title of "Alfonso's Tablets." But, my good friend Simmias, let us leave Alfonso and his tablets, and return to the prime subject of our conversation. Tell me, didst thou read attentively that part of Virga's work, where he speaks about the priest that preached in Spain?

SIM. I believe it is recorded that the king said to some learned Christian, that he had observed in the priest many more signs of folly than of wisdom.

MAI. Thou art right; that Christian's name was Thomas. But there are no historical documents in existence which show that any such appalling accusation was ever made against the Israelites previously to the time of that priest; since that period, however, it has been extensively circulated amongst all the lower classes of the Christians.*

SIM. How thinkest thou the accusation against the Jews, of using human blood at the Passover, could have arisen all at once? Might there not have been some slight reason for it? for we see that not only does it receive credit from the lower classes of Christians, but occasionally from the better informed.

MAI. And is there any doubt expressed respecting the law of Moses?

SIM. No; God forbid that there should: the law of

* King Alfonso had a sharp dispute with that Thomas respecting the Jews. Vide *Shebet Yehuda*.— Ben Iekhia, in his work, *Shalshet Hakabala*, says that the dispute took place in the beginning of the 6000th era, which corresponds with the 13th Christian century, and with the time of Alfonso.

Moses, from the beginning to the end, gives evidence of its having been formed on the authority of the Almighty. Like thee, we Christians believe that the law of Moses is from heaven; that all its histories, commandments, and ordinances,—in fine, that the whole of it was given by one shepherd, the God of heaven and earth, through Moses the righteous. Upon that is based the whole of the system of Christianity; and without the law of Moses and the prophets, the Christian religion could not exist. Confirmatory of this are the words of our legislator, the Messiah: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil: for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them the same, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”*

MAI. And yet there are men of considerable erudition who have brought accusations against the law of Moses and the Prophets; for instance, Apion of Alexandria, and Apollonius Molo.

SIM. Apollonius was very learned, and was the instructor of Cicero and Julius Cæsar.

MAI. Lysimachus and others wrote violently against the law of Moses, as appears in the book *Contr. Apion*. These asserted, also, that the Israelites were accustomed

* Matthew, v. 17—19.

to entrap Greeks into their power, feed them well for a time, and then offer them as sacrifices to the Almighty on the altar in the Holy Temple; and that when a certain Greek king, who had conquered Jerusalem, went into the Temple, he found a Greek locked up in a secret place there, who said that such things were actually done. The Greek authors and men of letters at length gave full credence to these assertions; and, as a matter of course, the vulgar believed them much more readily; and it was found impossible to eradicate these impressions. In addition to all these imputations, the Israelites were at last accused by the previously quoted writers of having worshipped the shadow of a column, whilst they were in the wilderness, in the time of Moses and the tabernacle; and in the second book, *Contr. Apion*, it is stated that they worshipped the head of an ass in the Temple. The celebrated historian, Plutarch, has said in his writings that the Israelites honoured and preserved pigs as sacred animals; and that on their Sabbath, and at the feast of the tabernacle, they paid adoration to the idol Bacchus. Tacitus, in the fifth book of his history, says that the Hebrews were called "Yehudim," from the mountain Ida, in the Island of Crete; and that at the time when Bocchöris ruled Egypt, the Israelites were, by the advice of the oracle of Hammonia, exiled from the country to remove the leprous disease that prevailed in it: he also mentions that they worshipped the figure of an ass in the Temple: and many other absurd and unfounded things are recorded by him, which must be familiar to all who read the Greek and Latin classics.

SIM. The Greeks were not only maliciously prejudiced against the Jews, but against the Christians, during the infancy of the Christian religion, as many ancient writings abundantly testify; and the most wicked and ignorant amongst them accused the Christians of crimes which they never dreamt of.

MAI. Yes; but they were not all ignorant and unprincipled that thus aspersed the Christians.

SIM. Who were the good and enlightened men that did so?

MAI. Marcus Aurelius was one. It is well known that, for those times, he was a very good monarch; he not only forgave his enemies, but even trusted and showed favour to them after they had offended him; he honoured philosophers, and was himself famed for having acquired much knowledge; yet he persecuted the Christians, because he believed that they dealt with evil spirits.* I need not mention what the Christians were accused of by Nero, the cruel; by Domitian, and other emperors; but Plinius, who was a governor in Bithynia, under the Emperor Trajan, and who was famed as a philosopher and author, even he persecuted the Christians.† Whatever misfortune happened in the territory which he governed, the Christians were said to be the cause of it; and it is recorded in history that many thousands of Christians, men, women, and children, were killed through the influence of such prejudices, independently of those who were first subjected to most barbarous tortures. The Romans of that era firmly

* Euseb. lib. 4, cap. 16.

† Plin. lib. 10, Epi. 102, 103.

believed that the Christians were the enemies of the whole world;* and such prejudices continued till the Christian religion became powerful.

SIM. Well, thou seest that falsehood cannot endure long. Now the truth has been established, thou wilt not hear any more said, either against the law of Moses or the Christian religion; every one now confesses that the Christian religion is founded in truth.

MAL. It is not my purpose to argue about religion; but to show thee what violent hatred has been excited against a body of people professing a peculiar religion; that even philosophers and virtuous men have been led away by prejudice to fight against truth; and that, when Christianity was in its infancy, and supported by only a few, and the Heathen creeds were powerful in the number and quality of their advocates, the weaker party was always kept under and persecuted. The fact is, the earliest Christians were afflicted with grievous penalties wherever they were found, just the same as the scattered and feeble Israelites were who subsequently lived under Christian governments: and who knows better than thyself, that even at this very day, the Christians, I mean those classes of Christians denominated Roman Catholics, Armenians, Greeks, and Copts, are despised and constantly insulted in India and Persia; because the more numerous and powerful portions of the people in those regions are disciples of Mahomet.

SIM. Thou sayest true. If the European monarchs had not inspired them with fear, Christians really could not have remained in those countries.

* Tacit. Annal. lib. 15, c. 44.

MAI. If the Christians are really feared by the Indians and Mooslimin in consequence of the power of the European monarchs, they cannot attribute their exemption from persecution to the respect of those people for the Christian religion. The Israelites that dwell amongst the Eastern nations, having no such protection extended to them from a favoured part of the world, are frequently made to suffer in a most pitiable manner; yet, with all that the Mooslimin and Hindoos allege against our creed as motives for their ill-treatment, there has never been an instance of Mooslimin or Hindoos accusing the Israelites of committing murder for the purpose of obtaining human blood to use in their religious ceremonies.* So far from being degraded by them with that imputation, they are allowed several

* *Rettung der Juden*, Cap. 1. § 11, in a note written by Mendelssohn:—"It may be that, in the present age, the Israelites in Christian dominions are better off than under the Moslem sway; but they certainly were never so cruelly persecuted by the Mooslimin as they were by the Christians of the Middle Ages; who butchered them in cold blood, burnt them alive, sequestered their property, and drove them naked into strange lands without the slightest remorse, countenanced as they were in such proceedings by their spiritual directors. At the present day, the Israelites in the Turkish Empire are taxed with something like moderation, and are not punished solely because of their peculiar system of religion. The number of Israelites in Mohamedan countries is greater than in Christian countries; and in these, if they have sufficient ability, they are not prohibited from aspiring to high offices under the governments: the present prime-minister of the Emperor of Morocco is an Israelite; his name is Zambul." The author here alludes to a French newspaper, called the "Imperial Conservator," No. 17, Petersburg, Tuesday, Feb. 26, 1824; in which it is mentioned that an Israelite, from Mogador, Myer ben Macuin, had been sent on a special mission to all the Christian courts of Europe.

privileges: sometimes they are made consuls, ministers, governors of districts, and toll-inspectors. By the Turkish Government they are allowed to purchase land and slaves, and to retain both as their legitimate property. Similar privileges are given to them in all countries belonging to Mohamedan and Indian rulers.

SIM. But canst thou explain why it is that the Christians charge the Jews with using blood at the Passover festival, and not of any other crime of a similar degree of iniquity? There certainly must be some reason for this.

MAI. Hast thou forgotten the multiplicity of charges that have been made against the Jews in Spain, Portugal, France, England, and Germany, besides that of using blood? Read the history of the Spanish Inquisition. Hast thou forgotten the accusation brought against them in the year 1400, when that extraordinary plague (by some called the Black Plague) was raging throughout nearly two-thirds of the world? When the awful distemper invaded France, many of the Christians declared, some of them even on oath, that they had seen the Israelites throw poison into the wells and rivers, and, at the same time, utter and perform incantations; and that this was the cause of the plague raging. In France and Germany many thousands of Jews were seized in consequence of these allegations, and sacrificed with the most inconceivable cruelty. Thou wilt find many cases parallel with this recorded in history. If thou wouldst turn this subject over in thy mind with due attention, thou wouldst find that such crimes as were imputed by the Heathen nations to the Christians

in former ages, the Christians have in later times attributed to the Jews. The celebrated Rabbi Menashe ben Israel very justly observes: "The same arguments which were used by the Christians at the commencement of their system of religion, to clear themselves of the odious stigma under which they laboured, may now serve us to prove our innocence to the Christians; and we have even a stronger argument to advance in our behalf than they could have had: for, as it is well known, the Israelites are prohibited by their own law from using blood of any kind; whilst the Christians, on the contrary, are allowed to eat the blood of many creatures."

SIM. Did the heathens ever accuse the Christians of eating human blood?

MAI. Undoubtedly: they were accused as we are at this very day. The heathens asserted that the Christians used human blood at their Passover.*

SIM. (*after having remained some time silent*). Brother Maimoon, thou art right. I recollect having read of this circumstance myself; it is not new to me. But the argument, that the Heathens accused the Christians of such a crime, may be turned against thee; because the Heathens may have said that they first saw the Israelites using human blood, and that, knowing the Christians to have sprung from them, they inferred they were guilty of the same.

* See Tertullian, in his work "*Apologia contra Gentes*;" Justin Martyr, in his work *Apologia ad Anton.* c. 2; Eusebius Cæs. I., V., cap. 1, 4; Pindea in his work, *Monarchia Ecclesiastica* I., 11, cap. 52, and others; see also *Rettung der Juden*, in the afore mentioned chapter, § 18.

MAI. In answer to this new objection, I may tell thee, firstly, that the Israelites at that period were greatly respected before the Heathen monarchs, and that they were so, I will produce ample evidence presently: secondly, that the annals of the world will not shew that the Israelites were ever accused of so abominable a practice by any other people than the Christians. All the accusations in respect to such a practice have come from Christians, who have said that we use only Christian blood; besides, as I have already mentioned to thee, the first time any such accusation was made, was only six hundred years ago, though the Christians themselves had been so stigmatised a thousand years ago, and even at an earlier date than that.

SIM. It is very strange; I really cannot understand how the accusations of the Heathens against the Christians could have originated.

MAI. I think the cause must have been that mentioned by a learned writer, named J. Tugendhold, in the preface to a work written by him* (pages 37, 38); the Heathens took the idea from the hostia, which is a ceremony instituted in commemoration of the body and blood of Christ. In addition to that, there were two well-known sects of Christians, in the early ages of Christianity, from whose actions the Heathens might have been induced to suspect them of such a practice; these were the Gnostics and the Cataphrygians; they were known to extract blood from a child by puncturing the flesh with a pin, and to mix it up with the hostia.†

* *Obrona Izraelitow.* Warsaw, 1831.

† *Lexicon Antiq. Ecclesiast. v. A. E. Miri*, 1717, p. 5.

SIM. That is mentioned in the History of the Church,* and the author who has recorded the circumstance was right. However, we are now speaking of the crime of which the heathens accused us; but the Israelites have not yet justified themselves, because, if it is proved that the Christians were wrongfully accused, it cannot be inferred from that, that the accusation of the Christians against the Israelites is utterly devoid of truth.

MAI. I will now refer more particularly to the arguments of Tugendhold; and by them I think I shall be able to shew that this idea of the Jews using human blood had its rise in a circumstance different from any thing which the Jews did. It is said, that the Christians killed children of the heathens to mix their blood with the hostia, which is to commemorate the body and blood of Christ, who said to his disciples, on the evening of the Passover, whilst eating Passover-cakes and drinking wine, as the Israelites had been ordained to do from a very early period of the world, "Think that this is my flesh and blood." In the early ages of Christianity, the heathens did not know how to distinguish Israelites from Christians; for many of the primitive Christians were Israelites, and the Christians themselves were also denominated Israelites; consequently, the Heathen writers, when inserting this circumstance in their books, may have written "Israelites," meaning those new religionists who had sprung from them. It is certain that celebrated Greek and Roman authors have recorded incidents of that description, authors to whose works much credit is given; and it is therefore possible that

* Justin Martyr, in his work, *Apologia ad Anton.* cap. 2.

the Christians, in subsequent ages, founded their ideas of the practices of the Jews from the verbal mistakes into which these authors naturally fell. It is not improbable, that they mistook the word *Yehudim* (which meant Christians) for Israelites, and the word *mazzah* (signifying the hostia), for Passover-cakes, which the Israelites eat on the Passover festival: and perhaps words similar to the following were found in the historians just alluded to: "The Israelites eat unleavened bread, which they call *mazzot*, and mix it with the blood of children, in commemoration of a certain meal which was eaten on the holy evening on which they solemnise their Passover." Now the author of that passage must have alluded to the Christians, who, at the time referred to, were commonly denominated Israelites; and by saying *mazzot* (Passover-cakes—hostia) mixed up with the blood of children, he may have alluded to the sects called Gnostics and Cataphrygians; and the words "certain meal eaten on the holy evening," may have been used in reference to the very last holy supper of Christ, which took place at the Passover.

SIM. Thou hast put a remarkably ingenious supposition; but we must not be guided by suppositions alone: there should be irrefragable proofs adduced: proceed to explain thyself.

MAI. At the time that the Israelites began to take up their abode under the Christian governments of Europe, they attracted much observation by the number and precision of their preparations for celebrating the Passover night. It was noticed how extremely careful they were in baking the Passover cakes; that no one was allowed to touch them, except with clean hands. The

common class of Christians in whose neighbourhood, or houses, the Israelites happened to dwell, thought, therefore, that they did something strange on the Passover evening; and the envious prejudice which, in those days of mental darkness, a difference of religious opinions was sure to engender, coupled with the jealous feelings which the wealth that Israelites frequently contrived to amass, was very likely to make them think, that so much mysterious preparation was for no good purpose. What preposterous things will not the professors of one religious creed sometimes attribute to those of another? I recollect having read one of Voltaire's works, in which he charges a certain Christian sect with having instituted a certain festival, called by them "The Festival of the Ass," on which occasion they clothe an ass in beautiful apparel, and bring it into an ante-room of their church, where they shew the animal great honours, by singing a poem in Latin, to which all present reply with another lyrical composition, which begins, *Eh Sire âne! ça, chantez*.* Now, with this example of detraction before us, who can tell what lengths various religious parties may go in inventing calumnious charges against one another?

SIM. Thou hast now shewn me, that the jealousy frequently engendered by a difference of religious opinions, propagates more evil reports than all other kinds of animosities in the world. I myself know that a great many false charges were made against the Israelites in Spain during the sway of the Inquisition. But all this does not prove that the Israelites could not occasionally

* Voltaire's Works, xli. p. 367; xvii. p. 380; and xxxvii. p. 340.

be guilty of a heinous crime. Is every one of thy people equally righteous with his fellows? Thou must believe that Israelites may sometimes behave wickedly towards Christians, as well as I believe that Christians occasionally do that which is wrong to the Israelites.

MAI. It may be that some of the charges made by Christians against Israelites are true; but then those Israelites can only be certain individuals who have acted dishonourably, in order to obtain some advantage in money transactions; and the actions of such cannot be said to be the actions of a whole nation. Besides, the Israelites have not at present any king, or general ruler of their own race; nor are they combined in a large community, so that the general tenour of their actions can be homogeneous; so far from that being the case, every Israelite may, in a great measure, do as he likes. But why should the whole nation of Israelites be stigmatised for the faults of a few individuals?

SIM. At all events, thou dost confess that there may be people amongst the Israelites in whose hearts there does exist deep animosity to persons professing a religion averse to theirs, and that such are capable of doing wrong to the Christian religion, either as regards a member of that religion, or the religion itself.

MAI. The dislike of other religions which the ignorant feel, may be considered almost natural to them; every individual of that description professing a certain creed, always fancies that his own is the best, and therefore dislikes and contemns all those whose opinions differ from his in that matter, without exception. I should think that the lower classes of the Israelites are

not, any more than others of the same grade, exempt from such contagion; and, of course, they imagine that their system of divine worship is the true and proper one, and feel an inclination to underrate the merits of all others: but the sensible and enlightened amongst us do not entertain such unfavourable notions of other creeds, for we are expressly commanded to behave with friendliness to those who are not under the same obligations to adopt our system of worship as we are, of which I will shew thee proof hereafter.

SIM. The common classes of the Christians hate the Jewish religion more than any other, because they were of that system that crucified our Messiah; so, undoubtedly, do the common classes of the Israelites revile the Christian religion and all its disciples, and are worse affected towards them than to any other system or people.

MAI. What thou sayest—that the Christians hate the Israelites more than they do any other people, may be correct; but in that thou has expressed an opinion utterly at variance with the principles and positive injunctions of your own lawgiver; who, in plain words, said, “Love your enemies;” and you are doubly bound to love those who live peaceably with you, and those that are strangers in your lands, in accordance with a commandment of the Almighty, given through Moses:—“Thou shalt love the stranger.” But I do not think it is a correct inferencé, that the Israelites must entertain an equal hatred to the Christians. If the Israelites do bear them any ill will, it can only arise from the bad treatment which they have so frequently met with from

the Christians. But the disposition of our people is not to cherish hatred; on the contrary, they are by nature inclined to love the country they inhabit, and the people who happen to be their neighbours.

SIM. How canst thou flatter thyself and thy co-religionists to such a degree, as to say, "The Israelites do not hate the Christians so violently as the Christians hate them?"

MAI. My reason for saying so is this: the system of Christianity is mainly founded on the death of Christ on the cross, &c.; the moment a Christian child is capable of receiving instruction, he is made acquainted with the principles of Christianity, the origin of its peculiar institutions, its holidays, the particular works of the Messiah, and of the manner in which he was deprived of life on the cross; consequently, the cross, and all that pertained thereto, must constantly be in his mental vision, and he cannot help being pervaded by sensations of abhorrence of those who were the instigators of such a tragedy. But this is not the case with any of us; the principles of our religion have been established from time immemorial, and all our ceremonies are coeval with them; besides, we never have occasion to make any allusion to your Messiah, not even to mention his name.

SIM. Let me hear more in support of this position thou hast taken.

MAI. On the appearance of Christ, who thought (according to the opinions of his disciples) to improve our religion, the Israelites would not receive him; at all events, our laws remained as before, and the proceedings of

Christ were, in fact, only known in a few towns in the Holy Land; in all other places where Israelites were dwelling at that time, the people were ignorant of the existence of such a person; and the Israelites who were exiled to Spain during the existence of the second Temple, were especially so. Thus Christ, after his death, was soon forgotten by the majority of the Israelites; and at this very day his history is not universally known to them, perhaps to only one in a thousand, such as those who are familiar with foreign languages, and who are in the habit of mixing and conversing with Christians. There are indeed many distinguished Rabbies who know but little about Christ, and who do not wish to know more, because they have no inclination to make an agitation concerning events which passed so many ages ago. Subsequently to Christ, there were several persons who rose up amongst the Israelites as Messiahs; but the Israelites gave no credit to them, nor did they seek to obtain vengeance on them. At this day we have not the least allusion to the history of Christ in our Talmud; the few passages which it formerly contained referring to him have been expunged, because our forefathers, when they came to reside under the protection of European and Christian monarchs, thought proper that they should, for the sake of peace; and therefore the persons who had to make additional copies of the Talmud, and afterwards the printers of it, purposely omitted them. But observe how differently the Christian Testament has been handed down to these times. In the Christian Testament is an ample narrative of the death of Christ, and it is repeatedly asserted therein that he took upon himself the responsibility of all the

sins committed by the whole world, and died for the purpose of sanctifying the name of God ; and by these means all his disciples are perpetually reminded of the injuries perpetrated on him by the Israelites. Amongst the Christians there are most powerful preachers, whose eloquence affects the heart and makes the eye to weep ; there is a great deal of poetry written on this subject, in which the sufferings of Christ are described in a most pathetic manner ; there are persons who have a powerful genius for representing by action such scenes, and who can penetrate the heart equally as well as the preacher ; pictures of Christ under the hands of his enemies there are in abundance, and those done with the most consummate skill : the wickedness of the Israelites is, in short, one of the essential parts of the groundwork of Christianity ; and how is it possible, therefore, that Christians in general should not cherish an antipathy to them ? But such is not the case with us, because we are commanded to love every body, and have no precept to lead us to single out any particular people as our natural enemies. It has frequently happened that Jews of the lower orders have been converted to Christianity ; and on such an occasion is it not natural that such Jews would decry the people, ceremonies, and institutions that they had renounced ? the effect of which would most surely be to augment the prejudice that the Christians already entertained against them. There is no parallel case which I can refer to in connexion with us. It is seldom that Christians in Europe have been converted to our faith ; consequently few Christians have had any motives for exciting a bad feeling in us for their co-religionists. In addition to the reasons

which dispose the Christians to look with suspicion on the Israelites, already advanced by me, I will mention this; there are many books in circulation amongst them written by ancient authors who were deeply prejudiced against our race, and who enjoined the people of their day to destroy the Israelites whenever they could, and advised monarchs and judges to banish them from their territories, to confiscate their property, and to burn their houses of prayer. The advice of these bigoted writers, many of whom were priests, was, alas! too often adopted; the actual despoilers of the unoffending Israelites believing that, for their zealous persecutions, they should be rewarded in a future state. Now we have no books amongst us that treat on such subjects, neither have we any devotees that make it their business to raise an agitation concerning such; and it is, moreover, highly improbable that we should try to give any offence to our neighbours, if it were merely on account of our being always in a minority, and scarcely ever powerful enough to hold up our heads before the nations of the world. We are strangers in most places, and are satisfied if the Christians only regard us with a friendly countenance; as the son of a concubine would be if regarded with kindness by the son of his father's married wife. And although civilization is making its most rapid progress amongst Christian nations, in consequence of which there are amongst them men of the greatest acquirements in philosophy and science, and their monarchs are in general men of profound understanding, and friends of justice and humanity; and although even amongst the lower classes of European Christians we find many enlightened persons,

who are also endowed with good moral qualities : still the long-lived antipathy to the Israelites has not yet been rooted from their minds. At this very day, all Christian children, with but few exceptions, are embittered against the Israelites ; their innocent minds cannot but contemplate with horror the affecting tragedy of the crucifixion, of which they hear so much, and, consequently, they must detest all those that have any connexion with the authors of it ; and though, as they grow older, they get better affected towards the Israelites, a portion of the prejudice imbibed in their infancy will, in most cases, remain with them in spite of their most strenuous exertions to dismiss them. It has frequently happened that an ignorant child, under the influence of this prejudice, has not thought it any harm to insult a venerable, and generous-minded Israelite, and has even ventured to throw stones at him ; the result of which has been, that the Israelite could not forbear giving him some chastisement, and in so doing may have drawn blood, as a father correcting his own child may have done : might not such an occurrence have furnished evil-minded Christians with a pretext for saying that this had been done in order to obtain the child's blood for unholy purposes ? There are very few Christians that have not Jews amongst their neighbours ; and the consequence must be, that both have transactions together ; the boys of the Israelites and Christians that dwell in the same vicinity play and roll upon the ground together ; and is it not probable that differences should arise between the parents, and that these boys should sometimes quarrel and beat each other ? Thus may be excited the anger of an ignorant Christian in Poland, a

person who probably may not know one letter from another, and not possess any natural good quality; such a one would not hesitate to swear such an oath against the Israelite as would induce others to consider him guilty of the appalling charge: and his conscience would be very unlikely to give him any qualms in the course of such a proceeding, for such notions as he might have imbibed concerning religion, would make him think that to destroy the Israelite was a deed righteous in the eyes of God and man.*

SIM. Dost thou mean to say the Israelites of all classes, high and low, are men of considerable acquirements?

MAI. Yes, they are.

SIM. It may be true that the Israelites in Italy, France, and Germany, are well versed in reading, and some celebrated for their acquaintance with particular sciences; but that is not the case in Poland and Russia, where a great many of thy brethren reside, and where, according to what I have heard, only a few are acquainted even with the Talmud: there are none amongst them that are distinguished for their acquaintance with general literature and science; and the lower classes of Israelites in those places are as ignorant as the Christians of the same grade.

MAI. God forbid! thy informants utter gross falsehood. It is indeed well known to the enlightened portion of society, that even in Poland and Russia there are many Israelites who, though they may not be generally well versed in foreign languages, and a variety of sciences, have a perfect acquaintance with the Talmud and

* This description refers to the mode in which Christians and Jews are in the habit of dwelling in Poland.—*Translator*.

the Bible; and that nearly every one reads Hebrew tolerably well, if not with grammatical precision, and can say and understand his prayers in that language: nearly every one reads the Bible in Hebrew, and understands the meaning of its various passages. There are schools in many of the small towns and villages, and schoolmasters specially appointed for the poor, who are instructed gratuitously. It is said in the Talmud, that the appointment of schoolmasters in each town was contemporaneous with the erection of the second Temple, at which period a decree was issued, ordaining that such teachers should be remunerated for their labours by the community at large. In the countries I have referred to, women and children read in Hebrew, and they, as well as the men, understand the Hebrew-German, the language to which they are mostly accustomed. Into this language the whole of the Bible has been translated, their prayers and ethics; some of the best commentaries, as the book *Zeëna Ooreëna*; extracts from the Talmud and other books of morality; *Menórat Hamaor*, the beautiful work, *Khobót Halebábot*, and histories like that of Josephus, and others. They have also translated into this language the Books of Proverbs, Enigmas, Problems, and Poetry; so that all the Israelites there, young and old, may at least know something. Daily, when they have left their employment, they assemble in their schoolhouses to study, and particularly in the morning and evening, during the holidays; and this mode of obtaining knowledge is practised by the lowest class amongst them, such as water-carriers, porters, &c. The women assemble occasionally, and one reads to the others; even the man who begs in the streets will have

in his possession such books as are of the most importance; and thou mayest find in the house of a person of mediocre circumstances, books, old and new, of the value of thirty ducats; and with some of the toll-keepers, books of the value of one hundred ducats; but in the house of a Christian minister in the same village, although he may be a much richer man than the toll-keeper, the books would not be worth a couple of ducats. Thus, in the smallest towns, where the number of Jewish families does not exceed ten, their spiritual head, though a needy man, has a larger library than the Christian priest of the same place, though he has the charge of so many more people. In Poland and Russia, the Israelites can boast of numerous printing offices: there is hardly a single province without one: and there are many of their printers who are noted for the carefulness with which they perform their work. A person who takes pleasure in reading, sharpens his intellects, and the more extensive his knowledge becomes, the more is his soul purified. But this is not the case with the bulk of the Christians in those countries, for though they can certainly boast of some men whose learning surpasses that of the Israelites, the lower orders scarcely know how to decipher a letter. Occasionally we hear of Christian magistrates in those countries who cannot write their own names, and are incapable of reading in any language; and they, of course, must be very ignorant, in comparison with the meanest of the Israelites. The Emperor Alexander the First endeavoured more than all his predecessors to enlighten the people under his government; his good intentions, however, have not yet been accomplished, on

account of the short time which has elapsed since he commenced his system of tuition; but it is to be hoped that they will in the course of time, as he kindly said on his having effected some improvements in the mode of education: "Then will there be light in the most humble cottages."* There is reason to hope in these days, through the agency of the mighty and wise Emperor Nicholas the First: may the glory of his majesty be elevated, for he exerts himself in every way for the benefit of his subjects; may the Almighty be with him, and may he long remain on the throne of his kingdom!

SIM. I am aware that the lower orders of Christians in Poland are rather loose in their morals and general conduct; but, according to the information which I have received, they are so through having copied the Israelites. Men frequently imitate the bad they see in others; and it is a striking passage of the Psalmist's which says, "They mixed with the nations, and learned their actions;" (Ps. cvi. 35).

MAI. To shew what is the truth in this matter, I will quote the words of a learned Christian, who wrote the reverse of what thou hast now advanced. By my life, I swear thou wilt hear things which thou dost not look for; and these are the opinions of Professor Schulten, a man well known to the world as being endowed with a good understanding, and who rejoices in establishing truth.

SIM. I admit that he is such as thou describest; he is particularly known by his travels, which he has written

* See the works of Karamzin, vol. viii., *Tableau de l'Instruction publique en Russie.*

with great judgment; and he has shewn how extensive is his knowledge in many branches of literature. I am most anxious, therefore, to hear his opinions.

MAI. I am ready to gratify thee, although what I am about to extract from his works has no reference whatever to the accusation against my brethren of using human blood, which was the starting subject of conversation. The following are his words, in a separate chapter.* They have also been copied in the work called *Ideen über die nöthige Organisation der Israeliten in Christlichen Staaten, von Joh. Ludwig Ewald*. After having described the state of Galizia, which is under the government of the Emperor of Austria, the learned Schulten proceeds to say, "Yet there is a class of people in Galizia who alone deserve to live in that beautiful and fertile country, &c. I allude to the sons of Israel. So much has been said about the Israelites in Galizia, that one is almost afraid to speak any more about them, because it may seem ridiculous: but still it is necessary to resume the subject. It is the opinion of those who have paid attention to statistics, and of other persons worthy of credit, that the 300,000 Israelites in Galizia are the cause of all the evil that has befallen that country, and that it is requisite to root them out of it, if they cannot be converted. It is said that the Israelites are the proprietors of the spirit shops, and spread deleterious liquors all over Galizia; that they are the chief means by which the people are intoxicated and

* *Annalen der Literatur und Kunst des Oestreichischen Kaiserthums*, 1807.

kept in ignorance; and that they stifle the spirit of industry in the people at large, by glutting the country with goods imported from foreign parts, and by exporting all the raw materials which might be manufactured at home. It is true that the Israelites do all that they are here charged with; but if they did not, would it not be done by the Christians? I know of many Christian landlords, as well as Israelites, who intoxicate their tenants by means of spirituous liquors. There are many wealthy Christians, who, instead of building places for the manufacture of cloth and linen, and for dressing leather, export all their fleeces and the produce of their hemp fields. The difference between the Jewish and Christian merchants consists only in this; the Jews are contented with a smaller profit on their speculations than the Christians. Instead of laying restrictions on industry, they are almost the only persons who really encourage it; and the example presented to the Galizian peasants by their exertion is calculated to incite them to bestir themselves likewise: but the lord who lets his vassals out to the Israelites for their use, does all that is in his power to stifle the spirit of industry in both. The Israelites only are permitted to travel for commercial purposes; they may go all over Galizia, if they choose to establish themselves there; they are the tailors, the shoemakers, the carpenters, furriers, glass-manufacturers, goldsmiths, and lapidaries; they till the ground also, for which they pay a greater rent than their Christian neighbours; and the knowledge of all the arts here referred to they bring with them from other places. The beer which they brew is very good, whilst that

brewed by the other inhabitants is hardly drinkable. In every district they are the inn-keepers; and one can always find food in the house of an Israelite, though it be situated in a part of the country scarcely habitable, whilst, on the contrary, there are Christians, even in the towns, that will refuse to sell a morsel of bread. Compare the physiognomy of the Israelite with that of the Galizian peasant, and it will be observed that the countenance of the former is perfectly human, whilst that of the latter strongly resembles the face of an orang-outang. In the pale, swoln, disfigured features of the Galizian peasant, thou wilt hardly perceive a single mark that betokens the possession of intellect; whilst, generally, the brightening eye of the Israelite indicates at once his Oriental and distinguished origin. The Israelite's aquiline nose, his open lips, his golden hair, and even his beard, conjoin to give him an aspect of sagacity which strongly contrasts with the stupid visages of those that surround him." Buchholz * mentions that statistics have been collected in Prussia respecting the number of persons generally confined in prisons, and those tried for criminal offences; and it has been ascertained that the number of Israelitish malefactors is much less, proportionably, than those amongst the Christians.

SIM. I will not attempt to refute these arguments. I have now heard something from Professor Schulten's

* *Ueber die Aufnahme der jüdischen Gemeinden zum Bürgerrecht.* Vienna, 1815.

works which I did not expect. But listen; I am going to ask thee another question.

MAI. Ask me whatever thou may'st think proper; and, if I am able, I will give thee an answer.

SIM. Thou hast said that it is natural to the Israelites to love the country they inhabit, and the people amongst whom they may be dwelling. Tell me, I pray, in what does that love consist?

MAI. All historians are unanimous on this point; and even the events which have come to pass in the present generation are sufficient to establish the fact;—that the Israelites never take part in any conspiracies or insurrections which may agitate any country in which any of them may be dwelling: they always lend their support to the government under whose protection they may be. They never even practice any animosity against those monarchs and rulers who have tyrannised over them; but do all they can to promote peace, however badly they may have been used. Reflect on their conduct to the Spaniards, although they were grievously persecuted in Spain; though hundreds and thousands were massacred there, others despoiled of their property, and driven in a state of destitution into Barbary; yet, when some of those who took refuge in Barbary had risen to stations of honour and dignity there, and when the Spaniards had conquered the city of Oran, which is situated in Barbary, they served them as loyal and dutiful subjects. Afterwards they fought against the enemies of the Spaniards with sword and spear, and never sought revenge for the ill-treatment which the

ancestors of these Spaniards had rendered to theirs. Even at the time when the inhabitants of Oran revolted against the Spaniards, and both famine and disease were raging in the town, the Israelites laboured with all their might, unremittingly, to make peace, and to procure food for those that were perishing.* The general history of the world will supply evidence in abundance to confirm what I have now asserted.

SIM. Thou art right. I have read of these facts myself in a Spanish historical work †.

MAI. But what reward did these wicked Spaniards give to the peaceful Israelites?

SIM. I feel melancholy when I reflect on their ingratitude. Those same Spaniards, when they had acquired actual possession of the country, banished the Israelites from the town.

MAI. That happened in the year 1669 of the Christian era; and from that time no Israelites have been allowed to settle in the town again. Was ever greater baseness than that perpetrated?

SIM. I must acknowledge to thee, my friend, that my heart is fully alive to the injustice now referred to. How could those Spaniards, being Christians, and having been taught the doctrine the principles of which so strongly recommend the practice of mercy, so far outrage the commonest obligations of common humanity?

MAI. If all people designating themselves Christians would regulate their actions in perfect accordance with

* *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte, aus dem Englischen, übersetzt von J. S. Semler.* B. 15. § 118.

† *Historia Univers. Jud. de Barrios.*

the precepts of Christianity, they surely would be blessed both in this world and that which is to come.

SIM. I think the Spaniards have always been more rigid in their religious observances than any other Christian people.

MAI. It is very foolish for a man to quit the middle path of his religion to go to extremes; and the violent enthusiast is generally found to be a fool. The Spaniards considered that the only way to evince the firmness of their attachment to their creed, was to avenge the death of the Messiah by forcing the whole world to become converts to Christianity, or by killing all those that refused. They also were of opinion that the more they tortured those whose system of divine worship differed from theirs, the more would they be entitled to the favourable regard of the Almighty. And they even believed, that by shewing any mercy to such, they sinned against the Almighty.

SIM. Whoever carries his religious notions to such extremes is greatly deficient in true knowledge: but fanaticism has been very prevalent in all ages.

MAI. And in proportion to the depth to which those Spaniards sank in ignorance and folly, the Israelites of that period, particularly those of Spain and Portugal, made themselves more renowned for their acquirements in literature and science than any other nation; as numerous works produced by them, and which are now extant, will testify.

SIM. (*appears angry, moves his lips, and shakes his head*). More renowned in literature and science! Understand well what thou sayest. Perhaps thou art

now unwittingly exaggerating; I have certainly never had reason to doubt thy own veracity.

MAI. (*looking steadfastly in Simmias' countenance and smiling*). I did not exaggerate; I have never done so; God forbid! I said it, do repeat it, and will also say it a third time. I will adduce the testimony of the most noted Christian authors of the present time in support of what I have asserted. But I must confess that I am much surprised that thou hast never heard of it before. Were I not fearful of losing sight of the various arguments I have to bring forward respecting the accusation of using human blood, which, as I observed a little while ago, was the starting subject of this conversation, I could convince thee, ere thou art much older, of the correctness of all that I have now been submitting for thy consideration. But I will do so ere long, nevertheless; at a fit opportunity remind me of my promise; and, if it please God, it shall be fulfilled.

SIM. I will not fail to remind thee. But now let us return to the discussion of the accusation against the Israelites of using human blood.

END OF THE FIRST CONVERSATION.

SECOND CONVERSATION.

MAIMOON. Good Simmias, I shall now undertake to prove to thee, from the Holy Scriptures, that this foul accusation is utterly groundless.

SIMMIAS. How wilt thou prove it?

MAI. One of the most important passages in Scripture is the commandment, "Thou shalt do no murder." By the commission of such a crime the Israelites would transgress this solemn command; and how could they do that, and still feel satisfied that they were doing what their law required?

SIM. Who can tell? Perhaps, in the opinion of thy people, that commandment refers only to an Israelite, and not to the rest of mankind; perhaps it may be thought by you that killing one who is not of thy persuasion is not much worse than killing a meaner animal, such as an ox, a lamb, or a goat; and that such is the case with thy people is a notion which your enemies do entertain.

MAI. It has already been shewn * that all the prohibitory precepts in the Bible have reference to all the

* See *Bet. Yehuda*, chap. 71. This book contains the principles of the Jewish religion, its history, and the history of the literature of the Jews, from the earliest date to the present time. It is worth the attention of every Christian who wishes to become acquainted with Judaism, as he will find in it every subject fully

human race; and I shall prove to thee now that the commandment, "Thou shalt do no murder," alludes to the children of Noah, under which denomination are ranged all the nations of the world. It is said in Genesis, ix. 6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man." The Almighty ordained that no one should escape punishment for shedding the blood of any human being whatever; and thus He spoke to the children of Noah in the same chapter, ver. 5: "And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man." King Solomon said, "A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him;" (Prov. xxix. 17). We find of David, the

described and explained. It forms an appendix to the work called *Téúda Bèisrael*, printed at Wilna and Huradna in the year 1828, with the approbation of the learned Israelites and a committee of Christians at Warsowie. The introduction to this work contains a letter of thanks from the committee to the author, who received a magnificent present for his work from the Emperor of Russia, Nicholas the First. The work also contains many useful observations for Christians, who wish to be informed concerning Hebrew literature and Hebrew authors of the different generations. It is there set forth the particular branch of literature in which each author distinguished himself, what was his general knowledge, moral character, and what were his opinions of the law; and at the end of the work is appended a long treatise, on the necessity of an Israelite's being skilled in some trade, written chiefly with a view to excite the Israelites to agricultural pursuits. Thanks to the Almighty, this treatise has had a most beneficial effect, for thousands of Israelites in Russia have devoted themselves to agriculture, more especially since they received permission and encouragement so to do from the Emperor: the efforts of this author have likewise induced them to establish schools in various towns in Russia.

anointed of the God of Jacob, the holy man chosen by the Lord, that, although many of the wars he engaged in against the worshippers of stars and planets were such as the Lord had commanded, for the Lord said unto David (1 Chron. xix. 8), "And I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked, and I have cut off all thine enemies from before thee;" and although it has ever been admitted by legislators and men of learning that he who conquers a country and sheds blood in battle must not only not be called a murderer, but be entitled to the name of hero: yet the Almighty did not approve of David's building a temple to him, on account of the quantity of blood which had been shed during his wars: for the Almighty said to him, (1 Chron. xxii. 8), "Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars; thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood on the earth in my sight." We also see that a murderer seldom escapes punishment for the crime he has committed; he betrays signs of guilt that excite the suspicion of men; and it often happens that a murderer's conscience so afflicts him, that he cannot refrain from delivering himself up to justice, in the absence of legal evidence against him. With all these facts before them, how could it enter into the minds of any people that the Israelites are prone to commit murder, and that even their law requires them to do so? The Almighty, blessed be His name, has commanded (Exod. xxi. 20), "And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished." This passage is commented on in the Talmud (Sanhedrin,

Sect. Arbá Mitot), "The Hebrew master shall be punished with death, if he kill his servant, or maid, who is not an Israelite."

SIM. How is that proved? That passage from the Bible may allude to a servant or maid who is one of the Jewish persuasion.

MAI. This question has also been raised in the Talmud (vide Mekhilta quoted in the *Yalkut* in that verse); and this is the reply: "Notwithstanding, if the servant survive a day or two, the master shall not be punished, for he is his money." Consequently, it cannot refer to a Hebrew servant, for such a one is not his master's money; he is not his property. There are also many other arguments in the Talmud which shew that the passage from Scripture refers to a servant who may not be of the Jewish persuasion. At all events, the Talmud, which is the main support of our religion, gives the following explanation of the verse: "An Israelite who has killed his servant, or his maid, of whatsoever nation he or she may be, he shall be punished with death." And not only does our religion prohibit us from shedding the blood of human beings of any nation, or faith, but it strictly enjoins us not to do them any sort of wrong; and especially are we enjoined to live in amity with those of a different nation that may be our neighbours. Of this there is strong confirmation in Deuteronomy, xxiii. 8: "Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian, because thou wast a stranger in his land." Now, since we are commanded not to abhor an Egyptian, although the Egyptians made the lives of our forefathers bitter with hard bondage, and drowned their

sons, and although we have now left their country; how much more forcibly should that commandment apply to those nations amongst whom we do live, and who shew us kind treatment? It is said in the *Medrash Rabba*, section *Shoftim*, “For all the anguish which the Egyptians inflicted on us, the Israelites, the Holy Scriptures still enjoin us to shew mercy to them;” and it is said (Ps. xxxiv), “Seek the peace and pursue it.” If our conduct is to be so peaceful towards the Egyptians, who worshipped the stars and planets, and other objects that excite our abhorrence, surely we must feel an affection for those nations who are friendly to us, who, as we know, glorify the Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, who believe in future rewards and punishments, and who believe that the Mosaic Law came from the Almighty: and if those nations did not observe any other than the seven precepts given to the children of Noah, they would be considered by us, according to the Talmud, as resident proselytes. The seven precepts given to the children of Noah are; 1st. To beware of idolatry; 2nd. Not to blaspheme or profane the Holy name of God; 3rd. Not to commit murder; 4th. Not to commit adultery; 5th. Not to steal; 6th. To appoint men well acquainted with the laws to administer them;* and 7th. Not to eat the flesh or blood taken from any living beast. According to the Scriptures, a resident proselyte is to be treated in every respect the same as an Israelite; thus it is in Levit. xix. 33—35, “And if

* In this commandment there are many reasonable and just precepts included besides that, “Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you.”

a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him; but the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God: ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment," &c. The latter commandment was introduced in allusion to the alien,* just as a similar one was issued to the Israelites, and mentioned in the preceding part of the same chapter, verse 15, "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment." Nay, it is even said (Levit. xxv. 35—38), "To relieve the stranger or sojourner that he may live with thee, take thou no usury of him or increase; but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee: thou shalt not give him thy money upon money, nor lend him thy victuals for increase: I am the Lord your God." Thus it is one of the most important commandments in the Scriptures, to render every assistance to the alien, "That he may live with thee." The following are the words of Rabbi Moshe ben Nakhman (known by the initials R.M.B.N.), in the 15th precept of the Jewish Law: "We are commanded to render assistance to the resident proselyte, to protect him from misfortune. If, for instance, he were to fall into the water, or a heap of stones were to fall on him, then it would be our bounden duty to succour him with all our might. Should he suffer from disease, it would be our duty to endeavour to assuage his pain; and if he were in danger of losing his life thereby, we might do

* Alien here signifies a stranger to the Hebrew religion, ceremonies, &c.

for him on the holy Sabbath-day all that might be required; for the Almighty said (Levit. xxv. 35), ‘If thy brother wax poor, and his hand faileth, then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger or sojourner, that he may live with thee.’” The Talmud states that we are commanded to maintain an alien; and these also are the words of R.M.B.N., who is considered by all Israelites one of their highest authorities: “The Talmud instructs us to seek for peace, even from idolaters, to attend to their sick, to bury their dead in the cemeteries of the Israelites, and to maintain their poor with our own.” (*Tract. Gittin*, p. 61.) Maimonides in his work, *Yad Hakhazaka Hilkhoh Melakhim*, chap. 6, establishes the foregoing as a law; and concludes thus: “The Almighty is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all his works” (Ps. cxlix. 9). Now, if what I have here stated has been enjoined upon us with regard to heathen nations and idolaters, what must be our duties and feelings towards Christians? and how much more potently must the commandment “not to kill” be applied by us to them. In addition to all this, have we it not on the best authorities that the Christian is considered the brother of the Israelite? (*Téúda Bèisrael*, p. 133.)

SIM. Thou hast said that thou hast more evidence to extract from the Bible: let me hear it.

MAI. Now what dost thou think of the Israelites eating blood?

SIM. But how is the negative proved?

MAI. The holy law prohibits the Israelite from eating blood, in plain language: “Moreover ye shall eat no

manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings ; whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people." (Leviticus, vii. 26, 27 ; Deuteronomy, xii. 23). Thomas, the learned Christian whom I spoke of in our first conversation, very properly observed, when he vindicated the Israelites before King Alfonso, "That even the blood of fish, which, according to the definitions of the Talmud, is not called blood, the Israelite is forbidden to drink, and he regards it with disgust ; because his people are not accustomed to touch it : how much more, then, must he regard with disgust the blood of a human creature, which, contrary to what other nations do with fish, he has never seen used by any nation whatever ? If the Israelite eats a morsel of bread, and blood should flow from his teeth or gums, he will not finish consuming it till the blood has been removed from it ; most people have a dislike to looking at or meddling with blood that has flowed from others ; but the Israelite cannot bear to see or touch his own ; and the Israelite, moreover, is never anxious to witness the execution of any one, not even of one that has been his enemy."

SIM. What thou hast just advanced only shews their degraded condition ; and the Christian, Thomas, pertinently observed, also, that their condition arose from the Almighty's curse : " I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies, and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them ;" (Leviticus, xxvi. 36). Thus we see a hundred Israelites will flee from a Christian boy ; and a modern Christian author says, " It is a fact that the Israelites scarcely ever commit murder ; but this for-

bearance some Christians term cowardice, and reckon it a vice or defect in their dispositions, instead of a virtue."

MAI. That author has already had a sufficient answer, and his invidious arguments have been thoroughly refuted.

SIM. What was the answer he received on this subject?

MAI. The same which has been given by the celebrated Mendelssohn, in a work called, "*Lessings unterlassene Schriften.*"

SIM. Let me hear what he has said, for I like much to hear of Mendelssohn. He may be considered the German Plato, the Socrates of the Israelites.

MAI. The following is a remark of his: "They say that the abhorrence with which the Israelites regard murder exhibits their baseness! Well, if baseness is a means of preserving human life, then baseness is a virtue!"

SIM. Milk and honey flow from his tongue.

MAI. Now, besides that commandment in the Scriptures, "Ye shall love the stranger, because ye were strangers in the land of Egypt," there is another important one, namely, to love every human being of whatever nation; "Thou shalt love thy fellow-creature as thyself" (Leviticus, xix. 18); and the Talmud says that this law forms the foundation of all the other laws contained in the Scriptures (See *Téúda Bèisrael*, 2nd division, 5th chapter, 7th observation).

SIM. But I must again ask, if the commandment "to love thy fellow creature as thyself" alludes to every human being? because it appears that the Hebrew word "*Rea*" signifies only a friend, of the same religious persuasion.

MAI. Does not the Bible sufficiently show this? "Let every man ask of his friend [*Rééhoo*]; and every woman ask of her friend [*Réüt-há*]" (Exod. xi. 2). The meaning of this passage is, "The Israelitish man should ask of his Egyptian friend [*Réa*], and the Israelitish woman should ask of her Egyptian friend [*Réüt-ha*]."

SIM. That is no proof at all; because, at that time, the Holy Law had not been given to the Israelites; and therefore they were spoken of as other nations, as it is said, "Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation [*Góy*], from the midst of another nation [*Migóy*]" (Deut. iv. 34). I have heard that the Talmud commentators have spoken of this expression in these words; "These Egyptians were worshippers of stars and planets;" and so were the Israelites. But I am not certain that, after the Israelites received the Law, the term *Réa* was used as applicable to every human being, the same as it was used to designate an Israelite.

MAI. Yes; it is applicable to any human being. There is a passage in the history of Sampson, "And it came to pass when they saw him that they brought thirty friends [*Merëim*] to be with him" (Judges xiv. 11); and those companions were young men of the Philistines. In the Talmud there is a commentary on that passage in the Bible; "Thou shalt love thy neighbour [*le-Redkhha*] as thyself" in these words: "That which is hateful to thee thou shalt not do to thy companion" [*le-Khabrah*]: and the word *Khaber* [companion], is used in the Talmud when it speaks of persons of a different religion (*Bet Yehuda*, cap. 60. observa-

tion 2). In the Scriptures we find many laws, having reference to other nations, in which the word *Réa* is used; and we observe, also, the ΑΚΗ [brother] in the prohibitory law, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart" (Levit. xix. 19); which commandment refers to all men.

SIM. How dost thou show that?

ΜΑΙ. Akhab, the king of Israel, called the king of Aram "brother" (1 Kings xx. 33).

SIM. Thou hast spoken truly. Now if thou hast aught more to bring forward in support of thy position, I am anxious to hear it.

END OF THE SECOND CONVERSATION.

THIRD CONVERSATION.

MAIMOON. I undertake to bring forward such proof presently, as thou must deem incontrovertible; but first I shall show thee from the Talmud, which the Israelites consider their highest authority,* that this accusation had never a true foundation.

SIMMIAS. From the Talmud? I feel some surprise at this proposition; it is perfectly unreasonable. Thou dost remind me of a person who, being arraigned for a certain offence, offers to bring forward his wife and children to give evidence of his innocence. Of course the testimony of relations, interested parties, or of a thing that is identified with the offence, can have but little weight.

MAI. I crave thy pardon, my friend; but there is no analogy between the case of such a one and that which occupies my attention. I intend to cite the Talmud as testimony, because, when the Talmud was composed, if any such accusation had ever been made against the Israelites previously, the circumstance would in some way have been mentioned in it; whereas nothing of the kind was ever known to have been inserted therein. I will explain to thee the principles of the Talmud, and its

* Maimoon here alludes to that portion of the Talmud which is explanatory of the precepts of the Mosaic Law, as the Israelites consider that that portion was handed down, as a tradition, from the very first synod at which Moses presided to the time when the Talmud was composed in the form of a book; for all the other matters that are mentioned in the Talmud are left entirely to the understanding of the reader. This explanation is derived from the preface written to the Talmud by Rabbi Samuel Hanagid.—*Translator.*

precepts, by which thou wilt perceive the correctness of my present assertion.

SIM. Proceed to do so.

MAI. Now, according to thy opinion, it is supposed that the Israelites use Christian blood at the Passover in obedience to a law or precept equally as valid and stringent as the other laws by which their actions are regulated.

SIM. True ; such is our opinion, because if it were not so, the Israelites would not have exposed themselves to such dangers.

MAI. And from whom could we have received such a precept ? from Moses ? from the prophets ? or from the instructors who arose amongst us subsequently to the era of your Messiah ?

SIM. Doubtless from those who presided over your councils after the time of our Messiah, as we think ; our opinion is, that this ceremony was instituted by the Israelites to revenge themselves on the Messiah, who lived several hundred years after the prophets, about a century before the destruction of the second Temple, and during the time of the authors of the *Mishna*, upon which work the whole Talmud was founded, together with all the regulations, decrees, &c., issued by all the heads of synods and distinguished Israelites.

MAI. And so thou thinkest that our learned men of that generation instituted such a law, and that we are bound to observe it, because the Talmud lays it down as a rule, that every law emanating from the synod in Israel is to be considered as good an authority as those which emanated from the synod of Moses ?

SIM. Yes; a law instituted by the learned and distinguished Hebrews is designated "a precept of the learned in the law;" and it is observed like any other precept of the Bible, because it is considered to be of equal authority. Thus we find in Deut. xvii. 8, 9: "If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, &c., and thou shalt come unto the priests, the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment." Some are of opinion that the Israelites attach more weight to the precepts of the learned than to those of the Bible.

MAI. Well, then, why should we not value the precept respecting the use of human blood equally with all the other precepts handed down to us from the Talmudians and other learned men?

SIM. Explain thyself: I am all attention.

MAI. God forbid that we should value such a one. Supposing such a precept had been handed down to the learned, they would have forbidden the people to practise it. Is it not inculcated by the Rabbies, in speaking of the law of the Bible, that the Almighty does not consider that man a transgressor who is prevented from performing any particular religious duty by some accidental impediment? If any sons of a man die from the effects of circumcision, it is not obligatory on the father to have the survivors circumcised, although circumcision is the first and most important principle of Judaism; and in reference to clearing a house of leavened bread at the approach of the Passover, it is said in Tractate *Pessakhim*, 141, "A cleft between the house of an Israelite and a

stranger need not be examined, for fear the stranger should say that the Israelite wished to do him harm, or to try some charms against him." Notwithstanding that the commandment regarding the removal of leavened bread before the Passover commences is one of the most important, and the Israelites are forbidden to dress any victuals during this festival; and notwithstanding that any one would be considered as having transgressed the commandment who had left the smallest possible portion of bread in his house, — a sick person is allowed to eat on the day of atonement, and to keep no fast; and, for the sake of a sick person, others are allowed to relax from the strictness of their observances that day, and also to do things on the Sabbath which at ordinary times would be sinful in the extreme. Yes, although the laws requiring these days to be kept holy are the strictest of all, they may be broken in every way in order to relieve one that is on a sick bed, except by idolatrous worship, adultery, and by shedding blood. We also find that Rabbi Yokhanan did not place phylacteries on his head in the winter season, because he suffered from cold. (See *Yerushalmi Berakhot*, sect. *Háyá Koré*.) And all these omissions are sanctioned, because it is written in the Bible, "These are the laws which men shall observe, and shall live by them;" which passage is thus commented on in the Talmud; "Men shall *live* by them, but not *die* by them:" the meaning of this is, that men are bound to observe all the commandments in the Holy Bible, so long as they do not cause death or place them in danger. The Talmud instructs us, that we are bound to observe that law which enjoins us to avoid danger more strictly than all

the other prohibitory laws in the Bible. It is further said in the Talmud, that the synod shall not issue any decree but such as the majority of the people are to conform to. Now, how could a synod issue a decree to the effect that men should use human blood, since it would be almost impossible for any one to act in obedience to it? Out of respect to public decency or custom, any of the prohibitory laws may be transgressed, (*Berakhot*, p. 19. 2.) as is fully explained in the work *Bet Yehuda*; and would not that be a sufficient justification for transgressing the law requiring human blood to be used, especially when using it placed the life of an Israelite in danger, and more especially when it placed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Israelites in danger, and, as thy opinion is, the law came only from the composers of the Talmud? (*Bet Yehuda*, caps. 65 and 70). The Almighty (blessed be his name!) after conferring blessings on those who observed and kept his holy law, and pronouncing curses on them who slighted it, has said, "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee; neither is it far off. It is not in Heaven, that thou shouldst say 'Who shall go up for us to Heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it.' Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, 'Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it.' But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." Thus thou seest all the ordinances of the Almighty are easy for men to perform, because, as our learned have said, "The Almighty did not drive us into the observance of his laws by tyranny; so he who has no house need not have a

phylactery on his door-post, neither is he bound to purchase a house for the purpose of having an opportunity to place one in such a situation." Now, after all that has been said on this subject, is it possible that we should have been commanded to use human blood? God forbid. What obstacles there would be to such a practice! If it were indeed an established fact that we did so, the whole world would rise up against us to our utter annihilation.

SIM. Do we not find in the New Testament, that the Israelites reviled the Messiah because he cured the sick on the Sabbath-day, and that he was obliged to rebuke them for it? and how canst thou say that the Talmud enjoins man to cure the sick on the Sabbath-day, and on the day of atonement, and to transgress any laws for the sake of relieving a sick person?

MAI. If your Messiah had given medicine to the sick, the Israelites would have been silent, and would have considered that he had done a good action, because they cured the sick on the Sabbath. We also circumcise children on that day, and administer remedies to the circumcised, as Jesus himself said in the Gospel of St. John, vii. 22. But as his remedies were strange and unnatural, having no resemblance to those prescribed by physicians, he having cured the sick by a word, and the blind by putting clay moistened with spittle on their eyes, a remedy which human comprehension could not reconcile with the established modes of medical treatment, the Israelites thought proper to rebuke him for such conduct. Even if they had believed that he really effected such cures through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they would have considered him as acting sin-

fully; and they thought his conduct particularly sinful, believing, as they did, that he was conjuring with the name of God or his attributes. Thus we find in the Talmud (*Yerushalmi*, Tractate *Shabat*, chap. xiv.):—“The grandchild of Rabbi Yehoshua, the son of Levi, had some disease in his throat, and there came some one to him and repeated charms over him which he had heard from Peter, the disciple of Jesus the Nazarite, and it so happened that the child recovered; then said his father, the son of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, ‘I would rather he had died.’” And this he did wish, because it was the opinion of the Israelites that such unnatural charms ought not to be practised at any time. A similar case is recorded in Talmud *Yerushalmi*, *Ehn Maämidin*; and in Talmud *Babli*, Tract. *Aboda Zara*, cap. ii. p. 27. Perhaps there were some amongst the Israelites who thought, like some of the learned of other nations, that Jesus effected all his miracles by means of knowledge obtained in Egypt. (*Orig. Contr. Celsus*, i. 11.)

SIM. The Egyptians entertained a similar opinion of Moses, when they beheld his miracles.*

MAI. If the learned of the Hebrews had at that time believed, like thyself, that Jesus was greater than Moses, who delivered the holy law to our race, still they could not have approved of his curing the sick on the Sabbath-day through such agency as he employed; and they would have arraigned him for so doing before the synod.

SIM. Make thy words more intelligible.

MAI. According to the Mosaic Law, the people are referred to the learned for a decision as to any doubt that

* *Plin. Hist. lib. 31. p. 1*; and *Apol. Apol.*

may exist respecting the fulfilment of any particular commandment; as it is written in Deut. (xvii. 9,) "Thou shalt come unto the priests, the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days; thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand nor to the left." It is likewise said in Exodus, (xxiii. 2,) "To decline after the multitude." In a case where the Sanhedrin or the judges in Jerusalem could not agree on a subject, the law was construed according to the opinion of the majority. If the question was one of "clean or unclean," and the majority considered it clean, it was given as law by all the synod; and if the majority decided that it was "unclean," all the synod agreed that this decision should be established as law. But the opinion of a judge, or learned man, was never received as decisive of the subject in dispute, unless such judge or learned man had assigned sufficient grounds for his opinion, and shown that it was the result of mature reflection; if he had not done so, and could not support his opinion with good argument, his opinion was considered to be of no value, and he was not reckoned amongst the majority. Nay, even if that judge or learned man had been a true prophet, like Elias and Elisha, and he had been asked to prove the affirmative or negative of anything by giving reasons, and he, instead of complying with such a request, had merely answered, "Am I not a prophet? and have I not been authorised by heaven to declare that which I have?" the people not only would not have listened to him, but would have put him on his trial for uttering falsehood; and though his words might have agreed lite-

rally with the law, yet, if he could not have sufficiently explained them, his opinions would have been rejected; because our Holy Bible clearly says, "If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment between blood and blood, between plea and plea, &c., and thou shalt come unto the *priests*, the *Levites*, and the *judge*;" but it does not say that "thou shalt go to the *Prophet* to seek an explanation of a plea or judgment."

SIM. Does not the Bible say (Deut. xviii. 15), "The Lord thy God will raise up a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." I have heard that it is said in the Talmud, "If the prophet tell thee to transgress an affirmative commandment in the Bible, thou art bound to listen to him."

MAI. That only refers to a case of emergency, to stop a certain proceeding. It is said in the Talmud that if a prophet were to effect the conversion of a person from idolatry, we should follow and hearken unto him for the moment, even if we transgressed a certain law thereby. But God forbid that the momentary influence permitted to a prophet should be established as a permanent rule. The fact is, the affirmative commandment, "Unto him ye shall hearken," has been given in opposition to that mentioned before in the same chapter (10, 11, 12, 14 and 15); "There shall not be found amongst you any one that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter or a witch, or a wizard, or a charmer, or a consulter of familiar spirits, or a necromancer; for all such are an abomination unto the Lord; and because of their abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them

out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God; for those nations hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from thee, and unto him thou shalt hearken." We are only permitted to listen to the prophet when he speaks of the future. The Bible clearly says that he who does not submit to the decrees of the judges shall be put to death by man (Deut. xix. 12): "And the man that will do presumptuousness, and will not hearken unto the priest who standeth to minister there before the Lord God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die, and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel." But he who will not hearken unto the prophet whom the Almighty has raised, like unto Moses, is not to be tried for such a transgression of the laws before men, but shall be reserved for the eternal judgment; as it is said in Deut. xviii. 19. "And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." Thus we find in the Talmud *Baba Meziah*, page 59, "That a certain learned man essayed to establish the truth of a law by introducing into his arguments a miracle, and the assembly would not notice it:" the foregoing is also at greater length mentioned in the work *Bet Yehudah*. If a man were to come any day in the week to a sick person, and offer him prohibited food as a charm to cure him, and it were known that such food could not naturally act as a remedy, the patient, according to our law, would not be permitted to take it; but if an authorised physician were to come and say, that a certain thing prohibited by the

law would cure him, then it would become a duty to follow his advice; and if the sick person's attendants were not to do so, and he should die, they would be termed "murderers;" because it is written in the Bible, "And he shall cause him to be thoroughly healed." This commentary in the Talmud has reference to the same: "We learn that a person who is sufficiently skilful to practise medicine is allowed to administer remedies." There is another instance in the Talmud that illustrates the law we are now discussing.* A man was bitten by a mad dog, and one of the learned suggested that the diaphragm of the dog should be given to him; upon which the Talmud declares "That the law was not established according to suggestions." Maimonides, in his commentary on the Mishna, thus elucidates this passage: "The law does not apply to this case, because remedies administered in the way of charms have no foundation in nature." How much more difficult, therefore, it must be for an Israelite to perform cures by the utterance of a simple word.

SIM. But it is now known to the whole world, that the patients of the Messiah were cured immediately, and that a great many of them were sick persons who were thought to be incurable by regular physicians; and the best testimony of the reality of anything is what is presented to our own eyes: besides, is it not recorded in the Talmud that even the Messiah's disciples cured one or two Talmudians with the same means that their master had used?

* Tract. *Yoma*, Ch. *Yom Hakipurim*.

MAI. But the subject is still open for dispute to one not born a Christian, and who, from his youth, has been accustomed to doubt such things, and would even deny the existence of that which is visible to his bodily senses. Our traditions say that Jesus performed these miracles by repeating the most holy name, the *Tetragrammaton*, which it was not permitted to a prophet to pronounce, and to the high priest only during the time he was in the temple.

SIM. That is very probable; because, according to our belief and traditions, the Messiah was greater than the high priest, yea, even greater than the angels; such as you still expect your Messiah to be, as is mentioned by the *Midrashim*.

MAI. We have again wandered far away from the main subject of our argument; we have now begun a discussion concerning the foundation of the Christian religion, which I do not wish to continue, especially as, according to our belief, no miracle whatever can be admitted as a reason for giving credence to a prophet. Maimonides has said, that the attention paid by the Israelites to Moses was not the more on account of the miracles he performed; with which opinion I agree; therefore, let us return to the principal topic of our conversation.

SIM. Let every nation enjoy its own religious opinions undisturbed; by acting contrariwise to that principle, we only consume time without coming to any satisfactory conclusion. I shall now ask thee a question. In the course of our conversation thou hast repeatedly said that the Talmud contains no evidence to confirm the truth of

the accusation concerning the use of human blood; but how dost thou account for the following quotation from the *Yerushalmian Talmud* (Tract. *Pessakhim*), given in a Spanish book which I have read, and which was written against the Israelites?—"That it was proper for an Israelite to procure red wine, *Yayin adam*, for the Passover night." By this the Christian writer meant human blood, *Yayin adam*. I myself feel rather surprised at this; for why should the Israelites particularly wish to obtain red wine for that night, and not white wine? The Spanish author now referred to expresses much wonder that the Israelites should consider drinking wine on that night as obligatory on them as eating the Passover cakes. It is said in the Mishna of *Arba Pessakhim*, "That it was the duty of even the poorest Israelite to drink red wine, and that he should not drink less than four glassfuls, even if he were so poor as to be supported by the contributions of the charitable, in which case he would indeed be poor." It is mentioned in Tractate *Pèah*, "That a man who is in possession of food sufficient for two meals is prohibited from receiving eleemosynary support; and if the agent of some charitable institution should not give the poor man means to buy the wine, he would be compelled to borrow money for that purpose, or to dispose of a portion of his apparel."* Now there surely must be some allusion in all those remarks to the use of blood on that night. It is further mentioned by the Spanish author, "That ye have many strange ceremonies on that night; that, for instance, ye dip

* Vide the Commentary of the R. SH. B. M. on that *Mishna Pessakhim*, page 99, 2.

herbs in water, and eat them; that ye throw a few drops of wine out of a glass; and that ye put on a white talar or habit;" and by citing these incidents, he endeavours to prove that the Israelites are indeed guilty of the crime of using blood. In addition to the preceding, I have gleaned the following particulars from this Spaniard. In finishing your meal on that night, ye eat a morsel of Passover cake, which ye call *Afikoman*. When ye have read your prayers, and the history of the Exodus from Egypt, in a book called *Hagada*, you conclude the service with two songs, which, to our comprehension, have no meaning. "*Ekhad mi yodéa*—The number one; who knows what that signifies?" The other, still more enigmatical, commences with, "*Khad Gadyá dézábin Abbá*—A goat which my father bought for two florins." Your own commentators acknowledge these words as parabolical. The Spanish author thinks this song an allegory alluding to Jesus Christ, he being known frequently by the figure of a lamb, and that for that the term "goat" has been substituted; and from this circumstance proceeds to infer that the Israelites are guilty of the crime. I must confess, it is with much difficulty that we adopt this opinion of the Spaniard; for if the author of the song meant to allude to Jesus Christ, how could he conclude his composition with this sentence;—"that the Almighty would punish those that persecuted the goat?" It is not likely that the Israelites would believe such an assertion. I have read a book written by an Israelite well acquainted with your traditions, who gives various reasons for the ceremonies observed on the Passover Night, and attributes them to

hidden and mystical calculations; he also strongly recommends the drinking of red wine; and I feel assured that it is the singularity of your ceremonies on the Pass-over Night which has all along excited in the minds of other people suspicions concerning the propriety of your doings.

MAI. (*sighing, with tears in his eyes*). Worthy Sir, I will take the liberty to quote some of the words of Job, who, when his acquaintances were troubling his mind by endeavouring to shew that his actions were criminal, and that his misfortunes had been sent as a punishment for them, exclaimed, in his innocence, "Shall vain words have an end?"

SIM. Brother Maimoon, pray do not speak so; if there be cause for complaint, it must be against the Spanish author. I have been repeating his sentiments; what are my own I have not said. I have already stated that it was far from my wishes to hurt thy feelings. I only wish to afford thee an opportunity to fully establish the innocence of thyself and brethren; and may, therefore, be permitted to speak in the words of the Almighty to Job: "Then will I also confess unto thee that thy own right hand can save thee." (Job, xl. 14).




MAI. (*wiping away his tears*). Brother Simmias, may all nations be blessed with many such men as thou (*embraces Simmias*). Now hear what I have further to say, and then pronounce thy judgment.

SIM. (*placing his right hand on that of Maimoon*). Begin, for thy words I hope will enlighten me.

MAI. Thou hast said, that a certain Israelitish writer has made it evident that we were under a necessity of

procuring red wine for the Passover festival; but it is obvious that neither the Christian nor the Hebrew whom thou hast mentioned was acquainted with the opinions of those whom we consider to be our best authorities on the subject; for it is said, "If there be white wine of a better quality than the red, the preference must be given to the white."* It is well known that in this country the red wine is better than the white, and that it is preferred by all the Eastern people that drink wine; and so it is stated by travellers, and in the Scriptures:—"For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red;" (Psalms, lxxv. 8.) "Look not upon the wine when it is red" (Proverbs, xxiii. 8); "In that day sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine" (Isaiah, xxvii. 2); "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-vat?" (Isaiah, lxiii. 2). We find also in scripture that the word "blood" is sometimes used figuratively for wine; thus in Genesis (xlix. 14): "He washes his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:" and again in Deut. (xxxii. 14); "And thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape." The Talmud (*Ketubot*, 111, 2), also states that the red wine is better than the white. Where it recites all the advantages of the Holy Land, it says, "Perhaps thou mayest say 'there is no wine;' but it is written in the Bible, 'He washes his garments in wine;' which proves its abundance. Thou wilt perhaps say it is not red wine; to which I answer by a quotation from Scripture, 'And thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape;'

* *Toor Orakh Khayim*, § 472; 272; also *Bet Yossef*.

which implies positively that it was red." Thou mayest refer to that part of the Talmud where all the qualities of the wine grown in the Holy Land are enumerated, and thou wilt find that one of the chief of them is its red colour. I may also refer thee to the commentary entitled M. H. R. SH. A.; and thou art perhaps aware, that in the East people are in the habit of tinting their white wine red, as stated by the learned Olearius; and that the terms  *khamr* (in Arabic),  *khamro* (in Aramaic), and  *khemer* (in Hebrew) signify red wine; and the same terms also signify a red colour. Whenever the word *khamar*, or *khamro*, occurs in the Talmud, it signifies red wine, unless the word *laban* be attached to it, which signifies white (Tractate *Keritot*, 81). *Khamar khivaryon-atich*—old white wine." In Arabic the term for white wine is *khelbon*; and it is the same in Hebrew: thus in Ezekiel (xxvii. 18), *yayin khelbon*. In the Talmud it is rendered *khalab*; for instance in *Bereshit Rabba*, *Parasha* 18, is the following: "He washes his garments in wine, [*yayin*, that is *khalab*—white wine], and his clothes in the blood of grapes, [*adom*] red wine." It was from these circumstances that the *Yerushalmian Talmud*, which was composed at Jerusalem, made it a duty to procure red wine; and there is nothing else to explain in respect to this ordinance. The fact is, we are particularly required to celebrate the Passover evening by appearing perfectly free from all sorts of care; and it is on that account that we endeavour to obtain the best wine, so that our minds may be made cheerful. The writers of the

Yerushalmian Talmud have also given instructions how we should support ourselves on sofas, and how we should array ourselves in different costumes that were fashionable at the time they lived, with great people, and which such were accustomed to wear during their meals. One of our modern preceptors, Rabenu Abi Haézri, in the *Orakh Khayim*, has sensibly observed, that in the present age we need not recline on sofas at all on that evening, because such is not the custom of the country, he, Abi Haézri, being resident in Europe. Thou knowest that to sit on sofas during meals is an Oriental habit, and that the Romans adopted it from the Orientals; and I am now about to demonstrate to thee that all the ceremonies which we go through on the Passover night are such as were in vogue with the Roman princes, and that it was from them that the Israelites resident in Rome and Jerusalem adopted the same. When they sat down to their principal meal, which they termed *cæna*, they used to put on a *talar*, or white dress; they reclined on a sofa, ate eggs before they began the substantial part of the meal, poured wine from a glass, or took a few drops with their fingers; the dessert they called *mensa secunda*, and it was similar to what on the Passover evening we term *Afikoman*. The meal of the Romans was divided into three parts: the first they called *ante-cæna*, the beginning of the meal; and this was formed of things that excited the appetite, such as eggs, herbs, sweet wine, &c.; the second they called *mensa prima*, which consisted of the principal dishes of meat, fish, &c.; and then followed the *mensa secunda*, composed of fruits,

by which the repast was ended. The Israelites were not permitted to partake of the *mensa secunda* on the Passover night; and it is so stated in *Pessakhim* 119; and Tosefta Rabbi Yokhanan has said, that the Israelites were not permitted to eat dates, nuts, or roasted barley, of which a dessert was usually composed; which is confirmed by the Talmud in these words, “*En maftirin akhar hapessakh-afikoman* * — We are not allowed to finish our meal with a dessert on the Passover night, as we may on any other occasion.”

There are various other particulars in which the Passover repast resembles a feast of the Romans; for instance, the most distinguished guest is called “king,” the table used is considered holy, and as a substitute for the altar; and when the meal is over, they ask one of another some enigmatical question. A deal of information respecting the habits of the early Romans at their meals may be gained from a work entitled, “*Lehrbuch der Römischen Alterthümer*,” Vienna, 1823, Part iii., from § 48 to 94; which confirms what has just been said with regard to the feasting or banqueting ceremonies having a striking resemblance to those observed by us on the Passover night. Some of our preceptors, famed for their learning and discernment,

* The Greek word *epicomos*, *ἐπικῶμος*, in its radical meaning signifies the departure of a party of people in high spirits from a festival at which they had been well entertained; and it is probable that, by the modification which all languages at times undergo, the Israelites made use of the word to denote the conclusion, or last portion of the meal, that of the Passover, which to them is the most joyous one that they ever consume.—Vide *Lando's Maarkhe Halashon*.—TRANSLATOR.

have explained the meaning of these ceremonies, shewing that they have reference to certain passages in the Bible; they say, for instance, that the eating of a mixture of mashed apples and splinters of cinnamon was ordained, to remind the Israelites of the mortar used in building the fortresses in Egypt (the cinnamon being typical of the straw which the Israelites had been forced to collect, and the apples of the nation), and to stimulate the heart of every one to give praise and glory to the Almighty for the miracles he performed in our behalf. The same persons declare that the custom of eating herbs on the Passover evening was likewise ordained on Scriptural authority: "And with bitter herbs they shall eat it;" (Num. ix. 11; Exod. xii.) And in like manner, many other of the ceremonies observed on that particular occasion, supposed by some people to have some recondite meaning, are fully explained by a reference to the Scriptures. As for dipping the herbs in the mash of apples and cinnamon, that, as the Talmud distinctly declares,* is done to mitigate the bitter taste of the herbs. The Hebrew writer whom thou hast cited has spoken in a mystical manner of the fact of our calling the Sabbath next preceding the Passover "the great Sabbath;" but he might have mentioned the reasons assigned by our authorities, which are simple and intelligible. The "great Sabbath" is not mentioned in the Talmud; the term is derived from the Christians, who denominate the entire week in which the Passover happens, "the great week," each day in the week being termed a "great day;" so it is most likely that the Hebrews construe the

* *Arba Pessakhim*, p. 115.

word *Shabbat*, as meaning Saturday, a term used by the Christians to designate the whole week.*

SIM. The Christians call the Passover the Great Day, and the Romans called it the Great Night. Wilt thou now explain to me the meaning of the song which begins “*Khad Gadya — A Kid, &c.* ;” and of the other, “*Ekkhad mi yodea — The number One, who knows what it signifies?*”

MAI. I have already stated that the Romans were in the habit of proposing enigmatical questions or riddles to each other, after their meals; the Israelites adopted the same means to keep their children awake; and, according to the Talmud,† they were obliged to distribute nuts and roasted barley to them for the same purpose, so that they might be induced to enquire why the ceremonies of this evening were so remarkably different from what they beheld on other occasions; and the following passage

* See *Toor Orakh Khayim*, § 430. It is stated in the Talmud that the Exodus from Egypt began on a Thursday, which was the 15th of the month; whereby it appears that the 10th of the month, the day on which the Israelites were commanded to take each a lamb, must have been the Sabbath. That was a day in which a great miracle took place, as the Egyptians who entertained a great veneration for the lamb, as mentioned in Genesis, xvi. 34, beheld their slaves taking lambs and eating their flesh without their having any power to prevent them from so doing: and although the days intervening between the 10th and 15th were also devoted to the eating of the flesh of lambs, yet the first day, the Sabbath, as the beginning of the extraordinary event, was called the “great day;” and it is probable, therefore, that the Sabbath which precedes the Passover festival is still called the “great day,” though it may fall on any other day than the 10th. This reason is given by the authors of the *Tossefot* to the Talmud, and is a more natural one than that stated by Maimoon.—TRANSLATOR.

† *Pessakhim*, 119, 1.

from the Bible (Exod. xii. 26 ; xiii. 15) will also help to elucidate this subject: "When your children shall say unto you, 'What mean ye by this service?' that ye shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover.'" The origin of the song *Khad Gadya* is, or should be, well known. I have read the song in a German almanack, in which it is printed, with other amusing songs, in the old German language, under the title of *Das Zieglein*, and arranged in verse to suit the fancy of children: it is printed exactly as in our Passover service, with the exception of the stanza which begins with the words, "And the slaughterer came;" which was probably composed by the person who translated the song from the German into Hebrew. That this song is of German origin is corroborated by the fact that it is not to be found in any ancient edition of the Passover service. Doubtless the German Israelites were accustomed to sing it for the recreation of their children, and to keep them from going to sleep on the Passover evening, long before it was printed; and when it was printed, thought that it would be judicious to make it expressly a part of the Passover service. At the present day we find it in some of the prayer books used at the Passover, written in the old German language.* For much the same reason as the proceeding, the other song was introduced into the

* *Note by the Translator*:—I must here record a different opinion to that of Maimoon concerning the origin of this song. It arose from a more worthy and important source than what could be supposed to give rise to a trifling song for the simple amusement of children. This piece of composition refers, allegorically, to the subjugation of the Israelites by Nebuchadnezzar; then to the destruction of his empire, and to the destruction of the others that rose

Passover service; "*Ekkhad mi yodèa* ;—The number one, who knows what it signifies?" This poetical composition refers to the thirteen articles of the Israelites' creed: in reciting this, the young men ask each other questions, and then answer to each other. It is a custom in Switzerland even now, at the table of distinguished persons after dinner, for the company to ask each other enigmatical questions that have an allusion to some moral subject; and according to the statement of the historian Caramzin, the celebrated Lavater did the same. Caramzin strongly eulogized such a custom, and wished it to be adopted in Russia; and indeed some of the Russians have subsequently taken his advice.

SIM. The Spanish author quoted by me before, mentions another circumstance that is calculated to excite suspicion against the Israelites; you lock your doors on the Passover evening, which is quite contrary to the practice of your forefathers, for they invariably opened

consecutively on the ruins of his power; and, inferring from that which had already come to pass, that all empires which might thereafter spring up, and oppress the Israelites as Nebuchadnezzar had done, would inevitably be swallowed up, one by the other, till Death should have levelled them all, and the Almighty have commenced the eternal state of happiness by the destruction of Death, the Israelites adopted this song at the Passover as being most in harmony with the origin of that festival, it having been instituted to commemorate the overthrow of the first mighty power that had oppressed Israel. Probably, when the song was first composed, those who composed it were living under such a power, that the express mention of the persons and rulers to whom it refers would have drawn down upon them the most tremendous punishments that despotic authority could invent, and for that reason made it a complete allegory, the real meaning of which was to be explained only to those who were known to be staunch adherents to their faith.—*Hagada Arba Gessodot.*

their doors to shew that it was a night on which they were under the especial care of the Almighty; and with this original custom the words with which ye still begin the service agree; "Whoever is hungry shall come in and eat with us." It is, therefore, to be inferred that ye have to go through some strange ceremonies, because whoever is particularly anxious to screen his actions from the public, must naturally be supposed to do that which is not exactly right; thus, as it is recorded in the Bible, when a married woman concealed herself, they caused her to drink the bitter water which causeth the curse for her concealment; for by her concealment she drew suspicion upon herself.

MAI. The practice of locking the door was first adopted partly in consequence of the enmity which the Christians displayed to the Israelites, they fearing, after the evil reports circulated about them, that for the purpose of confirming them, some persons might contrive to introduce dead bodies into the Israelites' houses. And their reason for so doing was to prevent the possibility of Christians intruding, and ridiculing what the Israelites had to perform, which, the ceremonies being inexplicable to ignorant and profligate persons, ignorant and profligate persons would not hesitate to do, if they had an opportunity; and as all the members of an Israelitish family, men, women, children, and servants of both sexes, are bound to attend to the Passover service, a part of which is the reciting of the history of the Exodus from Egypt, any interruption of that kind would be considered as a serious misfortune to them. But it is not the practice of every Israelite to lock the door. It having been done by our an-

cestors when the state of the times compelled them to take such precautions, many of the ignorant do it still, under the false impression that there is a religious precept for it; and thou knowest the ignorant will imitate what others have done, for no other reason than influences the ape.

SIM. Friend Maimoon, do not be angry. I have now to ask thee a question respecting another custom of the Israelites, to which my attention was drawn by the book of that Spaniard: thou knowest it is natural for man to seek for an exposition of that which appears strange to him. What is meant by that glass of wine called the "cup of Elijah?" Do you really believe that Elijah will come on that night and drink out of it? Then ye open for a moment the house door, saying, "Blessed may he be that cometh!" Is not that a very foolish ceremony?

MAI. We open the door to remind those present that that night is called the watched night, or the night on which we were under the especial protection of the Almighty. But the most ignorant amongst our people have been seized by a foolish idea, and have imagined that Elijah would come indeed; and thus arose the saying, "Blessed be he that cometh!" The truth is, the ceremony of filling the cup of Elijah was unknown to our earliest ancestors.*

SIM. But what reason is there for calling this glass or cup, "the cup of Elijah," and for filling it and putting it on the table?

MAI. No reason is assigned by any of the modern Jewish authors, and of course none by the ancient au-

* *Beer Heteb Hilkhoh Pessakh*, 410.

thors, the custom being entirely unknown to them : but there is a certain passage in the Talmud which may be considered as an allusion to it.* This passage says it is a holy precept to drink wine on that glorious night, and even the poorest must endeavour to do so; the four cups that we are required to drink are in commemoration of, and therefore correspond in number with, the four expressions or promises of redemption given in the Bible; but as some persons who place faith in charms are afraid to drink an even number (although no danger of charms need be feared on this night, it being under the especial care of the Almighty), to satisfy the scruples of such, we drink an extra cup.† In the Talmud all precepts concerning which there may be any doubt, are termed “Elijah;” because the Lord said, by his prophet Malachi (Malachi, iv. 5—6), “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers:” by which we understand that the hearts will comprehend each other, and that Elijah will define and decide every doubtful point in the law, religious precepts, or customs. The cup we drink called the “cup of Elijah,” was originally so termed by some religious Israelite, who, finding himself in some doubt in

* *Pessakhim*, 109, 2.

† There were few people of any nation who did not place some degree of faith in charms at the period the Talmud was composed; the works of most of the ancient writers testify this; and a confirmation is to be found even in many passages of the Christian Testament.

connection therewith, used that phrase in accordance with the instructious of the Talmud. May it be the will of the Almighty that that precious day may quickly arrive, when falsehood shall prevail no more, and truth, in all its transparent lustre, shall be established by the seal of the Creator.

SIM. I wish to know why drinking wine on the night of the Passover is considered such a religious obligation, that your learned men and preceptors recommend the poorest among you to sell a portion of their apparel, or to hire themselves to others, rather than not be able to procure some. I have already spoken of the surprise which the Spanish author expressed regarding this point. It appears, after all, that the custom of drinking wine was introduced after the destruction of the second Temple, which was subsequent to the death of our Messiah: this, then, does afford some ground for suspicion that the Israelites make use of blood.

MAI. I am astonished to hear such words from thy mouth. Dost thou, the Patriarch of all the Greek Christians, forget that your Messiah drank wine on the night of the Passover? Is not one of the most important observances of your church based upon what he said when drinking wine on the Passover night?—"This wine is my blood," &c. This clearly proves that the drinking of wine was in existence then; and perhaps it was also in the time of the prophets.

SIM. Thou art right, brother Maimoon. The various ideas with which my mind is crowded have caused me to propose arguments against myself. However, I am not yet satisfied: tell me why that custom has ever been held

in such regard as even to claim the particular attention of our Messiah? None of the Israelites—of the best educated—are better acquainted with the origin of ancient precepts than thyself.

MAL. I have already stated, that the purport of our ceremonies on the Passover night is to give us an air of liberty and gladness, as it is a precept of our holy law to rejoice on holidays, and especially at the Passover, that having been instituted to commemorate the commencement of the happiness of our nation and its redemption from bondage; and as no real pleasure is to be obtained except in society, and as rejoicing is best promoted by drinking wine (as the royal psalmist said, “The wine rejoices the heart,” Ps. civ.), drinking wine was introduced into the ceremonies of this festival as essential for the due observance of the whole of them. There might, indeed, have been another reason for its introduction, in addition to that. Thou art aware that Moses our lawgiver taught the Israelites that it was the Divine pleasure that they should not follow the example of the Egyptians in respect to their idolatrous practices, which, from their long residence in Egypt, they might be inclined to do;* the prophets, scribes, and administrators of the law, that succeeded Moses, inculcated the same doctrine; and the consequence would be, that, on so particular an occasion as the Passover, the people would drink wine, as such a custom would be diametrically opposed to the customs of the Egyptians; who abstained from the drinking of wine of any sort, because they believed

* Maimonides, in his *Doctor Perplexorum*.

that the idol *Typhon* (the *Balzefon* of the Bible) had changed the blood of their ancestors into wine : * that such was their belief is stated in the history of the ancient Egyptians, and in the Egyptian mythology.

SIM. Thou art right. The tale about the idol *Typhon* was merely an invention of the Egyptian priests, to deter the people from drinking such an expensive beverage, for wine must have been scarce in Egypt, as it contains no vineyards, except in the vicinity of Alexandria and Fayoom, and as a common law prohibiting the consumption of wine would not have been greatly respected. I am, however, greatly astonished to find in the Bible that the king of Egypt, during the time that Joseph was with him, had a chief butler whose office consisted in presenting wine to his majesty !

MAI. The history of the ancient Egyptians states that wine was permitted to the kings and nobility ; it was not, however, real wine that they used, but the juice of pressed grapes, which had not undergone the process of fermentation, and which is called in Hebrew *Tirosh* : this is exemplified in the relation of his dream by the chief butler : “ And I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh’s cup ; ” (Genesis, xl. 11). Wine was very scarce in Egypt, but there was a great abundance of it in the Holy Land at that period ; and even at this day, although the country has greatly suffered from invasions and internal wars, and the cultivation of the vine has been little attended to since the Mohamedans acquired possession of it, a great quantity of wine is produced here.

* *Bet Haózar*, vol. ii.

Our ancestors who dwelt in the Holy Land were in the habit of drinking wine at every meal, on account of its cheapness; and for this reason the poorest among them were commanded to drink wine on the night of the Passover; otherwise, I feel convinced that the learned, and the commentators on the law, would not have enforced the drinking of wine as a duty. In testimony of my last assertion, I may state that in those countries where wine is not grown, or is very expensive, our learned men have recommended their brethren to drink a liquor made from dates or honey, instead of juice of grapes; and that in Poland, even at this day, there are many Jewish families who do drink a liquor made from honey on the night of the Passover.

END OF THE THIRD CONVERSATION.

FOURTH CONVERSATION.

SIMMIAS. Now let me hear what further evidence thou hast to bring forward from historical and other sources; for thou knowest that what I wish for is to see the innocence of thy people established.

MAIMON. It is well known to most people conversant with history, that after the death of Christ, many Israelites were forced from their native region to Rome, and were obliged to reside either there or in various countries under the Roman sway; and that the descendants of these people, for many generations, were forced to live in that state of exile. At certain periods, these Israelites received certain marks of distinction and respect from the Roman emperors, and even had titles and situations of honour conferred upon them; reference to which incidents may be found in the book, *Téûda Běïsræel*, p. 118.

SIM. That is true; and the same is related in the *Codex Theodosianus*.

MAI. Some of these Israelites served as generals in the Roman armies, so says the authority I have now quoted, *Téûda Běïsræel*, in page 133.

SIM. Yes; and such officers distinguished themselves by their bravery; on account of which they received applause from Julius Cæsar, who gave the Israelites the credit of causing the conquest of Mithradates.

MAI. But that occurred before thy religion was

established; and therefore it does not apply to what we are debating.

SIM. Thou art right; but there were Israelites serving in the Roman armies in the fourth century, until the time of Honorius.

MAI. That is true. The Israelites (for example, Gamliel the Nassi) were generally distinguished after the death of Christ.* It was the aim of some of the Roman emperors to degrade the Christians, which is instanced by what Nero and others like him inflicted on them. During the reign of Trajan, before Ben Kooziba, or Bar Cocaba, revolted against him, the Israelites were regarded with so much respect by the emperor, that he once formed a design of rebuilding the Temple for them; but at the same time he sanctioned a persecution of the Christians. The Emperor Julian also, three hundred and sixty years after the death of Christ, shewed them much respect, which is evident in a letter which he addressed to them, in which he promised to rebuild their Temple at Jerusalem, and to offer sacrifices there to the God of their forefathers.† And Queen Zenobia held them in great respect.

SIM. That queen entertained Jewish principles.

MAI. Now, surely it would have been easy in those days for an Israelite to shed Christian blood, if he had wanted such for the Passover; yet history contains no trace whatever of their having been suspected of doing anything of the kind at that era: there is none even in the history of the Christian Church, which records all the evils which the Christians suffered from other nations

* *Téuda Bèisrael*, p. 118.

† Jul. Epist. Comm. Judæ.

and by other means. It is hardly worth while to mention the great esteem testified for the Israelites by Yoosef, the Arab king, who lived in the fifth century, about seventy years previous to the time of Mohamed; so strongly attached was he to Jewish principles, that he persecuted many within his dominions who would not be converted to Judaism.*

SIM. Assad-abu-Carb, † another king of the Arabs, did the same.

MAI. But he lived about seven hundred years before the era of Mohamed; therefore you should not make any reference to him.

SIM. It is probable that the precept requiring blood to be used at the Passover service was issued in the fourth century, after the crucifixion of Christ, about the time when the Babylonian Talmud was composed; as I before stated, I am of opinion that it came from the writers of the Talmud.

MAI. But I again assert, that there is no history which contains any allusion to any thing of the kind having been heard of, or suspected at that date. There were Jewish kings in the eighth century established near the river Wolga; and the Jews were held in high esteem by the caliphs, and filled high offices under them as ministers and generals. ‡ But at the same period the Christians were held in abhorrence, and were degraded in every possible way. This dreadful accusation was

* *Mémoires de Litterature tirés des Registres de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.* Vol. xlvi. p. 485.

† Karamzin, *Geschichte des Russischen Reiches.* Vol. ii. p. 34, 35. De Guigne's *Hist. des Huns.* Vol. ii. p. 2, 507, 509.

‡ *Téuda Bëisrael,* pp. 47, 48.

only heard of for the first time about six hundred years ago, when the Christians had become powerful in Spain and Portugal, and other parts of Europe. The Christians in the southern parts of Europe had long contests with the Arabs and Moors, and they felt embittered against the Israelites because a great many of the ministers and generals of the Arab monarchs were selected from them, and because they spoke the Arab language, and mixed with the Arabs in other matters. Both Arabs and Jews were renowned for their learning in those days; and the ideas of both respecting the unity of the Almighty were so nearly the same, that what displeased the Christians in the Arab faith, also excited their displeasure against that of the Jews; and this, combined with other circumstances, provoked the Christians to persecute the Jews in the southern parts of Europe, when the Arabs had been expelled, and the Jews had no longer any protectors. In addition to the preceding, the popes of that period, for the purpose of strengthening the Roman Catholic Church, strenuously endeavoured to keep up the excitement in the minds of Christians against the Arabs and Jews; and in obedience to their wishes, King Ferdinand the First, who had the cognomen of "the Catholic," banished 800,000 Arab and Jewish families, and forced the majority of those who remained in his dominions to change their religion; and King Emanuel alone forced 300,000 Jews to become converts to Christianity.*

SIM. It is indeed surprising that no history, either

* Gedesius, Hist.

sacred or profane, nor even any historical book pertaining to the Christian Church, gives the slightest account of that accusation having existed previously to this period. From what thou sayest, I understand that thou art not aware of any work treating of the persecutions which the Jews suffered in the space of time intervening between the destruction of the second Temple and the expulsion of the Arabs or Moors from Spain, that makes any allusion to such a charge. However, after the Spaniards had raised the accusation, it was very extensively circulated; and, as thou dost admit, the sufferings of thy people then, have formed an important theme for subsequent historians.

MAL. The accusation was first raised in Spain and Portugal, from whence, especially after the introduction of the Inquisition into Spain in the year 1430, it spread rapidly all over Europe. The people of that period, both high and low, were very fanatical and disgustingly ignorant; and, with the examples with which history furnishes us of their being led away from common sense in other matters, we may readily suppose that such a diabolical rumour concerning a race of men whose motives they could neither appreciate nor understand, would soon obtain credit from them. For instance, how many horrible tales of ghosts and apparitions have emanated from the vulgar in all ages, and especially in that age? but does any intelligent person of the present day believe that any of them has the slightest foundation in truth? and in the same manner that superstitious people persuaded themselves that such things were real, the senses of some might have been so confused as to make them believe

that they had actually witnessed circumstances that corroborated the foul charge against the Israelites. At one time the government of France were so sensible of the absurdity and pernicious tendency of the belief in ghosts, that they issued a decree in Paris to the effect, that if any person should say that he had seen a ghost, or that his house was troubled with one, he should be punished by imprisonment. This decree has been so efficacious in its results, that no ghost has been seen since; and a person may now walk at midnight wherever he pleases without encountering one, although, before the passing of the decree, there was scarcely a place in Paris that was not reputed to be the abode of ghosts. It is even thus with the accusation against the Israelites; in those places where the people are enlightened in a superior degree and will not believe it, it is now never mentioned; but in those countries where the judges have understandings of an inferior order, and are prone to listen to strange tales, rumours and accusations of that description are made incessantly. In such places, if a Christian should feel offended with an Israelite, or with his religion, if he be a fanatic in his own, he will think to acquire credit by accusing the Israelite of the oft-named horrible crime. If through ignorance he really believed that the Israelites do such things, he might do it to preserve his own child, thinking that the child might fall a sacrifice to the particular Israelite against whom he was proceeding; and in that case he would be acting in accordance with the principle recognized by all nations, "That a man may protect himself by doing to another what that other meditates doing to him." And where the body of a

murdered Christian has been found on the highway without any conclusive evidence being obtainable to indicate the murderers, the suspicion against the Israelites may sometimes be strong on account of the previous antipathy entertained against them. It occasionally happens that a prostitute murders her new-born offspring, and throws it into a road, or other place where it is sure to be discovered; then, if the populace are ignorant and prejudiced, the murder is attributed to the Jews. A Christian may accidentally fall from the roof of a Jew's house, or from insanity or despair may commit suicide; and if the cause of his death be not clearly apparent, the ignorant and prejudiced populace immediately raise a cry that his life has been taken by Jews for the purpose of obtaining Christian blood.

SIM. And pray is it impossible that an Israelite should murder a Christian? And is it not as easy for an Israelite to accuse a Christian of murder from malicious jealousy, as for a Christian to accuse an Israelite?

MAI. True. An Israelite may kill a Christian, as well as a Christian may kill an Israelite; but in the latter case would it be supposed that the motive of the Christian was to procure human blood? Thou art right also when thou sayest that it is possible for an Israelite to invent, from malicious motives, a false charge against a Christian; but no Israelite would be actuated to do so from any antipathy to any particular ceremony, real or supposed, belonging to the Christian religion, because no Israelite believes that Christians would eat the blood of one of his race. Whenever it happens, therefore, that an Israelite accuses a Christian of having killed an

Israelite, the accused is brought before a judge, and, if the nature of the evidence against him be not positive, enquiry is then made as to whether it was known that the Christian could have any motive for perpetrating such an act; if it then appear that the murdered individual was a beggar, or very poor, it is not supposed that the Christian murdered him for the sake of his property, and no other reason is thought of except animosity: and if he was a child, it is not supposed that the Christian took away his life through envy, and in that case no other reason is thought of. But when an Israelite is accused of having murdered a Christian, he is not treated so impartially; the judge does not enquire whether the victim was poor, old, or young, or whether he was known to have had cause for animosity to the victim; it is said directly by many that the Israelite committed the murder to obtain Christian blood; and as the judge seldom takes any pains to confute such an opinion, the consequences to our people in the countries where we are so dealt with, are to us of the most calamitous description.

SIM. How are they calamitous?

MAI. The populace are thus encouraged to seek the destruction of us all. But we hope, with the assistance of the Almighty, that those amongst thy people whose understanding is enlightened, and whose judgment is not corrupted, will ere long be fully awake to the injustice that is now done us, and that the governments may endeavour to apply some remedy. There is reason to fear, however, that no remedy which the governments and the most intelligent portion of society can devise will ever,—at any rate, for a very long term of years—heal

the dissensions between the Israelites and the Christians to which this accusation has given rise. The prejudice has existed in the minds of the vulgar for so many ages, that it will take many more ages to thoroughly root it out; and though the Israelites have hitherto shewn much forbearance towards the Christians under all their ill usage, it is not in human nature that they can always do so. If these persecutions continue, who can tell what things they may be driven to contrive against the Christians? for despair will make the most inoffensive and tranquil-minded man fierce and revengeful. At the best, the two nations are sure to live in a state of mutual apprehension and dislike, and thus, living as they do, intermixed with each other, the principles of friendliness and humanity, which ought to predominate in the bosoms of all people, will be gradually weakened, till, so far as the two nations are relatively concerned, they do not exist at all. So, if a Jew should, in the course of a journey, meet with a Christian whose life, from some casualty, might be in imminent danger, he will be afraid to go near him to render him any assistance, being apprehensive that if the man should afterwards die, his motives for touching him might be wholly misconstrued. These things are self-evident.

SIM. How dost thou make that out?

MAI. I will explain myself more at large. As thou art aware, the accusation respecting the use of blood has not been agitated for fifty or sixty years, till within a short time ago; during that period the Hebrews applied themselves, as in ancient days, to the study of various foreign languages, from which they derived much honour, as

well as pecuniary profit: they became familiar with many European languages, so that they could write as well as speak them correctly; and they also acquired a perfect knowledge of other very useful sciences, such as medicine and chemistry. How different was this state of things from that which prevailed while the minds of men were rife with suspicion against them in respect to the appalling accusation. They were afraid to study other languages then; they were afraid to have any more intercourse with Christians than what it was absolutely necessary they should have; the minister of each congregation discouraged any of his charge from learning other languages, for fear that any student, after having become proficient in the dialect of another people, should, for the sake of practising his acquirements with more worldly benefit to himself, become an apostate, and calumniate his former brethren, as converts from Judaism have done, though not from a sincere attachment to the Christian religion: besides, with the utmost perseverance in studying any science, the Israelite, distrusted as he was on all sides, could not achieve any honourable distinction for himself: so the Israelite, knowing little of any language but his own, and reading but few books besides what his own people furnished him with, began to think the literature of other nations contained but little that was worth knowing; and by this many Christians were led to imagine that the Israelite was a fixed enemy to them, and that his abstaining from acquiring any familiarity with their ways was on account of his fearing to defile himself by any closer connection with them.

It is a fact that, in most parts of the world where there are any Israelites settled, they speak, even amongst

themselves, the language of the country; but it is extraordinary that in Poland there is not more than one in a thousand that speaks Polish well; and those who can write and read in that language are very few indeed.* There is nothing which has greater influence in creating an attachment to any country than a perfect knowledge of its language; it is by means of such a knowledge that perfect friendships with any of its natives are created; as it immediately throws open all the avenues to social intercourse. Ignorance of the language is mentioned in the Scriptures as being one of the curses pronounced against those who shall not adhere to the law: "The Lord shall bring a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;" (Deut. xxviii. 49). We know that a person who takes up his abode in a strange country will not rest satisfied till he has acquired a thorough knowledge of its language; although many of those amongst whom he is living may use a dialect to him which he can fully comprehend, yet he will ever be anxious to speak their language correctly; for by being able to do so he will find favour with the inhabitants generally, and make many of them his particular friends. When the Israelites were exiled to Babylon, they quickly learnt the Aramaic language, and used it so much, that in time they almost forgot the Hebrew; and again, when Alexander the Macedonian gained possession of the Holy Land, they commenced learning the Greek language, and particularly in Egypt, where the Holy Law was written in Greek.† After the destruction of the second temple, when the majority of the

* See the work of *Téúda Bèisrael*, p. 40, for a confirmation of this.

† *Téúda Bèisrael*, p. 37.

people had settled in Babylon, they, as well as the head of the synod, spoke Aramaic; and when the Arabs held sway over that region, they adopted the Arabic mode of speech, and wrote their books in Arabic.

And so, wherever the course of events compelled Israelites to reside, they invariably adopted the language most commonly used, until they arrived in Poland. It was about the year of the creation 4856, that Poland became the abode of any Israelites. At first they were much respected by the Polish people, a proof of which is furnished by the many privileges which were conferred upon them by the kings of Poland, who shewed them more favour than they did their Christian subjects. The learned Czacki says that at that period they lived in perfect amity with the Polish Christians, and said some of their prayers in the Polish language; which account is confirmed by those of many of our ancestors. But when the Christians in Poland began to look upon them with jealousy, which they were induced to do through the superior estimation in which the Polish rulers and governors held them, and began to accuse them, as other nations had done, of using Christian blood, the Israelites became shy to their Christian acquaintances, resumed the language they had been accustomed to use in Germany, where their books were usually printed—and where some of them were translated into the German tongue*—and seldom spoke the common dialect of the country, except when they were compelled to do so.

* See *Téúda Bèisrael*, p. 35.

SIM. Gratian (in *Vita Commendoni*) states that the Israelites enjoyed great privileges in the Ukraine during the sixteenth century, and that they were remarkable for their mental acquirements at that time.

MAI. The learned Schlözer confirms that in the following words: "In Christian countries where the Israelites, during the middle ages, were allowed to engage in commercial business, they were most cruelly treated, except in the Ukraine, where, during the sixteenth century, they enjoyed every privilege, and lived in peace and prosperity.*

SIM. It is true that the Christians of that era behaved very harshly to the Jews.

MAI. All righteous Christians of this day are unanimous in their testimony on this subject. Now, therefore, was it strange that such wicked accusations should have been made against my people?

SIM. I recollect having read in some historical book, that the Israelites were once charged in France with having murdered a Christian, and that an order was given by the official authorities that the offenders should be put into barrels, through which nails were driven, so that the points converged in the inside; by which means, when the barrels were rolled along the ground, the unfortunate creatures perished in a most excruciating manner.

MAI. Oh! those judges! their anger was like unto that of a rabid serpent.

SIM. This mode of punishment was similar to that

* A. L. Schlözer's *Weltgeschichte*: Göttingen, 1792, vol. i. p. 203.

which the Carthagenians inflicted on Regulus; so Rollin relates, in his history of the Carthagenians.

MAI. The cause from which Regulus suffered was greatly similar to that which influenced the fate of those unfortunate Israelites; he was so put to death because he faithfully kept the oath he had taken; and the forefathers of the Israelites took an oath before Mount Sinai, which their descendants are bound to observe, and by the observance of which, they draw upon them all this ill-treatment. It is probable that those French judges took example from the Carthagenians; or from the manner in which Heathen tyrants, such as Nero, had put Christian saints to death.

SIM. The tyrant Nero set fire to the capital city of his own dominions, and then ascended to the top of a high tower to view the conflagration, which lasted six days.

MAI. To avert suspicion from himself, he accused the Christians in Rome of being the incendiaries; and that he might appear in earnest, he caused some Christians to be stuck on the pinnacles of pointed pillars, some to be flayed alive, and others to be burnt. It was by Nero's command that the two first apostles of Jesus Christ were murdered; Peter was hanged, and Paul was decapitated.

SIM. Another of that monster's cold-blooded atrocities, was his causing his servants, one evening, to bind several Christians, in a state of nudity, to pillars in his garden, and to cover their bodies with pitch; which, on being fired, made them utter screams of agony, which he listened to with delight while pacing to and fro in the garden.

MAI. Though such were the practices of idolatrous nations, whose enjoyments and passions resembled those of the brute creation, rather than those with which the Almighty endowed man, yet such people as believe in the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and in the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, have not entirely abstained from the same; the Christians, whose lawgiver denounced all revengeful actions in the most positive terms, have persecuted the Israelites with as much bitterness as any Heathen tyrant ever testified to his most inveterate enemy. Doubtless the Christians, when they had become powerful in the world, remembered with anger the treatment which the early members of their religion had received from the Romans and other Heathens, and wished to avenge their fate; but, as there was no Heathen nation against whom they could proceed, the Romans and others having been gradually converted to Christianity, their wrathful feelings burst forth upon the Jews; and thus they reasoned with themselves: "Those who persecuted our predecessors denied Christ; let us, therefore, punish all who deny Christ at the present time." Friend Simmias, didst thou ever hear of a more insidious argument? it reminds me of a passage in the Talmud: "Tobias sinned, and Sanged was beaten."

SIM. It reminds me of an anecdote related by some of our ancestors: In the small town of Kilegef, near Lemberg, in the province of Wolin, in Poland, it happened that a Christian shoemaker was accused of murder; he was arrested, tried, found guilty, and had sentence of death passed on him; but afterwards, as he was the only shoemaker in the town, the judges ordered an innocent

locksmith to be executed in his stead, because he could be better spared than the shoemaker, there being more than one locksmith in the town.

MAI. The comparison is apposite, and the anecdote curious. It also reminds me of a fact mentioned by the learned Salomon Maimoon.* There was in his time a nobleman (P. * * *), who, one day while the congregation were at prayer, entered his church in a state of intoxication, and, on approaching the altar, conducted himself indecently. A few days afterwards, the minister told him that he had committed a grievous sin, that he had profaned the sanctuary of the Lord, and that he required him to shew his contrition for the offence by making a large donation for the purpose of buying wax candles to light the church in which it had been committed. The nobleman, without hesitation, promised to furnish the required number of candles; and immediately published an order that all the Israelites that dwelt on his estates should bear the burthen, by supplying him with the candles first; with which order the Israelites were obliged to comply.

SIM. (*laughing*). That was, indeed, a curious occurrence; the Israelites, who had no belief in Christ, brought an offering out of their own property to obtain forgiveness for one who, though a believer, was a notorious sinner.

MAI. Salomon Maimoon gives the anecdote as nearly as possible in the words in which I have related it to thee.

SIM. True. But what shall I say of all those troubles

* *Sal. Maimoon's Lebensgeschichte* : Berlin, 1793. vol. i.

and grievances which my brethren have forced upon yours since they went to reside in Europe—the persecutions and compulsions to conversion in Spain, France, Germany, and Poland?

MAI. We have it on the authority of the book *Téúda Bèisrael*, that the Russian government has never oppressed them.

SIM. I have certainly heard much said relating to the cruelties practised on the Jews in Christian countries, but I have generally hesitated to give credit to what I have heard, for vulgar rumour is a common liar.

MAI. To what dost thou now allude?

SIM. I have heard that a famous painter in Italy, wishing to paint a picture of the death of Christ, succeeded in causing a Jew to be crucified, who, in the agonies of death, furnished the artist with such ideas, as enabled him to make his picture the nearest semblance of reality: the name of the painter I have now forgotten.

MAI. That was a fact, I believe; and the picture is now to be seen in the picture gallery of Dresden in Saxony. In company with several others, I once went to look at it; and the incident attending its production was then corroborated by all present; the painter's name was Michael Angelo, and he was almost as celebrated as Raphael.*

SIM. I now recollect that that was his name: he was a contemporary of Raphael's; they were both alive in the year 1520: however, I never believed the story.

* Maimoon gives this account of the incident as he heard it at Dresden, but, apparently, does not vouch for its authenticity.—
TRANSLATOR.

MAI I have not been able to give implicit credit to it myself; but, surely, we well know that the Christians practised greater barbarities than this upon the Jews.

SIM. The Jews were very unjustly treated by the European monarchs of the middle ages, putting mercy out of the question; for it was frequently the case that they invited Jews to settle in their dominions, knowing that they always proved a serviceable acquisition to a country in respect to their indefatigable commercial spirit; and then they made solemn promises of protection to them, which, to their great dishonour, were not kept after their own ends had been accomplished; they were tender of them for a while; but at length they were sure to sanction a persecution of them, that they might confiscate their property.

MAI. It is usual at the present time, when a new town is built near to the sea-coast, for the government of the country to entice Jews to settle there by offering certain privileges to them; because, as thou sayest, they are known to be expert in mercantile transactions. They extend their dealings to the remotest parts of the world; and it is no extravagant figure of speech to say that they are capable of converting a desolate waste into a thriving city. But when, alas! their exertions have continued so long as to give an air of prosperity to any place, other merchants, of a different religion, feel tempted to settle in it; and these are sure to be patronised in a greater degree by the rulers of the country, they being of the same religion, and having obtained all that they wanted from the Jews. The Jews are then gradually forced by vexatious enactments to remove from the principal streets

previously occupied by them to the back lanes and meaner thoroughfares of the town; and from those they are frequently thrust out of the town altogether. This is the way in which they have been repeatedly used in Poland, Lithuania, Galizia, Hungary, and Bohemia. Brother Simmias, this reminds me of the practice of the women in some countries, who, previously to putting an infant to the breast, place a little dog to it to draw off the unwholesome milk; after which the child is put to suck the good milk, and the dog is thrown into the kennel.

SIM. But I am astonished at the short-sightedness of kings and their ministers who sanction such an unjust requital of the industrious Jews, knowing, as they do, how much benefit they have derived from them, and may still derive.

MAI. Kings and ministers are perfectly aware of the good resulting to their realms from the abode of Jews in them, and they have testified, as I have already repeatedly stated, their approbation of their conduct by bestowing on them many privileges and dignitiés; but, in the periods to which we most particularly refer, kings and their ministers could not always withstand the clamour of their Christian subjects, who formed the majority. The Christians generally were not possessed of much money; they were chiefly engaged in agriculture, and pastoral pursuits, and had little knowlege of commerce, by which means fortunes are the soonest made; they were therefore jealous of the Jews; and both the vulgar and the middle classes, assisted by their priesthood, combined to undermine their credit with the go-

vernments, and urged upon the governors and ministers that they ought not to patronise such persons, however they might feel benefited in pecuniary matters thereby, for it was contrary to the Christian religion to do so; and when, by their endeavours, the Jews were abased, they would exclaim, in tones of piety, "See how these people are punished by the Almighty! it is a sin to shew any compassion to them, for who shall dare to speak against the Almighty's judgment!" utterly forgetting that the Lord has said, "I dwell with the humble and oppressed." The conduct of the priests and the populace in those ages may be compared with the following case:—A certain rich and powerful man quarrelled with a poor man that lived in the same city; and whilst they were disputing, the rich man said to his opponent, "Hold thy peace, be not impertinent; for if thou dost utter aught more against me, the Almighty will shew his regard for me by visiting thee with a sore affliction;" but the rich man did not become silent, for he continued to scold and revile the other with irritating expressions, which he could not hear without giving one more reply; upon which the rich man immediately struck him and beat him severely. The poor man fell ill in consequence of the blows; and being nigh unto death, his friends went to his enemy, the rich man, and made him acquainted with his dangerous condition, who immediately replied, "I see that the Almighty has been my avenger; his affliction is of the Lord! as I said to him, so it has happened; why, therefore, do ye stand before me and lament?"

FIFTH CONVERSATION.

SIMMIAS. Brother Maimoon, I understand that thou hast further evidence to bring forward to rebut this fearful accusation.

MAIMOON. Of all the people that have shewn animosity to the Israelites, there are none who are more bitter against them than the Caraites, who, previously to the year of the creation 4519, were as a portion of the Israelitish nation, and who, by the interference of Saul and Anan, separated from the Israelites in that year; and if there were anything in our religious observances improper, they would be sure to denounce it to the world; yet they have never made any accusation of the kind, and I am convinced that they could not but give evidence in our favour, so far as that may be concerned. The testimony of the Caraites must be important, for they are highly esteemed amongst Christians, and Christian monarchs have conferred many favours on them, designating them "true Christians." As I have already observed, if there be any among the Christians who are thoroughly acquainted with the Hebrew and Aramaic languages, and with Hebrew literature, such, for instance, as Professor Eichhorn, Dr. Lud. Wachler, and Professor Gesenius, let them come forward and say whether they have ever discovered sufficient reason for so accusing my people.

SIM. Might not your doctors of laws, and others who

presided over your literature, have been afraid to commit anything connected with the accusation to parchment or paper?

MAL. Our literary men have never flinched from publishing controversial books inimical to the Christian faith; there may some of that description still be seen in public libraries, and in which the opinions of theologians are freely expressed; and there are, likewise, many ancient manuscripts still in existence, the work of Israelitish authors, in which the Christian faith is largely commented on; and as many of these were written by persons who were under the safe protection of monarchs who had no sympathy with the Christians, why should they have been afraid of making any allusion to the Israelites' using blood, any more than they were of asserting other things extremely distasteful to the Christians? Great numbers of Israelites are now residing in Mohamedan countries, and may write what they please; to these countries Christian travellers have easy access, and those curious Christians who do explore them are sure to obtain all the manuscripts they possibly can; but none that have ever been found by such have been known to contain the slightest evidence of the Israelites' having such a rite in their Passover service as eating Christian or human blood. And let me ask, if any of the Jews that have become converts to Christianity declare that such a one exists; and there are many who have become converts to Christianity, and who would surely tell the truth, if such were the case.

SIM. There are still many authors to be cited who have accused the Israelites of practising this disgusting rite,

and amongst them Eisenmenger, in his work *Entdecktes Judenthum*.

MAI. The works of Eisenmenger, and of others like him, are not good evidence; for, in what they asserted, they were prompted by feelings of jealousy, Eisenmenger especially.* Some of them imputed such crimes to the Jews to divert the attention of the Inquisition from some of the Christian priests, who, at certain times, were also obnoxious to calumnies of equal enormity. Besides, none of Eisenmenger's works state distinctly that the Israelites used human blood. Will any of the numerous talented Christian ministers, professors of sciences, heads of universities, military commanders, and judges and professors of laws, make a solemn declaration that they believe the Israelites guilty of this crime?

SIM. Eisenmenger was certainly one of your greatest enemies. I do not know of any that equalled him, except John Hoornbeeck, who, in the seventeenth century,

* The talented Christian professor Michaelis, although no friend to the Israelites, has said in his work *Michaelis' Orientalische Bibliothek*, vol. i., p. 320, that no credit should be given to Eisenmenger; his words are these: "I consider Eisenmenger's *Judenthum* shews much learning; but it indicates a deal of spiteful feeling. If any one should write in a similar spirit against either of the three established religions of the Roman empire, he would be termed a blasphemer. What would be thought of one who should write a 'Discovered Popedom,' or 'Lutherdom,' and omit mentioning any of the virtues of the system, but only its reputed vices, contradictions, and the statements of insignificant authors concerning it, and empty opinions which have been expressed by some parties in the course of desultory conversation? It is well known that there is much to be alleged against Catholic people; but the Catholic religion may not be the sole cause of all their bad actions; the same remark holds good with us, the Lutherans, and with the Anabaptists."

published a Latin work, in which all the Israelites' faults were set forth in a most invidious manner.

MAI. And for all that, Hoornbeeck plainly declared that the imputation of using human blood could not be true; and the words of that declaration thou mayest read in the work of the celebrated Menashe ben Israel, who copied them.* I will mention to thee what he has said in his *Prolegomena*, page 26.

SIM. Do so.

MAI. The passage is in Latin; it was translated from the English by Mendelssohn: "*An autem vero sit quod vulgo in historiis legatur,*" &c. "Whether that be true, which is commonly read in histories, to aggravate the Jews' hatred against the Christians, or rather the Christians' against the Jews, that they should annually, upon the preparation of the Passover, after a cruel manner, sacrifice a Christian child, privily stolen, in disgrace and contempt of Christ, whose passion and crucifixion the Christians celebrate, I will not assert for truth: as well knowing how easy it was, in those times wherein these things are mentioned to have happened (especially after the Inquisition was set up in the popedom), to forge and feign; and how the histories of those ages, according to the affection of the writers, were too much addicted and given unto fables and figments. Indeed I have never yet seen any of all those relations that hath, by any certain experiment, proved this fact; for they are all founded either upon the uncertain report of the vulgar, or else upon the secret accusations of the monks belonging to the Inquisition; not to mention the avarice

* *Vindicæ Judæorum*, sect. i. §. 12.

of the informers, wickedly hankering after the Jews' wealth, and so with ease forging any wickedness. For in the book of the Sicilian Constitutions, tit. 7, we see the Emperor Frederick saying, '*Si vero Judæus vel Saracenus sit, in quibus, prout certo perpendimus, Christianorum persecutio nimis abundat ad præsens*— But if he be a Jew or a Saracen against whom, as we have weighed, the persecution of the Christians doth much abound,' &c.: thus taxing the violence of certain Christians against the Jews. Or if, perhaps, it hath sometimes happened, that a Christian hath been killed by a Jew, we must not, therefore, say that in all places where they inhabit, they annually kill a Christian child. And for that which Thomas Cantipratensis (lib. ii., cap. 23) affirms, viz., that it is certainly known that the Jews every year, in every province, cast lots which town or city shall afford Christian blood to the other cities; I can give it no more credit than to the other fictions and lies wherewith he has stuffed his book."

SIM. According to thy words, it appears that amongst the Jewish proselytes of the present day, there are none who know any thing of their former brethren to confirm this accusation; but by speaking thus, thou dost seem to cast some imputation on the proselytes of by-gone times.

MAI. Thou dost rightly understand me. The Jews who became proselytes to Christianity two or three hundred years ago, both the voluntary and forced, were generally of the lowest class; and I recollect that thirty years ago, when I was a boy, all the Jewish proselytes to Christianity in Poland, were either butchers, shoe-

makers, or dog-killers; and the females domestic servants. There is a curious anecdote extant of Joseph the Second, Emperor of Austria, in connection with the Jewish proselytes. A Jewish damsel, wishing to record her renunciation of her previous religion, was asked by the priest, in the emperor's presence, what motive she had for wishing to become a Christian, and not giving any answer to this question, she not knowing what she should say, the emperor observed to her, "I will answer for thee; the cause of thy wishing to change thy religion arises from the presence of the Hungarian Hussars that are quartered in this town."

SIM. One may soon recognise words of the wise Emperor Joseph; they correspond with his character.

MAI. The ministers of the laws in Poland, as well as the priests, were accustomed to have discussions concerning religion with these converts; it was from such that they gained their ideas of Hebrew literature and religious ceremonies; who, in order to make it appear that they were superior to the common order of their former brethren, affirmed that the practice of using human blood at the Passover was really in existence, but that only the most learned and distinguished amongst the Israelites were initiated into the secret. Occasionally business brought the governor or chief priest of a Polish town in contact with Israelites, and they would take advantage of the opportunity to enter into theological debates with them; but they were mostly of the mean order just alluded to; and, judging of the Israelites at large from what they gleaned from them, they judged wrongly, saying, "Such is written in the Israelites' books,

and such are their religious ceremonies." It was very seldom that they could have any conversation with the learned members of the congregations, because they understood only the Hebrew language. The ways in which converts were obtained from the lower classes of the Jews were numerous. Some abjured the faith of their forefathers for worldly gain; some, having transgressed certain enactments of the law, were afraid of the punishment of the *Cuna*,* which the congregation would have inflicted on them, and therefore abjured their faith; and others abjured it out of spite to their parents or family connexions, who might have given them offence, knowing that a family which had one of its members converted was considered degraded by the others, and that no one would afterwards marry into that family: by this means many profligate sons extorted a deal of money from their parents, who, to avoid the disgrace, acceded to their unreasonable desires. At the present day, however, every Israelite may do as he pleases; and if a respectable family think proper to abjure their faith, there is not that dread of disgrace which all their connexions would formerly have felt; and if one does anything contrary to the law, he is not exposed to any punishment or marked reproaches from his brethren; consequently, those who become converts to Christianity at the present day are not exclusively of the lower classes, but are oftentimes persons of great literary acquirements, and possessed of great wealth, who,

* On the outer wall of some of the synagogues in Poland a chain is fixed, at the end of which is a ring, which opening, is put round the neck of a Jew who has transgressed certain points of the law. This chain and ring are called the "*Cuna*."

finding that on account of their creed, they are under restrictions that prevent them from employing their talents or money to a good advantage, and being perhaps of a mercenary disposition, determine to become Christians; by which means all their disabilities are at once removed, and they are placed upon a footing with the most favoured. For these reasons, brother Simmias, thou wilt not find amongst the converts of these times many stupid and ignorant persons, but such as will not incline to propagate falsehoods against their brethren, though they have forsaken them, and will therefore furnish no evidence to show that there can be any truth in the accusation against the Israelites of using human blood.

END OF THE FIFTH CONVERSATION.

SIXTH CONVERSATION.

SIMMIAS. Thou hast told me that, by the force of reasoning, independently of positive evidence, thou couldst convince me that this dreadful accusation originated in malice.

MAIMOON. Among all the Israelites who reside amongst nations other than Christian—Mohamedan, Hindoo, Chinese, and idolatrous African—was it ever known that an Israelite was accused of killing a child for the Passover?

SIM. (*abruptly*). No; because ye are accused of using Christian blood especially.

MAI. Pardon me, my friend; thou dost not understand me; if thou wilt permit me, I will briefly explain.

SIM. Excuse my interruption, I pray; proceed, for thy friend listens.

MAI. Would it not have been easy for any body of Israelites in any of the above-mentioned countries to have murdered some Christian, also resident there,—in China especially, where a man is allowed to kill another who may be his property or slave, and where Israelites might have purchased a Christian slave on purpose—and have distributed his blood to the different Hebrew communities inhabiting other countries, in the same way as citrons are distributed amongst us for the Feast of the Tabernacle? Thou art well aware that the Israelites

carry on a continued correspondence with each other all over the globe; and would not such a system for supplying them with Christian blood have been much more easy and safe than obtaining it in the way which our enemies have imputed to us? What canst thou say to this?

SIM. Your enemies may say that fresh blood is required, and not such as is stale and coagulated.

MAI. In almost every town where any Jews are to be found, there is a Jewish surgeon, who, amongst other professional duties, must have occasion frequently to perform the operation of blood-letting; and if, as our enemies say, we must have Christian blood, what would be easier than for such surgeons to preserve the blood taken by them from any Christian for the use of their brethren, to whom it could be distributed without the slightest difficulty?

SIM. It may be that the precept which ordains that you shall use Christian blood, has ordained that it shall be no other than the blood of some Christian who has been deprived of life expressly on your account, and by your own hands.

MAI. If that were the case—if we were compelled to use fresh blood, and not such as had become stale and coagulated by transmission from a distant region, and blood for the obtaining of which some Christian must be murdered; in every part of the world, where a large body of Israelites dwell, the murder or mysterious disappearance of Christians must be notorious. But how many places are there, where Israelites in abundance have their abode, where a Christian has neither been murdered, nor disappeared in a manner unaccountable,

for many years past? If a cow or a sheep be lost, there is always a diligent search made after it; and if it should never be regained, nor any precise information gathered respecting its loss, there is sure to be plenty said on the subject; yet how much more diligent is the search after the slayers of a murdered man, or after the man himself, if he have disappeared from his friends in a mysterious manner! Now is not this a complete refutation of the argument that Israelites require the blood of a murdered Christian every year? I have further to add, that the blood of one child would not be sufficient to supply the wants of the Israelites in any one Christian country. In a town which contains amongst its population thirty thousand Israelites, it would be necessary for them to kill two Christian children annually; and when you consider how many towns there are in some countries containing each that number, the murders would be so numerous as to excite a terrible suspicion in the minds of the people of the country at large, in spite of all the caution which the murderers might observe. Out of so many cases, some circumstances confirmatory of the guilty practices of the Jews must come to light; in some instances children would escape, and divulge sufficient to blast the character of the Jews universally. It is very seldom that a murderer of any other description escapes punishment; and, as I have, in the course of my previous arguments, already observed, it frequently happens, that where a murder is involved in mystery, the perpetrator of the deed himself clears it all up, if pressed hard, by a confession; but no clear case of this sort, has ever been established against a Jew: and though, under

the pressure of horrible tortures inflicted by fanatics in a state of gross ignorance and semi-barbarism, some Jews have been known to admit the truth of the accusation, no confession has ever been made, which people of intelligence and in a high state of civilization have considered to be worthy of their serious belief. It is a prevalent idea with all nations, that murder is a sin so heinous, that exposure and retribution will, sooner or later, inevitably overtake the man who thus provokes the wrath of the Most High; and in nine cases out of ten, retribution does overtake the man who unlawfully sheds the blood of a fellow-creature: and if the Jews were universally addicted to this sin, how could they, any more than other kinds of men, preserve their guilt from certain detection? As I remarked to thee in our last conversation, why do not those Jews who have turned Christians, divulge the secret, if it be indeed true that we practise such things?

SIM. As I answered in our last conversation, so must I answer to that remark now. It is said that the practice is confined to the most learned of the Hebrew faith. I have read in a book written by a Christian, an assertion that it is confined to perhaps only two or three in a whole country or principality, who have had the secret handed down to them by tradition.

MAI. Consider well what thou sayest. If it be so great a secret to the Israelites at large, what reason is there in the supposition that blood is supplied to all the Israelites without exception? for it is supposed, as thou thyself hast repeatedly said, that every Israelite must taste blood on the Passover night.

SIM. It is said that the chief rabbi of each community superintends the baking of the Passover cakes; that he pours some blood into the dough; and that the common people are not aware of what has been done.

MAI. O what an astounding falsehood! How can you draw a camel's rope through the eye of a needle? Such a thing is utterly impossible. The chief rabbi does not superintend the baking of the Passover cakes for general use; they are either baked by the heads of families separately, or several meet and assist each other in the operation; sometimes they are ordered to be done at a regular baker's; and they are required to be baked a month previous to the eve of the festival. Dost thou think that the rabbi is engaged in all the offices of the synagogue? or that he is the only one who reads the prayers? or that an Israelite does nothing without first consulting him, as is the case with many Christians? In addition to his duties in the synagogue, in the presence of his whole congregation, the rabbi has nothing to do, with the exception of deciding a religious question occasionally, and trying disputes between parties, as a judge, in those countries where the rank and privileges of a judge are accorded to him by the government; for every Israelite, who is well versed in the law and the traditions, is allowed to decide any questions in religious matters which may be put to him by his household, or others who may have respect for his knowledge. The chief rabbi has nothing to do with the reading of prayers for the congregation, for any pious Israelite, whether he be learned or not, may read prayers in the synagogue on each of the common days of the week; and on the Sabbath and holidays may

read a portion of the Pentateuch; such a one may also circumcise children, preside over marriage ceremonies, and may, indeed, perform every religious office for which he has sufficient ability. The chief rabbi mostly says his prayers at home, in company with the Israelites, as whenever ten Israelites may be assembled together, the public service of prayer is allowed to be performed: in fact, the chief rabbi has no particular preference shewn to him, except on account of his learning and sage qualities, and his being the acknowledged spiritual head of the congregation. The situation of the Christian minister is very different. He reads the prayers as well as the Gospels; he baptizes, reads the burial service, and presides over the ceremonies of marriage contracts; and he alone must do these things, for none but he is allowed to meddle with them. There are some towns where the Israelites have no acknowledged spiritual head.

SIM. Do you not confess to your rabbi?

MAI. We confess on the day of Atonement; but our confessions are uttered in a subdued voice, and are made to the Almighty alone,—never to a mortal. There are some who confess daily, in the morning when they arise from their beds, and in the evening when they retire to rest; but their confessions are made in silence, and are known only to themselves and their Maker.

SIM. Is it not requisite for your minister to bless the Passover cakes, as our priest does when he raises the Hostia and sprinkles it with holy water? It is possible that your rabbi may sprinkle the Passover cakes with water mixed with blood.

MAI. Nothing of the kind is requisite; a blessing

from our minister is not needed, nor have we any such ceremony as sprinkling the bread with any liquid, as all Christians who are well acquainted with the principles of the Jewish religion are perfectly aware.

SIM. Perhaps it is not necessary to use blood at the Passover every year, but only once in seven years; or at a jubilee; and this would account for the accusation being revived at intervals of fifty years.

MAI. Hast thou forgotten that in those places where the judges gave credit to the accusation it was raised almost every year? whereas in France, Italy, and Germany, where no attention was paid to it by the judicial authorities, it was after a while dropped entirely. Wherever the judges had encouraged the prejudice against the Israelites, accusations would every year have been abundant. It was thus in Poland of late, when, after an interval of fifty years, the judges thought proper to foment the foul suspicion; and so in future, where judges shall be found prone to hearken to the clamours of the populace, wicked men will not omit to fabricate plenty of charges every year. There are, as thou knowest, in all Christian towns and villages, lewd women who prostitute themselves to soldiers and others. These frequently have children, the offspring of such illegitimate intercourse; and, to free themselves from the burthen of keeping them, which to the virtuous woman is a pleasure, they deprive them of life. May not one of this class, at the same time that she concocts a tale so artfully as to evade the suspicion of her neighbours as to the infant's death, as easily concoct a tale to criminate the Jews in connexion with that death? and she would certainly have

great inducement to do so, in the shape of pecuniary bounties, which many of our enemies would not fail to bestow on her. Probably some of the special charges have originated with some such person.

SIM. It is supposed by many that speak against you that they are the fanatics of your persuasion who are guilty of this crime, and that the bulk of the Israelites, the learned and rational, are perfectly innocent.

MAI. If this horrible charge had been first raised at a period when, and in a place where, the Israelites had made no great progress in philosophy, either natural or moral, I should not be able readily to find an answer; but it was started, as I have already mentioned, in Spain six hundred years ago, when the Israelites, especially those in Spain, were remarkable for their mental faculties, and the beneficial purposes to which they had applied them. So devoted to philosophical researches were the Israelites at that time, that even their youth plunged into disquisitions which, in these days, none but those who have seen many years pass over them would venture on; their ardour was so great in the pursuit of knowledge, that the elders of the nation in France, and other parts, were (to restrain them from entering on subjects which they could not comprehend, and which, therefore, they would probably exhibit in a false light) obliged to threaten with excommunication all Israelites who attempted to study metaphysics before they were five-and-twenty years of age. Now, with intellects so highly cultivated, is it to be supposed that they would propagate such a monstrous practice amongst their brethren as that which was alleged against them? It would have been equally as

absurd as to say that the pupils of such philosophers as Bayle and Voltaire, had, on the appearance of any disease, sent for an old woman to perform charms by melting wax, or other means equally as useless, for the purpose of sending it away. On the reverse, the Spanish Christians of that era were steeped up to their ears in ignorance and superstition; and one consequence of their condition, and a natural one too, was their attributing to persons so much their mental superiors the same deplorable defects; for, as the Talmud says, those who have weak minds are accustomed to see easily in others the faults which belong to themselves alone; and those who are prone to reproving others are generally most deserving of reproof themselves. A similar spirit to that which actuated the first traducers of the Israelites in Spain, pervaded the minds of those who witnessed the first balloon ascent, who murdered the inventor of so strange a machine, deeming that it could only be the contrivance of a sorcerer. In Brody, about fifty years ago, the Israelites did not transact business in counting-houses; and one day, somewhere about that time, two Christian merchants, accompanied by their clerks, arrived from Germany, and hired a stately house belonging to the Israelites. It was soon perceived by the latter that they were continually employed, both day and night, in writing, and that they sent away and received a great many letters; and the old men felt considerably alarmed, and said that this writing and correspondence had reference to their people. A short time afterwards the Emperor issued an edict commanding that recruits for the army should be levied from the Jews; and they all were of

opinion that the old men had guessed rightly, and that this evil was caused by the two German merchants.

SIM. I was well aware of all that thou hast stated. I know that the Spanish Christians of the era to which thou hast made especial allusion, were extremely ignorant. At the present day they are not remarkable for their wisdom; but still, as I have already signified to thee, I consider thy account of the Spanish Israelites a great exaggeration: thou hast lavished praises on them which, if really deserved, would shew that they were the very perfection of all that is wise and good. However, I have thy promise to verify all thy statements. Blessed is the Almighty, who reminds us of our undertakings, for I undertook to remind thee of thy promise.

MAI. What better evidence of the intellectual attainments of the Israelites of that epoch canst thou desire, than the innumerable works which they have left behind them? I may refer thee to a book written by a certain learned Christian,* to another printed at Rome,† and to many others written by Christian authors; from these thou wilt be able to ascertain the number and nature of the works they have composed: it will be, however, sufficient for my purpose to quote a few words from some of the most distinguished amongst Christian writers; what they say will fully bear me out in all that I have advanced; and by their words thou wilt be convinced sooner than by my own,

SIM. I should like to hear the quotation; for, as thou

* *Jos. Christoph. Wolfii Bibliotheca Hebræa*; Hamburgi, 1712.

† *Kiryat Sefer*, of Bartolocius, printed at Rome, 1675.

didst undertake to satisfy me in every particular, in our first conversation, I am anxious to listen to something fresh.

MAR. Before I produce what I consider to be conclusive evidence of their great attainments at that epoch, I must throw a little more light on their general character; and I can do so by mentioning what was said by a Christian writer, who, though by no means a friend to the Israelites, as may be seen by a work of his handed down to the present times,* could not deny a thing the truth of which was as apparent as the sun. This person, after giving a description of the superstition and fanaticism of the Spanish Christians, and of the tortures they inflicted on the Jews, recorded his opinions and observations of facts in these terms: “By the index of prohibited books, we find included amongst them, under Reg. xiv., all the books of the Talmud, the Hebrew lexicons, commentaries on the law, and all Hebrew works treating of religion. Other nations may perhaps think that such a prohibition could not have deprived the world of anything particularly valuable, but he who is conversant with Spanish literature must be aware that at the time when all the nations of Europe were sunk in ignorance and barbarism—during the eleventh century—the Hebrew university at Cordova, and subsequently at Toledo, was flourishing in the cultivation of every department of science. Amongst the Hebrew authors there is hardly one who is not a native of Spain; and the learned of other places admit that they are indebted to Spain for the knowledge

* *Die entlarvte Inquisition der Spanier, von Don Antonio Puigblanch*: Weimar, 1817.

they possess." Of four authors of whom the Israelites boast, three belong to our country, namely, Abraham ben Ezra, Moses ben Maimoon, and David Kimkhi.

SIM. Those authors are well known to me; they are reckoned to be men of great attainments by Christians, particularly Moses ben Maimoon; many Christian historians mention him with great praise; even the writers of the Church history speak highly of him.

MAI. In the historical work thou hast just mentioned, many other learned Israelites are spoken of, who lived in the twelfth century. But let us not confound one topic with another. I will finish the quotation which I partly gave thee. It runs thus: "The prohibition was undoubtedly the cause of the loss of many Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts, the value of which we can never accurately estimate, and the number of which must have been considerable. For just at the period when the banishment of the Israelites from Spain occurred, they had the most celebrated authors amongst them, who went afterwards to Africa, and to various parts in the East; these were Abraham Zacuti, Joseph and Shem Tob Uziel, Joseph Fes, Samuel Seralio, Jacob Berab, Isaac and Meyer Arama, Joseph Gecatilia, Jacob and Levy ben Khabib, Joseph Taitank, R. Yehuda Khayat, R. Abraham Saba, R. Yehuda Abuhab, and Isaac Abarbanel, &c."*

* Abraham Zacuti, the son of Samuel Zacuti, was the author of the *Sefer Hayukhassin*.

Joseph and Shem Tob Uziel were pupils of R. Izkhak Abuhab, who was the author of the *Menorat Hamáor*, and the preceptor of the author of the book *Yukhassin*.

Rabbi Joseph Fes, the preceptor of M.H.R.A., of Trani.

Samuel Seralio, mentioned in the book *Shulshelet Hakabala*.

SIM. Mention in what respect their talents were of a superior order; for, although I have read many historical works which may have explained, such matters escape from my memory; which doubtless is not the case with thee in this business, as it is of importance to thy own congregation.

MAI. These are the words of another distinguished Christian author:* “The Israelites, without country, home or leader, endured a most melancholy fate; oppressed and persecuted by the Arabs, they fled to Europe, where there were more predominant prejudices against them, and the rights of man were more misunderstood; the cruelty inflicted on them, and the contempt with which they were treated, obliged them to avail themselves of the deficiencies in the knowledge which the Europeans had of commerce, and they were compelled to obtain

Jacob Bérab, the Resh Galuta in the Holy Land, resided at Zafed, and was in the habit of arguing with R. Levi ben Khabib, the author of “The Correspondence,” under the initials M.H.R.L. ben Khabib; he was the son of the author of the *Ehn Jacob*.

R. Izkhak Arama, the author of the *Baal Akeda*, and R. Meyer Arama, the author of the Commentary *Mèi Iyob*.

Joseph Gecatiglia, the author of the books *Sha'are Orah*, *Sha'ar Hashámáyim*, and *Merkabát Yekhezkel*.

Rabbi Jacob ben Khabib, the author of the *Ehn Jacob*; and his son R. Levi ben Khabib, the author of “The Correspondence.”

Rabbi Joseph Taitonk (mentioned in the *Shalsholet Hakabala*) the Nassi at Saloniki.

R. Yehuda Khayit, the author of the *Minkhat Yehuda*.

Rabbi Abraham Saba, author of the *Zeror Hamór*.

R. Yehuda Abuhab, perhaps the brother-in-law of R. Shemuel Abuhab, mentioned before.

R. Izkhak Abarbanel, who is well known by his works.

* *Versuche einer allgemeinen Geschichte der Literatur, von Ludwig Wachler*, vol. ii. p. 193.

their livelihood by fraud and usury, which placed them in a position by no means enviable; or they were forced to pass their lives in misery and woe. And yet in this wretched situation, they conferred great benefits on literature; they preserved with unparalleled patriotism and national pride the Hebrew language, the knowledge of which, without them would have been surely lost, and could not have been revived amongst us by John Reuchlin.* Medicine and philosophy, which previously had been attended to but little by any people but the Arabs, were by their means made to flourish among the Europeans. In most countries they were the only mathematicians, physicians, and rationalists. They translated a

* John Reuchlin, a native of Germany, lived in the fifteenth century. He was the first amongst the Christian learned who was acquainted with the Hebrew language and its literature; for although many Christians before his time had studied that language, and had been taught it in their schools, the utmost their knowledge of it enabled them to do was to read and translate a few words of it; as mentioned by Eichhorn in his *History of Literature*. After Reuchlin's success in mastering Hebrew, other Christians studied it more profoundly. It is related by the Hebrews that Reuchlin learned the language from two Israelites,—R. Jacob Joel Luans, and the celebrated R. Obadyah Seforni. Reuchlin was much attached to the study of traditions (*Kabála*). At the time when Johan Pfefferkorn, a convert from Judaism to Christianity, formed a league with certain Christians for the purpose of procuring the destruction by fire of all the Talmud, and other Hebrew books in Germany, he having alleged that all except the Bible contained blasphemies against God and Jesus Christ, and succeeded in getting his purpose sanctioned by a decree from the Emperor; Reuchlin most zealously advocated the Israelites' cause, and so prosperously as to defeat the apostate's machinations: he afterwards obtained a bull from the Pope to prohibit any one from laying hands on Hebrew books for the purpose of destroying them.

great many works from Arabic into Hebrew, of which literary exertions there are numerous testimonials still in existence, the fruits of which are of no great value at the present day, though formerly they were highly valued and esteemed."

SIM. In honour of the superior reputation of those Israelites for learning, I deem it just to mention something which has this moment come into my recollection concerning an Israelite who was converted to Christianity in France. It was in the fourteenth century that he lived, and a most distinguished man he was; he corrected the Italian translation of the Bible, for he was well versed in the Hebrew language, and he added to his translation a concise commentary on the Bible, which caused him to be much thought of by Catholics and Lutherans. It was acknowledged on all hands that his commentary was a very sensible production, and that it served greatly to enlighten on religious subjects all the kingdoms of the West. His name was Nicholas de Lyra; and of him it was the Roman Christian said:—

"Si Lyra non lirasset,
Lutherus non saltasset."

"If Lyra had not played,
Luther would not have danced."

The Lutherans turned this phrase so as to confer honour on the convert, and praise on themselves; thus:—

"Si Lyra non lirasset,
Mundus delyrasset."

"If Lyra had not played,
The world would have been confused."

MAI. If thou wilt refer to the work *Bet Yéhuda*, chap. 128, 5th observation, thou wilt find recorded many cases similar to this: but I only allude, remember, to the learning of Israelites who continued faithful to their own religion. Listen, I pray thee.

SIM. Brother Maimoon, I crave thy pardon. It was not my intention to disturb thee, but to corroborate thy own statement in that case. Proceed.

MAI. And all those who lived after the whole of the Talmud had been composed, whose exact knowledge of the law enabled them to define it to all the Israelites resident all over the world, and whose precepts are still our guiding authorities, were, in addition to their theological attainments, well acquainted with literature and science in general; in the works I have so often quoted, *Bet Yéhuda*, and *Téúda Bèisrael*, some of them are spoken of as very eminent philosophers. In the latter work there is a full description of each; and their names and places of abode are given, for several successive generations; and the accounts of certain well-known and honourable Christians, confirmatory of their merits, are recorded therewith. In these works, there is also an account of the authors of the Mishna and the Talmud; and I feel sure that any intelligent Christian who is thus informed of the character they bore, will dismiss from his mind all ideas of their ever having been cognizant of such wicked things as have been imputed to them.

SIM. I thank thee for thy information, brother Maimoon; I was not aware that in the ninth century the Israelites held such an eminent position; though I have no doubt that they did, and for several centuries after-

wards, when nearly all the world beside were involved in a state of ignorance and folly. Thou art perhaps aware that the famous Charles the Great, although naturally a man of powerful capacity, and some good qualities, could neither read nor write. Whenever he issued any decree he was compelled in lieu of a proper signature, to make a mark on the paper with the blunted point of a sword dipped in ink. It happened one day that his son Ludwig, frequently known by the appellation of "the compassionate," assembled the bishops and great officers of state to witness the signing of an Imperial edict; but when all the preliminary forms had been gone through, there was no inkstand, or writing material of any sort, to be found in any part of the palace, or in any of the houses of the bishops; and it must have gone without signing, had they not after long searching procured pens and ink from the keeper of the royal seal.

MAL. We surely may judge from this incident, how very ignorant all those great persons were. History records that there have been Popes who prohibited Christians from studying science of any kind, under pain of excommunication, and who even considered the study of grammar a heinous sin, and forbade their flock from reading the Greek and Roman authors. The learned Czaki has observed,* that knowledge at that time was detested by the nations of Europe, and that what authors there were in existence only wrote to excite the ill-will of the multitude towards the Jews, which they considered a pious and praiseworthy action. The authors thus

* Dissertation concerning the Jews, p. 15.

alluded to, showed great malevolence to the Hebrew faith, and were continually provoking the Jews to controversies. One exception to such a class of authors, J. G. Eichhorn, who wrote about the termination of the eighth century, says,* “The Christians zealously looked upon the Israelites as objects for conversion, and, therefore, their acts were subjects for discussion. After the lay powers had persecuted and annoyed them for a long time, for the purpose of wresting from them the wealth obtained by industrious commercial enterprises, monks and theologians took them to task, and endeavoured to draw them into religious controversies; and when they were tired of incessant empty declamations against them, they compiled miscellanies of passages from the Bible to be disseminated as arguments against the Hebrew faith, though such were, in a great measure, quite inapplicable to the subject; or they made collections of extracts from books composed by fathers of the Christian church, or by councils of the church dignitaries, who had given judgment in certain matters adversely to the Jews, and were known to condemn their tenets; but nothing did these busy zealots bring forward against them which was the result of their own meditation and knowledge, for they were unable to hold any methodical dispute with the Jews, and they knew nothing of the Hebrew language.

SIM. Nevertheless, there were in those days several very learned bishops; and amongst other classes of society also there were men of considerable attainments; but the majority of the higher classes and princes were extremely ignorant; and of course the vulgar were nearly

* J. G. Eichhorn's History of Literature, vol. i. § 308.

all so. King Alfred was the first to establish an improved mode of education in England; and whilst he was a boy no one could be found clever enough to superintend his tuition. During the tenth and eleventh centuries education was at a very low ebb in Europe; and in France, Germany, and England, a learned man was thought such an extraordinary being, that it was customary, if any culprit who had been sentenced to death was able to write, to set him at liberty. In the history of Russia, we read that during the reign of Wladmir, when he commenced putting in operation his system of education at Kiew, where he resided, the idea of having their children taught anything raised a great commotion in the minds of the vulgar. That great prince was the first to attempt the work of civilization in that country: but his purposes were grossly misunderstood by his subjects, who regarded them as extraordinary and pernicious innovations; and when the children were obliged to be taken from their mothers to the school-houses by force, the mothers wept and lamented as if they were mourning over a corpse, for they contemplated literary studies as equally dangerous and reprehensible with those of witchcraft.

MAI. I have read in Karamzin's history of Russia that the women assembled and threw stones at the windows of the school-houses.

SIM. I have read the same.

MAI. In Poland and Lithuania, several centuries later, the kings were not able to write.*

* "The progress of knowledge was much more slow in Poland than Russia; for while there were men of considerable attainments

SIM. Thou art right in attributing the religious animosities in Europe at that period to ignorance.

MAI. The Christians disliked the Jews because their religion was totally different from theirs; but what made their antipathy to them so excessive, was their being the descendants of those by whom the Christian Messiah had been slain; it most probably was strengthened and supported by the circumstance of their superior literary and scientific qualifications, for dislike of genius is always a predominant feeling in the bosoms of the ignorant; as one of the renowned of the Talmud, Rabbi Akiba, has said, "Whilst I was ignorant, I was wont to say, I would bite a learned man like an ass."* Their hatred was more intense and violent than an idolater exhibits to a man of learning, and the wives of the ignorant were more violent in their hatred of persons than their husbands. In addition to what I have now advanced, I may remind thee of what I have already pressed on thy attention, — the gross superstitions prevalent in the seventeenth century.†

SIM. Now let me hear what other arguments thou art provided with?

MAI. Why do we not kill any of the Samaritans? They have behaved badly to us; they instituted a surreptitious collection of precepts for our holy Law; they built a temple on Mount Gerizim; they caused the

in the latter country, for example, Nestor and Sylvester in the year 1100, there was not one of any account in Poland."—See *Geschichte d. Lit. J. G. Eichhorn*, vol. i. p. 694.

* *Pessakhim*, 49.

† The works of Karamzin.

destruction of many thousands of Israelites when our nation was divided into two classes; they almost caused the destruction of our Temple, and nearly effected our banishment. Why do we not kill any of the Karaites? who, when their sect was first established, displayed great animosity towards us, and endeavoured to give us a bad name to Christian monarchs; who are considered by the strictly pious Israelites to be worse than the worshippers of stars and planets. Or why do we not seek to wreak our vengeance on the sect of Shabtai Zebi, which is still in existence, as well as the others? all of which gave as much offence to the Jews, as the Christians had done prior to the raising of the wicked accusation against us. What person ever hears the Israelites mention the names of the founders of those sects? And if we did not live in the midst of Christians, who continually keep him in our minds, by my life! we should never be heard to mention the name of Jesus Christ. Now, if the sects of Hebrew origin dislike us still in their hearts, yet we do not seek to injure them in return; though, being so much more numerous in the world than they, we could do so almost with impunity, if we chose to arrange plans for such a purpose: and as the majority of the Christians, who are not of Hebrew origin, do not persecute us now, why should we cherish revengeful feelings particularly against the Christian faith? and as they are so much more numerous in the world than we, how contrary to all ideas of prudence it would be to practise systematically against their lives. The Christian monarchs and rulers are extremely powerful; we have no ruler of our own

nation, but are weak and dependent on their protection; the present monarchs and ministers of Christian countries are mostly just and humane, and many of them grant us serviceable privileges in their dominions; why, therefore, should we secretly seek the destruction of the Christians?—why return evil for good? And though there are some wicked persons amongst the Christians at the present time (and no nation has ever been without some), and they endeavour to disgrace our name, still we shall always seek peace and humble ourselves before them; thus acting on the principle that actuates a weak man, who is engaged in a dispute with a strong one. What does reason prescribe in such a case?

SIM. That the weak is not prone to quarrel with the strong.

MAI. Is it not incumbent on the weaker party, as a matter of prudence, to avoid giving provocation? And dost thou, friend Simmias, conceive that the Israelites are destitute of common sense, that they should pursue a course which must be the very perfection of folly, putting its sinfulness entirely out of the question? I cannot believe that any one can have such an opinion of them.

SIM. All their enemies acknowledge that the Israelites are a wise nation; whoever thinks otherwise can have neither knowledge nor sense.

MAI. And if that be admitted, what motive can they have for placing, as it were, a sword in the hands of their opponents to be used for their own destruction? Surely they must seek to cultivate the friendship of those amongst whom they dwell; the same as a son,

whose father has taken to him another wife, seeks to secure the good will of his step-mother's children, and is slow to resent insult from them. The Scriptures command the natives of any place to love and show kindness to the stranger; why have they not an ordinance specially enjoining the stranger to love and show kindness to the native?—because the position of the native empowers him to ill-use the stranger, if he be minded so to do; but the stranger is helpless, and cannot do ill if he would. The Israelites now are strangers every where; and why should men fear them?

SIM. Hast thou more arguments of this nature? if so, let me hear them; for, by my life! they carry conviction to one's mind.

MAI. I have many more; but it is not my skill in using them that convinces; it is the simple truth on which they are based: our innocence of the foul practice which has been charged upon us.

SIM. Go on.

MAI. I have already stated, that slaughter is abhorrent to the very nature of the Israelites, because his disposition is peaceful, and he has not had any experience in extinguishing animal life; whereas, the Christians are naturally resolute, and not fastidious, and are accustomed, men, women, and children, to slaughter cattle, fowls, and animals, of various kinds, to make provision for their daily sustenance. The Israelites have all their animal food supplied by certain persons, who are specially appointed for the purpose, who are well acquainted with animal anatomy, and the rules for preparing animal food prescribed by our law. Such a person is called the

Shokhet [slaughterer], and although he is indispensable, yet some of the early Hebrew astrologers declared that a *Shokhet*, and he that circumcises, were born under the influence of Saturn, and that their dispositions were cruel. From their childhood upwards, Christians hunt for and procure food in any way in which it may be obtained, because they have no reason to be particular as to the manner in which animals are deprived of life for their use. As means of sport and recreation, they are accustomed from childhood to carry guns, spears, and swords; but the Jews, ever since the destruction of the second Temple, have always evinced a reluctance to handle any mortal weapon. Didst thou ever hear of an Israelite in a state of mental distress and despair stabbing or shooting himself, as Christians frequently do? If an Israelite commits suicide, it is mostly by drowning or hanging. The fact which I conceive I have established by this argument is, that the Israelites contemplate the act of slaughtering with much greater disgust than the Christians; which furnishes another powerful reason for acquitting them of all suspicion of being addicted to commit murders periodically.

SIM. Is it not thy opinion, that the lower orders amongst the Israelites are more charitably disposed towards each other than the people of a similar station among the Christians are?

MAI. Yes; it is a fact that in the small towns in Poland, the Christians have no hospital or place of refuge for poor travellers; whereas the Israelites have provided hospitals for the humble and needy wayfarer of their persuasion in some of the smallest villages; and they

form societies for their support, as well as providing for the poor in the towns. The poor are often fed in the houses of the wealthy, in one house one day, and in another the next, and particularly on a Sabbath or holiday; and the benevolent societies for the purpose of clothing the destitute, burying the dead, and lending money to the honest poor, are too numerous and various to specify.

SIM. I have heard extremely laudatory reports of the Jewish hospitals at Wilna, Odessa, Berlin, and Warsaw, and of those established in Germany. The Jews in Germany at the present day are highly spoken of for their intellectual acquirements.

MAI. There is a very beautiful hospital at Brody; it is now fifteen years since I saw it; at that time the Christians had not one of any sort, though there were many wealthy individuals of the Christian faith residing there: I am not aware that there is a Christian hospital there even now. I have seen a poor sick Christian lying in the dirt (for there was no accommodation of any description for the indigent sick), where he was left to die; afterwards he would be taken to the police station, and from thence carried, without any mark of respect, to the burial ground. But wherever any body of Israelites is collected, a society is established for burying those who may die in a state of poverty.

SIM. I believe that the greatest portion of the numerous Israelites resident at Brody are well versed in science and literature. I know them to be good people in their moral dispositions, and that they are generally well esteemed.

— MAI. I have had an opportunity of noticing the good opinion held of the Jews at Odessa. There are a great many settled in that town; the Russian emperor gave them permission to erect a school there, which is a most excellent establishment.

END OF THE SIXTH CONVERSATION.

SEVENTH CONVERSATION.

SIMMIAS. Explain to me, as thou hast promised, the position in which other nations stand with respect to your religion.

MAIMOON. We do not deny that people may obtain rewards in a future state for good actions performed in this, whatever may be their system of Divine worship; and this thou mayest ascertain by a reference to the works, *Téúda Bèisrael* and *Bet Yéhuda*.

SIM. What is your opinion of the Christian religion? I have been told that the Talmud contains a number of passages that are highly insulting to it.

MAI. Why should we despise the Christian religion any more than other systems, even when, as the Talmudists have declared, we do not consider that idolaters, if they perform righteous actions, are excluded from rewards in a future state? The truth is, as I have already stated to thee in the course of these conversations, the Talmud, as it is now arranged, makes no mention whatever of the Christian religion; what few passages it did formerly contain have been expunged by the direction of learned men of modern times, to avoid the possibility of giving offence to Christians: and who can tell what those passages were? how can I judge of a thing I never saw, and of which I have no means of forming anything like a correct idea? However, I will communicate to thee the opinion of some who are considered our very highest authorities; one whom I shall quote, though

the last amongst the *Géonim*, is the first in our estimation; we prize his learning as highly as that of Moses, the great Lawgiver of our people, and concerning him the following proverb, often repeated by our people, applies: "From Moses to Moses there was none like Moses." I now allude to Moses ben Maimoon, the Spaniard, whom thou didst mention some time ago. He is known by the initials R.M. B.M., and he lived about the year 4900 of the Creation. He composed a work called *Mishne Tora*, which contains all the precepts of our law. In *Hilkhot Melakhim*, we find these words written by him: "Jesus the Nazarite, the founder of the Christian religion, came into this world to pave the way for the Royal Messiah, whom we expect to appear." The Christians expect Jesus Christ to appear on earth again. Similar to the opinion of Maimonides on this subject is that of the author of the book *Cuzari*.* Two generations after that of Maimonides, the illustrious Rabbi Simon ben Zemakh lived, known by the initials R.SH.B.Z., a man who greatly distinguished himself by his extensive acquirements in knowledge; and he, in one of his works,† has spoken particularly of Jesus the Nazarite, and of the great good he effected for all the world. Rabbi Joseph Jabez, a very pious man, who lived about the time when the banishment from Spain took place, composed several valuable works, and some deprecating the study of philosophy. In one of his works, called *A Treatise on the Unity*, he says that through the Christian religion the Jewish faith has been preserved to this day.‡ The same

* Chap. iv. § 23; also the Commentary *Ozer Nekhmad*.

† *Milkhamat Khóbá*, printed at Constantinople.

‡ *Téúda Bèisrael*. p. 50.

opinion was entertained by the illustrious Rabbi Jacob Sasport,* who showed, by incontestable arguments, that the Nazarite, with his disciples, observed the Holy Law, and professed to have been sent on earth only to strengthen its influence; and he also says that the Israelites have derived great benefits from the institution of Christianity, as well as other nations. The Christians are praised in the *Cuzari*, and by the commentator on that work, for the great good they have effected amongst the bulk of mankind by their energetic endeavours to root out idolatry; and the opinions of these authorities are that, they have had the special assistance of the Almighty, by which they have been enabled to extend their influence all round the globe, and to instil into the minds of vast numbers of the human race a belief in the existence of a Divine being, of future rewards and punishments, and in the performance of miracles by God's messengers. There was another Hebrew writer of great note who wrote in the same strain, Rabbi Jacob Emden, the son of the author of the work *Khakhan Zebi*; he also set forth, in a book called *Ressen Matéh*, which he addressed to the learned of the four countries, † the good intentions of

* *Zisit Nobel Zebi*, second edition, printed at Amsterdam.

† ספר שמוש—הוא כלי זיון מיוחד להשתמש בו כל איש יהודי
 נאמן ל"ה יצא הלוי למלחמה וחמוש
 לידע מה לענות לכסילים ולהשיב לאפיקורסים המקוללים
 המתועבים בת ש"ן שר"י שקוץ כמוש וכו'
 כולל שלשה חיבורים
 שוט לסום—בו כתבי התחלת התעורורת המינים המתועבים בת ש"ן
 שר"י בפדאליע
 מתנ לחמור—(תובו רצוף קונטרס רסן מתעה ופתקא דגפל מרקיעא)
 רשבט לנו כסילים הוא תשובות באנשי און המינין הנ"ל על טענותיהם וכו'
 נדפס באמשטרדם
 שנת ות"ק"תי מבוגדיך ותעשי לך במות טלואות לא באות

Jesus the Nazarite and his Apostles proved by the introduction of the Christian religion, thus propagating amongst the Heathen the belief in future rewards and punishments, and the resurrection from the grave. I am not in possession of the R. SH. B. Z., it being very voluminous; I have copied the greater part of the words of Rabbi Jacob Emden, for he is more concise in his style, and his language agrees in its signification with that of the R. SH. B. Z., and that of Rabbi Jacob Sasport; his words are also quoted by the celebrated philosopher Mendelssohn, at the conclusion of his *Jerusalem*.

SIM. Thou hast told me of things this day which to me are quite new. Go on, I pray, for thy words enlighten me. I am all attention to hear thee recite his words.

MAI. * “The Christian religion places greater restrictions on its professor in some respects than our law does; and, according to that, certain marriages which our Holy Law allows of are considered improper: for instance, it prohibits a man from having two wives at one time, and from marrying the sister of a deceased wife, and other near relations. Those Christians, too, who live in strict conformity with this system of worship, are very cautious as to swearing, and display many honest and good moral qualities; and they are inclined to use forbearance towards their enemies, and to suppress all revengeful feelings. Happy would they be,

* Rabbi Jacob Emden is known by the initials J.E.B.Z. This extract is from a work entitled *Ressen Matéh*, p. 15; it forms part of his work entitled *Sefer Hashimoosh*, printed at Amsterdam, in 518; the full title of which is given in Hebrew characters on the previous page.

and happy should we be, if they adhered to the positive precepts of their system in their conduct regarding us, even as those precepts were recorded by their Evangelists: 'And unto him that smiteth thee on one cheek, offer also the other; and to him that taketh away thy cloke, give thy coat also.'* Christianity abounds with such precepts and maxims as this: if Christians had observed them, great praise would be their due, and we, in our exile, should have lived in peace and happiness, not losing, as we have done, thousands and thousands of our most pious and venerable fathers, who, though innocent of aggression both in deed and word, have been slaughtered like sheep in the shambles, burnt, and destroyed in every way that barbarous ingenuity could devise."

In exciting the hatred of the Christians, we have done nothing contrary to the purpose of your Messiah, distinctly expressed by him; for it is well known that Jesus ever insisted on the necessity his disciples were under of doing all that the Jewish law enjoined; and his Apostles preached in the same spirit: thus in your Testament it is written, "Think not I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall

* Matt. v. 39, 40; Luke vi. 29.

do and teach them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Another instance of what the intention of Christ really was, is shewn in his conduct to the lepers whom he healed. He told them that, as soon as they were free from their leprosy, they should go to the Temple, and offer up those sacrifices which were prescribed by the Mosaic Law;* and further, that they should never forget to obey the Ten Commandments, which, as we all know, contain the principles of all the Israelitish laws. We also find that Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, accuses them of practising adultery, and makes allusion to a case where he had caused a man who had married the wife of his father to be put to death.† These facts furnish sufficient evidence, without including what I have before quoted, that Christ never meant to destroy the Mosaic Law. This explanation will also serve to shew the reason why St. Paul circumcised his pupil Timothy.‡ Timothy was the son of a Jewess; and though his father was a Greek, yet Paul, having himself been a pupil of Rabbi Gamliel Hazakin, knew that the child of a Jewess was, nevertheless, according to the Talmud, considered to be a Jew. From an apparent contradiction in the Gospel, many Christians of great learning have formed an idea that Christ gave them a new law instead of the law of Moses; but how can such an idea be reconciled with the passage wherein Christ says that he is come only to fulfil the latter? As I have said, the writers of the Gospel never thought to intimate that Christ came to destroy the Hebrew religion; all that they have written

* Matt. viii. 4.

† 1 Cor. v. 5.

‡ Acts xvi. 3.

merely shews that he wished to establish a religion for the Heathen nations, and which he did not profess to be a new one, as it comprised the seven precepts given to the children of Noa, but which had been nearly forgotten by them: to re-establish the seven precepts given to the children of Noah was Christ's main object, and his Apostles were appointed to carry it into effect. No Christian can controvert this proposition; because all of them acknowledge that the law is to be preserved to eternity. It may, nevertheless, be objected, that the establishing of a distinct mode of worship for the Heathen does not agree with the precept given by Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians; "As the Lord has called every one, so let him walk, and so ordain I in all the churches.* In answer to this, I aver that Christ did not promulgate a law containing more than the seven precepts; for as the Jews were the only people delivered by the Lord from the Egyptian bondage, no other people had any concern with their religious law, the greater portion of it being connected with circumstances which arose out of that memorable and glorious event. Thus Christ forbade to the Heathen to perform idolatrous ceremonies, the eating of blood and strangled animals; but he did not prescribe circumcision to them, or the observance of the Sabbath conformably to the Mosaic Law, which had been explained to us by our learned scribes and Pharisees, men to whom the true traditions had been handed down, and regarding whom the phrase "sitting on the throne of Moses," was applied by Jesus the Nazarite himself: "Then spake Jesus to the multi-

* 1 Corinthians, vii. 17.

tude and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do."* Acting on the same principle, the apostles introduced baptism amongst the Heathen nations, instead of circumcision, an initiatory ceremony of that kind being indispensable for the proving of a proselyte; and they appointed Sunday as a day of rest to commemorate the first day of the Creation, to

* Matth. xxiii. 1, 2. The seeming inconsistency in the circumstance of Christ's counselling his auditors to pay attention to the commands of the Pharisees, and to take example from them, after having denounced the ways of the same kind of people, will be cleared up by the following explanation. There were seven sorts or sects of Pharisees: 1st. The Shechemites, who, after the manner of Shechem the son of Hamor, observed the Mosaic law not for the love of God, but for the sake of their worldly convenience; 2nd. Those who, to appear as if busied in religious musings, walked with their heels and toes contracted, and frequently stumbled against stones in consequence; 3rd. Men who pretended to close their eyes because they were unwilling to look on women, and thereby occasionally came in collision with walls and other obstructions in their path, which bruised them and made their blood to flow; 4th. Men who affected to consider themselves most humble and lowly, and, therefore, were constantly bowing their heads to the ground; 5th. Men who fancied that, because they had already gone through a complete course of those actions and observances which the law required, it was unnecessary for them to exert themselves any more; 6th. Men whose actions were controlled solely by the expectation of reward, either in this world or the next, for any good works they might perform, and not by any abstract and innate love of good works themselves; and 7th. Those men whose ways were fashioned after God's own heart, and who really did that which was righteous from a holy affection for righteousness itself. It is unquestionable that Christ, when speaking against the Pharisees, alluded to the first six sects, and to the last sect when exhorting his followers to attend to their instructions; and that the translators of the New Testament have not paid sufficient attention to those nice distinctions.—TRANSLATOR.

preserve in their minds the belief that the world is under the control of One who created it according to His own will, and who, whenever He pleases, can undo that which He has done. They did not appoint that day to commemorate the Exodus from Egypt, because none of those to whom they were preaching, nor their ancestors, had ever had anything to do with Egypt as the Israelites had, and, therefore, could feel no particular inclination to rejoice on account of such an occurrence: they wished to ameliorate the condition of the Heathen, without interfering with the established customs of the Israelites: this was the principal object of the apostles, though to every one it does not appear exactly in that light; for, as the wise man has said, "Counsel in the heart of man is like water in a deep well; the man of understanding only can draw it" (Proverbs xx. 5). It was, therefore, that to the Heathen nations another day for rest was appointed; but Christ and his apostles, being Israelites by birth, conformed implicitly to the Holy Law, and kept the Israelitish Sabbath, and observed the ceremony of circumcision also. Thus it will be seen that Christ had a double object in view, and which events have proved to have been fully effectuated;—to ameliorate the condition of mankind at large, and to confirm and strengthen the law promulgated by Moses. None of our learned men ever spoke with so much energy on the perpetual preservation of the Holy Law as he did; and the good which he effected for the Gentiles would have brought forth much better fruits, if they had at all times rightly comprehended his purpose, and acted towards each other with the same philanthropic spirit that warmed his bosom."

All that I have now advanced are the opinions and statements of the Rabbi Jacob Emden, greatly abridged; in their original state, they are too lengthy to be quoted here. He has put forth similar sentiments in various works besides that from which my present arguments are abstracted; for instance, in a commentary on the ethics, entitled, *Lekhem Shamayim*; and in another, entitled, *Torat Hakenáot*. He likewise has an allusion to this subject in a book called *Meteg Lakhamor*, where he speaks with still more energy; and in his book *Agerot Temon*, he quotes a passage from Maimonides, having reference to the same; for Maimonides, in his work, *Yad Hakhazaka*, at the end of *Hilkhot Melakhim*, comes to the same opinion; and, further, his sentiments are borne out by a passage from the Talmud, which, in one of his books, he has backed them with. Now, friend Simmias, I have shewn thee in what light Jesus Christ and his disciples have been, and are still, considered by teachers of the Hebrew law in relation to the Hebrew people.

SIM. Many thanks are due to those learned men: they have spoken well and honestly, although their opinions do not exactly coincide with those of the expounders of the Christian religion to us. But there is another question that I must put to thee.

MAI. Ask; and, if possible, I will answer.

SIM. If our Messiah is, and has been, regarded with so much respect by the Israelites, why did your ancestors take his life?

MAI. The Sanhedrin of the period in which Jesus Christ lived, was partly composed of Saducees, whose

doctrine repudiated the principles of Christ, namely, faith in the resurrection of the dead, immortality, and the existence of angels, principles which he imbibed from the learned authors of the Mishna. The high priest of that period was a Sadducee: thus it was the hands of the Sadducees, not those of the Pharisees, that were laid on Jesus the Nazarite and his disciples. It is said, "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him which were of the sect of the Sadducees, and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands upon the apostles, and put them in the common prison." The Pharisees, whom your Legislator reprehended, were those alluded to in Talmud Nedarim, not the Pharisees that were the authors of the Mishna. And even supposing that the latter Pharisees concurred in sanctioning the sentence passed on Jesus, they could not have done so because they condemned his doctrine, as that was in perfect unison with that taught by themselves, and set forth in the Mishna; Jesus, as I think I have previously observed, having been a pupil of Rabbi Yehoshua, the son of Perakhya, one of the authors even now referred to. We are informed by tradition, that what excited their disapprobation of Jesus the Nazarite was his uttering the most sacred name of the Almighty, the Tetragrammaton, it being an express point of the law that he who pronounced that word should be punished with death. Tacitus states that Jesus was not executed by the order of Pontius Pilate for any offence which came especially under his cognizance as governor, but in consequence of his seeking to establish a new system of Divine worship,

which, according to the Gentiles of that era, was not a righteous and honest one; and besides this, that author imputes no other transgression to him. J. Bossuet states, that neither in the books of the ancient Hebrews, nor in any of the Gospels, is there any trace of the Jews' having charged Jesus with any other crime than that he called himself the Messiah and the Son of God. Some Heathen authors have, with feelings of acrimony, written against his actions, and published decrees, supposed to have emanated from Pilate, in which several sins are imputed to him; and they say, that those formed the reason of his being punished. But at no time did the Israelites attempt to vindicate their conduct by fixing any sin upon him, except his calling himself the Messiah and the Son of God, and repeating the Almighty's most sacred name; in all other respects they saw nothing that he did deserving of censure. We therefore, at the present day, contemplate Christ as we do any other righteous Israelite, who may have sinned and been punished in consequence thereof, and of whom we continue to say, "He is our brother." His calling himself the Messiah raised against him a political animosity which it is necessary for me more fully to elucidate. Those who believed him to be the Messiah were therefore accustomed to style him King of the Jews; and this begat in the elders and chief Israelites much apprehension on account of the interpretation which the Romans might give to this title; and said they, "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe in him, and the Romans shall come and take away our place and nation." Such a reason as this,

has been deemed sufficient for taking the life of many persons against whom there was no charge whatever of moral guilt. And ought we to be surprised that he was sentenced to death for no other reason than his calling himself the Messiah and the Son of God, when we know that the synod, under Menashe, sentenced the prophet Isaiah to death, and actually executed him, because he had said, "I have seen the Almighty?" which they considered blasphemy, the Almighty having said, "No mortal can see me and remain alive."* But the majority of Israel's learned men and doctors of law did not approve of this; and the Talmud declares it to have been wrong, and that the synod did that which was evil thereby.

SIM. The death of Isaiah, at the instigation of the Synod of Menashe, is mentioned by many fathers of the Christian Church.

MAI. More extraordinary than all I have yet mentioned, is the charge against the Israelites of killing Christ: that is radically false, for they did not kill him themselves.

SIM. This assertion of thine savours of nonsense: that is a fact which no one has ever attempted to deny.

MAI. Not to trouble you with many words of my own to verify this assertion, or with opinions extracted from the works of Hebrew authors, I will recite to thee the opinion of a celebrated Christian philosopher of the present age, who has written that which on this matter will fully bear me out.

* Talmud *Yebamôt*, p. 49.

SIM. A Christian philosopher of this age? who is he? I am anxious to hear his name.

MAI. Hast thou ever heard of the celebrated Professor Krug?

SIM. Of Leipsic?

MAI. The same.

SIM. His reputation is well known to me: he is said to be a great man, of profound erudition, and one that tries to make his actions acceptable to God and man. Pray impart to me what thou knowest concerning him; for, though he is a follower of Martin Luther, yet he is a good Christian.

MAI. These are his words:* “But the worst is, that it is not true that the Israelites crucified Jesus, for the Romans did it; yet we have never heard that the present Romans, though there are many wicked men amongst them, are reproached for the crime committed by their progenitors. It might be said that the early Jews were the cause of the catastrophe; but they were not; it was only the High Priest and some who adopted his opinion. Those individuals acted in this respect as people would do always, and every where, amongst Christians, because they disliked the new doctrine, but were unable to refute it. They complained to the civil magistrate, they perverted the words of Jesus, and accused him of a political transgression; and the magistrate was weak enough to listen to the accusation, because the cunning priests said, ‘If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar’s friend.’†

* *S. Ueber die Verhältnisse verschiedener Religions Partheien zum Staate und über die Emancipation der Juden, von Professor Krug. Leipsic and Jena, 1828.*

† St. John, xix. 12.

These words staggered the governor; so that he thought it more advisable to sacrifice an innocent man, than to forfeit the good opinion of the emperor. The vulgar, naturally excited by the priests, cried out, 'Crucify him! crucify him!' just as the vulgar amongst Christians will do who take delight in witnessing executions. But how long have the words *vulgar* and *nation* been used to denote one and the same class of people? And had not he who was crucified also many friends among the Israelites, who deprecated the act? Who made us avenge that act on innocent posterity? Did not he while praying, say 'Forgive them, for they know not what they do'? Was it not his express command, 'Love your enemies, and behave well to them that offend you?' O Christians! Christians! how little do ye reflect on the name from which you designate yourselves."

SIM. Whenever I hear the moral precepts inculcated by our Messiah, they appear new, such virtue is in them. They excite my feelings, and cause my eyes to shed tears of joy.

MAI. Grant, O God, that his words may take firm root in the hearts of all Christians; then shall we both be happy!

SIM. And what more has that learned professor written concerning the Jews?

MAI. He has greatly advocated our cause; but that is foreign to our subject.

SIM. But if thou knowest aught of his that thou thinkest could impart pleasure to me, let me hear it, howsoever brief thy speech may be.

MAI. In the same work he says,* “ After making strict inquiries, I found that the Israelites in Germany, as in other countries, are not gluttons; that no Israelite was ever found guilty of pirating a copyright, though he might have done so easily, and reaped a good profit thereby: the Christians, on the contrary, commit plagiarisms openly and without shame: and the Christians contract many loathsome diseases, which it would be improper to mention. Melancholy is rarely perceived amongst the Israelites; but it is common with the Christians; who are subject to evils, the result of bad morals and sensual indulgences, against which Christian ministers preach, in a much greater degree than is ever known with the Israelites.” This author has mentioned many circumstances, besides these, as favourable to my people.

SIM. You Israelites have certainly a most excellent advocate in Professor Krug. I really do not think that there is an equal to him amongst all the Christians.

MAI. O, yes; there are many; I have already quoted from several of our time. The fact is, the truly great amongst you always search after means to discover truth; their criticism is not sparing to any person.

SIM. It seems to me that we have introduced into our conversation much that is quite irrelevant to our purpose; let us now set ourselves right.

MAI. I wish so to do.

SIM. There can be no doubt that your ancestors to whom thou hast referred, wrote, as thou sayest, in favour of our Messiah; but I think the Talmudists afterwards

* From page 27 to 29, in a note.

acted differently, in consequence of the persecutions they underwent from the Christians: it is probable that they did, for, as Plutarch says, both love and hatred are causes of diversion from the straight line.

MAI. It is in the Talmud, also, that "love diverts the line," &c.

SIM. I have been assured that many things were added to the Talmud, particularly to that portion which treats of histories and allegories.

MAI. So some authors of the Heathen, and even some Christians, have accused the early fathers of the Christian Church of having made alterations in the Gospels, and of having added passages thereto for which they had no sufficient authority, especially in those portions of the Gospels that refer to the Hebrews, the authors of the Mishna, and their doctrine. Our learned men at this very day have doubts, as to whether they should attribute the words of those passages to Jesus, Paul, or Peter; and they think sometimes that these invidious phrases may have been interpolated with the original work from motives of revenge. The Gospels were not written by Jesus himself, nor by his immediate apostles; but by persons who collected and arranged all the information concerning the acts of Christ which could be obtained some years after his death. I will not mention what Marcion, and Manes the philosopher, both Christians,* have said on this subject; but there is much doubt even at this day, amongst many Christians, respecting the origin of one epistle in the New Testament.

* See Bossuet, p. 433.

SIM. We consider Marcion and Manes as heretics; and who, therefore, would place confidence in their opinions? it is useless even to mention them. In the same way that ye regard with feelings of veneration the books of the Talmud, do we appreciate and respect the Gospels: we consider them sacred, from beginning to end; for they are the words of the Living God, and are sealed with the seal of Truth.

MAT. Happy would your brethren be, if they universally conformed to the main principles of their doctrine; and happy would my brethren be, if they universally conformed to the precepts of their law; for although the two systems differ in their details, the origin of both is the same; our teachers and yours were all pupils of Moses and the Prophets.

SIM. In reference to what thou hast just said—that some of the early fathers of the Christian Church made unauthorised additions to the Gospels inimical to the Hebrews, the authors of the Mishna, and their doctrine, I must say that it is not true. God forbid! There is nothing of what thou speakest to be found in the Gospels. Certain it is that the authors of the Mishna and the Pharisees drew forth great rebukes from the Messiah, because they were proud, and sought after empty honour. He greatly esteemed, however, the precepts they professed to teach, and commanded all his followers to receive and observe them; as St. Matthew relates in these words: * “Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, The Scribes and Pharisees

* Matt. xxiii. 1—8.

sit in Moses' seat; *all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do*; but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments; and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues; and greetings in the market-places; and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi." I have heard from one of your Rabbies that it is stated in the Talmud, that it was said by one (who was present at the lecture) to one of the authors of the Mishna, who preached in the synagogue on the sin which a person commits by remaining unmarried, although he was without a wife himself, "Master, thou preachest well, but thou dost not perform that which thou preachest." I believe the preacher's name was Ben Azai: expressions similar to this man's were used by the Messiah towards the Scribes and Pharisees in general.

MAI. Ben Azai gave a good reason for what he said, which was satisfactory to those who heard it. I must apologize for our masters, the authors of the Mishna, upon almost the same principle that Ben Azai did. They were obliged to observe a certain dignity, agreeably to what your Messiah said; because, being the leaders of the people, who sat in Moses' seat, and some of them being also members of the Synod, in which was centered all the political power (and it is known that during their reign the ecclesiastical and political functions of the

nation were combined in one synod*), they found it indispensable to display a kind of dignity, for by that chiefly the respect of the people was to be obtained; and all politicians agree that that is essential for the safe continuance of any system of government. With regard to their having trammelled the people with ordinances which, according to the reproofs of your Lawgiver, they themselves did not care to put in practice, —I must make another apology for them. All the affirmative laws comprised in the Bible (except those which we are compelled to observe in respect to our neighbour), may be dispensed with by one who devotes himself wholly to the study of the law; for such a one is considered to be more beneficially exerting himself than if he applied his faculties to other purposes, at the same time scrupulously practising the minor precepts of the law, the same as any ordinary person who for voluntarily disregarding them would be punished.

SIM. Whosoever offers an apology for his master will be blessed. I do not wish to argue with thee merely on religious topics; therefore, friend Maimoon, let us return once again to the main subject of our conversation. I should like to know what Mendelssohn says about our Messiah, especially since thou hast said that his opinions correspond with those of R. SH. B. Z.: undoubtedly the words of Mendelssohn will greatly elucidate this matter.

MAI. The following are words of his, extracted from his *Jerusalem*: “Jesus of Nazareth never signified † that

* *Bet Yehuda.*

† Jerusalem, v. M. Mendelssohn. Berlin, 1783, p. 130.

he was come to acquit the house of Jacob of the law; nay, he said the reverse in express terms; and what is more, he acted the reverse. Jesus of Nazareth himself observed not only the Mosaic Law, but the rabbinical institutions; and whatever seems to be contrary to this in the sayings and doings recorded of him, only seems so at first sight: carefully examined, everything will be found perfectly to agree not only with Scripture, but also with tradition. If he came to put a stop to the more and more spreading Pharisaism and hypocrisy, surely he would not himself have set the first example in their favour, by sanctioning personally a law which he deemed it necessary to set aside. On the contrary, the rabbinical maxim, that he who is born in the law must live according to the law, and die according to it, obviously characterises his whole conduct, and that of his disciples in the beginning. If, in later times, his followers thought differently, and believed that they might also absolve the Jews who joined them from the observance of the law, they certainly had no authority from him for so doing."

SIM. I recollect that I have read the whole of that work; and I consider that it is of great service to the Israelitish faith. I have, moreover, read a letter in German, written by that celebrated philosopher, Emanuel Kant, when first that work appeared; and I cannot conceal from thee, brother Maimoon, that, notwithstanding Kant's great reputation for philosophy and piety, I did not approve of his sentiments. Mendelssohn was born a Jew, and brought up in the Jewish faith; and consequently had no particular inducement to study the

principles of Christianity; therefore, when he wrote his work, it was natural that he should chiefly aim at vindicating his own religion, without reflecting whether his words were in unison with the precepts of Christianity or not. But the philosopher Kant was born a Christian, and ought not for that reason to have made use of such words in reference to Mendelssohn. I recollect that when I was reading *Jerusalem*, I made several observations myself in disapprobation of it; neither I nor any other Christian could approve of the passage which thou hast just quoted from that work; and I wished, therefore, to ask some questions concerning particular parts in it. But we Christians are satisfied to hear such sentiments from an Israelite regarding us. I wish that all learned Israelites would take pattern from Mendelssohn.

MAL. I should much like to know where a copy of that letter of Kant is to be obtained, and what its contents are.

SIM. It is in a German book;* the letter runs thus: "M. Friedländer will tell you with what admiration of your acuteness, penetration, and wisdom, I read your 'Jerusalem.' I hold this work to be the announcement of a great, though slowly approaching reform, which will not only concern your religion, but also that of others. You knew how to join conscientious freedom with religion, a circumstance which no one would have believed to have been possible, and which no other religion can boast of. You stated the necessity of unlimited

* *Beitrag zur Geschichte der Verfolgungen der Juden im 19ten Jahrhundert*: von David Friedländer. Berlin, 1820, p. 24, *Fragment eines Briefes von Kant an Mendelssohn*.

freedom of conscience in every religion so profoundly, and so clearly, that our church must, of necessity, at last so think like yourself, as to remove from it every thing which may harass or oppress the conscience. A point will cause the junction of all people in the essential parts of religion; for all religious precepts which oppress the conscience have originated in history, if a belief in the latter is considered as a condition for future happiness." Now, friend Simmias, I propose that we return again to our main subject of discussion: we are far off it again.

SIM. We ought so to do.

END OF THE SEVENTH CONVERSATION.

EIGHTH CONVERSATION.

SIMMIAS. After hearing the various cogent arguments which thou hast brought forward to refute the accusation against the Israelites, of using Christian blood, I feel surprised that so many Jews have really confessed that they were guilty of that crime.

MAIMOON. Art thou not aware that tortures of the most agonizing description were inflicted on those poor wretches previously to their confession? My blood runs cold when I think of their sufferings. Our masters have justly observed respecting Khananyah, Mishael, and Azaryah, who exposed their lives to the flame, and yet remained faithful to their creed, that if they had been put to the torture, they would probably have consented to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's image; for tortures so excessive have been devised that few can endure them and retain their reason scarcely for a day, much less for days, weeks, and years, which were the periods to which the Spanish Inquisition prolonged their cruelties on those few who manfully refused to criminate themselves falsely.* In most cases where those horribly acute tortures were practised, the victims, despite their spotless

* *Puigblanch*, the book mentioned before; also, *Histoire de l'Inquisition en Espagne, par le Secrétaire de l'Inquisition*. Paris, 1824.

innocence of the guilt attributed to them, could not forbear to utter inconsistent things, thinking thereby to have their pangs terminated by death, or perhaps obtain a momentary respite from them. And who can wonder at them for what they said? Every mortal has not the strength of mind which constitutes a hero. But there have been many amongst our learned, whose firmness shed a glorious yet melancholy light on our cause, who underwent every species of torture that fierce persecutors could invent, and yet proudly adhered to the truth. There is one fact recorded concerning our martyrs, which pierces the heart of almost every reader, and which occurred in the middle of the seventeenth century: it was that of the Hebrew philosopher, Orobio,* who was kept in prison, and tortured in the worst manner the Inquisition could think of, for three years; and yet he never swerved from his first protestation of innocence.

SIM. I believe he was physician to Philip the Sixth of Spain.

MAI. Yes; and afterwards he was physician to Louis the Thirteenth of France. Orobio composed many philosophical works, in both the Latin and Spanish languages.

SIM. His works are highly appreciated by Christians.

MAI. The history of mankind shews that excruciating pain inflicted wilfully by others, will cause men to say that which their consciences disclaim. For this reason it was that the synod at Jerusalem never resorted to torture to obtain evidence of a prisoner's guilt from him-

* *Sulamith*, 4ter Jahrgang, vol. i. part 2, p. 417.

self, but always sought to prove a case by means of witnesses. If powerfully bodied men so frequently sink and become deranged under the torture, how must it have been with delicately framed men, and women, and children? Who can wonder at any confessions extorted from them?

SIM. The same just system of examination into accusations is observed by the Russian government; for although their inquiries are as strict and energetic as may well be, they never allow a prisoner to be beaten or to be put to bodily pain till after his guilt is incontestably established.

MAI. This is an evidence that the rulers of Russia are men of sound understanding and friends of truth. I have seen a report in the book *Vindiciæ Judæorum** of an extraordinary circumstance, which I think it worth while to relate to thee. “A Portuguese nobleman, whose physician was imprisoned for being supposed to be a Jew, begged of one of the inquisitors, by letter, that he would cause him to be set at liberty, because he had certain knowledge that he was a good Christian; but the physician, nevertheless, was put to the torture, and, in his agony, confessed that he was a Jew, and promised to become a penitent. Upon this the nobleman became incensed, and feigning himself sick, sent for the inquisitor, by one of his servants, to come to visit him. When the inquisitor arrived, he commanded him to confess that he himself was a Jew, and further, to write his confession with his own hand; and when he refused to do this,

* Samuel's English Translation, p. 18, 22.

the nobleman charged some of his servants to put a helmet, heated red hot on a fire, on his head; but, unable to endure this threatened torment, he confessed, and wrote with his own hand, that he was a Jew. The nobleman then took occasion to reprove him for his injustice and cruelty, saying, ‘In the same manner that I forced a confession from you, was a confession forced from my physician, with this difference, fear of the torment made you confess, whereas he experienced it.’

I will relate another case from the same work: “The auto-da-fe (which is ordinarily performed at Toledo) was performed at Madrid, in the year 1632, in the presence of the king of Spain; where the king and queen took an oath, before the inquisitors, that they would maintain and preserve the Catholic faith in their dominions. On this occasion it is recorded, that a family of our nation was burnt because they had confessed, upon the rack, the truth of a certain accusation made against them by a maid-servant, who, probably through some pique, said that they had scourged an image of some saint, from which much blood flowed in consequence of the stripes, and which was heard to cry, ‘Why do ye thus cruelly scourge me?’ The nobility had no belief in this accusation, but the proceedings of the Inquisition no one durst call in question.”* Another reason of there being reports in existence of Israelites having confessed to this crime might have arisen from the merciful consideration of some of the judges, on whom the superintendence of their tortures in some cases devolved; and who, seeing

* Vind. Judæorum, p. 17.

that they were immovably determined to assert their innocence to the last, and fearing to liberate them on account of the prejudices of the populace or of some other judges, gave out that they had acknowledged their guilt, in order that by a speedy and final punishment their sufferings might be brought to a close. It has doubtless sometimes happened that one or two Israelites in a congregation, of enthusiastic dispositions, took upon themselves the burden of an accusation, in order to preserve the whole congregation from ruin, which the prejudiced vulgar would certainly have effected when their suspicions were excited, unless they had been appeased by obtaining some victims. We find many such instances of magnanimous devotion spoken of in Greek and Roman history; and the Talmud distinctly mentions the cases of two righteous Israelites who thus testified their affection for their brethren, Popus, and Lulianus. It may, doubtless, likewise have happened that some judges were excessively cruel and proud, and feeling mortified at not being able to extort a confession from the sufferers, did not hesitate to utter a falsehood to obtain credit with the multitude, and said they had confessed; and this was the case in some of the small towns in Poland, about a century ago, where the judges were often harsh-tempered and bigoted priests (at that time, and in such places, excessively ignorant), or such persons as blacksmiths, or peasants, who were often in a state of inebriety, and who were utterly unfit to doom a fellow-mortal to death. I could cite very many instances of unfortunate Israelites having been put to death on their own confessions, and yet were absolutely innocent; the work *Shebet Yéhuda* mentions

cases in which, after the victims were executed, circumstances came to light which not only fully acquitted them of the guilt, but proved the crimes for which they had died to have been perpetrated by the Christians by whom they had been stigmatized. Menashe ben Israel, in his *Vindiciæ*, mentions many similar cases, as thou mayest find on reference to it; and numerous Christian authors, indeed, have recorded the same facts.

SIM. It is an error which may often occur with very righteous magistrates, to pass a harsh sentence on an innocent man, he being guilty in their honest opinions, founded upon an impartial investigation, and the apparently credible testimony they have heard against him; or on the other hand, a guilty man may suffer through circumstances, after an impartial enquiry, being apparently in his favour; for the judge can decide only from what he sees; as it is said, "for man looketh on the outward appearance."*

MAI. But after all possible evidence which I may adduce from undoubted sources, of the innocence of my people in respect to this horrible crime; and of the kindness generally exhibited by them towards Christians, even to the zealously preserving of Christians' lives, there would still remain a doubt in the mind of him who has ever listened seriously to the accusation.

SIM. And why so?

MAI. Because whoever falls into the snare of the accusation, has so many insidious suspicions to remove from the hearts of his accusers, ere his innocence will be admitted by them. I cannot but think that it must be

* 1 Samuel, xvi. 7.

the means of the Almighty's chastisements of us, as was said, "Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee."*

SIM. Explain thyself more clearly.

MAI. The proofs of innocence which an accused person can put forward, either himself or by his advocate, are negative; neither can we call them absolutely convincing proofs. The evidence of the accuser, on the contrary, is positive, that is to say, affirmative, stating a fact which has taken place. We will put a case thus:—Something was missed from the house of A, and suspicion of theft fell upon B, because he had been in the house, or for some other reason depending on circumstances. B, wishing to prove himself innocent, stated that he was once in the house of C at a time that something was missed, and the thief was apprehended, and other things occurred to shew that he did not steal that article; but his evidence was of a negative character; he stated that he never did steal anything from any other person; yet B might have stolen something from A's house; for if he was not a thief when in the house of C, nor in any of the other houses in which he had been before, yet that did not absolutely prove him innocent of the theft in the house of A. A person may be a thief, and yet not steal everything that comes in his way; and the more numerous the instances which B adduces to show that suspicion had been cast on him before, and other persons had been found to be the offenders, the more strong would be suspicion against him in his pre-

* Deuteronomy, xxviii. 61.

sent position; for his enemies would say, "Why is suspicion always cast upon B, and not on C, D, or any body else? this furnishes strong grounds for believing him to be the thief in this case." Thus when a theft is committed, suspicion is likely to fall upon B; and should B mention, as a proof of his being naturally honest, that he once found an article of value and restored it to its owner, his determined enemies would say it was an unsatisfactory proof, for he knew it might have been traced to him. And if he should continue to argue that he once restored an article of value to its proper owners who lived in a distant part of the world, after having found it in his own house, where he could have kept it without molestation, still they would say that such an act was a further confirmation of his dishonest propensities; for he might have been desirous to go to the place where the owners of the article resided, for the purpose of practising that which was improper, and for which, after this apparent sign of honesty, he would find great facilities there. Thus, with all his arguments, his evidence would only be of a negative character. An answer similar to his was given by Joseph's brethren to him who pursued them for the theft of the cup: "Behold, the money which we found in our sacks' mouth, we brought again unto thee, out of the land of Canaan; how then should we steal out of the lord's house silver or gold!"* This they gave as an unanswerable proof of their innocence, the more especially because they had restored the money after they had been in another country with it in their possession, which the words, "out of the land of

* Genesis, xliv. 8.

Canaan" signified. And when afterwards the cup was found in the sack of Benjamin, which took place after the money had been restored, his brother exclaimed, "What shall we speak? how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of his servants:" by which they appear to have been afraid that suspicion would weigh upon them all, although the cup was not found in any one of their sacks; and therefore they said, "Behold, we are my lord's servants, both we and he with whom the cup is found."

SIR. This is true. He who is placed under the necessity of producing evidence to clear himself from suspicion of guilt, can never be entirely free from suspicion afterwards; for every one will say to him, "Why should not *I* be required to produce evidence of my character?"

END OF THE EIGHTH CONVERSATION.

NINTH CONVERSATION.

SIMMIAS. I have often wished to ask thee one question, but hitherto I have omitted it. Now, praise be to Him who reminds us of things forgotten; I will put it to thee, and thou must give me an answer.

MAIMOON. Put thy question, my friend; perhaps I shall be able to answer it to thy satisfaction.

SIM. Undoubtedly the accusation of the use of blood must have been investigated by many Christian monarchs, and especially by the Popes; and it must also have happened that amongst them there were friends of truth, who had full power to investigate the subject. Dost thou happen to know the result of any inquiries made by such? if so, pray inform me.

MAI. Thy conjecture is correct. The decrees issued by those monarchs and Popes in consequence of their investigations, fully testify the groundlessness of the accusation. But before I specify them, I will quote to thee something that was said by the noble and learned Czacki, a Polish Christian, who died about sixteen years ago. I have frequently mentioned his name to thee already.

SIM. Who is there who has not heard of that distinguished person? What thou art about to quote is doubtless from his admirable work entitled, "A Disquisition concerning the Jews;" for it treats entirely of your

people. I have heard a great deal of that work, though I have never read it myself. I think I have heard thee mention it before.

MAI. In the work thou hast just named he has inserted many arguments to refute the accusation, and also many decrees which emanated from Polish kings, and learned and influential men, as well as decrees issued by the Pope, in favour of the Israelites; but I alluded to another work written by him previously to that.

SIM. Perhaps it is a work which he wrote on the Polish laws; for I have been told that that is a very erudite performance likewise. I think I have once seen it.

MAI. Thou art right; it is in his work *On the Lithuanian and Polish Laws*.^{*} These are his words, in the shape of a note to the second article of the general privilege granted to the Israelites by the Polish king, Vitold, in Lucku, in 1408.

[At this stage of their discourse, Maimoon despatched a servant of Simmias to his house for several books, which he named. The servant speedily did his bidding.]

SIM. Pray give them to me; I will read them. [*He takes them from Maimoon and reads.*] 11. "Whosoever charges a Jew with having killed Christian children must produce three witnesses; and whoever fails to prove such a charge, shall undergo a penalty equal to that which would have been inflicted on the murderer." Czacki, in

^{*} *Czacki*, vol. ii. p. 111.

his note, thus concludes: "In spite of all the decrees issued by the Popes in favour of the Israelites, in spite of all the protections granted to them by the government, the voice of the clergy continued, even to our days, to resound on this subject, and to prepare materials for persecution. A priest of Cracow, named Budek, in 1407, by charging the Israelites with having killed a child, occasioned a riot to break out amongst the people, in which many Jews were slain." Stanislaus Lwowizyk (Leopolitanus), a priest, wrote in 1543 a work, *De Sanctis Interfectis a Judæos*, which was printed by Imgler, and which he concluded with an exhortation to the people to expel the Jews. Skargo, a priest, in his *Lives of the Saints*, mentions briefly, in that of St. Simon, of Trent, a murder committed in the year 1574, in Punie, a Lithuanian town, and spares no expressions capable of making the Jews hated. Przedas Moiecki, a priest, published at Siebeneychen's printing office, 1598, an extensive treatise on the history of similar cruelties, and by his narrative excited the anger of all those who had more zeal than wisdom. When a decree of the tribunal of Lublin had, in 1636, condemned a Jew for having killed a child, the Carmelite friars, who printed the decree, did not forget to inveigh against the Israelitish nation. About the middle of the same century, a device, representing the martyrdom of a child, was publicly exhibited in Woyslawice, a Polish town; and as late as 1774, the criminal tribunal of Warsaw was yet employed in examining a similar charge. When, therefore, the Jews were generally accused of this crime, protection against the general prejudice was needed; and this is the reason why the

clause above-mentioned was granted as a privilege to the Jews."

MAI. Can we have any better evidence than that of the popes themselves, who declared the accusation false? And dost thou not know that whenever the Israelites were banished from a Christian country, they were always received by the popes in Rome, as well as in the states under them; and under the popes sometimes enjoyed great privileges?

SIM. I should like very much to read the decrees of the kings and popes which declare the accusation to be false.

MAI. I give thee here a little work, entitled, *Documenta Judæos*, printed in Poland in 1763; also an ukase, written in the Polish and Russian languages, as it was issued by the great Emperor Alexander the First; and I give thee another work, which was printed two years ago in Warsaw, in the Polish language; it is called *Obrona Israel*. I have here for thy perusal a translation of the celebrated work of Menashe ben Israel, to which I have already called thy attention; this he composed in the year 1656; it contains answers to many questions which were put by distinguished English Christians, and an answer to the accusation of the use of blood; that work is generally known by the name of *Vindiciæ Judæorum*.

SIM. I know that great man; he was the spiritual head of the congregation at Amsterdam; monarchs and learned Christians greatly respected him. I have read several of his works, which he composed in Latin, English, Spanish, Dutch, and Hebrew; he is the author of more than thirty works in different languages.

MAI. The work I have so often alluded to, and which I have here, has been translated into German by the great Hebrew philosopher Mendelssohn, whom we have several times spoken of as the German Plato, and the Hebrew Socrates.

SIM. The celebrated Karamsin also designates him by those appellations.

MAI. That philosopher translated it in the year 1782; and it was printed in the same year at Berlin: it has also been printed elsewhere; and he added a wonder-exciting preface to his work.

SIM. All men of learning agree, that whatever has been written by Mendelssohn deserves to be styled precious and wonderful: there was not a philosopher like him at the time he lived, nor is there his equal in our days. He was also very pious in his actions, and therefore obtained in his generation the title of "Precious;" and he was the only one of his nation so called. I recollect having read once, that when the Emperor Alexander the First ordered his minister of finance to make an estimate of the annual expenditure for the schools he intended to establish for the Israelites in his dominions, and the minister brought to the Emperor the account he desired, he said, "May it please your Imperial Majesty, this establishment will require an immense sum; the expenses will be greater than any benefit that can be derived from them." Upon which the Emperor mildly observed, "If from these schools in my country, only one Mendelssohn should come, the benefit will be greater than all the expenses I shall incur."

MAI. (*looking at Simmias with a cheerful countenance,*

and his eyes expressing the gratification of his heart). Two years ago a learned Hebrew from Warsaw translated that work into the Polish language, and added to it a very long preface, which chiefly serves to refute the accusation of the use of blood: in that thou wilt also find several decrees, and answers to the questions of our opponents.

SIM. I will read them.

[Simmias here commenced the perusal of the various documents, and Maimoon waited with him till he had concluded, which was about three o'clock in the afternoon.]

Documenta Judæos in Polonia concernentia ad acta metrices regni suscepta, et ex iis fideliter iterum descripta et extradita Varsaviæ, Anno 1763.

“AUGUSTUS THE THIRD, by the Grace of God, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania, Russia, Prussia, Massovia, Samogitia, Kiovia, Volhynia, Podolia, Podlachia, Livonia, Smolencia, Severia, Czerniechovia, Hereditary Duke of Saxony, and Elector.

“It is our will and pleasure to make known, by these presents, to all whom it may concern, to our own subjects especially; that the infidel Meyer Jewelowicz, one of the elders of the Jewish community in Poland, has appeared in person before the officers of our minor chancery; and has caused to be inserted amongst the records

thereof the document, a copy of which is hereunto subjoined, which was extracted, by authority, from the archives of Lemberg, and signed, in testimony of its authenticity, by the most noble Skorupka Padlewski, and sealed with the seal of the Starosty; whereby we are assured that it is a faithful copy of the original, and that its correctness in every particular is unquestionable.

“ Enacted in the castle of Lemberg, on Friday, the very day of the Lord our Saviour’s transfiguration, one thousand seven hundred and eleven.

“ The infidel Aaron Israelowicz, chief Syndic of the town and suburbs of Lemberg, has this day, in his own person, appeared at the Record Office of the Starostine Castle; and, on his requisition, has been inserted amongst the public and official records of the same, a special article in favour of the Jews of Lemberg; being one of the provisions of a privilege, or charter, granted by His Majesty, Sigismund the third, king of Poland, and inscribed on parchment by command of the same illustrious monarch, and approved of, and confirmed in all its paragraphs, by his late majesty Michael the First; in confirmation of which, his majesty affixed to it his sign manual, and it was also signed by his majesty’s secretary, the noble Hieronymus Pinoci, and sealed with the seal of the privy council, and enrolled in the public records on the Friday ensuing upon the Sunday *Cantate* of the year 1671. This has been submitted by the aforesaid Aaron Israelowicz to the inspection of the authorities of this office, transcribed in their presence, and the transcript compared with the original. The twenty-first paragraph of the precept is as follows:—

“ ‘ And farther be it enacted, that henceforward no Jew shall be accused by any Christian, lightly saying, as regards this matter, that Jews are under the necessity of using Christian blood in the making of unleavened bread for their paschal feast; for the papal decrees, and constitutions or enactments of Innocent, declare that of such things the Jews are in no wise guilty, and, moreover, that such are not sanctioned by their law. And if any Christians, from stubborn prejudice, or wilful malice, shall charge a Jew with the commission of a crime for the purpose of obtaining Christian blood, then it shall be right and lawful for the Jew to require the Christian to produce three witnesses who are Jews in support of his charge, whose reputation must be free from reproach, and whose faith must be unshaken; and if, by such evidence, the Christian should succeed in proving the Jew to be guilty, then shall the Jew be condemned to death, and his life be inevitably taken from him; but if the Christian should not be able to support his accusation with such evidence as is hereby specified, then shall he suffer the same penalty as would otherwise have been awarded to the Jew. And if, on such pretences as that any Jews are supposed to have used Christian blood for any mysterious purpose, nobles, citizens, or burgesses of our kingdom, shall commit any acts of violence on the Jews residing within our dominions, without their having been lawfully convicted of the crime alleged against them, the property of such shall, without reservation, be forfeited to our own treasury. And it is also enacted, that if any Christian shall summon any Jew to answer to any charge of a like nature, the Jew shall not be com-

pelled to appear before any judge in respect to such charge, except the Palatine for the time being; and that if any Christian within our dominions shall, on the Sabbath, or on any festival or peculiar day on which the Jews are forbidden by their religion to touch money, attempt to exact from them the Radia,* and, in the prosecution of their purpose, shall violently seize a Jew's furniture or other effects, such Christian shall be tried before a competent tribunal, and, if convicted of the offence, be punished as a robber and common thief, and his treatment shall be the same in every particular.'

"After the paragraph had been duly registered, as the said Aaron Israelowicz required, the original document was returned into his possession, for which his receipt was duly given."

(LOCUS SIGILLI.)

"This extract has been revised by me,

SKORUPKA PADLEWSKI, MP.

"The same has been read by me, GORNICKI.

"Which document, per oblatum, faithfully copied, we have permitted to be inserted in our records, the original being returned to the owner, for which we hold his receipt.

(The signature of the infidel Meyer Jewelowicz written in Hebrew characters.)

"Done the Friday after Quadragesimal Sunday (Lætare), March the 18th, in the year of our Lord 1768.

" M. WODZICKI, E. P. P. R.

"[L. S.] Report of his lordship the illustrious Count de

* A certain tax levied on the Jews in Poland.

CRANOW WODZICKI, Bishop of Premysl, Abbot of Czernikow, and Vice Chancellor for the crown.

“JEAN STOMINSKI, Keeper of the records of the crown, and secretary to his majesty.”

AUGUSTUS THE THIRD, By the Grace of God,
&c., &c., &c.

“It is our will and pleasure to make known, by these presents, to all whom it may concern, to our own subjects especially; that the infidel Meyer Jewelowicz, one of the Elders of the Jewish Community in Poland, has appeared in person before the officers of our minor chancery, and has caused to be inserted in the records thereof a copy of the letter hereunto subjoined, with an attestation, under the hand and seal of the noble Charles de Schmidt, our Chancellor, that it is a faithful translation from the Italian into Latin.”

“*Letter of his Eminence the Cardinal Corsini, to his Excellency the Nuncio of the Holy See, Visconti. Written from Rome to Warsaw, on Feb. 9th, 1769.*

“To the most Illustrious and Reverend in God, the Nuncio of the Apostolic See — the Cardinal Corsini.

“The bearer of this letter, Jacob Jelek, a Jew born in Poland, is the same that in the year 1758, during the reign of the supreme Pontiff, Benedict the Seventeenth, came to Rome to implore, in the name of his brethren inhabiting Poland, the protection of the Apostolic See

for them ; to shield them from the fierce and bitter persecutions which, as they say, they are subjected to by the Christians, not only as regards their property, but their persons and their lives.

“ It appears there is a serious injury done them when they are charged, as they frequently are, by unruly assemblages of people, with murder, under the false impression, that in the preparation of their unleavened bread, they are in the habit of using human blood, especially Christian blood. The now happily reigning supreme Pontiff, Clement the Thirteenth, after a careful investigation of the subject, has determined to act in the matter as becomes his wisdom and love of justice, and as the great importance of it requires ; and, in accordance with his intentions, you will receive certain private instructions. For the present, his Holiness deems it sufficient to command us to inform you, that it is his pleasure that full and efficient protection be afforded by your Lordship to the aforesaid Jacob Jelek, so that, while on his journey home, he may not be exposed to any molestation or grievous annoyance, especially from those whom your Lordship might expect to be actuated by any angry and revengeful feelings towards him, because of his having applied for the protection of the Holy See. It is the wish of his Holiness that adequate means be provided for effectuating this object ; those on whom the active measures for its accomplishment will devolve must be properly apprised of their duties in respect to the same ; and, indeed, such protection must be secured to the bearer of this letter as will convince him that the word of his Holiness has not been given in

vain, and that he is deeply a debtor to our Lord's clemency and heavenly love.

“‘God grant your Excellency long to enjoy health.’”

(The following are the words of the attestation.)

“‘I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that this letter is a *verbatim* translation from the Italian language into Latin, and that it perfectly agrees with the original, given by the Most Reverend in God, the Lord Cardinal Corsini, to the Most Illustrious Nuncio of the Apostolic See in Poland, A.D., 1760, who (the Nuncio) delivered it to the Most Illustrious Count Brühl, in order that he might, in conformity with the principle it sets forth, protect the Jewish people inhabiting Poland; and which, to ensure for it due faith, I have signed with my own hand.

“‘CHARLES DE SCHMIDT, Counsellor to his Majesty.’

“‘This letter, as it is here expressed, we have allowed to be inserted in the Records of the Chancery, and the original to be returned to the owner of it, who has given us under his own hand a receipt for the same.’”

(The signature of the infidel Meyer Jewelowicz, in Hebrew characters.)

“‘That the veracity of this document may be incontrovertibly established, the seal of the crown has been affixed.

“‘Done at Warsaw, on the Friday after the Quadregesimal Sunday (Lætare), in March, 1763, the 30th year of his present Majesty's reign,

“‘M. WODZICKI, E.P.P.R.

“‘[L.S.] Report of the most noble Lord Michael

Count de CRANOW WODZICKI, Bishop of Premysl and Vice-Chancellor for the Crown.

“JEAN SLOMINSKI, Keeper of the Records of the Crown, and Secretary to His Majesty.”

“AUGUSTUS THE THIRD, by the grace of God, King of Poland, &c., &c., &c.

* * * “and has caused to be inserted in the records thereof a letter from the Most Reverend Lord, the Apostolic Nuncio, to the Illustrious Count Brühl, the chief minister of our Saxon court, written in French, and also a Latin translation of the letter, the tenor of which is perfectly in accordance with the original. The document hereunto subjoined is a faithful copy of the same.

“*Letter from the Most Reverend in God, the Apostolic Nuncio at the Court of Warsaw, to the Most Illustrious Count Brühl.*

“It is certain that the Jews who inhabit Poland have applied to the Holy See for protection against the lawless persecutions to which they are exposed; and on this subject I have even received commands from his Holiness, which I have been mindful to fulfil whenever an opportunity for my so doing has presented itself. As your Excellency wishes to be informed of the intentions of his Holiness, I have the honour to communicate them to you. His Holiness deigns to make known that the Holy See has lately examined the grounds on which rests the opinion that the Jews make use of human blood in the preparation of their unleavened bread, and for the pro-

curing of it are guilty of the murder of Christian children; and it has been ascertained that there is no evidence in existence which will satisfactorily show that the Jews have ever been guilty of such a crime for such a purpose, notwithstanding the prejudice which was formerly, and is by many people even now, entertained against them. And in the event, therefore, of any such charges being hereafter brought against them, that prejudice is not to be received as corroborative of the fact alleged; but on strictly legal proofs alone must their accusers endeavour to substantiate their accusations.

“ ‘ I am, with the most perfect respect, Sir,

“ ‘ Your Excellency’s most humble and

“ ‘ Obedient servant.’ ”

“ This letter, the original in French, and the Latin translation thereof, as here given, we have allowed to be registered as desired; and we have also given instructions to the proper officers, that any party who may desire to possess a copy of the same shall have a copy correctly written after that deposited in the record office. The original has been returned to the bearer, for which his receipt has been duly given.

(The signature of the infidel, Meyer Jewelowicz, in Hebrew characters.)

“ Done at Warsaw, on the Wednesday after the Sunday of the Passion week, in March, 1763, the thirtieth year of his present Majesty’s reign.

“ M. WODZICKI, E.P.P.R.

“ [L.S.] Report, &c., &c., as before.

“*J. Tugendhold's Preface to his Polish Translation of Menashe ben Israel's 'Vindiciæ Judæorum.'*”

“After so many vicissitudes of woe and oppression, through which the Israelites had passed during the eleven centuries of their dispersion over the kingdoms of the earth, a storm more destructive and horrible than any they had yet experienced burst upon them with the commencement of the epoch of the Crusades. ‘The first Crusade,’ says the virtuous and learned Czacki,* referring to some ancient and celebrated Christian writers, ‘proclaimed towards the end of the eleventh century, inflicted more evils on the defenceless Jews in Europe than all that the Saracens suffered from the progress of the Christian armies, and exterminated more Jews in our native region, than all the Saracens whom they cut off in the heart and tumult of sieges and pitched battles.’ This statement is confirmed by the learned Bishop Naruszewicz, in the following terms:— ‘These knightly heroes, beginning their devout enterprise with the conversion of Jews, compelled them to receive the Christian sacrament, and subjected them to many indignities.’ †

“The great eclipse of the sun of Christianity, the foundation of which is said to be good-will to all men, drew upon the heads of the Israelitish people a frightful tempest. The hatred against this humbled and prostrated nation daily increasing, was in a great measure excited and kept alive by the pens of Christian writers,

* See Czacki's work under the title of “Disquisition concerning Jews,” p. 52.

† Naruszewicz's History of Poland, tom. iii. p. 57.

chiefly belonging to the clergy. ‘The light of science,’ says Czacki, alluding to those in comparison with others who lived in subsequent epochs, ‘did not extend its beneficial influence over any spot of Europe; and the monks, whose legendary lives assumed a miraculous character, and many secular historians also, believed that they were performing praiseworthy actions by adding to the vocabulary of abuses profusely heaped upon Jews, or by charging them with the commission of the most abominable crimes.* How, then, can it be wondered at, that minds involved in darkness, and predisposed by the spirit of the age and other circumstances which might then prevail, to a fanatical abhorrence of the Israelites, and unceasingly excited by the sermons of an apparently learned clergy, should have been brought to such a state as to believe the most absurd and monstrous fabrications, especially when those fabrications tended to effect an object to them most desirable, namely, that of enriching themselves, which they could do by persecuting and pillaging the Jews?’

“This was the epoch, while a sanguinary war was being carried on, ‘by a sainted mob,’ to use the words of the venerable Naruszewicz, in which first arose the preposterous accusation (though productive of most frightful effects) of the Jews making use of Christian blood. Nearly all enlightened writers, clerical as well as secular, agree in assigning its origin to this epoch; and it is when referring to that, that Czacki says, (making some allusion as before to more recent times), ‘Till the twelfth century,

* Czacki’s “Disquisition concerning Jews,” p. 54.

Europe had never heard of these charges, which emanated from a mistaken zeal, and were received as truths by the masses of society, so notorious for their credulity at that period, believing almost any assertions regarding Christian martyrs. The number of martyrs then rapidly increased, and the credulous people numbered them amongst the saints; and they did so frequently without the authority of the church.*

“ But as falsehood, however artfully contrived, will not stand the test of truth, which never swerves from its first position, this horrible charge assumed such a variety of aspects, as to convince sensible and unprejudiced persons that it never could have had a firm foundation; very few of the promulgators of the charge could agree with each other as to the precise manner in which the Jews used Christian blood, when any such had been obtained by them. Some conceived that the blood was required by the Jews to mix with their unleavened bread; some that the Jews committed murders in order to refresh their memories regarding the manner in which Jesus Christ had been put to death; and others there were who imagined that the Israelites used such blood in the preparation of certain medicines, and for magical purposes.

“ Bishop Fleury, so celebrated as a man of extensive

* *Czacki's Disquisition*, p. 54. The enlightened reader will easily perceive that the worthy and learned Czacki, in these two last sentences, boldly and openly attacks the Rev. Zuchowski and his followers; that he alludes even to other, less furious, and otherwise respectable writers, perhaps even to Skarga. The reader will convince himself of this last assertion, by comparing the above-mentioned quotation with the second part of that from the work of the celebrated Bishop Fleury.

knowledge, and whom Czacki very often quotes in his learned and voluminous work entitled *Ecclesiastical History* (xii., p. 579.) expresses himself on this subject as follows :—

“Some authors assert that the Jews used to commit these cruelties in order to obtain Christian blood, which they used for remedies, or magical operations; but the reasons they give for it are so shameful and frivolous, that I disdain to mention them. Moreover, I find none of these facts based upon any incontestible proof; and it would be of little importance to attempt to verify them, were it not for the worship rendered to those pretended martyrs; because the Church has no other end in view than the conversion of the Jews, and does not wish to destroy them or make them hated.’

“In Poland, where the Israelites arrived towards the end of the eleventh century of the Christian era, principally from Germany,* and where they introduced industry in addition to wealth,† they were in the beginning, treated in a friendly manner. They enjoyed liberty under the shield of privileges, which were granted to them by the kings who then reigned. Boleslas, Duke of Great Poland, granted them, in 1264, similar privileges,

* This is chiefly proved by the idiom still spoken among the Polish Israelites.

† “Our country” says Czacki, “fertile but not populous, felt the want of industrious habits. The Jews, persecuted in Germany during the plague, brought their riches to us.—The commerce of the country, as well as the money, was in their hands, no Christian yet daring to engage in any thing so important and difficult. It is even likely that the Jews paid large sums of money to the Government, which enabled King Casimir the Great to build numerous towns (vide *Desquis.* p 74, 75).”

which were afterwards confirmed by Casimir the Great, who reigned from 1333 to 1370. Casimir's Government extended over several countries which did not belong to Boleslas.* They enjoyed the privilege of being landed proprietors, and especially of carrying on all kinds of commerce and mechanical trades.†

“The unwearied perseverance with which they availed themselves of these important privileges, contributed greatly to the prosperity of the country. ‘Then,’ says Czacki, ‘the Christian merchant did not inveigh against the Israelites; and as long as commerce flourished under the protecting wings of liberty, the Christian in his church, as well as the Jew in his synagogue, offered

* *Czacki's Disquis.*, p. 62.

† In an apology for the Hebrew people, published in Cracow 1539, it is stated, that there are scarcely any Poles employed as artizans in Poland, and that there are only about five hundred merchants in that nation — but the Jews are numbered to three thousand two hundred merchants in that country, and about ten thousand artizans (R. p. 84). In the succeeding period of Sigismundus Augustus' reign, they were in a very prosperous condition, and were much praised in consequence of their conduct. Cardinal Comendonius, ambassador at the Court of King Sigismundus, who visited the southern provinces of Poland, speaks of them in the following terms: — “There are in these provinces a great many Jews who are not scorned as in several other places. They do not there derive a miserable existence from insignificant profits and usury, although they do not reject these means of gain; but they possess lands, carry on commerce, and even devote themselves to the study of science, especially to medicine and astronomy. They hold nearly every where the offices of exactors of custom duties, and those of the transport of merchandize. They can boast of pretty large fortunes, and not only rank among the native gentlemen, but sometimes even rule over them. They wear no distinctive dress from that of the Christians, are even allowed to carry a sword and to be otherwise armed: in short, they enjoy the rights of all other citizens.” (*Vie du Card. Com. par Flechier*, p. 190).

up his thanks to the Almighty for having given them one fatherland and established between them equal justice.'

"But these blessings were soon mingled with misfortune and suffering. The Jews were comparatively prosperous and happy under Boleslas, Casimir the Great, and Sigismund; but yet the beginning of their prosperity had been embittered. The savage spirit of the age, which we have already endeavoured to depict, soon spread its influence over Poland; that influence grew with the progress of time; and the banners of fanaticism and intolerance were gradually unfolded, until at length, in the fourteenth century, they were waved with desolating triumph over the unfortunate descendants of Judah.

"With the beginning of the fifteenth century they began in Poland to imitate foreigners in accusing the Jews of using blood; and although some time elapsed before any definite charge was made, supported by anything having the resemblance of evidence, the precursory murmurs gave rise to most cruel persecutions. The virtuous and learned Czacki, in speaking of this epoch, says 'When a false zeal had represented the Jews as being murderers of Christian children, the double indignation of Christians and professors of other creeds, used to declare lawful every means of injuring a Jew.' The energetic edicts of the Polish sovereigns of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, secured the Jews, in a great measure, from ruin; but immediately after the death of Casimir the Great, when, as Czacki says, 'The government had been weakened, and the security and fate of the Jews made to depend on the qualities (good or bad) of the rulers, and frequently even on trifling circumstances,

then the spirit of savage intolerance was again kindled, and acted more powerfully upon the previously happy country of Poland; and, along with it, the cruel persecutions of the Israelitish race were revived in a more destructive manner than any that had yet been known.

“But in order to give a better aspect to the charge of using Christian blood, it was deemed necessary to have something like real and credible evidence forthcoming; and special cases were got up, in which certain means were pointed out as having been used in carrying off or decoying a child into the hands of Jews; certain Jews were charged with being the actual murderers; and a disfigured piece of humanity was produced as being what remained of the body after the Jews had accomplished their purposes. But the beginning of all things is difficult; and the first attempt the calumniators made, even with a special case, completely failed: nevertheless, actuated by the mortification of defeat, they contrived to punish the Jews, under some pretence or other, in a most afflicting manner.

“It is certain, and Dlugosz (lib. 10), as well as Stubicki (ch. 7) confirms it, that the first publication of the charge against the Jews of using blood accompanied with indictments forged agreeably to legal forms, took place at Cracow in 1407: but the contexture of the indictments was necessarily so coarse, that the thread, otherwise the shallowness of the pretence, was easily discovered. The magistrates of Cracow, sufficiently convinced of the falsehood of the charge, strenuously defended the Jews against the attacks of an infuriated populace; but yet,

through the fanatical declamations of a priest named Budek, they suffered many grievous injuries.

“About half a century later,* similar barbarities are said to have been practised at Cracow, in consequence of the denunciations of a Christian woman, who pretended that her neighbour, a Christian like herself, had delivered up her child to the Hebrews: but this malicious scheme was soon exploded by the exertions of the magistrates.† Subsequently, during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, and at the beginning of the eighteenth, similar charges were brought forward with better success in Rava, Pultusk, Tarnow, Vilno, Gostyn, Sochaizeu, Rozana, Ciechanow, Biala, Sandomierz, Rzeszow, Grabow, &c.‡

“Here let me dwell a little on this work of Zuchowski, which I have so often quoted, which recapitulates the

* The phrase *Kilkadziesiat lat* means several tens of years, and conveys but a vague idea of a number between twenty and a hundred, of which sixty may be considered as the average.

† Zuchowski, who mentions this fact also, p. 92, calls the officers here referred to “Jews;” but I think that if he had lived in those times, the officers would have been able to convince him that they were true Christians, and worthy disciples of truth, as well as of humanity.

‡ Zuchowski numbers, with due precision, eighty and odd similar murders in Poland, committed in the three above-mentioned centuries. I am not bound to acquiesce in the opinion of the reverend gentleman; I will, nevertheless, suppose that this was the exact number of charges, or as he calls them, crimes. Still what proportion can the reverend gentleman make them bear to the number of the Polish population, taking into account the three hundred years during which the eighty cases are said to have happened? and yet he assures us that, in Lithuania alone, thirty gallons of such blood were yearly required. (30 *garcy*; one *garniec* is equal to about 2½ pints of English measure).

contents of other preceding works on the same subject, and to which, as to a long-established arsenal, the enemies of truth, tolerance, and humanity, resort for arms, with which, however rusty and unserviceable such may be, they think to accomplish their wicked purposes. I am not deterred from so doing by the knowledge that I shall thus give our inveterate enemies an access to this precious arsenal, and an opportunity of selecting from its rich stores such arguments and calumnies as will best suit their purposes. On the contrary, I hope to gain no small triumph from the exhibition of some of the principal assertions contained in the above-mentioned book, as I am certain that the friends of truth, universal knowledge, and humanity, to whose judgment I submit myself, will be thereby enabled to decide whether such a book deserves the appellation of a literary work, or rather that of a despicable libel.

“ My worthy readers must excuse me, if my feelings have led me somewhat aside from the matter. In returning to it, I begin by appealing to the words of Czacki:—‘The chief spiritual authority of the Popes frequently defended the Jews, and but seldom justified their persecution. Pope Alexander the Second, (who reigned about 1060), praised the French bishops for having protected the Jews. He declared the war against the Saracens to be just because they obstinately combated; but not the persecution of the Jews who submitted to bondage.’ Pope Urban the Fourth, who reigned over the Roman Catholic Church from 1261 to 1265, set himself indignantly against the prejudice that was fast spreading over western Europe, that the Jews for

their religious rites required human blood; a proof of which we find in the decree or privilege of Boleslas, duke of Great Poland.*

“The despair which seized the Israelites during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, especially in Spain and France, persecuted as they were in consequence of the charges mentioned, was relieved by the gracious interference of Gregory IX. In speaking of that interference these are the words of Czacki: ‘Gregory IX., in 1236, appealed for pity on behalf of this race, to France and Spain, at the same timè, nevertheless, the zeal of the crusaders was depriving them of their lives, and the insatiable avarice of the holy warriors was extorting from them their riches.’

“In 1338, by smearing with blood the host, a wicked clerk in Passan incited the people against the innocent Israelites, to whom the act was attributed; but the papal authority, having discovered the truth, caused the heartless calumniator to be punished, and so put a stop to this persecution.†

“When, in the middle of the fourteenth century, the plague was raging, more especially in Germany, the spirit of persecution caused this visitation of Providence to be ascribed to the guiltless Jews, whom the contagion

* The name of Pope Urban is not mentioned in the decree just quoted, as we shall see hereafter; but any one who knows anything of the history of the Church, will easily find it out by comparing the times in which Boleslas and Urban reigned.

† This single fact ought to have shamed the priest Zuckowski, who so fastidiously speaks in his work of the charge brought against the Jews, of stealing and staining with blood the consecrated wafers.

had comparatively spared; and many of them were in consequence murdered. The celebrated Basnage mentioned this event in the following terms: 'They were, this very year, charged with having poisoned the wells, springs, and rivers. The plague was then causing great horror in Europe. I do not know if it was not in consequence of the Jews dying in less numbers than others, that this blessing of heaven excited envy; certainly they were deemed guilty because God preserved them from the general calamity. Mere suspicion sufficed for their condemnation; and instead of thinking how to die as became them, in peace with all mankind, people exerted the remainder of their strength and life in slaughtering the Israelites.'*

“The fury of the populace would have made the number of their victims much greater, if Pope Clement VI., by an energetic pastoral letter, had not put a stop to the slaughter. Czacki mentions this epoch in these terms: ‘During the plague of 1348, a papal bull was the only defence the Jews found against popular fury, to which they were greatly exposed.’

“Passing over the constitutions or bulls in prohibition of the accusations so often mentioned, of using Christian blood, which were issued in former times by Innocent IV., Urban IV., and Paul III., popes known equally as well by their pious zeal, as by their enlightened minds and exemplary philanthropy, let us come to similar edicts of a later date. Henceforward I shall purposely avail myself of the very words of the before-

* History of the Jews, by Basnage.

mentioned report, as given by the pen of a learned Christian lawyer.

““ Being in Rome during the reign of the Pontiff Benedict XIV, A.C. 1758, I was made acquainted with the case of Jacob Jelek, a Polish Jew, who brought before the Apostolic See all the circumstances of a horrible charge which had been made against his people generally. These were examined with the utmost care, in the manner in which it is there customary to examine such matters. Afterwards, in the reign of Clement XIII., the examination was resumed, and auspiciously brought to a conclusion; and nothing was elicited that could in any shape confirm the acts to which the accusation related. The Roman magistrates and tribunals are accustomed to investigate all matters brought before them with the utmost caution and deliberation, even such as are of little importance. After having perused the written explanation of each party in a suit, and filed a decree or sentence, if either of the parties should consider himself too hardly dealt with by the decision, they grant a rehearing of the case; and will even hear it a third time, if particularly required. How strict then must they have been in a matter of such importance as this, and so intimately connected with religion. The Apostolic See would have neglected nothing in the investigation of this affair; every point of law, and every legal ceremony, would have been attended to. Nevertheless, after every thing had been done, there appeared not the least foundation for the horrible imputation.

““ This result of the enquiry, so favourable to the Israelites, induced the Pope to issue commands to the Lord

Cardinal Corsini, to furnish the said Jacob Jelek with a recommendatory letter addressed to Cardinal Visconti, nuncio of the Apostolic See in Poland, which letter was to the following effect:—*

“ ‘ The opinions of the Holy father and of the Apostolic See, which were of the same importance as an ultimate decree, were forthwith communicated by the Lord Cardinal Visconti to the court of the then reigning monarch, Augustus III., in a letter addressed to Count Bruhl, † prime minister of the Saxon court.’

“ These clear and convincing certificates of the Apostolic See, contributed to strengthen the national laws of Poland, and the prerogatives and enactments of the sovereign. ‡

“ From the pious and important constitutions of the supreme heads of the Church, I will now proceed to touch upon some decrees enacted in reference to the same subject by the kings of Poland:—and firstly, as to the constitutions of the crown. Herbut's statute § contains a precise legal prohibition against accusing the Israelites on this ground. This is yet better proved by

* Here follows a quotation from the letter which has already been inserted in the commencement of this work.

† Here follows a quotation from the second letter, inserted at the commencement with the other official documents.

‡ If Zuchowski, who dared to attack the former constitutions and bulls of the Popes respecting this matter, and endeavoured to shake their credibility, had lived long enough to see the epoch of Benedict XIV. and Clement XIII., and had been informed of their decree transmitted to King Augustus III., he would probably have been silenced, and would have no more dared to traduce all former similar constitutions.

§ In the paragraph *De Impetitione Judæi pro Puero inter empto.*

Zalaszowski,* and equally by Januszowski;† they, as well as preceding lawyers, mention the rights and privileges granted in Kalish by Boleslas, great grandfather of Casimir the Great, and confirmed in Cracow, A. C. 1345, by the same king, Casimir the Great, in the presence of the Wojewodes (Palatines), Castelans, and the king's chancellor (Zbigniewa), and then incorporated by king Alexander with the statute laws. Paragraph 32 of the chief of these privileges is as follows:—

“ ‘ According to the papal decrees, in the name of our father, we command that, in future, no Jews in our dominions may be accused of using human blood; as, according to the commandments of the Old Testament, all Jews abstain from every kind of blood. But, if any Jew be charged with having killed any Christian child, he must be convicted on the testimony of three Christians and three Jews; and if so convicted, he shall incur such a penalty only as would be awarded to any other person for a similar deed. And if the witnesses should vary in their depositions, and the guilt of the Jew be not proved, then the penalty which the Jew would have incurred, shall be awarded to the accuser.’

“ Czacki, who was so erudite, and possessed of a profound knowledge of the Hebrew language, mentioning briefly the above-quoted paragraph, adds a short but forcible remark, well adapted to stop the tongues of our calumniators, and which is rendered thus:—‘ The religious books of the Israelites, without including with them those of the Holy Scriptures, those being universally known,

* *Jus Regni Poloniae*, vol. i. l. i. letter b. § 4.

† Statutes, Laws, and Constitutions.

contain no such doctrine. We have seen how the Popes have defended the Jews against these calumnies. The example of the Swiss, who in the thirteenth century, forbade that the Jews should be accused of similar crimes, was followed by many other governments.'

“In the year 1453, Casimir the Fourth, king of Poland, granted in Cracow a privilege to the Jews, arranged in twenty-four articles, the twenty-first of which is in substance as follows:—

“‘Be it also enacted, that no Jew shall henceforth be accused by any Christian, lightly saying, that the Jews are bound by their religion and customs to make use of Christian blood, or the sacrament of the Christian church; for the papal decrees and enactments of Innocent declare that such crimes have never been proved against them, and, moreover, that such are contrary to the spirit of their law.’

“This privilege or charter was fully confirmed by succeeding monarchs; for example, by Sigismundus Augustus, in Piotrkow, in the years of the Christian era 1548, 1551, 1564, and 1571; Stephen in Warsaw, 1580; Sigismundus III., 1588; Vladislaus IV., 1633; John Casimir in Cracow, 1649; and, lastly, by Michael, who, at the coronation diet in Cracow, was graciously pleased to increase the articles to forty. The above-mentioned King Stephen issued in 1576 a universal edict, that the charge of killing children should not be made against the Israelites, as they did not practise such abominable crimes. This universal edict was incorporated with a decree filed in a certain law-suit, and which can be found amongst the general records of the Polish Crown.

Czacki mentions it in his *Disquisition*, p. 94, and refers to the volumes of the Crown records, under the letters X.P., p. 113."

"Copy of the Proclamation of the most illustrious Prince Golotzin, the Director in Chief (Minister) of Foreign Religious Confessions.

"To his Excellency the Civil Governor of Grodno.

"In consequence of there being many denunciations, even at the present time, levelled against the Jews in regard to their being guilty of such abominable practices as murdering Christian children, in several provinces which have been severed from Poland and incorporated with the Russian territory, his Imperial Majesty, considering that such opinions have been so often refuted as to render them absurd and exceedingly unjust, and wishing to throw around the Israelites in his dominions that safe guard from wanton outrage which they deserve, has deigned to command me to apprise all governors in this realm, that it is his Imperial will and pleasure that no Jews be henceforth executed for the murder of Christian children, unless there be stronger evidence to support such charge than the mere prejudice that the murder has been committed for the sake of the blood; and that in case of a murder having been committed, of which suspicion shall have fallen on a Jew, the inquiry into the matter shall be conducted in a strictly legal manner, the same as is observed with men professing other creeds, who may lie under the imputation of having committed a murder.

“This Imperial Ukase your Excellency is required to see duly fulfilled.

“I have the honor to be, &c.

(Signed) “PRINCE ALEXANDER GOLOTZIN.”

St. Petersburg,

No. 261.

March the 6th, 1817.

SIM. (*when he had done reading.*) Brother Maimoon, blessed is the Lord who did not turn away from the prayer which I offered up to Him, that truth, which, throughout the whole course of my life, I have cherished, might not be withheld from me now. Grant, O God, that those promises which were made to us by our holy prophets may be fulfilled; “For then will I give to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.”* “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”† “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.”‡ Now, brother Maimoon, go home in peace. I shall write a letter to my brother, in which I shall declare your innocence, and thus remove from ye, as far as I am able, the disgrace which has been cast upon ye by your enemies. I shall also send him a report of the conversations which have taken place between us on the subject. I rely

* Zephaniah iii. 9.

† Isaiah xi. 9.

‡ Isaiah xi. 6.

upon the reason and wisdom of my brother, as well as upon those righteous and honest men who may be with him; that they may all acknowledge the truth, the seal of the Almighty. Yet, before thou leavest me, pray mention to me the names of some books that treat of the history and literature of the Hebrews, composed by distinguished and learned Christians, as well as by some of the Hebrew authors who have written in other languages: such works, I mean, as I have not yet read; for it often happens that I have discussions with the learned concerning the Hebrews or Caraites; and how could one not so well acquainted with similar works compete with them in argument? and especially if he be not well versed in the Hebrew and Aramaic languages, or may not have read the works written in Latin on that subject. I have been told by a learned Hebrew, that among the Christians there is scarcely one in thousands to be found who has a perfect knowledge of the Hebrew religion, its ceremonies, the works of the Israelites, their learned men, and other matters of similar importance.

MAR. That learned Hebrew was right. I shall most willingly comply with thy request, and I shall only name to thee such works as thou dost wish for,—the most renowned and the most necessary which I can just recollect; and here is a list of some of them.

(Maimoon gives Simmias a list of books. After this they kiss each other, and Maimoon returns to his home.)

THE LIST OF BOOKS REFERRED TO BY MAIMOON.

1. Josephus Flavius Cont. Apion.
2. Origens Cont. Celsus.
3. J. G. Eichorn's Allgemeine Geschichte der Literatur.
4. Jo. Cristoph. Wolfii Bibliothecæ Hebraicæ Hamburg.
5. G. B. de Rossi Dictionario Stor. degli Aut. Ebr.
6. J. Bartolocii Bibl. Ejusd. lib. jud. Rabbin.
7. Dohm, Ueber die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden.
8. Dissertation on the Jews, by T. Czackiego.
9. Rettung der Juden, von M. ben Israel, translated by Mendelssohn.
10. Charakter des Judenthums, von Wolf und Solomon.
11. Jeschurun, von Wolfssohn.
12. Die Emancipation der Juden, von Professor Krug in Leipzig.
13. Jerusalem, von Mendelssohn.
14. Sulamith, eine Zeitschrift von Dr. D. Fraenkel.
15. Actenstücke, von Carl A. Buchholtz.
16. Ueber die Aufnahme der Jüdischen Glaubensgenossen zum Bürgerrecht, von Carl A. Buchholtz.
17. Dr. J. M. Jost's Geschichte der Israeliten.
18. Letters of a Jew to Voltaire. Moscow, 1808 and 1817.

Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is too light to transcribe accurately.

APPENDIX.

THE following is a translation of a letter written by Dr. Johannus Reuchlin (professor of Humanioræ at the Universities of Basil, Ingoldstadt, and Tübingen), in the Hebrew language, and addressed to Bonetto de Lates, an Israelite, who, at the time being, was chief physician to Pope Leo. Bonetto was born in Provence, on account of which he is also known by the appellation of *Medicus Provincialis*. He was highly celebrated for the invention of an astronomical ring, which indicated the hour during both the day and night, and determined the height of the sun and planets. This invention is described in a work which he dedicated to Pope Alexander IV., entitled, *De Annuli Astromici Utilitate*.*

Reuchlin's Defence of the Talmud.

“To my lord who sits in the Councils of the Wise, who is the light and support of the exiled Israelites; to him who is my master and instructor, Bonetto, first physician to his Holiness the Pope,” &c. &c.

After prefacing his epistle with a number of profound

* See *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*.

compliments, the strict signification of which it is very difficult to render into English, the writer proceeds thus:—

“It is the beginning of my task to acquaint your lordship that, about two years ago, his gracious majesty the reigning emperor, whom God preserve, made a journey to Köln, which is a town containing a Christian university, and many distinguished men learned in theology. As his imperial majesty was passing through the town, the major part of the inhabitants, as it were by previous agreement, suddenly ran and assembled in a crowd before him, simultaneously exclaiming, in a tone that betokened distress of mind, ‘Help, O King and Emperor.’ And thus they continued:—‘For this reason do we cry for help. There is in thy empire a body of people who belong to a nation that is dispersed and degraded over the face of the whole earth; and their laws are not like the laws of thy subjects at large, nor like those of other nations; they are an offence and a great evil to those who render to thee due allegiance; and they are made so by certain books which they prize, in which their religious tenets are set forth, and which contain passages deeply insulting to our church, and conjurations against the Pope, the bishops, and all the clergy of whatever degree,—yea, and against the nobility of the nations of Europe, against kings and emperors, and, finally, against our whole nation, and the nations of the world. These books constitute what is called the Talmud. In addition to the evils which we have thus briefly enumerated, these books contain another still greater. If there were none such in existence, there would be only one religion; all

men would then yield their faith to our Saviour Jesus Christ; but these books are the sole cause that so many people live in error. For this reason, mighty monarch, thou shouldst not allow these books to exist in thy dominions any longer; and after having, with mature deliberation, convinced ourselves of the justness of our prayer, we earnestly petition that thou wouldst issue a command that all such books be delivered into the custody of a royal commissary or officer by thee appointed, by whom they may be deposited in the royal archives, and afterwards, in one mass, excepting the twenty-four books of the Holy Scriptures, be burnt and utterly destroyed; so that the evils of which we complain may be rooted out from amongst us, and that all men may worship one God under one name, and not be separated in their religious faith as these books have caused them to be separated hitherto.'

"All these tumultuous supplications had been produced by the intrigues of one sprung from your own people, an apostate, to whom the following passage in the Scriptures will doubtless apply:—'Thy destroyers, and they that made thee waste, shall go forth of thee.'* That apostate, as you are accustomed to designate him, was in possession of several letters from princes and counts, and also of one from a nun, the sister of the emperor. Not only did the nun give her countenance to the apostate, by communicating to him her sentiments in writing, but she proceeded in person to the emperor, threw herself at his feet, and vehemently besought him, saying, 'Oh, my

* Isaiah, xlix. 17.

brother and lord, ruler of nations, and most puissant monarch in the world, all the sins and crimes that are committed by means of the books of the Talmud will, in some sort, be charged upon you, for it is in your power to destroy them, and yet you do not. Does it require stronger testimony of their evil tendency, than that of a man who was educated and trained in the doctrine taught and disseminated by them, and who, consequently, must know whether they be good or bad? I, therefore, most earnestly beseech your Majesty to cause the books of the Talmud, wherever any such may be found, to be seized and burnt, and utterly destroyed. By such an act your Majesty's glory and devout repute will be raised to a perfect equality with that of the mightiest potentates that have ruled these realms before; and I doubt not that your Majesty will thus secure the lasting gratitude of all your loyal subjects, and the especial favour of God.'

“It must be apparent to all persons, my lord, that his Majesty could not entirely resist these importunities for the destruction of the Talmudical books; therefore he issued a decree that they should all be seized and placed in the custody of officers properly appointed for that purpose. His Imperial Majesty, however, determined that the charges of their having an evil tendency should be strictly investigated, previously to their being actually destroyed; for that reason he sent to me a sealed letter, in which were conveyed his imperial commands that I should rigidly search the Talmud throughout, and afterwards report to him, whether, according to my opinion, it contained such insulting and mischievous passages as had been attributed to it. The duty thus

imposed on me I performed as well as the abilities and comprehension which God has endowed me with would permit. I bestowed much attention indeed on the perusal of the books, for I always had, and have still, a strong predilection for the study of Hebrew literature. The conclusion to which I came respecting them can be best expressed in the terms in which my answer to his Majesty was couched, which was as follows :—‘ I have not myself discovered any passages in the Talmud which can be construed as insulting to our nation or to our religion ; nor am I aware that any such have been noted by any other men with whom I am acquainted, whose learning and wisdom are sufficient to give weight to their judgment. The Talmud solely treats of the religious laws and moral precepts of the Jews, and no one else is under any obligation to believe in them. But, supposing that any one of the books should contain matter so objectionable as that which has been charged to them, let that only be consumed. There are amongst the cabalistic* books, as well as amongst others pertaining to the Hebrew nation, many which are of great value, and it would be a pity

* The term “ cabalistic ” must not here be taken in its common sense. The word *cabala*, from which it is derived, originally referred to matters, the knowledge of which had been transmitted to posterity by traditions, and not by written records. Its signification, indeed, was almost restricted to a superior system of philosophy, or, I may say, theosophy ; or, at least, to sciences of a superior order. Those who may wish for an explicit account of pure cabalistic literature, may be gratified by referring to the work entitled, *Choker U. Mekubhal sive Philosophus et Cabbalista auctore Mose Chajim Luzzatto, instruxit M. S. Freystadt, Philosophiæ linguarumque Orientalium Doctor, &c., Lipsiæ, 1840, apud Aug. Frid. Böhme.*—TRANSLATOR.

and a loss to destroy them all. The apostate who condemns them could have no other object in view than to aggrieve the Jews, and to cause dissension between them and others with whom they ought to be at peace.' As soon as our most gracious emperor had read my opinion, so expressed, he commanded that all the books which had been seized should be restored to their original owners.

“Now, my lord, the moment that the apostate and the professors of the university of Köln were informed that their design had been frustrated through my interposition, they furiously asserted that I was a Manichean, an Epicurean, and a heretic; and not only did they thus stigmatise me before the public, but the apostate wrote some vituperative and reproachful pamphlets against me, and distributed them very extensively, in order to represent that my conduct in this business had been influenced by motives at variance with honour and religion. They even preferred an accusation against me to the Inquisition, and endeavoured deeply to traduce my character there. I then wrote a pamphlet in defence of myself, and stated therein all the reasons by which my decision on the Talmud had been formed. This they wished to have burnt, with marks of indignity and disgrace; but their purpose so to do was defeated. When they became aware that it was impossible to injure the good repute that I bore in the estimation of the Inquisitors, and were also acquainted that I had submitted my obnoxious decision to the Pope, for the judgment of his holiness, their malignant chagrin stirred them up to write more abusive pamphlets against me, and to make

attempts to degrade and prejudice me in the minds of all sorts of men.

“I am now afraid that these calumniators will summon me to appear to answer their spiteful accusations before magistrates belonging to other districts than that in which my residence is fixed, and thus put me to great and ruinous expences; by this fear, I am impelled to solicit the good offices of your lordship in my behalf. I have heard that your lordship has great influence in the cabinet of his Holiness; and that even his sacred person is frequently entrusted to your wisdom and skill. I therefore most earnestly, yet humbly and respectfully, entreat your lordship to endeavour to obtain from his Holiness a special mandate, to the effect that I shall not be so molested, and that I shall not be compelled to appear before any magistrates, in respect to the allegations which I have spoken of, except those within whose jurisdiction I am, according to the statutes and institutions of their peculiar courts. Should they think fit to insist on my appearing with them before his Holiness himself, I shall be willing to answer any questions which they may, in that case, put to me; but to be forced out of my own country, to be tried by the prejudiced authorities of Köln, I consider to be most unjust.

“If this, my humble petition, be complied with, I shall thereby know that I have found favour in the eyes of your dignity, and I shall further feel assured that my efforts to justify the course which, regarding the books of the Talmud, my conscience required me to take, have not been made in vain.

“I venture once again to repeat my entreaties that

your lordship will deign to give your benign consideration to this important matter. Under any circumstances, I shall always be ready to serve your lordship in that sphere through which my influence extends; your lordship has only to make known what advantage it is in my power to secure for you, and your wishes shall be fulfilled. The Almighty God knows that I am sincere in my professions of respect for your lordship; to Him I shall ever pray for your lordship's preservation, and for the well-being of all those whom your lordship is pleased to patronise.

“One of the most humble amongst the Christians,

“JOHANNES PFORZHEIM, DOCTOR.”

The Translator has ventured to insert the preceding letter in the form of an Appendix, deeming it to be a perfect curiosity in religious controversy, and as furnishing an extraordinary instance of inconsistency in the conduct of those by whom the Israelites were oppressed. Must it not seem very strange, that Reuchlin, who was one of the chief of the Christian learned men of his time, should, on account of his liberal and just sentiments regarding the Israelites, in opposition to those of a great body of Christians, have been compelled to sue for protection to an Israelite, whom the very head of the Christian church patronised and cherished!

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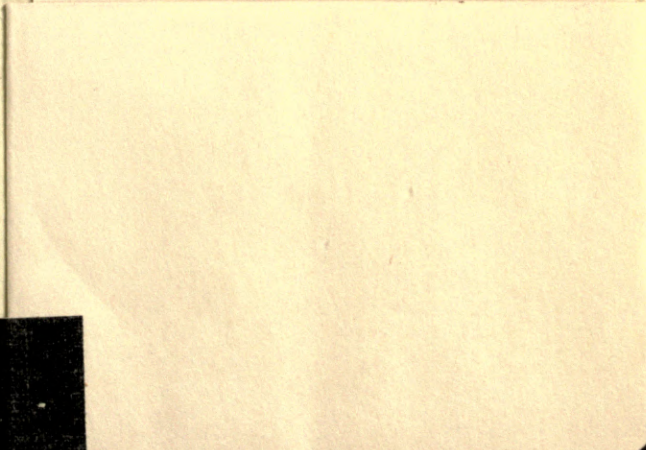
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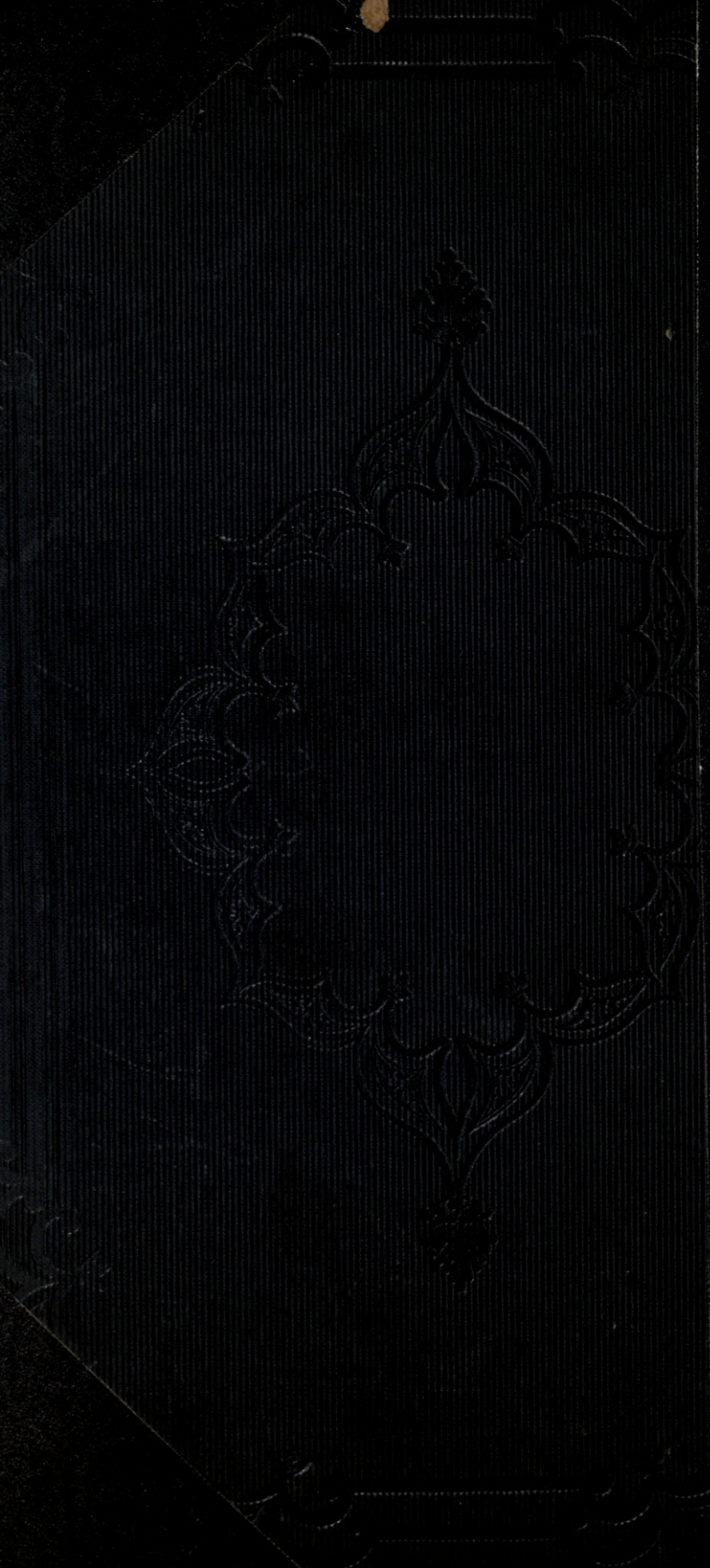
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