

Sketches of Jewish Social Life - Part 3

by Alfred Edersheim

The sermon highlights the contrast between Jewish and Christian views on salvation, emphasizing the importance of honest labour and manly independence.

Scripture: Leviticus 25:35, Deuteronomy 23:19, Matthew 23:23, Luke 18:10, Acts 18:3

Topics: "Jewish Culture", "Pharisaism"

Description

Alfred Edersheim delves into the intricate world of Pharisaism, shedding light on their strict adherence to religious laws and practices, their conspicuous devotions in public spaces, and their influence in Jewish society. He explores the detailed regulations governing trade and commerce among the Jews, emphasizing the ethical considerations and protections for both debtors and creditors. Edersheim also highlights the unique position of the Jews in Alexandria, their significant role in commerce, and the impact of their wealth and influence on political events. Through his thorough examination, he provides valuable insights into the religious, social, and economic dynamics of Jewish life during that time.

Transcript

Paradise and hell were supposed to be contiguous, only separated--it was said, perhaps allegorically--by an handbreadth. But although we may here find some slight resemblance to the localisation of the history of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:25,26), only those acquainted with the theological thinking of the time can fully judge what infinite difference there is between the story in the Gospel and the pictures drawn in contemporary literature. Witness here the 22nd chapter of the book of Enoch, which, as so many other passages from pseudo-epigraphic and Rabbinical writings, has been mangled and misquoted by modern writers, for purposes hostile to Christianity. The Rabbis seem to have believed in a multitude of heavens--most of them holding that there were seven, as there were also seven departments in paradise, and as many in hell. The pre-existence of the souls of all mankind before their actual appearance upon earth, and even the doctrine of the migration of souls, seem also to have been held--both probably, however, chiefly as speculative views, introduced from foreign, non-Judaeian sources.

But all these are preliminary and outside questions, which only indirectly touch the great problems of the human soul concerning sin and salvation. And here we can, in this place, only state that the deeper and stronger our conviction that the language, surroundings, and whole atmosphere of the New Testament were those of Palestine at the time when our Lord trod its soil, the more startling appears the contrast between the doctrinal teaching of Christ and His apostles and that of the Rabbis. In general, it may be said

that the New Testament teaching concerning original sin and its consequences finds no analogy in the Rabbinical writings of that period. As to the mode of salvation, their doctrine may be broadly summed up under the designation of work-righteousness.

In view of this there is, strictly speaking, logical inconsistency in the earnestness with which the Rabbis insist on universal and immediate repentance, and the need of confession of sin, and of preparation for another world. For, a paradise which might be entered by all on their own merits, and which yet is to be sought by all through repentance and similar means, or else can only be obtained after passing through a kind of purgatory, constitutes no mean moral charge against the religion of Rabbinism.

Yet such inconsistencies may be hailed as bringing the synagogue, in another direction, nearer to biblical truth. Indeed, we come occasionally upon much that also appears, only in quite another setting, in the New Testament. Thus the teaching of our Lord about the immortality of the righteous was, of course, quite consonant with that of the Pharisees. In fact, their contention also was, that the departed saints were in Scripture called "living" (Ber. 18 a). Similarly, it was their doctrine (Ber. 17 a, and in several other passages)--though not quite consistently held--as it was that of our Lord (Matt 22:30), that "in the world to come there is neither eating nor drinking, neither fruitfulness nor increase, neither trade nor business, neither envy, hatred, nor strife; but the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads, and feast themselves on the splendour of the Shechinah, as it is written, 'They saw God, and did eat and drink'" (Exo 24:11).

The following is so similar in form and yet so different in spirit to the parable of the invited guests and him without the wedding garment (Matt 22:1-14), that we give it in full. "R. Jochanan, son of Saccai, propounded a parable. A certain king prepared a banquet, to which he invited his servants, without however having fixed the time for it. Those among them who were wise adorned themselves, and sat down at the door of the king's palace, reasoning thus: Can there be anything awaiting in the palace of a king?

But those of them who were foolish went away to their work, saying: Is there ever a feast without labour? Suddenly the king called his servants to the banquet. The wise appeared adorned, but the foolish squalid. Then the king rejoiced over the wise, but was very wroth with the foolish, and said: Those who have adorned themselves shall sit down, eat, drink, and be merry; but those who have not adorned themselves shall stand by and see it, as it is written in Isaiah 65:13." A somewhat similar parable, but even more Jewish in its dogmatic cast, is the following: "The matter (of the world to come) is like an earthly king who committed to his servants the royal robes.

They who were wise folded and laid them up in the wardrobes, but they who were careless put them on, and did in them their work. After some days the king asked back his robes. Those who were wise restored them as they were, that is, still clean; those who were foolish also restored them as they were, that is, soiled. Then the king rejoiced over the wise, but was very wroth with the careless servants, and he said to the wise: Lay up the robes in the treasury, and go home in peace.

But to the careless he commanded the robes to be given, that they might wash them, and that they themselves should be cast into prison, as it is written of the bodies of the just in Isaiah 57:2; 1 Samuel 25:29, but of the bodies of the unjust in Isaiah 48:22, 57:21 and in 1 Samuel 25:29." From the same tractate (Shab. 152 a), we may, in conclusion, quote the following: "R. Eliezer said, Repent on the day before thou diest. His disciples asked him: Can a man know the hour of his death? He replied: Therefore let him repent to-day, lest haply he die on the morrow."

Quotations on these, and discussions on kindred subjects might lead us far beyond our present scope. But the second of the parables above quoted will point the direction of the final conclusions at which Rabbinism arrived. It is not, as in the Gospel, pardon and peace, but labour with the "may be" of reward. As for the "after death," paradise, hell, the resurrection, and the judgment, voices are more discordant than ever, opinions more unscriptural, and descriptions more repulsively fabulous. This is not the place farther to trace the doctrinal views of the Rabbis, to attempt to arrange and to follow them up. Work-righteousness and study of the law are the surest key to heaven. There is a kind of purgation, if not of purgatory, after death. Some seem even to have held the annihilation of the wicked. Taking the widest and most generous views of the Rabbis, they may be thus summed up: All Israel have share in the world to come; the pious among the Gentiles also have part in it. Only the perfectly just enter at once into paradise; all the rest pass through a period of purification and perfection, variously lasting, up to one year. But notorious breakers of the law, and especially apostates from the Jewish faith, and heretics, have no hope whatever, either here or hereafter! Such is the last word which the synagogue has to say to mankind.

Not thus are we taught by the Messiah, the King of the Jews. If we learn our loss, we also learn that "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Our righteousness is that freely bestowed on us by Him "Who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities." "With His stripes we are healed." The law which we obey is that which He has put within our hearts, by which we become temples of the Holy Ghost. "The Dayspring from on high hath visited us" through the tender mercy of our God. The Gospel hath brought life and immortality to light, for we know Whom we have believed; and "perfect love casteth out fear." Not even the problems of sickness, sorrow, suffering, and death are unnoticed. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." The tears of earth's night hang as dewdrops on flower and tree, presently to sparkle like diamonds in the morning sun. For, in that night of nights has Christ mingled the sweat of human toil and sorrow with the precious blood of His agony, and made it drop on earth as sweet balsam to heal its wounds, to soothe its sorrows, and to take away its death.

Chapter 11

Jewish Views on Trade, Tradesmen, and Trades' Guilds

We read in the Mishnah (Kidd. iv. 14) as follows: "Rabbi Meir said: Let a man always teach his son a cleanly and a light trade; and let him pray to Him whose are wealth and riches; for there is no trade which has not both poverty and riches, and neither does poverty come from the trade nor yet riches, but everything according to one's deserving (merit). Rabbi Simeon, the son of Eleazer, said: Hast thou all thy life long seen a beast or a bird which has a trade? Still they are nourished, and that without anxious care. And if they, who are created only to serve me, shall not I expect to be nourished without anxious care, who am created to serve my Maker? Only that if I have been evil in my deeds, I forfeit my support. Abba Gurjan of Zadjan said, in name of Abba Gurja: Let not a man bring up his son to be a donkey-driver, nor a camel-driver, nor a barber, nor a sailor, nor a shepherd, nor a pedlar; for their occupations are those of thieves. In his name, Rabbi Jehudah said: Donkey-drivers are mostly wicked; camel-drivers mostly honest; sailors mostly pious; the best among physicians is for Gehenna, and the most honest of butchers a companion of Amalek. Rabbi Nehorai said: I let alone every trade of this world, and teach my son nothing but the Torah (the law of God); for a man eats of the fruit of it in this world (as it were, lives upon earth on the interest), while the capital remaineth for the world to come. But what is left over (what remains) in every trade (or worldly employment) is not so. For, if a man fall into ill-health, or come to old age or into trouble (chastisement), and is no longer able to stick to his work, lo! he dies of hunger. But the

Thorah is not so, for it keeps a man from evil in youth, and in old age gives him both a hereafter and the hopeful waiting for it. What does it say about youth? 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew strength.' And what about old age? 'They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.' And this is what is said of Abraham our father: 'And Abraham was old, and Jehovah blessed Abraham in all things.' But we find that Abraham our father kept the whole Thorah--the whole, even to that which had not yet been given--as it is said, 'Because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.'

If this quotation has been long, it will in many respects prove instructive; for it not only affords a favourable specimen of Mishnic teaching, but gives insight into the principles, the reasoning, and the views of the Rabbis. At the outset, the saying of Rabbi Simeon--which, however, we should remember, was spoken nearly a century after the time when our Lord had been upon earth--reminds us of His own words (Matt 6:26): "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" It would be a delightful thought, that our Lord had thus availed Himself of the better thinking and higher feeling in Israel; so to speak, polished the diamond and made it sparkle, as He held it up in the light of the kingdom of God. For here also it holds true, that the Saviour came not in any sense to "destroy," but to "establish the law." All around the scene of His earthly ministry the atmosphere was Jewish; and all that was pure, true, and good in the nation's life, teaching, and sayings He made His own. On every page of the gospels we come upon what seems to waken the echoes of Jewish voices; sayings which remind us of what we have heard among the sages of Israel. And this is just what we should have expected, and what gives no small confirmation of the trustworthiness of these narratives as the record of what had really taken place. It is not a strange scene upon which we are here introduced; nor among strange actors; nor are the surroundings foreign. Throughout we have a life-picture of the period, in which we recognise the speakers from the sketches of them drawn elsewhere, and whose mode of speaking we know from contemporary literature. The gospels could not have set aside, they could not even have left out, the Jewish element. Otherwise they would not have been true to the period, nor to the people, nor to the writers, nor yet to that law of growth and development which always marks the progress of the kingdom of God. In one respect only all is different. The gospels are most Jewish in form, but most anti-Jewish in spirit--the record of the manifestation among Israel of the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, as the "King of the Jews."

This influence of the Jewish surroundings upon the circumstances of the gospel history has a most important bearing. It helps us to realise what Jewish life had been at the time of Christ, and to comprehend what might seem peculiarities in the gospel narrative. Thus--to come to the subject of this chapter--we now understand how so many of the disciples and followers of the Lord gained their living by some craft; how in the same spirit the Master Himself condescended to the trade of His adoptive father; and how the greatest of His apostles throughout earned his bread by the labour of his hands, probably following, like the Lord Jesus, the trade of his father.

For it was a principle, frequently expressed, if possible "not to forsake the trade of the father"--most likely not merely from worldly considerations, but because it might be learned in the house; perhaps even from considerations of respect for parents. And what in this respect Paul practised, that he also preached. Nowhere is the dignity of labour and the manly independence of honest work more clearly set forth than in his Epistles. At Corinth, his first search seems to have been for work (Acts 18:3); and through life he steadily forbore availing himself of his right to be supported by the Church, deeming it his great "reward" to "make the Gospel of Christ without charge" (1 Cor 9:18).

Nay, to quote his impassioned language, he would far rather have died of hard work than that any man should deprive him of this "glorying." And so presently at Ephesus "these hands" minister not only unto his own necessities, but also to them that were with him; and that for the twofold reason of supporting the weak, and of following the Master, however "afar off," and entering into this joy of His, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:34,35). Again, so to speak, it does one's heart good when coming in contact with that Church which seemed most in danger of dreamy contemplativeness, and of unpractical, of not dangerous, speculations about the future, to hear what a manly, earnest tone also prevailed there.

Here is the preacher himself! Not a man-pleaser, but a God-server; not a flatterer, nor covetous, nor yet seeking glory, nor courting authority, like the Rabbis. What then? This is the sketch as drawn from life at Thessalonica, so that each who had known him must have recognised it: most loving, like a nursing mother, who cherisheth her own children, so in tenderness willing to impart not only the Gospel of God, but his own life. Yet, with it all, no mawkishness, no sentimentality; but all stern, genuine reality; and the preacher himself is "labouring night and day," because he would not be chargeable to any of them, while he preached unto them the gospel of God (1 Thess 2:9).

"Night and day," hard, unremitting, uninteresting work, which some would have denounced or despised as secular! But to Paul that wretched distinction, the invention of modern superficialism and unreality, existed not. For to the spiritual nothing is secular, and to the secular nothing is spiritual. Work night and day, and then as his rest, joy, and reward, to preach in public and in private the unsearchable riches of Christ, Who had redeemed him with His precious blood. And so his preaching, although one of its main burdens seems to have been the second coming of the Lord, was in no way calculated to make the hearers apocalyptic dreamers, who discussed knotty points and visions of the future, while present duty lay unheeded as beneath them, on a lower platform.

There is a ring of honest independence, of healthy, manly piety, of genuine, self-denying devotion to Christ, and also of a practical life of holiness, in this admonition (1 Thess 4:11,12): "Make it your ambition to be quiet, to do your own" (each one for himself, not meddling with others' affairs), "and to work with your hands, as we commanded you, that ye may walk decorously towards them without, and have no need of any one" (be independent of all men). And, very significantly, this plain, practical religion is placed in immediate conjunction with the hope of the resurrection and of the coming again of our Lord (vv 13-18).

The same admonition, "to work, and eat their own bread," comes once again, only in stronger language, in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, reminding them in this of his own example, and of his command when with them, "that, if any would not work, neither should he eat"; at the same time sternly rebuking "some who are walking disorderly, who are not at all busy, but are busybodies" (we have here tried to reproduce the play on the words in the original).

Now, we certainly do not pretend to find a parallel to St. Paul among even the best and the noblest of the Rabbis. Yet Saul of Tarsus was a Jew, not merely trained at the feet of the great Gamaliel, "that sun in Israel," but deeply imbued with the Jewish spirit and lore; insomuch that long afterwards, when he is writing of the deepest mysteries of Christianity, we catch again and again expressions that remind us of some that occur in the earliest record of that secret Jewish doctrine, which was only communicated to the most select of the select sages. *

* We mean the book Jezirah. It is curious that this should have never been noticed. The coincidences are not in substance, but in modes of expression.

And this same love of honest labour, the same spirit of manly independence, the same horror of trafficking with the law, and using it either "as a crown or as a spade," was certainly characteristic of the best Rabbis. Quite different in this respect also--far asunder as were the aims of their lives--were the feelings of Israel from those of the Gentiles around. The philosophers of Greece and Rome denounced manual labour as something degrading; indeed, as incompatible with the full exercise of the privileges of a citizen. Those Romans who allowed themselves not only to be bribed in their votes, but expected to be actually supported at the public expense, would not stoop to the defilement of work. The Jews had another aim in life, another pride and ambition. It is difficult to give an idea of the seeming contrasts united in them. Most aristocratic and exclusive, contemptuous of mere popular cries, yet at the same time most democratic and liberal; law-abiding, and with the profoundest reverence for authority and rank, and yet with this prevailing conviction at bottom, that all Israel were brethren, and as such stood on precisely the same level, the eventual differences arising only from this, that the mass failed to realise what Israel's real vocation was, and how it was to be attained, viz., by theoretical and practical engagement with the law, compared to which everything else was but secondary and unimportant.

But this combination of study with honest manual labour--the one to support the other--had not been always equally honoured in Israel. We distinguish here three periods. The law of Moses evidently recognised the dignity of labour, and this spirit of the Old Testament appeared in the best times of the Jewish nation. The book of Proverbs, which contains so many sketches of what a happy, holy home in Israel had been, is full of the praises of domestic industry. But the Apocrypha, notably Ecclesiasticus (xxxviii. 24-31), strike a very different key-note. Analysing one by one every trade, the contemptuous question is put, how such "can get wisdom?" This "Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach" dates from about two centuries before the present era. It would not have been possible at the time of Christ or afterwards, to have written in such terms of "the carpenter and workmaster," of them "that cut and grave seals," of "the smith," or "the potter"; nor to have said of them: "They shall not be sought for in public counsel, nor sit high in the congregation; they shall not sit on the judges' seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment; they cannot declare justice and judgment; and they shall not be found where parables are spoken" (Ecclus xxxviii. 33). For, in point of fact, with few exceptions, all the leading Rabbinical authorities were working at some trade, till at last it became quite an affectation to engage in hard bodily labour, so that one Rabbi would carry his own chair every day to college, while others would drag heavy rafters, or work in some such fashion. Without cumbering these pages with names, it is worth mentioning, perhaps as an extreme instance, that on one occasion a man was actually summoned from his trade of stone-cutter to the high-priestly office. To be sure, that was in revolutionary times. The high-priests under the Herodian dynasty were of only too different a class, and their history possesses a tragic interest, as bearing on the state and fate of the nation. Still, the great Hillel was a wood-cutter, his rival Shammai a carpenter,; and among the celebrated Rabbis of after times we find shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, sandalmakers, smiths, potters, builders, etc.--in short, every variety of trade. Nor were they ashamed of their manual labour. Thus it is recorded of one of them, that he was in the habit of discoursing to his students from the top of a cask of his own making, which he carried every day to the academy.

We can scarcely wonder at this, since it was a Rabbinical principle, that "whoever does not teach his son a trade is as if he brought him up to be a robber" (Kidd. 4.14). The Midrash gives the following curious paraphrase of Ecclesiastes 9:9, "Behold, the life with the wife whom thou lovest" (so literally in the Hebrew): Look out for a trade along with the Divine study which thou lovest. "How highly does the Maker of the world value trades," is another saying. Here are some more: "There is none whose trade God does not adorn with beauty."

"Though there were seven years of famine, it will never come to the door of the tradesman." "There is not a trade to which both poverty and riches are not joined; for there is nothing more poor, and nothing more rich, than a trade." "No trade shall ever disappear from the world. Happy he whom his teacher has brought up to a good trade; alas for him who has been put into a bad one." Perhaps these are comparatively later Rabbinical sayings. But let us turn to the Mishnah itself, and especially to that tractate which professedly embodies the wisdom and the sayings of the fathers (Aboth).

Shemaajah, the teacher of Hillel, has this cynical saying (Ab. i. 10)--perhaps the outcome of his experience: "Love work, hate Rabbiship, and do not press on the notice of those in power." The views of the great Hillel himself have been quoted in a previous chapter. Rabbi Gamaliel, the son of Jehudah the Nasi, said (Ab. ii. 2): "Fair is the study of the law, if accompanied by worldly occupation: to engage in them both is to keep away sin; while study which is not combined with work must in the end be interrupted, and only brings sin with it."

Rabbi Eleazar, the son of Asarjah, says, among other things: "Where there is no worldly support (literally, no meal, no flour), there is no study of the law; and where there is no study of the law, worldly support is of no value" (Ab. iii. 21). It is worth while to add what immediately follows in the Mishnah. Its resemblance to the simile about the rock, and the building upon it, as employed by our Lord (Matt 7:24; Luke 6:47), is so striking, that we quote it in illustration of previous remarks on this subject.

We read as follows: "He whose knowledge exceeds his works, to whom is he like? He is like a tree, whose branches are many and its roots few, and the wind cometh, and uproots the tree and throws it upon its face, as it is said (Jer 17:6)...But he whose works exceed his knowledge, to whom is he like? To a tree whose branches are few, but its roots many; and if even all the winds that are in the world came and set upon such a tree, they would not move it from its place, as it is written (Jer 17:8)."

We have given this saying in its earliest form. Even so, it should be remembered that it dates from after the destruction of Jerusalem. It occurs in a still later form in the Babylon Talmud (Sanh. 99 a). But what is most remarkable is, that it also appears in yet another work, and in a form almost identical with that in the New Testament, so far as the simile of the building is concerned. In this form it is attributed to a Rabbi who is stigmatised as an apostate, and as the type of apostasy, and who, as such, died under the ban. The inference seems to be, that if he did not profess some form of Christianity, he had at least derived this saying from his intercourse with Christians. *

* Elisha ben Abbuja, called Acher, "the other," on account of his apostasy. The history of that Rabbi is altogether deeply interesting. We can only put the question: Was he a Christian, or merely tainted with Gnosticism? The latter seems to us the most probable. His errors are traced by the Jews to his study of the Kabbalah.

But irrespective of this, two things are plain on comparison of the saying in its Rabbinical and in its Christian form. First, in the parable as employed by our Lord, everything is referred to Him; and the essential difference ultimately depends upon our relationship towards Him. The comparison here is not between much study and little work, or little Talmudical knowledge and much work; but between coming to Him and hearing these sayings of His, and then either doing or else not doing them. Secondly, such an alternative is never presented by Christianity as, on the one hand, much knowledge and few works, and on the other, little knowledge and many works. But in Christianity the vital difference lies between works and no works; between absolute life and absolute death; all depending upon this, whether a man has

digged down to the right foundation, and built upon the rock which is Christ, or has tried to build up the walls of his life without such foundation. Thus the very similarity of the saying in its Rabbinical form brings out all the more clearly the essential difference and contrariety in spirit existing between Rabbinism, even in its purest form, and the teaching of our Lord.

The question of the relation between the best teaching of the Jewish sages and some of the sayings of our Lord is of such vital importance, that this digression will not seem out of place. A few further quotations bearing on the dignity of labour may be appropriate. The Talmud has a beautiful Haggadah, which tells how, when Adam heard this sentence of his Maker: "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee," he burst into tears, "What!" he exclaimed; "Lord of the world, am I then to eat out of the same manger with the ass?" But when he heard these additional words: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," his heart was comforted. For herein lies (according to the Rabbis) the dignity of labour, that man is not forced to, nor unconscious in, his work; but that while becoming the servant of the soil, he wins from it the precious fruits of golden harvest. And so, albeit labour may be hard, and the result doubtful, as when Israel stood by the shores of the Red Sea, yet a miracle will cleave these waters also. And still the dignity of labour is great in itself: it reflects honour; it nourisheth and cherisheth him that engageth in it. For this reason also did the law punish with fivefold restitution the theft of an ox, but only with fourfold that of a sheep; because the former was that with which a man worked.

Assuredly St. Paul spoke also as a Jew when he admonished the Ephesians (Eph 4:28): "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." "Make a working day of the Sabbath: only be not dependent upon people," was the Rabbinical saying (Pes. 112). "Skin dead animals by the wayside," we read, "and take thy payment for it, but do not say, I am a priest; I am a man of distinction, and work is objectionable to me!" And to this day the common Jewish proverb has it: "Labour is no cherpah (disgrace)"; or again: "Melachah is berachah (Labour is blessing)." With such views, we can understand how universal industrious pursuits were in the days of our Lord. Although it is no doubt true, as the Rabbinical proverb puts it, that every man thinks most of his own trade, yet public opinion attached a very different value to different kinds of trade. Some were avoided on account of the unpleasantnesses connected with them, such as those of tanners, dyers, and miners. The Mishnah lays it down as a principle, that a man should not teach his son a trade which necessitates constant intercourse with the other sex (Kidd. iv. 14). Such would include, among others jewellers, makers of handmills, perfumers, and weavers. The latter trade seems to have exposed to as many troubles as if the weavers of those days had been obliged to serve a modern fashionable lady. The saying was: "A weaver must be humble, or his life will be shortened by excommunication"; that is, he must submit to anything for a living. Or, as the common proverb put it (Ab. S. 26 a): "If a weaver is not humble, his life is shortened by a year." This other saying, of a similar kind, reminds us of the Scotch estimate of, or rather disrespect for, weavers: "Even a weaver is master in his own house." And this not only in his own opinion, but in that of his wife also. For as the Rabbinical proverb has it: "Though a man were only a comber of wool, his wife would call him up to the house-door, and sit down beside him," so proud is she of him. Perhaps in the view of the Rabbis there was a little of female self-consciousness in this regard for her husband's credit, for they have it: "Though a man were only the size of an ant, his wife would try to sit down among the big ones."

In general, the following sound views are expressed in the Talmud (Ber. 17 a): "The Rabbi of Jabne said: I am simply a being like my neighbour. He works in the field, and I in the town. We both rise early to go to work; and there is no cause for the one setting himself up above the other. Do not think that the one does

more than the other; for we have been taught that there is as much merit in doing that which is little as that which is great, provided the state of our hearts be right." And so a story is told, how one who dug cisterns and made baths (for purification) accosted the great Rabbi Jochanan with the words: "I am as great a man as thou"; since, in his own sphere, he served the wants of the community quite as much as the most learned teacher in Israel. In the same spirit another Rabbi admonished to strict conscientiousness, since in a sense all work, however humble, was really work for God. There can be no doubt that the Jewish tradesman who worked in such a spirit would be alike happy and skilful.

It must have been a great privilege to be engaged in any work connected with the Temple. A large number of workmen were kept constantly employed there, preparing what was necessary for the service. Perhaps it was only a piece of Jerusalem jealousy of the Alexandrians which prompted such Rabbinical traditions, as, that, when Alexandrians tried to compound the incense for the Temple, the column of smoke did not ascend quite straight; when they repaired the large mortar in which the incense was bruised, and again, the great cymbal with which the signal for the commencement of the Temple music was given, in each case their work had to be undone by Jerusalem workmen, in order to produce a proper mixture, or to evoke the former sweet sounds. There can be no question, however, notwithstanding Palestinian prejudices, that there were excellent Jewish workmen in Alexandria; and plenty of them, too, as we know from their arrangement in guilds in their great synagogue. Any poor workman had only to apply to his guild, and he was supported till he found employment. The guild of coppersmiths there had, as we are informed, for their device a leathern apron; and when its members went abroad they used to carry with them a bed which could be taken to pieces. At Jerusalem, where this guild was organised under its Rabban, or chief, it possessed a synagogue and a burying-place of its own. But the Palestinian workmen, though they kept by each other, had no exclusive guilds; the principles of "free trade," so to speak, prevailing among them. Bazaars and streets were named after them. The workmen of Jerusalem were specially distinguished for their artistic skill. A whole valley--that of the Tyropoeon--was occupied by dairies; hence its name, "valley of cheesemongers." Even in Isaiah 7:3 we read of "the field of the fullers," which lay "at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway" to Joppa. A whole set of sayings is expressly designated in the Talmud as "the proverbs of the fullers."

From their love of building and splendour the Herodian princes must have kept many tradesmen in constant work. At the re-erection of the Temple no less than eighteen thousand were so employed in various handicrafts, some of them implying great artistic skill. Even before that, Herod the Great is said to have employed a large number of the most experienced masters to teach the one thousand priests who were to construct the Holy Place itself. For, in the building of that part of the Temple no laymen were engaged. As we know, neither hammer, axe, chisel, nor any tool of iron was used within the sacred precincts. The reason of this is thus explained in the Mishnah, when describing how all the stones for the altar were dug out of virgin-earth, no iron tool being employed in their preparation: "Iron is created to cut short the life of man; but the altar to prolong it. Hence it is not becoming to use that which shortens for that which lengthens" (Midd. iii. 4). Those who know the magnificence and splendour of that holy house will be best able to judge what skill in workmanship its various parts must have required. An instance may be interesting on account of its connection with the most solemn fact of New Testament history. We read in the Mishnah (Shek. viii. 5): "Rabbi Simeon, the son of Gamaliel, said, in the name of Rabbi Simeon, the son of the (former) Sagan (assistant of the high-priest): The veil (of the Most Holy Place) was an handbreadth thick, and woven of seventy-two twisted plaits; each plait consisted of twenty-four threads" (according to the Talmud, six threads of each of the four Temple-colours--white, scarlet, blue, and gold). "It was forty cubits long, and twenty wide (sixty feet by thirty), and made of eighty-two myriads" (the

meaning of this in the Mishnah is not plain). "Two of these veils were made every year, and it took three hundred priests to immerse one" (before use). These statements must of course be considered as dealing in "round numbers"; but they are most interesting as helping us to realise, not only how the great veil of the Temple was rent, when the Lord of that Temple died on the cross, but also how the occurrence could have been effectually concealed from the mass of the people.

To turn to quite another subject. It is curious to notice in how many respects times and circumstances have really not changed. The old Jewish employers of labour seem to have had similar trouble with their men to that of which so many in our own times loudly complain. We have an emphatic warning to this effect, to beware of eating fine bread and giving black bread to one's workmen or servants; not to sleep on feathers and give them straw pallets, more especially if they were co-religionists, for, as it is added, he who gets a Hebrew slave gets his master! Possibly something of this kind was on the mind of St. Paul when he wrote this most needful precept (1 Tim 6:1,2): "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are believing and beloved, partakers of the benefit." But really there is nothing "new under the sun!" Something like the provisions of a mutual assurance appear in the associations of muleteers and sailors, which undertook to replace a beast or a ship that had been lost without negligence on the part of the owner. Nay, we can even trace the spirit of trade-unionism in the express permission of the Talmud (Bab. B. 9) to tradesmen to combine to work only one or two days in the week, so as to give sufficient employment to every workman in a place. We close with another quotation in the same direction, which will also serve to illustrate the peculiar mode of Rabbinical comment on the words of Scripture: "He doeth no evil to his neighbour--this refers to one tradesman not interfering with the trade of another!"

Chapter 12

Commerce

The remarkable change which we have noticed in the views of Jewish authorities, from contempt to almost affectation of manual labour, could certainly not have been arbitrary. But as we fail to discover here any religious motive, we can only account for it on the score of altered political and social circumstances. So long as the people were, at least nominally, independent, and in possession of their own land, constant engagement in a trade would probably mark an inferior social stage, and imply either voluntary or necessary preoccupation with the things of this world that perish with the using. It was otherwise when Judaea was in the hands of strangers. Then honest labour afforded the means, and the only means, of manly independence. To engage in it, just sufficient to secure this result, to "stand in need of no one"; to be able to hold up one's head before friend and foe; to make unto God moral sacrifice of natural inclination, strength and time, so as to be able freely and independently to devote oneself to the study of the Divine law, was a noble resolve. And it brought its own reward. If, on the one hand, the alternation of physical and mental labour was felt to be healthy, on the other--and this had been the main object in view--there never were men more fearlessly outspoken, more unconcerned as to mere personality or as to consequences, more independent in thought and word than these Rabbis. We can understand the withering scorn of St. Jude (Jude 16) towards those "having men's persons in admiration," literally, "admiring faces"--an expression by which the LXX translate the "respect" or "regard," or "acceptance" of persons (the *nasa panim*) mentioned in Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 10:17; Job 13:10; Proverbs 18:5, and many other passages. In this respect also, as so often, St. Paul spoke as a true Jew when he wrote (Gal 2:6): "But of these who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me:

the face of man God accepteth not."

The Mishnah, indeed, does not in so many words inform us how the change in public feeling, to which we have referred, was brought about. But there are plenty of hints to guide us in certain short caustic sentences which would be inexplicable, unless read in the light of the history of that time. Thus, as stated in the previous chapter, Shemaajah admonished: "Love work, hate Rabbiship, and do not press on the notice of those in power." Similarly, Avtaljon warned the sages to be cautious in their words, for fear of incurring banishment for themselves and their followers (Ab. i. 10,11). And Rabbi Gamaliel II had it (ii. 3): "Be cautious with the powers that be, for they only seek intercourse with a person for their own advantage. They are as if they loved you, when it serves for their profit, but in the hour of his need they do not stand by a man." In the same category of sayings for the times we may rank this of Rabbi Matithja: "Meet every one with a salutation of peace, and prefer to be the tail of lions, but be not the head to foxes." It is needless to multiply similar quotations, all expressive of an earnest desire for honourable independence through personal exertion.

Quite different from those as to trades were the Rabbinical views about commerce, as we shall immediately show. In fact, the general adoption of business, which has so often been made the subject of jeer against Israel, marks yet another social state, and a terrible social necessity. When Israel was scattered by units, hundreds, or even thousands, but still a miserable, vanquished, homeless, weak minority among the nations of the earth--avoided, down-trodden, and at the mercy of popular passion--no other course was open to them than to follow commerce. Even if Jewish talent could have identified itself with the pursuits of the Gentiles, would public life have been open to them--we shall not say, on equal, but, on any terms? Or, to descend a step lower--except in those crafts which might be peculiarly theirs, could Jewish tradesmen have competed with those around? Would they even have been allowed to enter the lists? Moreover, it was necessary for their self-defence--almost for their existence--that they should gain influence. And in their circumstances this could only be obtained by the possession of wealth, and the sole road to this was commerce.

There can be no question that, according to the Divine purpose, Israel was not intended to be a commercial people. The many restrictions to the intercourse between Jews and Gentiles, which the Mosaic law everywhere presents, would alone have sufficed to prevent it. Then there was the express enactment against taking interest upon loans (Lev 25:36,37), which must have rendered commercial transactions impossible, even though it was relaxed in reference to those who lived outside the boundaries of Palestine (Deu 23:20). Again, the law of the Sabbatic and of the Jubilee year would have brought all extended commerce to a standstill. Nor was the land at all suited for the requirements of trade. True, it possessed ample seaboard, whatever the natural capabilities of its harbours may have been. But the whole of that coast, with the harbours of Joppa, Jamneh, Ascalon, Gaza, and Acco or Ptolemais, remained, with short intervals, in the possession of the Philistines and Phoenicians. Even when Herod the Great built the noble harbour of Caesarea, it was almost exclusively used by foreigners (Josephus, Jew. War, 409-413). And the whole history of Israel in Palestine points to the same inference. Only on one occasion, during the reign of Solomon, do we find anything like attempts to engage in mercantile pursuits on a large scale. The reference to the "king's merchants" (1 Kings 10:28,29; 2 Chron 1:16), who imported horses and linen yarn, has been regarded as indicating the existence of a sort of royal trading company, or of a royal monopoly. A still more curious inference would almost lead us to describe Solomon as the first great "Protectionist." The expressions in 1 Kings 10:15 point to duties paid by retail and wholesale importers, the words, literally rendered, indicating as a source of revenue that "from the traders and from

the traffick of the merchants"; both words in their derivation pointing to foreign trade, and probably distinguishing them as retail and wholesale. We may here remark that, besides these duties and the tributes from "protected" kings (1 Kings 9:15), Solomon's income is described (1 Kings 10:14) as having amounted, at any rate, in one year, to the enormous sum of between two and three million sterling! Part of this may have been derived from the king's foreign trade. For we know (1 Kings 9:26, etc.; 2 Chron 8:17, etc.) that King Solomon built a navy at Ezion-geber, on the Red Sea, which port David had taken. This navy traded to Ophir, in company with the Phoenicians. But as this tendency of King Solomon's policy was in opposition to the Divine purpose, so it was not lasting. The later attempt of King Jehoshaphat to revive the foreign trade signally failed; "for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber" (1 Kings 22:48; 2 Chron 20:36,37), and soon afterwards the port of Ezion-geber passed once more into the hands of Edom (2 Kings 8:20).

With this closes the Biblical history of Jewish commerce in Palestine, in the strict sense of that term. But our reference to what may be called the Scriptural indications against the pursuit of commerce brings up a kindred subject, for which, although confessedly a digression, we claim a hearing, on account of its great importance. Those most superficially acquainted with modern theological controversy are aware, that certain opponents of the Bible have specially directed their attacks against the antiquity of the Pentateuch, although they have not yet arranged among themselves what parts of the Pentateuch were written by different authors, nor by how many, nor by whom, nor at what times, nor when or by whom they were ultimately collected into one book. Now what we contend for in this connection is, that the legislation of the Pentateuch affords evidence of its composition before the people were settled in Palestine. We arrive at this conclusion in the following manner. Supposing a code of laws and institutions to be drawn up by a practical legislator--for unquestionably they were in force in Israel--we maintain, that no human lawgiver could have ordered matters for a nation in a settled state as we find it done in the Pentateuch. The world has had many speculative constitutions of society drawn up by philosophers and theorists, from Plato to Rousseau and Owen. None of these would have suited, or even been possible in a settled state of society. But no philosopher would ever have imagined or thought of such laws as some of the provisions in the Pentateuch. To select only a few, almost at random. Let the reader think of applying, for example, to England, such provisions as that all males were to appear three times a year in the place which the Lord would choose, or those connected with the Sabbatic and the Jubilee years, or those regulating religious and charitable contributions, or those concerning the corners of fields, or those prohibiting the taking of interest or those connected with the Levitical cities. Then let any one seriously ask himself, whether such institutions could have been for the first time propounded or introduced by a legislator at the time of David, or Hezekiah, or of Ezra? The more we think of the spirit and of the details of the Mosaic legislation, the stronger grows our conviction, that such laws and institutions could have been only introduced before the people actually settled in the land. So far as we are aware, this line of argument has not before been proposed; and yet it seems necessary for our opponents to meet this preliminary and, as we think, insuperable difficulty of their theory, before we can be asked to discuss their critical objections.

But to return. Passing from Biblical, or, at least, from Old Testament to later times, we find the old popular feeling in Palestine on the subject of commerce still existing. For once Josephus here correctly expresses the views of his countrymen. "As for ourselves," he writes (Ag. Apion, i, 60-68), "we neither inhabit a maritime country, nor do we delight in merchandise, nor in such a mixture with other men as arises from it; but the cities we dwell in are remote from the sea, and having a fruitful country for our habitation, we take pains in cultivating that only." Nor were the opinions of the Rabbis different. We know in what low esteem pedlars were held by the Jewish authorities. But even commerce was not much more highly regarded. It

has been rightly said that, "in the sixty-three tractates of which the Talmud is composed, scarcely a word occurs in honour of commerce, but much to point out the dangers attendant upon money-making." "Wisdom," says Rabbi Jochanan, in explanation of Deuteronomy 30:12, "is not in heaven"--that is, it is not found with those who are proud; neither is it 'beyond the sea'--that is, it will not be found among traders nor among merchants" (Er. 55 a). Still more to the point are the provisions of the Jewish law as to those who lent money on interest, or took usury. "The following," we read in Rosh Hash. 8. 8, "are unfit for witness-bearing: he who plays with dice (a gambler); he who lends on usury; they who train doves (either for betting purposes, or as decoys); they who trade in seventh year's products, and slaves." Even more pungent is this, almost reminding one of the Rabbinic gloss: "Of the calumniator God says, 'There is not room in the world for him and Me'--"The usurer bites off a piece from a man, for he takes from him that which he has not given him" (Bab. Mez. 60 b). A few other kindred sayings may here find a place. "Rabbi Meir saith: Be sparing (doing little) in business, but busy in the Torah" (Ab. iv. 2). Among the forty-eight qualifications for acquiring the Torah, "little business" is mentioned (vi. 6). Lastly, we have this from Hillel, concluding with a very noble saying, worthy to be preserved to all times and in all languages: "He who engages much in business cannot become a sage; and in a place where there are no men, strive thou to be a man."

It will perhaps have been observed, that, with the changing circumstances of the people, the views as to commerce also underwent a slow process of modification, the main object now being to restrict such occupations, and especially to regulate them in accordance with religion. Inspectorships of weights and measures are of comparatively late date in our own country. The Rabbis in this, as in so many other matters, were long before us. They appointed regular inspectors, whose duty it was to go from market to market, and, more than that, to fix the current market prices (Baba B. 88). The prices for produce were ultimately determined by each community. Few merchants would submit to interference with what is called the law of supply and demand. But the Talmudical laws against buying up grain and withdrawing it from sale, especially at a time of scarcity, are exceedingly strict. Similarly, it was prohibited artificially to raise prices, especially of produce. Indeed, it was regarded as cheating to charge a higher profit than sixteen per cent. In general, some would have it that in Palestine no one should make profit out of the necessaries of life. Cheating was declared to involve heavier punishment than a breach of some of the other moral commandments. For the latter, it was argued, might be set right by repentance. But he who cheated took in not merely one or several persons, but every one; and how could that ever be set right? And all were admonished to remember, that "God punisheth even where the eye of an earthly judge cannot penetrate."

We have spoken of a gradual modification of Rabbinical views with the changing circumstances of the nation. This probably comes out most clearly in the advice of the Talmud (Baba M. 42), to divide one's money into three parts--to lay out one in the purchase of land, to invest the second in merchandise, and to keep the third in hand as cash. But there was always this comfort, which Rab enumerated among the blessings of the next world, that there was no commerce there (Ber. 17 a). And so far as this world was concerned, the advice was to engage in business, in order with the profit made to assist the sages in their pursuits, just as Sebuah, one of the three wealthy men of Jerusalem, had assisted the great Hillel. From what has been said, it will be inferred that the views expressed as to Palestinian, or even Babylonian Jews, did not apply to those who were "dispersed abroad" among the various Gentile nations. To them, as already shown, commerce would be a necessity, and, in fact, the grand staple of their existence. If this may be said of all Jews of the dispersion, it applies specially to that community which was the richest and most influential among them--we mean the Jews of Alexandria.

Few phases, even in the ever-changeable history of the Jewish people, are more strange, more varied in interest, or more pathetic than those connected with the Jews of Alexandria. The immigration of Jews into Egypt commenced even before the Babylonish captivity. Naturally it received great increase from that event, and afterwards from the murder of Gedaliah. But the real exodus commenced under Alexander the Great. That monarch accorded to the Jews in Alexandria the same rights as its Greek inhabitants enjoyed, and so raised them to the rank of the privileged classes. Henceforth their numbers and their influence grew under successive rulers. We find them commanding Egyptian armies, largely influencing Egyptian thought and inquiry, and partially leavening it by the translation of the Holy Scriptures into Greek. Of the so-called Temple of Onias at Leontopolis, which rivalled that of Jerusalem, and of the magnificence of the great synagogue at Alexandria, we cannot speak in this place. There can be no doubt that, in the Providence of God, the location of so many Jews in Alexandria, and the mental influence which they acquired, were designed to have an important bearing on the later spread of the Gospel of Christ among the Greek-speaking and Grecian-thinking educated world. In this, the Greek translation of the Old Testament was also largely helpful. Indeed, humanly speaking, it would have scarcely been possible without it. At the time of Philo the number of Jews in Egypt amounted to no less than one million. In Alexandria they occupied two out of the five quarters of the town, which were called after the first five letters of the alphabet. They lived under rulers of their own, almost in a state of complete independence. Theirs was the quarter Delta, along the seashore. The supervision of navigation, both by sea and river, was wholly entrusted to them. In fact, the large export trade, especially in grain--and Egypt was the granary of the world--was entirely in their hands. The provisioning of Italy and of the world was the business of the Jews. It is a curious circumstance, as illustrating how little the history of the world changes, that during the troubles at Rome the Jewish bankers of Alexandria were able to obtain from their correspondents earlier and more trustworthy political tidings than any one else. This enabled them to declare themselves in turn for Caesar and for Octavius, and to secure the full political and financial results flowing from such policy, just as the great Jewish banking houses at the beginning of this century were similarly able to profit by earlier and more trustworthy news of events than the general public could obtain.

But no sketch of commerce among the early Jews, however brief, would be complete without some further notice both of the nature of the trade carried on, and of the legal regulations which guarded it. The business of the travelling hawker, of course, was restricted to negotiating an exchange of the products of one district for those of another, to buying and selling articles of home produce, or introducing among those who affected fashion or luxury in country districts specimens of the latest novelties from abroad. The foreign imports were, with the exception of wood and metals, chiefly articles of luxury. Fish from Spain, apples from Crete, cheese from Bithynia; lentils, beans, and gourds from Egypt and Greece; plates from Babylon, wine from Italy, beer from Media, household vessels from Sidon, baskets from Egypt, dresses from India, sandals from Laodicea, shirts from Cilicia, veils from Arabia--such were some of the goods imported. On the other hand, the exports from Palestine consisted of such produce as wheat, oil, balsam, honey, figs, etc., the value of exports and imports being nearly equal, and the balance, if any, in favour of Palestine.

Then, as to the laws regulating trade and commerce, they were so minute as almost to remind us of the Saviour's strictures on Pharisaic punctiliousness. Several Mishnic tractates are full of determinations on these points. "The dust of the balances" is a strictly Jewish idea and phrase. So far did the law interfere, as to order that a wholesale dealer must cleanse the measures he used once every month, and a retail dealer twice a week; that all weights were to be washed once a week, and the balances wiped every time they had been used. By way of making assurance doubly sure, the seller had to give rather more than an

ounce in addition to every ten pounds, if the article consisted of fluids, or half that if of solids (Baba B. v. 10, 11). Here are some of the principal ordinances relating to trade. A bargain was not considered closed until both parties had taken possession of their respective properties. But after one of them had received the money, it was deemed dishonourable and sinful for the other to draw back. In case of overcharge, or a larger than the lawful profit, a purchaser had the right of returning the article, or claiming the balance in money, provided he applied for it after an interval not longer than was needful for showing the goods to another merchant or to a relative. Similarly, the seller was also protected. Money-changers were allowed to charge a fixed discount for light money, or to return it within a certain period, if below the weight at which they had taken it. A merchant might not be pressed to name the lowest price, unless the questioner seriously intended to purchase; nor might he be even reminded of a former overcharge to induce him to lower his prices. Goods of different qualities might not be mixed, even though the articles added were of superior value. For the protection of the public, agriculturists were forbidden to sell in Palestine wine diluted with water, unless in places where such was the known usage. Indeed, one of the Rabbis went so far as to blame merchants who gave little presents to children by way of attracting the custom of their parents. It is difficult to imagine what they would have said to the modern practice of giving discount to servants. All agreed in reprobating as deceit every attempt to give a better appearance to an article exposed for sale. Purchases of corn could not be concluded till the general market-price had been fixed.

But beyond all this, every kind of speculation was regarded as akin to usury. With the delicacy characteristic of Rabbinical law, creditors were expressly prohibited from using anything belonging to a debtor without paying for it, from sending him on an errand, or even accepting a present from one who had solicited an advance. So punctilious were the Rabbis in avoiding the appearance of usury, that a woman who borrowed a loaf from her neighbour was told to fix its value at the time, lest a sudden rise in flour should make the loaf returned worth more than that borrowed! If a house or a field were rented, a somewhat higher charge might be made, if the money were not paid in advance, but not in the case of a purchase. It was regarded as an improper kind of speculation to promise a merchant one-half of the profit on the sales he effected, or to advance him money and then allow him one-half of the profits on his transactions. In either case, it was thought, a merchant would be exposed to more temptation. By law he was only entitled to a commission and to compensation for his time and trouble.

Equally strict were the regulations affecting debtor and creditor. Advances were legally secured by regular documents, drawn out at the expense of the debtor, and attested by witnesses, about whose signature minute directions are given. To prevent mistakes, the sum lent was marked at the top, as well as in the body of the document. A person was not taken as security for another after the loan was actually contracted. In reference to interest (which among the Romans was calculated monthly), in regard to pledges, and in dealing with insolvent debtors, the mildness of the Jewish law has never been equalled. It was lawful, under certain restrictions, to take a pledge, and in the event of non-payment to sell it: but wearing apparel, bedding, the ploughshare, and all articles required for the preparation of food were excepted. Similarly, it was unlawful, under any circumstances, to take a pledge from a widow, or to sell that which belonged to her. These are only some of the provisions by which the interest of all parties were not only guarded, but a higher religious tone sought to be imparted to ordinary life. Those who are acquainted with the state of matters among the nations around, and the cruel exactions of the Roman law, will best appreciate the difference in this respect also between Israel and the Gentiles. The more the Rabbinical code is studied, the higher will be our admiration of its provisions, characterised as these are by wisdom, kindness, and delicacy, we venture to say, far beyond any modern legislation. Not only the history of the past, the present privileges, and the hope connected with the promises, but the family,

social, and public life which he found among his brethren would attach a Jew to his people. Only one thing was wanting--but that, alas! the "one thing needful." For, in the language of St. Paul (Rom 10:2), "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."

Chapter 13

Among the People, and with the Pharisees

It would have been difficult to proceed far either in Galilee or in Judaea without coming into contact with an altogether peculiar and striking individuality, differing from all around, and which would at once arrest attention. This was the Pharisee. Courted or feared, shunned or flattered, reverently looked up to or laughed at, he was equally a power everywhere, both ecclesiastically and politically, as belonging to the most influential, the most zealous, and the most closely-connected religions fraternity, which in the pursuit of its objects spared neither time nor trouble, feared no danger, and shrunk from no consequences. Familiar as the name sounds to readers of the New Testament and students of Jewish history, there is no subject on which more crude or inaccurate notions prevail than that of Pharisaism, nor yet any which, rightly understood, gives fuller insight into the state of Judaism at the time of our Lord, or better illustrates His words and His deeds. Let us first view the Pharisee as, himself seemingly unmoved, he moves about among the crowd, which either respectfully gives way or curiously looks after him.

There was probably no town or village inhabited by Jews which had not its Pharisees, although they would, of course, gather in preference about Jerusalem with its Temple, and what, perhaps would have been even dearer to the heart of a genuine Pharisee--its four hundred and eighty synagogues, its Sanhedrims (great and small), and its schools of study. There could be no difficulty in recognising such an one. Walking behind him, the chances were, he would soon halt to say his prescribed prayers. If the fixed time for them had come, he would stop short in the middle of the road, perhaps say one section of them, move on, again say another part, and so on, till, whatever else might be doubted, there could be no question of the conspicuousness of his devotions in market-place or corners of streets. There he would stand, as taught by the traditional law, would draw his feet well together, compose his body and clothes, and bend so low "that every vertebra in his back would stand out separate," or, at least, till "the skin over his heart would fall into folds" (Ber. 28 b). The workman would drop his tools, the burden-bearer his load; if a man had already one foot in the stirrup, he would withdraw it. The hour had come, and nothing could be suffered to interrupt or disturb him. The very salutation of a king, it was said, must remain unreturned; nay, the twisting of a serpent around one's heel must remain unheeded. Nor was it merely the prescribed daily seasons of prayer which so claimed his devotions. On entering a village, and again on leaving it, he must say one or two benedictions; the same in passing through a fortress, in encountering any danger, in meeting with anything new, strange, beautiful, or unexpected. And the lo

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