

THE JAMNIA PERIOD IN JEWISH HISTORY.

I.

THE request made by R'Jochanan ben Zakkai, when he secured the favour of Vespasian, that the Sanhedrin should be allowed to settle at Jamnia¹ is clear evidence of his wisdom and knowledge. The town itself had remained loyal to the Romans, and the Jewish population, hitherto in the majority² had just been considerably weakened by the importation of an alien element.³ Neither in Jamnia nor anywhere in the neighbourhood could rebellion be even suspected. The Jewish population in the Plain of Sharon too had suffered but little in the war, and besides the whole plain from Carmel to Gaza, with the low hills of the Shephelah, was amongst the most fertile and desirable land in Palestine. The fertility of Lydda is specially mentioned⁴ and from Ganoth Zeriphim, near Joppa,⁵ the firstfruits of the wheat had been taken for presentation in the Temple. Nowhere else in the Holy Land could the maximum return be so easily secured with the minimum of labour. We need not then be surprised that the population was large, though of course the numbers given must be discounted in view of the manifest megalomania of the recorders.

The little Jewish State, to some extent administered from Jamnia from A.D. 70 to 135, is defined as extending from Antipatris to Gibbethon, the latter of which must have been somewhere in the Philistine country, as Bethshemesh is mentioned as having been between them.⁶ There we have it stated that there were no fewer than 600,000 villages, and that Bethshemesh was the smallest. Elsewhere⁷ the population

¹ *Ab. d'R' Nathan* iv; *Gittin* 56 a. That the assembly at Jamnia was no ordinary Rabbinical *Beth din* (Court of Justice) but regarded itself, and was regarded, as a continuation of the Great Sanhedrin of Jerusalem is clear from the Jewish sources, and has been fully shewn by Bacher (art. *Sanhedrin*, Hastings *DB* iv 398 b), who says: 'At Jabneh (Jamnia) an assembly of Teachers of the Law constituted itself, and regarded itself as a continuation of the Great Sanhedrin. . . . This new Sanhedrin, as constituted at Jamnia, had many points of close contact with the old Council of Jerusalem.' There were seventy-two elders present at the Jamnia assembly when Eleazar b. Azariah was associated with Gamaliel II as President (*Mishnah Zebachim* i 3). Naturally its legislative authority was not fully recognized at first, but grew. See also Schürer *G. J. V.*⁴ i 657 f (= E. T. vol. ii 275 ff; cf. 273 ff).

² Philo *Leg. ad Caium* xxx.

³ Jos. *Bell. Jud.* iv 8. 1.

⁴ T. B. *Keth.* III a.

⁵ M. *Men.* vi 2.

⁶ T. J. *Taan.* iv 5; Midrash *Echa* on Lam. ii 12.

⁷ Midrash *Shir* on Canticles i 16

is said to have been equal to those who came out of Egypt. Then it is recorded¹ that within the same limits R' Akiba had 24,000 pupils.

Jamnia itself, though less important than Lydda, at which place we hear² of merchants, and³ of trade in pottery, would be freer from bustle and traffic, and more suitable for administration and scholastic work, and the more likely choice of⁴ an old man. It accordingly became the official meeting-place of the Beth Din or supreme Rabbinical Court, corresponding to the old Sanhedrin; but the leading teachers established themselves in the most important centres around. Thus R' Akiba had his school at Bene-Berak (Ibn Ibrak); R' Tarphon at Lydda (Lud); R' Elazar at Modin (el-Medyeh); R' Jehoshua at Pekiin, between Lydda and Jamnia; R' Nachum Ish Gamzu, probably at his native Gimzo (Jimzu). All these lie within a few miles of one another. In addition we have other rabbinical centres in the neighbourhood frequently mentioned, chief of which are Beth Dagon (Beit Dajun); Beth Sipuriyeh (es-Saphiriyeh); Kefr Tabi (Kefr Tab); and Ono (Kefr Ana). Furthermore we find mention of native and resident rabbis at Joppa, Caesarea, Antipatris, as well as others belonging to Sycominum⁵; Haifa⁶; Sikhnim⁷ and other places in Galilee, but all in association with Jamnia. In the hill country of Judah R' Ishmael taught and practised vine-culture⁸ at Kefr Aziz (Khurbet Aziz, seven miles south of Hebron), and we find R' Jochanan ben Zakkai residing at Beror-chail (probably Burer, by Gaza) whither he seems to have retired about five years after the Fall of Jerusalem.⁹

II.

With the destruction of the Temple and the City we might have expected that Judaism would decline and disappear. With the downfall of the state, however, the principle was announced:¹⁰ 'The Law is the Heritage of Israel'; and that principle was so developed by the brightest constellation of teachers that Judaism has ever produced that, without Temple, Priest, or Sacrifice, Rabbinical Judaism rose from the ashes of the old faith with an assured existence of two millenniums. When the Mishnah was written down, the merits of these teachers were acknowledged in the following terms:—'Since the death of R' Meir (second Tannaitic generation A.D. 130–160) the speakers of parables have ceased; since that of Ben Azzai the assiduous are no more;

¹ T. B. *Sanh.* 94 b; *Yeb.* 82 b. These numbers are of course not to be taken literally.

² M. *Bab. Metz.* iv 3.

⁴ T. B. *Rosh ha-shanah* 31 b.

⁶ Midrash *Shem.* 14.

⁸ M. *Kil.* vi 4.

¹⁰ T. B. *Succah* 42 a.

³ M. *Kel.* ii 2.

⁵ T. B. *Bab. Bath.* 119 b.

⁷ T. B. *Rosh ha-shanah* 29 a.

⁹ T. B. *Sanh.* 32 b.

since that of Ben Zoma (rather earlier in second century than Meir) there are none studious; since that of R'Jehoshua (end of first and beginning of second century A. D.) loving-kindness has left the world. Since the death of R'Shimeon ben Gamaliel locusts and many evils have come; since that of R'Elazar ben Azariah (end of first century A. D.) the learned have ceased to be rich; since that of R'Akiba (martyred c. A. D. 135) there is no reverence for the Law; since that of R'Chanina ben Dosa (end of first century A. D.) there are no wonder-workers; since that of R'Jochanan ben Zakkai the splendour of wisdom has gone'.¹

One of the most distinguished teachers of the period, whom we shall have occasion to quote most frequently, R'Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (end of first and beginning of second century A. D.), brother-in-law of Rabban Gamaliel II, is unnamed in the list given. This probably arises from the fact that he died in Caesarea and practically excommunicated.² Thus even here we have an indication that within rabbinic circles there was difference of opinion and lack of harmony. The Sadducees may be left out of account, as they were a weak and diminishing community³; but the two Pharisaic parties, the schools of Hillel and Shammai, both survived the Fall of Jerusalem, and their representatives appear in disputation over many questions. Both contributed to the interpretation of the Law and to the establishment of the Faith. The School of Hillel was inclined to take the broader and easier view of each question, while that of Shammai adopted the narrower and stricter. The heads of these schools are themselves characteristically set forth in the admonition, 'Let a man be ever mild like Hillel, and not passionate like Shammai'.⁴ Accordingly we have two Schools of Interpretation of Scripture. Beth Hillel declared that the Torah spoke according to the language of men⁵; Beth Shammai treated Scripture as something quite apart from all human speech, and attempted to expound innumerable doctrinal and legal decisions from every pleonasm and rhetorical expression, from the very tittles of the letters.⁶ With these dividing principles before us we shall now look at the nature of the Reconstruction carried through at Jamnia, and the work of the leading teachers.

R'Jochanan ben Zakkai was already a very old man. He was the youngest of Hillel's pupils,⁷ and had been described by him as a father of wisdom to coming generations.⁸ He had taught under the shadow

¹ M. *Sota* ix 15; T. B. *Sota* 49 a and b.

² T. B. *Sanh.* 68 a.

³ M. *Yad.* iv. 6, 7, and 8.

⁴ T. B. *Shabb.* 30 b.

⁵ T. J. *Ned.* i 1; T. B. *Sanh.* 90 b; T. B. *Bab. Metz.* 31 a and b.

⁶ T. J. *Sota* v 7; T. B. *Menach.* 29 b.

⁷ T. B. *Bab. Bath.* 134 a.

⁸ T. J. *Ned.* v 6

of the Temple wall,¹ and forty years before the Destruction of the Temple had, within the House itself, on the ground of Zechariah xi 7 foretold the coming event.² It was only natural then that he should profess no purpose of Reform. He sought only the preservation of what had been received and accepted. Still certain changes had to come. Temple, priest, and sacrifice had gone. In place of these he proclaimed the principle, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice'. The synagogue at Jamnia, in things necessary, took the place of the Temple. That the Calendar might be kept in order, observations of the New Moons were reported at Jamnia. There they were probably checked by certain rules known to the authorities. We read of something of this kind called *Sod Ha-Ibbur*, and we are told that Rabban Gamaliel had Tables showing *the Phases of the moon*,³ and even something of the nature of a telescope for use on land and water.⁴ In this manner the way was being cleared for the Astronomical Arrangement of the Calendar by R'Hillel II in A.D. 358. The Blowing of the Shophar (ram's horn) was also allowed at Jamnia to the full extent that it had been practised in the Temple at Jerusalem. Matters concerning the priests were discussed, but they could meanwhile have only an antiquarian or sentimental interest.⁵

R'Jochanan had been a diligent student of Scripture. It was said there was no section that he had not fully taken up,⁶ and he is said to have been the first to make use of the Haggadah. His whole aim was to enter into the spirit of the writings, and where difficulties were met he sought for means of harmonizing the differences. Of this we have an example in his explanation of the discrepancy between the numbers of the Levites and the redeemed first-born, in which he seeks to show that this is to be accounted for by the fact that the first-born, who were also Levites, were not to be redeemed, and are accordingly not reckoned.⁷ Through him the school of Hillel maintained its position in the matter of administration, and took precedence for a time at least in teaching also. He was succeeded by Rabban Gamaliel II, when he had attained the age of thirty. He had many difficulties to meet, and they were sometimes overcome only by use of the *Cherem* (Ban). He always tried to decide on the principle of 'What does the Law mean?' and he sought to leave the application to others.⁸

During R'Jochanan's later years (*ante* A.D. 100) there had been

¹ T. B. *Pes.* 26 a.

² T. B. *Joma* 39 b.

³ M. *Rosh ha-shanah* ii 8.

⁴ T. B. *Eruvh.* 43 b.

⁵ M. *Shek.* i 4; *Eduy.* viii 3.

⁶ *Ab. d'R'Nathan* 14 and 25; Midrash *Shir* on Canticles i 3.

⁷ M. *Yad.* iv 6, 7, 8; T. B. *Bechor.* 5 a; *Bammidb. rab.* 4.

⁸ M. *Peah* ii 4; *Demai* iii 1; T. B. *Bab. Metz.* 74 a; *Derech Eretz* 1.

associated with him his friend, and almost contemporary, the genial and devout Nechuniah ben Hakkana. He taught on the lines of the Seven Rules laid down by Hillel, but mainly on the principles of the General and the Particular—Rule V.¹ We have very little that is certain of his exposition, but he takes a place of distinction as the teacher of R'Ishmael of Kefr Aziz.² Courteous and kindly³ he made a great name for himself by his helpfulness to the families of those absent in the war of Bar-Cochab (A. D. 132-135),⁴ and it was probably in connexion with such action that he was put to death.⁵ He was greatly respected even by his opponents, who paid him a visit of consolation when his son died,⁶ while even R'Akiba pronounced a eulogy on him when he was martyred.⁷ He was not only a true representative of Beth Hillel, but became the main link between the great founder of the School and the later Judaism, having by explanation and modification extended the Seven Rules of Hillel to the number of Thirteen. As he left them they find a place in every Jewish Prayer Book to-day. He was indifferent to the individual words and sounds, and sought to explain Scripture according to the plain sense, without seeking for any underlying hidden meaning. His aim is to work out logically the certain meaning of the Bible Text.

R'Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (of Lydda), brother-in-law of Rabban Gamaliel, belongs to the same school. He was one of the five famous pupils of R'Jochanan, and in the matter of Tradition he occupied a somewhat similar position. He would permit no new development of the text, but allowed only what had been transmitted and explained by the accepted rules. What he had not heard was for him undecided⁸; otherwise his conservatism placed him in the school of Shammai.

The great light of this latter school was R'Akiba ben Joseph, who also learned the outline of his system from his teacher, R'Nachum of Gimzo, under whom he had studied for twenty-two years.⁹ According to the system of these teachers the minute details of Scripture—any seemingly superfluous expressions, and especially the use of the Infinite Absolute with the Verb, as also the Hebrew particles *gam*, *eth*, *aph*, *kol*, *rah*, *min*, *ach* were of the greatest importance. The name given to this method is that of *RIBBUI* and *MI'UT*, or Extension and Limitation. We read of Rabbi Akiba studying all the *Eths* and *Gams* of Scripture.¹⁰ Regulations not obtainable from the plain text were thus

¹ T. B. *Shebu'oth* 26 a.

² *Aboth* iii 16.

³ *Mechilta*, Mishpat 18.

⁴ *Mechilta*, Mishpat 18.

⁵ T. B. *Chag.* 12 a; *Bereshith Rab.* 1.

⁶ T. B. *Shebu'oth* 26 a; *Bereshith Rab.* 1.

⁷ M. *Kil.* vi 4; T. B. *Keth.* 64 b.

⁸ T. B. *Ned.* 66 a and b.

⁹ T. B. *Moed Kat.* 28 b.

¹⁰ T. B. *Succah* 27 b.

derived, Accordingly we learn that the *Gam* in Num. xviii 28 was understood to be an extension, and to mean some addition to the text. And so it was interpreted as referring to an agent who might be sent to present the offering. Thence the principle was derived that 'things done by an agent were done by one's self'. The *Eth* in Deut. x 20 was understood to include an extension of the persons to whom the fear of the Lord was due, and so made to include the rabbis. Then the *Ach* in Exodus xxxi 13 was read as allowing a limitation or easing of the Sabbath Law where life was in danger.¹

The followers of Akiba found indications of an intended extension in the repetition of a word, in the conjunctions 'O and Vav ('or' and 'and'), and of an intended limitation in emphasis on a demonstrative or suffixed pronoun, and in the definite article, for examples of which see Mielziner.² We can understand that the School of Hillel was, in virtue of disputes³ arising, forced to give attention to this method also, and accordingly we read of R'Jochanan's having studied it, and of questions on it arising between R'Ishmael and R'Akiba.⁴ One of these discussions indicates one direction in which this system was leading. R'Ishmael asked R'Akiba what was meant by the *Eth* in Gen. i 1⁵ and the answer was that it indicated the difference between the Subject and the Object of the Verb.⁶ The study of such detail was bound to lead to the formulating of the grammar of the language, and at the same time to a noting of differences of readings in the transmitted text. In this connexion it may be noted that a great many of the variant readings known as *Qri* and the *Kethibh* of the Old Testament differ only in the matter of *Vav* and *Yodh*, and as these letters hardly differed at all in the Hebrew Alphabet of the second century, as shown by the Kefr Birim Inscription, it would be necessary to note these specially during this period.

III.

There is another point of some importance to be noted in connexion with differences between the Schools of Hillel and Shammai that was under discussion before our period commenced, and lasted till after its close; that is the doubt regarding the canonicity of certain books. In virtue of one passage in the Mishnah⁷ in which it is questioned whether two of the Hagiographa 'defile the hands' (an idiom indicating 'canonicity'), this question is better known than most others belonging to the time. In the Wisdom of Solomon (ii 1-10) we have

¹ T. B. *Pes.* 22 b; *Yoma* 85 b; *Kidd.* 41 b.

² *Introduction to the Talmud* pp. 182 ff.

⁴ *Toseph. Shebu'oth* i 7.

⁶ T. B. *Chag.* 12 a.

³ T. B. *Shebu'oth* 26 a; *Sanh.* 51 b.

⁵ *Bereshith Rab.* i.

⁷ *Yad.* iii 5.

a passage in which the author speaks of Ecclesiastes in such a manner that one can hardly think that he considered it canonical. That, however, is the only indication from the Jewish-Hellenistic School. All other references have to do with Beth-Shammai, and the problem as to books concerning which doubts existed was ultimately solved by members of that school deciding on the lines of Beth Hillel. The books in question are eight in number, and embrace Canticles, Koheleth, Esther, Ruth, Ezekiel, Proverbs, Jonah, and Chronicles.

In the Mishnah passage already indicated¹ we read, 'All the Hagiographa defile the hands. Canticles and Koheleth defile the hands'. R'Jehudah says 'Canticles defiles the hands, but regarding Koheleth there is a difference of opinion'. R'Shimeon says that Koheleth is of the light things of Beth Shammai, and of the weighty things of Beth Hillel. R'Shimeon ben Azzai says, 'I received from the mouth of the seventy-two elders on the day that they seated R'Elazar ben Azariah in the Council that Canticles and Koheleth defile the hands'. R'Akiba says, 'Far be it from any man in Israel to think that Canticles does not defile the hands, for the whole world is not equal to the day when Canticles was given to Israel, and if there was a difference of opinion it was only concerning Koheleth'. R'Jochanan ben Jehoshua, brother-in-law of R'Akiba agrees with Ben Azzai. Thus they differed and thus they taught. This passage is supported by another Mishnah² which sums up as follows, 'According to the words of Beth Shammai, Koheleth does not defile the hands, but according to Beth Hillel it does'. The question of these books is raised in the Gemara. There R'Meir³ says that Koheleth does not defile the hands, and that there is a difference of opinion as to Canticles. R'Jose says that Canticles defiles the hands, and that there is a difference of opinion as to Koheleth. R'Shimeon says that Koheleth is of the light things of Beth Shammai, and of the weighty things of Beth Hillel, but Ruth, Canticles, and Esther defile the hands. He speaks in the name of R'Jehoshua. R'Shimeon ben Menasia says that Koheleth does not defile the hands, because it is merely the wisdom of Solomon.

Other passages give reasons for the differences of opinion. We read,⁴ 'At first they made Proverbs, Canticles, and Koheleth apocryphal, because they had pictorial expressions, as in Prov. vii 7-20; Cant. vii 12 seq.; Eccles. xi 9. This lasted till the Men of the Great Synagogue came and discovered the solution'. Again we read,⁵ 'R'Jehudah ben R'Shemuel bar Shilath says in the name of Rabh (*ob.* A. D. 247). "The Wise men sought to make Koheleth apocryphal because its words (i 2 and vii 3) were contradicting one another.

¹ M. *Yad.* iii 5.

² M. *Eduy.* v 3.

³ T. B. *Meg.* 7 a.

⁴ *Ab. d'R'Nathan* i.

⁵ T. B. *Shabb.* 30 b.

Why then did they not make it apocryphal? Because its beginning (i 3) and its conclusion (xii 13) are the words of the Law”¹.

One of these Gemara passages mentions Ruth and Esther. Of the former we have no further note, but Esther is more fully discussed. Perhaps the low estimate in which Purim was held had something to do with the doubts considering this book. Regarding that Feast we learn² that the use and wont of the place of celebration was recognized, and that Prayer in connexion with the reading of the Roll was optional. Then regarding the book itself, R’Eliezer says that Esther was given by the Holy Spirit, for it says, ‘Haman said in his heart’; R’Akiba says that Esther was given by the Holy Spirit, for it says, ‘Esther obtained favour from all that looked upon her’; R’Meir says that Esther was given by the Holy Spirit, for it says, ‘And the thing was known to Mordechai’; R’Jose says that Esther was given by the Holy Spirit, for it says, ‘But on the spoil laid they not their hand’.

Then the following incident is related,³ ‘When Levi bar Shemuel and Rabh Huna bar Chayya were arranging the coverings of the books in the house of R’Jehudah (*ob.* A. D. 200), they brought the Roll of Esther, and said, “This is Megillath Esther”. He did not ask a covering, but said to them “In this manner also it will be shown to be apocryphal (*apheqritha*)”’.

Of a still later period we have this record,⁴ ‘Rabh and Rabbi Chaninah and R’Jochanan and Bar Kapparah and R’Jehoshua ben Levi say (*c.* A. D. 240), that the Roll of Esther was given to Moses on Sinai, for there is neither before nor after in the Law. R’Jochanan (*ob.* A. D. 279?) and R’Shimeon ben Lakish (a contemporary) express an opinion. R’Jochanan says, “The prophets and the Hagiographa will in the future be abolished, but the Five Books of the Law will not”. R’Shimeon adds, “Also the Roll of Esther and the Halachoth are not to be abolished”’.

Ezekiel is dealt with in three passages⁵ all practically the same. R’Jehudah says in the name of Rabh (*ob.* A. D. 247), “Let Chananyah ben Chizkiah be of blessed memory, since but for him the book of Ezekiel would have been made apocryphal, on account of its words contradicting those of the Law, in that Exek. xlvi 6 is against Num. xxix 2.” “Why was it not made apocryphal? They brought him 300 jars of (lamp) oil, and he sat in his upper room and solved the contradiction.” The solution is given from Ezek. xlvi 7 in the words, “according as his hand shall attain unto”. The passage in Chagigah adds, “Our rabbis relate the incident of a child that was reading the

¹ Cf. also Midrash *Kohelath rabba* on Eccles. i 3, and on xi 8.

² *M. Meg.* iv 1.

³ *T. B. Sanh.* 100 a.

⁴ *J. Meg.* i 5.

⁵ *T. B. Shabb.* 13 b; *Chag.* 13 a; *Men.* 45 a.

book of Ezekiel in the house of his rabbi. The rabbi was explaining the word "chashmal", and fire came out of chashmal and burned him. Accordingly they wished to make Ezekiel apocryphal. Chananyah ben Chizkiah said to them, "If this is wise, then all are sages".

Regarding Proverbs we have one reference,¹ 'They sought to make Proverbs apocryphal because its words were contradicting one another. And why did they not make it apocryphal? The answer was given, "Did we not weigh fully Koheleth and find the solution? Here also we have solved the matter. And what were the contradictions? Answer a fool according to his folly, and Answer not a fool according to his folly. (Prov. xxvi 4-5.) There is no question; here it is in the things of the Law, there in the things of the world"'.

The question regarding Jonah appears in the Midrash,² where an explanation of the words 'sar chamishim' in Isaiah iii 3 is offered. The whole matter, however, is merely a Jewish play with figures. It reads, 'To the 24 books add 11 from the Twelve (Minor Prophets) leaving out Jonah, which is a book by itself, then the Six Sedarim (of the Mishnah) and the Nine Peraḳim of Torah Kohanim (Siphra); these are Fifty'.

The phrase 'a book for itself' occurs regarding Num. x 35-36, but on that passage no such question is raised.³ Furthermore the reference to Jonah has no real connexion with canonicity, but simply indicates that the book dealt with the Gentiles and not with Israel.

Our last reference, also in the Midrash,⁴ states that R'Shimeon in the name of R'Jehoshua ben Levi and R'Chama Abu R'Hoshaya in the name of Rabh (c. A. D. 250) say that Chronicles was not given except as a Midrash (*darash*).

When we examine all these evidences we observe that in no case was the Canonicity of a book questioned on account of authorship or date, or on the ground of any external evidence. Concerning Chronicles we have only an expression of opinion, and that of very late date. The same may be said of Jonah. The quotation given concerning it shows that the Mishnah had been already codified, and that Siphra was in written form. The question of Ruth hardly arises. The objectors to the book of Ezekiel are not named, but they seem to have belonged to Beth Shammai, and the decision was given by a member of that School before the settlement at Jamnia. The objections to Proverbs were never serious, and they were easily disposed of. Esther, Canticles, and Koheleth seem to have been most frequently doubted, but the case was settled in favour of all three by the middle of the third century.

¹ T. B. *Shabb.* 30 b.

³ T. B. *Sanh.* 116 a.

² Midrash *Bammidh. rabba* 18.

⁴ Midrash *Vayyik.* 3.

One point requires attention. Ben Azzai seems to declare that the canonicity of Canticles and Koheleth was decided in a full Sanhedrin at Jamnia, on the day of the deposition of Rabban Gamaliel, and that is frequently accepted as the date of the formal and authoritative closing of the Old Testament Canon. There is reason for serious doubt on that point. There was much to do that day in connexion with the questions in dispute between Rabban Gamaliel II and his colleagues. These questions dealt with (a) a first-born animal wounded on the lip, (b) whether Evening Prayer was optional or obligatory, and (c) concerning the New Moon. No question of the canon was involved, and there would not be time for discussing it that day. Besides we may be sure that questions on which Beth Hillel and Beth Shammai differed would be kept in the background on such an occasion. The most that could have reached the ears of Ben Azzai would be some incidental remark. Besides, the question was not settled, for the discussions on Esther, Canticles, and Koheleth as between R' Akiba and his companions, as given above, clearly point to a later date, say A. D. 115 and further till the year A. D. 200 the matter was still being discussed. There never seems to have been a formal canonizing of any portion of the Old Testament (any more than of the New) by any judicial authority. The books gradually made their way to universal acceptance in the synagogue and in the church, and in these disputes on the part of individuals or schools we see the process in operation.

IV.

In the little State—or, perhaps we should rather say autonomous district—that the Rabbinical authorities sought to administer from Jamnia, they evidently set before themselves the ideal of a people submissive to the Torah, but even more so to its rabbinic interpretation. The ideal is set forth in what they tell us¹ of an earlier time, that between Gabbatha and Antipatris there was neither male nor female child, nor man nor woman, who was not familiar with all the decrees concerning ceremonial purity. Elsewhere² the complaint is made that since the Temple was destroyed the Wise Men have become like scribes, the scribes like schoolmasters, the schoolmasters like illiterates, and the illiterates lower still, no one seeking and no one asking. The fact is that with the settlement on the Plain of Sharon the rabbis came into contact with the peasantry (Am-Haaretz), who cared little for the subtle distinctions they made, and so were despised by the 'learned'. It was the old position, 'This people who knoweth not the Law are cursed' (John vii 42). The question is asked, Who is the Am-haaretz? and

¹ T. B. *Sanh.* 94 b.

² T. B. *Sotah* 49 a and b.

the answer is given, 'Every one who does not read the Shema in the evening and in the morning, these are the words of R'Eliezer; R'Jehoshua says, Every one who does not wear phylacteries; Ben Azzai says, Every one who has no tassels on his garment.'¹ R'Meir says that a man is obliged to thank God every day that he was not made a Gentile, nor a woman, nor an illiterate'.² It was forbidden to associate with illiterates even on a journey, intermarriage with them was discouraged, and they might be inhumanly treated. They seem to have returned the rabbinical compliments in kind, for R'Eliezer tells us,³ 'If we were not necessary to them for business, they would kill us. The hatred of the illiterates towards the disciples of the wise, is greater than that of the Gentile toward Israel, and their wives are worse than they'.

With the Samaritans at Nablus, twenty miles distant, the rabbis must have come into contact, and so we hear of them too. Sometimes they are spoken of in a favourable, and sometimes in a hostile manner. Meat slaughtered by the Cuthean was allowed,⁴ their unleavened bread was permitted,⁵ and one might legally fulfil his Passover obligations with it.⁶ R'Eliezer allows their cooked food also⁷; R'Shimeon ben Rabban Gamaliel II even admits that in the observance of every precept the Cutheans were more exact than the Israelites⁸; and R'Meir permits circumcision by a Samaritan where there is no medical Israelite.⁹ But on the contrary R'Eliezer at another time declared,¹⁰ 'He that eateth a bit of Samaritan bread is as he that eateth swine's flesh'. As time passed the feeling toward the Samaritans increased in bitterness, probably on account of their attitude to Bar Cochab, and it was forbidden to trust them with the books of the Law,¹¹ while it was declared that they had no share in the World to Come.

V.

On the part of the Greco-Roman (Gentile-heathen) authorities the Jews enjoyed considerable liberty, and there seem to have been often friendly relations, and even a kind of social intercourse between the two parties. Rabban Gamaliel II secured his position by an official visit, presumably about the year A.D. 75, to the Viceroy of Syria,¹² and was by him confirmed in his office. R'Chananyah (A.D. 70-90) exhorted men to pray for the Gentile authorities,¹³ and we have it on record that

¹ T. B. *Pes.* 49 b.

² T. B. *Pes.* 49 b.

³ T. B. *Kidd.* 76 a.

⁴ T. J. *Ab. Zar.* v 4.

⁵ T. B. *Ab. Zar.* 26 b.

⁶ T. B. *Chag.* 13 a.

⁷ *Aboth* iii 2.

⁸ T. B. *Men.* 43 b.

⁹ T. B. *Chul.* 3 b.

¹⁰ T. B. *Chul.* 4 a.

¹¹ T. B. *Chul.* 4 a.

¹² M. *Shebu'oth* viii 10.

¹³ M. *Eduy.* vii 7.

permission was granted through him for the rebuilding of the Temple, but through local intrigue it was prevented, a limitation as to measurement being later introduced, which made its erection impossible.¹

We need not attach much importance to the reported discussions between various rabbis and the emperors. Caesarea is called in the Jerusalem Talmud 'Metropolin shel melachin' ('Metropolis of Kings'), and every high Roman official was 'a king' to the Jew. Among stories connected with such conversations is that between a Roman and the daughter of Gamaliel concerning the abstraction of Adam's rib for the creation of Eve.² It reads thus :—Caesar, quoting Gen. ii 21, said to Rabban Gamaliel, 'Your God is a thief'. The rabbi's daughter intervening said, 'Let me answer him' and turning to Caesar said, 'Name me a judge to decide my cause, for thieves came to our house last night and stole from us a vessel of silver, but left us one of gold'. 'Would that such might come to me every day', said the king. 'And was it not beautiful then that God took a rib from our father Adam, and gave him a maid to wait on him'. Then we have again the story of the daughter of a Roman (the common editions of the Talmud call him 'emperor', the earlier editions 'kopher' or 'unbeliever') who asked R'Jehoshua how he, being so ugly, could be a man of so great learning. He asked where her father kept his wine, and on being told in vessels of earthenware, he pointed out that she ought to put it into vessels of silver and gold. When she had done this it became sour, and thence the girl learned that great learning was not inconsistent with an unprepossessing appearance.³

One incident of these years brought the Jamnia leaders into close touch with the Gentile world, the journey which was undertaken to Rome about the year A.D. 95 by Rabban Gamaliel of Jamnia, R'Elazar ben Azariah of Emmaus, R'Jehoshua ben Chananyah of Pekiin, and R'Akiba. We are told that they went and taught in Rome, and that they met and discussed various problems with various classes of the people.⁴ There they came into contact with a Senator, and were enabled to rescue themselves from imminent death, but at the cost to him of his life.⁵ The Jews seek to identify this senator with Flavius Clemens, whom the Christians claim as the author of I Clement. In connexion with this visit to Rome a typical story is told of R'Akiba. When they heard the tumult in the city, his companions began to weep, but Akiba to laugh. They said to him, 'Why dost thou laugh?' He said to them, 'Why do ye weep?' They answered, 'These heathen are bowing to their images and offering incense to their idols. They

¹ Midrash *Bereshith rabba* 64.

² T. B. *Sanh.* 39 a.

³ T. B. *Taan.* 7 a.

⁴ Midrash *Shem. Rab.* 30.

⁵ T. B. *Gitt.* 56 b; *Ab. Zar.* 10 b and 11 a; Midrash *Debhar. Rab.* . 2.

dwell secure and quiet ; but as for us, the House, the footstool of our God, is burned with fire. Shall we not weep ? ' He answered them, ' Therefore I laugh, if it is so to those that transgress His will, how much more will there be at last to those that do His will ! ' ¹

But even in their Palestinian home there must have been during this whole period a feeling of insecurity and unrest. The imposition of the Didrachm for the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and its systematically enforced payment, was in itself a grievance, and the abuses of authority in its collection caused much heart-burning. ² Nerva indeed removed some of the asperities, and claims credit for it on his coin with the legend, ' Fisci Judaici calumnia sublata ' ; but that was probably only a measure of temporary duration.

The search for members of the House of David ordered by Domitian (81-96), as recorded by Eusebius from Hege-sippus, must have threatened Gamaliel. Then the years 115 to 117 must have been a time of anxiety for the Jamnia State. The Jews in the East had been disaffected against Rome and had supported the Parthians. Trajan was at Antioch in 115, and returned to Cilicia in 117. During the time of his absence the Jews in Egypt and Cyrene rose and massacred 200,000 Greeks. In Cyprus too they left no one alive. ³ Hadrian took action against them, and slew as many as had perished under Nebuchadnezzar or Titus. Then Mesopotamia rose and had to be dealt with. All these risings meant anxiety for Palestine. There was ground for suspicion too, for there can be little doubt that all these insurrections had been arranged from the Jamnia centre. R' Akiba had journeyed through Galatia, Africa, Arabia, ⁴ and Cappadocia, ⁵ and he had gone to Babylonia under the pretext of arranging the Calendar at Nehardea. ⁶ He had visited practically every place where risings took place, and he had gone no where else. It is not unlikely that it was during such times of fear that more hostile feelings were expressed against the Gentile, and that there arose such sayings as, ' It is forbidden to give good advice to a Gentile, ' ⁷ and ' The Gentile who busies himself in the Law is worthy of death. ' ⁸

¹ Midrash *Echa* on Lam. v 18.

² Dion. Cass. lxxvi 7 ; Jos. *Bell. Jud.* vii 6, 6 ; Orig. *ad. Afric.* ; Sueton. *in Domitian* xii.

³ According to Dion. Cass. lxxviii 32 the Jews at this time massacred 240,000 Greeks in Cyprus. That a massacre on a very large scale took place on the island is confirmed by the savage severity of the laws enacted in Cyprus against Jewish visitors ; see Schürer *G. J. V.* ⁴ i 666 f (= E. T. vol. ii 284 f).

⁴ T. B. *Rosh ha-shanah* 26 a.

⁵ T. B. *Yeb.* 121 a.

⁶ T. B. *Yeb.* 122 a.

⁷ T. B. *Bab. Bath.* 4 a.

⁸ T. B. *Sanh.* 59 a.

VI.

It is to association with the Gentile world during this period that we owe the great admixture of foreign words admitted into the Mishnah Speech. Non-biblical things were usually named from the Greek spoken in the neighbourhood. Lists of these words have been collected by Schürer and others, but there is still the need of special study in this department. The words so introduced refer to all departments of life, to government, civil, military, and legal; to public institutions, architecture, baths, inns, and theatres: to commerce with foreign imports and materials; to plants and utensils; and they even include common words like 'thief', 'dwarf', and 'idiot'. Josephus had used the word Sanhedrin of the Jewish Council, but it never occurs except as the name of a Mishnah Tract. The Council is invariably named Beth Din.

In connexion with the Plant-Names, many of which are foreign, it may be well to note here that Agriculture was evidently studied scientifically so far as that was then understood. Only in this district could the experience be acquired of which we have the results carefully set down in the Seder Zeraim of the Mishnah, and further discussed in the Palestinian Gemara.

VII.

With another section of the community there was during this time very frequent association, namely with the Minim. The majority of these were certainly Jewish Christians, though it may have suited the rabbis to class with them others having Agnostic tendencies or tainted with philosophic doubt. From the evidence of the Book of Acts and of the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius we are led to believe that the Jewish Christians were numerous. Both Jew and Christian were ever ready for the discussion of religious questions. Justin Martyr's Dialogue is but an example of what was going on every day, and if R'Tarphon be not actually 'Trypho the Jew', the name at least may have been taken from him. Before the Sanhedrin had been long established at Jamnia, Jewish bitterness began to manifest itself. Gamaliel instructed Samuel the Little to add to the *Shemone 'Esre* the section called *Perek Hamminim*.¹ To this Justin refers, 'Cursing in your synagogues with most dreadful execrations those that believe in Christ', 'You curse even to this very day those that prove that He whom you crucified is the very Christ'.²

¹ T. B. *Ber.* 28 b. The *Shemone 'Esre* is 'The Eighteen Blessings' of the Synagogue Liturgy, and the *Perek Hamminim* is the Paragraph against heretics. In the present form there are nineteen Paragraphs. The text can be read in Singer's Prayer Book (Hebrew and English) pp. 44-54.

² Justin *Dialogue* 16, 93.

Their knowledge of Old Testament Scripture is shewn by the advice of R'Eliezer, who tells his associates,¹ 'Be diligent in the study of the Law, that ye may know what reply to give to an Epikorus'. R'Tarphon was so bitter that he quoted Psalm cxxxix 21-22 as referring to the Christians. He permitted a man seeking refuge from an assassin to enter a heathen shrine, but not the house of a Min.² The Gospel is well known and named offensively in word-plays. R'Meir calls it *Aven-gillayon*, while R'Jochanan uses the term *Avon-gillayon*. Christian books are not to be saved from the fire, but to be burned at once even with the names of God contained in them. R'Jose says that on a week-day the names of God ought to be cut out and hidden away, but the rest should be burned. R'Tarphon invoked a curse on himself if he did not burn the books, names of God and all.³

But notwithstanding this hostility the rabbis of this period seem to have had a fair knowledge of the contents of the Gospel. Of course there was much that was common in the language and thought of the times, and caution is required in asserting that the Gospel is always the source. We have parallels to practically all the Beatitudes. The Peace-maker is blessed.⁴ Men are taught to be 'humble of spirit'.⁵ The reward of keeping a single command is 'inheriting the earth'.⁶ Gamaliel uses the phrase 'the kingdom of heaven'.⁷ R'Tarphon uses in the same way as Christ 'the mote and the beam'.⁸ R'Jochanan is called by his disciples 'the light of the world'.⁹ R'Meir says that a man's words ought to be few before the Holy One.¹⁰ Then we meet statements about 'seeking the living among the dead',¹¹ and 'condemnation from one's own mouth',¹² while R'Jehoshua speaks of systems of good teaching as 'pearls'.¹³ R'Jochanan has a parable about small offerings made to the Temple which closely resembles that of the Widow's Mite,¹⁴ and another certainly based on those in Matthew's Gospel regarding a king who prepared a feast for his servants, in which the fates of the prepared and unprepared are set forth as sitting down to partake of the feast, and being compelled to stand and look on without tasting.¹⁵ R'Akiba transmits another regarding the places of honour at a feast in which the request 'to go up higher' appears.¹⁶ R'Shimeon ben Elazar asks, 'Did you ever see an animal or a bird

¹ T. B. *Sanh.* 38 b.

² T. B. *Shabb.* 116 a.

³ *Aboth* iv 2.

⁴ M. *Ber.* ii 5.

⁵ *Ab. d'R' Nathan* 24.

⁶ Midrash *Vayyik. Rab.* 6.

⁷ T. B. *Ber.* 17 a; *Shabb.* 119 a; *Chag.* 3 a.

⁸ Midrash *Vayyik. Rab.* 3.

⁹ Midrash *Vayyik. Rab.* 1.

¹⁰ T. B. *Shabb.* 116 a and b.

¹¹ M. *Peah* i 1.

¹² M. *Kidd.* i 10.

¹³ *Arachin* 16 b.

¹⁴ T. B. *Ber.* 61 a.

¹⁵ Midrash *Bammidh. Rab.* 16.

¹⁶ T. B. *Shabb.* 153 a.

that had a trade?' and then he goes on to note the greater importance of man in relation to divine providence.¹ Elazar ben Azariah speaks of a tree with 'many leaves and few roots'.² Then we have a distinct quotation in the Story of Rabban Gamaliel and his sister Emma Shalom in their attempt to expose one of the Minim, who professed to be an incorruptible judge. Emma presented him with a golden lamp, and requested an order that her brother be obliged to divide the inheritance with her. When the Court met the judge declared that, Israel being in captivity, the Law was of none effect, the Gospel having taken its place, and it made no distinction between male and female. Before the next sitting Gamaliel sent him a Libyan ass, and then the verdict was given that the Gospel stated, 'I am not come to diminish from the Law but to add to it'.³ Then we have a miracle recorded that very closely resembles that of John iv 52. Gamaliel's son is sick. Messengers are sent to R'Chanina ben Dosa to beg his intercession. He prays and then gives the command, 'Go, for the fever has left him'. They make note of the hour, and the matter concludes as in the Gospel.⁴

It is further worthy of notice that during this period we have from the side of Judaism the first mention of the Suffering Messiah. R'Dosa expounds Zechariah xii 12 and states that it refers to 'The Messiah ben Joseph who was slain'.⁵ This teaching was later developed from the Jewish side, but it seems to have been initiated through the intercourse between Jews and Minim during this period.

To the disputes between the rabbis and the Minim we owe furthermore at least one translation of the Old Testament. Jewish authorities were discontented with the LXX version, which seemed to favour the Christian position too much. Thinking that the Hebrew text might in their interests be better represented, they arranged that Aquila, a Jewish proselyte of Pontus⁶ should produce a new translation. A type of the corrections made is that mentioned by Justin⁷ where he indicates the substitution of *νεάνις* for *παρθένος* in Isaiah vii 14. Aquila is said to have carried through his work under the direction of R'Eliezer ben Hyrcanus of Lydda, and R'Jehoshua ben Chananyah of Pekiin, but the Version shows on every page the influence of the rules of *Ribbui* and *Mi'ut*, as laid down by R'Nachum of Gimzo and R'Akiba.⁸ Thus we find the Hebrew particle *Eth* represented by the Greek preposition *σὺν* (Gen. i 1). All this makes very bad Greek indeed, and the version could never have been used for reading. At the best it

¹ M. Kidd. iv 14.

² T. B. Shabb. 116 a and b.

³ T. B. Succah. 52 a.

⁷ Dial. 71.

² T. B. Ber. 34 b.

⁴ T. B. Ber. 34 b.

⁶ Iren. iii 24.

⁸ Cf. T. J. Kidd. i 1.

could only be used as an Index, telling what was to be found in the Hebrew Text. Origen¹ and Augustine² state that it was greatly approved by the Jews, and this is confirmed by the Jerusalem Talmud, which applies to it Psalm xlv 3. We learn that there were two editions of Aquila's version, and we can well believe that a less literal translation would be found necessary if it were to be read at all.

VIII.

Of the literature of the Jamnia period very little has reached us in its original form, but the work done was of the greatest importance for the next generation. Almost the only fragment that escaped the Fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 was the *Megillath Taanith*, compiled shortly before that event by Eliezer ben Chananyah. But the two Great Schools of R'Ishmael and R'Akiba have given us, probably orally transmitted for a time, a great mass of material. From the former we have the Midrashim *Mechilta* on Exodus, and *Siphre* on Deuteronomy, apart from chapters xii to xxvi, while from the latter we have *Siphra* on Leviticus and *Siphre* on Numbers and Deuteronomy xii to xxvi. But in their present form all these works come from the School of Abba Areca (Rabh) who died in Babylon in A. D. 247. They include both Haggadah and Halachah.

Then we know that R'Akiba himself prepared at least a draft of the Mishnah.³ But even he was dependent on other Mishnahs⁴ on which he made corrections.⁵ Then we have it specially noted that R'Eliezer ben Jacob had special information regarding the Temple, and that he was the compiler of the Tract *Middoth*⁶ in the Mishnah. Chananya, one of the colleagues of Jochanan ben Zakkai, had been Sagan in the Temple. He tells of serving there⁷, and reference to ritual observances is made by him. Doubtless we are in his debt for much of that nature that appears in our Mishnah. These items of information that have reached us enable us to see that much that we wish to know has been transmitted to us from a much earlier period than the final compilation of the Mishnah, in fact that much of it is practically contemporary evidence, and consequently that the Mishnah is to a large extent a most reliable document, and merits our careful study in virtue of the light it can throw on New Testament times and on the sub-apostolic Age. And in the immediate future, with the re-construction of the

¹ *Ep. ad. African.*

² *De Civ. Dei* xv 23.

³ *Epiph. adv. Haer.* i 2, 9 (xxxiii 9); *T. J. Shek.* v 1.

⁴ *T. B. Sanh.* 27 a.

⁵ *T. B. Rosh ha-shanah* 17 b; *Keth.* 57 a.

⁶ *T. B. Yoma* 16 a.

⁷ *T. B. Yoma* 39 a.

Holy Land, opportunities that will be afforded for the systematic study of all questions will doubtless bring much light on the problems of the Mishnah, while the Mishnah itself will lend guidance to the student and to the excavator.

W. M. CHRISTIE.

SERMONS BY THE AUTHOR OF THE *THEOGNOSIA*,
ATTRIBUTED TO GREGORY OF NYSSA.

AMONG the Parham MSS collected by the Hon. Robert Curzon, afterwards fourteenth Baron Zouche, which were bequeathed to the British Museum by the late Baroness Zouche in 1917, are two vellum MSS said to contain sermons by St Gregory of Nazianzus. With the second, which is correctly described but which I have not examined in detail, I am not here concerned; the first, which is numbered 21 among 'Greek MSS on Vellum', p. 25 of Curzon's printed *Catalogue of Materials for Writing*, is thus described :—

'21 St. Gregory Nazianzen, sermons of the eleventh century; folio, 15 inches by 10½, written in long lines; the heads of the sermons and the texts are in uncial letters.'

This description contains two errors. The MS (now Add. MS 39605) is certainly not so late as the eleventh century. The earlier and major portion of it is in a fine and regular, if somewhat stiff, hand of distinctly early type, upright and laterally compressed. It is not likely to be later than the first half of the tenth century, and is probably to be placed quite early in that period; I hesitate to assign it to the ninth century. In the later portion of the MS there are several changes of hand, which sometimes occur in the middle of a sentence or even a word. These later hands are less regular and handsome in appearance than the first, and they might, without it, be placed somewhat later in time, but this is not necessary, and it seems improbable that the MS was written at different periods. There is no colophon such as might indicate the date or the scribe's name.

The second error is more serious. The sermons are none of them by St Gregory of Nazianzus, or at least do not occur among the known works by him or bearing his name. Curzon's mistake was doubtless due to a misreading of a note added to the heading of the first sermon. This heading, written, as Curzon states, in uncials, originally consisted of three lines. Unfortunately l. 1, which undoubtedly contained the author's name, has been carefully and very effectually erased, so that not a trace of the original writing remains. Over the erasure is some