

26^U
16

Anti-Talmud Movements.
among
Jew and Gentile.

MARTIN ZIELONKA

Misc. 2/81

218993

To my first teachers of religion

My Father and Mother

Do I dedicate, this, my first effort.

Table of Contents.

Preface	p. IV
Authorities.	p. VII

Part One

Anti Talmud Movements among the Jews.

Chapter I - Pre-Karaitic Movement	pp. 1-14.
Chapter II - Karaite Movement	pp. 14-48.
Chapter III - Mystic Movement	pp. 48-72.

Part Two

Anti Talmud Movements among the Gentiles.

Chapter I Justinian's Novellae.	pp. 72-78
Chapter II Actions of Popes & Potentates.	pp. 78-101
Chapter III Nicolaus Donin vs. Rabbi Jechiel.	pp. 101-117.
Chapter IV Nachmanides.	pp. 117-127
Chapter V Reuchlin and Defense of Jewish Literature.	pp. 127-147.

Preface.

The point that this thesis intends to accentuate is, that there was a continuous anti-talmud movement from the time that the talmud was closed (a. 500 C.E.) up to the dawn of the nineteenth century. I have had to restrict myself to this time although I know that this excludes the anti-talmud movement while the talmud was in the course of collation, and also the position of modern reform towards the talmud. These would

V

have proven both fascinating and instructive but lack of time, did not allow me to touch upon them.

I know that it is customary to give excuses and offer apologies in handing in a thesis. These, I think, are unnecessary since all, especially our faculty, know what difficulties the students encounter in preparing their theses for graduation. I, therefore, will offer none. I cannot refrain, however, from extending my thanks, to the members of the faculty, who whenever called upon, most willingly

gave me their assistance. Still I think that I would be doing an injustice were I not to mention personally Professors M. Mielziner and H. Heutsch for the many hints they have given me; my special thanks are due to Professor L. Grossman for suggesting the subject to me, ~~and~~ also, for guiding and directing my readings, and loaning me many books from his valuable library.

My thanks are also due, to all the professors for their kindness to me during the past eight years, and for the instruction they have imparted to me.

Authorities read:

Grätz - Geschichte der Juden.

Leipzig 1864+ Vol. ~~V VI VII VIII IX X XI~~

Berliner A - Censur und Confiscation
hebräischer Bücher im Reichs-
staate Frankfurt 1891.

Philipsen, Hr. Ludwig - Die Israelitische
Religionslehre

Deutsch Emanuel - The Talmud" J.P.S. of A. 1895

Hermestetter Arsene - The Talmud - translated
by Henrietta Szold J.P.S. of A. 1897

Grätz. History of the Jews.

Vol 3, 4, 5.

J.P.S. of A. 1895+

Deutsch Hr. G. Philosophy of
Jewish History. Cincinnati A 1897

Fischer Karl - Gutmeinung über, den
Talmud der Hebräer. Vienna 1883.

Loeb Isidore - La Controverse sur le
Talmud sous Saint Louis. Paris 1881.

Levin Hr. - Die Religionsdisputation, des
Rabbi Yechiel von Paris 1240, am Hofe
Ludwig's, des Heiligen, ihre Veranlas-
sung und ihre Lösung in M. G. H. J. 1869.

Frankl Hr. P. - Beiträge zur, der letzten
gaonäischen Zeit und zur Kritik
der karäischen Propaganda. in M. G. H. J. 1871

Kisch Hr. M. - Die Anklageartikel,
- gegen den Talmud und ihre Ver-
theidigung, durch Rabbi Yechiel ben
Joseph vor Ludwig, dem Heiligen, in Paris
in. M. G. H. J. 1874

Frankl Mr. P. F. - "Zur Karäischen Bi-
bliographie" in M. G. H. J. 1872.

Frankl Mr. P. F. - Karäische Studien. in M. G. H. J. 1882.

Frankl Mr. P. F. - Karäische Studien. in M. G. H. J. 1883.

Spartz - Die Schicksale des Talmud
im Verlaufe der Geschichte
in M. G. H. J. 1885.

Müller Mr. A. - "Zur Leidengeschichte
des Talmud." in Ben Chananjah of
1861, 1862, 1863.

Bacher Prof. H. - "Zirgisani, the Karaite" of
his work on Jewish Sects in Jewish
Quarterly Review 1895.

Goitein Mr. H. - Ankläger und Vertheid-
iger, des Talmud. - Frankfurt 1897.

Gratz hr. H. - Frank $\frac{2}{3}$, die Frankisten.

Breslau 1868

Gratz hr. H. - Aktenstücke zur Confir-
cation der jüdischen Schriften in
Frankfurt O. A. M. unter Kaiser
Maximilian, durch Pfefferkorn's
Angebrei." in M. H. H. J. * 1875.

Hirsch hr. S. A. - Pfefferkorn, and the
Battle of Books. in Jewish Quarterly Review 1892.

Jost hr. J. M. - Geschichte, des Juden-
thums und seiner Sekten, Leipzig 1858.

Besides these I ^{have} read various articles
in the different Encyclopaedias upon
the different matters that did

* M. H. H. J. stands for - Monatschrift
für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des
Judenthums.

present themselves, and which I
did not think ^{it} necessary to mention
in detail.

1.
Part One.

Anti-Tatnud Movements

among the Jews.

Chapter I. Pre-Karaite Movement.

Great movements do not Minerva-like spring forth suddenly. The Karaite movement did not originate with Anan ben David; it had its origin almost half a century before him. In the appearance of the false Messiah fifty years before we can trace anti-talmud movements. These men, however, did not leave the impression on history which the great Karaite leader did; still

they present to us the inner feeling of the Jews of that time with regard to the Talmud.

Sereue (about 700 C.E.), and Abiah ibn Isa ben Ishak were the two foremost leaders of the anti-talmudists. Both proclaimed themselves heralds of the Messiah, and thus considered themselves sufficiently authorized to abrogate talmudic laws.

In the Maonic Response Shaare Gedek we find the following: "Ein Irlehrer war, aufgetreten, der sich für den Messias, ausgab, und fand Anhänger."

Diese waren in Ketzeri, ausge-
artet, beteten nicht die vorge-
schriebenen Formeln, beobachteten nicht
manche Speisegesetze, scheuten
nicht den Genuss von Weiden-
wein, arbeiteten am zweiten
Famertage, ~~er~~ schrieben nicht
Checontracte nach Talmudischen
Vorschrift. Sie wollen nun von
ihrer Ketzeri lassen, dürfen
sie ohne weiteres in den
Gemeindeverband, aufgenom-
men oder nicht. ⁽¹⁾

This is found ascribed
to one Matronai. He have

(1) Quotation from Hartz-Geschichten d.
Juden. Vol 5. Note 14.

however, two men by that name. Natronai b. Nehemiah (about 719), and Natronai b. Hlai (859-69). External sources, as the chronicle of Isadore Paccensis (about 750) speaks of one Serenus, who influenced even the people of Spain to leave their homes, and come and follow him. He gives the date as 721-22. Conde, Bar Hebraeus and the Byzantine chronicler, Theophanes, all tell of a Messiah between the years 720-725.

These proofs would seem to point to the fact that there

was a Messianic disturbance among the Jews in the earlier part of the eighth century. And since we know of no such movements during the ninth century we conclude ~~from~~^{that} the above quotation from the Gamic Responsa was addressed to Hatronai b. Nehemiah (719).

The points in which they differed from the Rabbimtes, or Talmudists, are as follows.

(1)

אין ואין את הטרפה

They did not examine an animal to see if it was Terephah.

(2) אינם מתפללין תפלה
 Did not consider the estab-
 lished form of prayers obligatory.

(3) אינם משמרין יינם משום יין נסך
 Allowed the use of wine of
 non-Jews.

(4) עושים מלאכה ביום טוב שני
 Did work on the second-
 day of festivals.

(5) אין כותבים כתובות (וגיטין כישראל)
 Did not observe the legal
 formalities in writing their
 marriage contracts, or ~~mar-~~
~~riage contracts~~ bills of divorce.

(6) התיר להם עריות
~~They permitted incest. This was~~
 He permitted them marriages prohibited
 by the rabbis. This was

simply to emphasize their opposition.

Serene was captured and brought before the Caliph Jezid. He denied all charges brought against him, and said that he was only joking with the Jews. His followers then tried to return to the folds of Judaism, and thus was the cause of the Responsa of Natronai b. Nehemiah.

Thirty Years later, Eliaich d
 Ibn Isa ben Ishak of Isfahan in Persia claimed to be a Messiah and opposed the Talmud.

He claimed that God had
 appointed him to free Israel
 from the yoke of the oppressor.
 "People believed that he was, a
 Messiah because it is alleged
 that he was ^{an} ignorant tailor
 who could neither read nor
 write and yet composed books
 and scrolls without having
 received any instruction." ⁽²⁾ Garty
 on the other hand claims
 that he was well educated
 both in the Bible and in the
 Talmud and that this accounts
 for the fact that he was
 not ~~so~~ strenuously opposed to

(2) H. Bacher in *Liqvisani, the Karaite etc.* in
Jewish Quarterly Review, 1895.

the latter, as his predecessor
Serene.

This leader fell in a battle, on the Euphrates, in 749. His adherents formed a sect the Isavrites or Isphahanites &c. are known to have existed until the middle of the tenth century.

He accepted the eighteen benedictions, and the benedictions before and after the ^{spv} and also the calendar.

Two accounts of this man are extant. First by David ben Merwan Alinokammez (950) found

in Hadassi's אשכול הכופר. Second
by a Mohammedan Sarastani, who,
although he flourished about 1140,
took his account from earlier
sources. Both tell of the mar-
tial character of this Messiah;
neither, however, gives us exact data
of the points of conflicts between
his followers and the Talmud-
ists.

From the fact that Sar-
astani says that they observed
some of the Rabbinical laws
as the eighteen benedictions, we
infer that they did not
keep all of them. The ones

in which they differed cannot very well be ascertained, and at present we can only say that they differed in the following three:—

- (1) Prayed seven times, a day.
- (2) Forbade divorce even in case of ~~adultery~~ ^{adultery} 3)

(3) Forbade followers to eat meat even of birds or to drink wine. Some followers remained faithful, as we find one author⁴⁾ saying that in 937 about twenty followers still lived in Hamaeus.

These movements show the

3) ואסר שיגרש איש את אשתו אפילו בדבר ערוה

4) Baehv-Lirgisani, the Karaite and his work on Jewish sects in Jewish Quarterly Review 1898.

trend of Jewish thought toward the Talmud, at this early period.⁵⁾ The Talmud, at this time already was looked upon as the guide book of the Jews and more attention was bestowed upon it than upon the Bible. Little wonder then, that, when a few years after, a man did arise who did not proclaim himself a Messiah and still ~~taught~~ taught in favor of a return to the Bible, he found many followers.

5) cf. Hatanai's statement quoted by Grätz in Geschichte d. Juden Vol. I. Note 14.

Chapter II.

The Karaite Movement.

The origin of this sect is shrouded in mystery. The Rabbinites cannot sufficiently disparage Anan, the supposed founder, while the Karaites praise him too much claiming even that he was a prophet.

It was in the year 761-762 C.E. that the exilarch Shimon died. Since he had no issue, the position ought to have been given to his nephew Anan ben

1) Jost. Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Sekte. Vol. II p. 294. especially the Note.

David. But the latter's younger brother Chananya was given the preference. The cause of this, according to some authorities is, that his doctrines, which were well known, were considered heretical, and therefore he was not given the position; others say that his anger was only against the rabbis, and when these persecuted him he transferred his hatred from the rabbis to the Talmud. Some sources give us an entirely different version. They claim that he was for some time in

office and was then deposed.

The Karaites try to trace their origin back into the second commonwealth. They claim that it originated at the time of Nehemiah and that they have absolute proof of their existence from that time on. As to the fact that they first came into prominence with Osnan ben David, they say that this was due to the circumstance that before this their numbers were small, and without a leader, and that when

such a prominent man, as Anan ben David espoused their cause, new vigor was given to it, and thus their earlier history was forgotten and the entire credit of starting the movement was given to Anan.

The only conclusion we can reach as to the origin is that it is shrouded in deep mystery. The sources from which we could have received authentic information, namely the works which Anan ben David is reported to have written are

lost. Our views are obtained from the polemical literature of the Karaites and Rabbinites, and we must always remember that the former can find no words equal to the task of describing their hero; the latter are profuse in the disparagement of him, and his followers.

One thing is certain that about 765 C.E. we find a sect calling themselves Karaites [from the fact that they rejected all tradition and referred to the Bible as their ultimate source] in

Bagdad of sufficient number
 and authority to bring up-
 on them the wrath of the
 Rabbis. The latter accused
 the Karaites before Calif Abu
 Jafar Almansur of an attempt
 to rebellion. Anan was taken
 prisoner, and brought before
 the Calif. Here again the
 story is wrapped in mystery.
 We know not what trans-
 pired, what his defense was
 or how he freed himself.
 We only know that the Calif
 gave him permission to em-
 igrate to Palestine. Others claim

that he was not taken prisoner but that he and his followers voluntarily left the country to settle in Palestine.

He and his followers, therefore, left Bagdad and settled around Jerusalem. They built a temple in the holy city and their services continued unmolested until the crusades.

Anan and his followers rejected the authority of the Talmud, and, in fact, claimed to reject all tradition. They asserted that they went

back to the authority of the Bible. Instead of this, they seem rather to have gone back to the time of the Mishnah" where differences of opinion about laws were permitted. The name is derived from the Hebrew *מקרא* and they are often called *בני מקרא*.

The cause of the division between the Rabbinites, and the Karaites is three fold.²⁾

First. - The Rabbinites claim, that when the written law was given to Moses, a traditional law was also given which was to be delivered from one generation

¹⁾ of Gratz Geschichte d. J. Vol. 6. Note 17.

²⁾ I here follow Josi's Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Sekten Vol. II Bk. V. Ch. II.

erative to another, and which finally was written down. The Karaites assert that the Bible was the only law delivered to Moses.

Second. The Rabbinites claim that the written law needs explanation and that this is done by the oral law. The Karaites assert that the written law carries its explanation within itself, and wherever it is brief it leaves it to common sense to interpret.

Third The Rabbinites claim that they have a right to

increase or decrease, the numbers of commandments. The Karaites assert that this is false since the Bible (Lev. ² ~~XIII~~) says that no change is possible. That in such cases as שחטה which they accept, they are only following a correct explanation of the verse.

Ruau is reported to have said חפיו באורחא שפיר "Search the Bible diligently." This set aside at once all the Talmud and Halacha and made the Bible the only authority. It is thus easily understood that there could be little, if any, agreement between

the different Karaites. One of them says: "You can scarcely meet two Karaites of one and the same mind in all matters; upon one point or another every one has an opinion different from the rest." Thus we also find them dividing into numerous sects, among which the author above quoted mentions the Onanites, Isfahanites, Judganites, Akbarites, Baalbekites, Paulites, Tiflisites. Each of these sects differed from the other in minor details, and the cause of this can generally be ascribed to

1) cf. H. Bacher - Zirgisani, the Karaite and his work on Jewish sects. Jewish Quarterly Review 1895.

2) cf. Alon Grantz, Geschichte d. J. Vol I note 18.

the lack of tradition.

The Karaites prospered for about one hundred and fifty years, and caused the Rabbinites much trouble. Saadja wrote many polemical works against them, and they, in their turn, found able defenders. They went forth on missionary work and seemed to have been successful for Alphonso VI was asked by Joseph Alkabri, to suppress them.¹⁾ Their development however was slow, for it was not till the thirteenth century that Aaron ben Joseph, the Ibn Ezra of the

¹⁾ Hb. P. F. Traubel - "Karäische Studien" in M. G. H. J. 1882.

Karaites, and Aaron ben Eliak
their Maimonides arose. As late, as
1621, a famous Jewish physician
Korimedigio wrote a letter, to a
Karaitic friend Isaac ben Nathan
of Trok, in which he scoffed, at
the Talmud and praises the
Karaites for being, able, to, do
without it.¹⁾

At the present, time few
are still alive, and these live
in southern Russia. They are
not persecuted, as other Jews
and have a reputation for
honesty, veracity & uprightness.
They are, however, very poor, and

¹⁾ cf. Grätz Geschichte d. J. Vol. X p. 155 ff.

and are dying out very fast.

The few that remained in Palestine, after the Crusades, gradually became more and more ascetic and soon formed a sect of their own. They spent their time in bewailing the downfall of Jerusalem and thus were called אבלי-ציון "Mourners for Zion."

In noting the points in which they differed from the rabbinites we must bear in mind the following facts - First - All religious duties of later Karaism must not be ascribed to Anan.

Second - Quau did not throw off all rabbinical customs. Third - Karaism has undergone changes.

We will take up the last point first. We can note a gradual leaning towards asceticism until finally we come upon those who leave everything in order to live in Jerusalem. We also see that Zirgisani speaks of a new sect having formed in his day (937 C.E.) under the leadership of Hamel, Al-Hamegani. Above also we have noted the different sects into which the Karaites

1) Cf. W. Bacher, Zirgisani the Karaites etc in J. 2 Q. 1895

were divided within one hundred years after Anan. Lirgisan, after portraying the dissensions which reigned among them in matters great and small, says: "Things are becoming worse day by day."

Since it is almost impossible to state exactly what reforms were introduced by Anan and what ones by his successors I will only state those points in which Karaism after its development differed from Rabbinism. In the following I shall follow closely Grätz.

Geschichte and Jost's Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Sekten.

The two authorities that I have mentioned do not agree in all points. For example Jost says that circumcision may be performed if the eighth day falls on Sabbath, but it must be done privately, and if the birth took place in the evening we postpone the act till the following day. Gratz²⁾ however says that it is forbidden because it is necessary to apply remedies, and these could not

1) Jost-Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Sekten. Bk. V Pt. II Chap. IX.

2) Gratz, Geschichte der Juden. Vol. 5. Note 17 I³⁾

be applied on the Sabbath.

The Karaites did not accept the fixed calendar of Hillel II but retained the former method of setting the New Moon by observation.

It is doubted whether or no they accepted the thirteen laws of interpretation of Rabbi Ishmael. Some authorities claim that they only adopted eleven, others that they accepted all of them."

They were stricter in the observance of the Sabbath than the Rabbinites. No one was allowed to walk farther than

"cf. Gratz-Geschichte, d. J. Vol 5 Note 17.

two thousand cubits, and this
 only in towns inhabited by Jews.
 Where both Jews and Gentiles
 lived they were allowed to go
 only to the synagogue, or
 academy. They adopted the
 thirty nine grades of work of
 the Rabbins and also consider-
 ed as work all difficult reason-
 ing especially on mathemat-
 ics and astronomy. Co-habitation
 was considered as a desecration
 of the Sabbath. No light was
 allowed to be lit, even by non-
 Jews and this caused their
 Sabbath evenings to be dark

and dreary. The day was supposed to be spent only in prayer and meditation. Fasting on this day was strictly prohibited except as a propitiation of a bad dream. The pascal lamb could not be slaughtered on the Sabbath.

They allowed, however, to administer medicine to the sick to extinguish a conflagration, to assist the unfortunate, and to fight the enemy on that day.

The other holidays, they celebrated, some according to the rabbinical dictates, others ac-

-cording to their own interpretation of the Bible. Thus they abolished the second day of holidays and set Shevnoth at all times on Sunday, making it the fiftieth day after the Sabbath during Pesach week.

Pesach was celebrated more strictly than ^{by} the Rabbinites and the Matzoh must be made of barley flour and was not allowed to be baked except on the evening before. It was celebrated for seven days, the first and the last being holidays, and the

five intervening days being semi-holidays on which work could be done.

The first day of the seventh month was only a day of prayer, and not the day for blowing the Shofar. They did not accept the Rabbinical law of שנת ה'תש"ז that Rosh Hashanah could not fall on the first, fourth or sixth day of the week.

The day of Atonement was with them the most solemn day and they accepted the rabbinical explanation that one should fast on that day.

The feast of Booths, was celebrated for seven days, with the eighth day as a closing holiday. They did not, however, carry the festal bunch although they considered it proper to dwell in booths.

Purim was celebrated for two days and in the leap year in the first Adar.

They did not observe Chanukah or the fast of Esther.

The appearance of the new moon was not a day of rejoicing but rather a day of prayer.

They also celebrated some minor fast days only one of which the ninth day of Tebeth agrees with the rabbinical day. The others were the seventh day of the fourth month, the tenth day of the fifth month, and the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month.

The levitical laws of uncleanness were not considered as binding after the destruction of the temple. The list of forbidden marriages was extended, and the extension of the levirate laws to relations in

general was not allowed, and the husband could not inherit from his wife's estate.

They did not consider the rabbinical laws of Tefillin and Mezuzah as binding, and said these are ^{but} only figurative expressions in the Bible.

Before closing this short sketch of the greatest of the anti-talmud movements, it will be most interesting to compare the thirteen articles of faith of Maimonides written in the twelfth century with the ten articles of faith of the Karaites.

which seem to have been written
after of Maimonides. Their in-
tent seems to be to point out
the peculiar beliefs of the Karaites.
[In the following I have given
the thirteen articles of faith in
regular order, and have numbered
those of the Karaites, as they
ought to be but have
placed them, as well as I
could opposite to those of
the same or opposite meaning
in Maimonides' articles of faith.]

I. I believe with a true I. That all this
and perfect faith, that bodily (or natural)
God is the Creator whose existence, that is to
name be blessed Governor say the spheres and
and Maker of all creat. all that is in them
ures, and that ~~He~~ ^{He} ~~both~~ is created.

wrought all things,
worketh and shall work pure.

II. I. b. w. a. p. f. i. t. III That there ^{is} no
C. (w. n. b. b.) is ~~not~~ similitude, and
~~not~~ one and that that ~~He~~ ^{He} is one,
such a unity as separate from all.
is within, can
be found in none
other; and that ~~He~~ ^{He}

hath, alone been part
God, is and forever
shall be.

III. I. f. w. a p. f. d. t. II. That they have
C. (w. m. d. b.) is, not a Creator and
corporeal, not to be the Creator has
Comprehended with this own soul or
any bodily proper spirit.
ties and that there
is no bodily essence
that can be likened
unto him.

IV. I. b. w. a p. f. d. t.
C. (w. m. d. b.) to be the
first, and the last.

that nothing was
before Him and
that He shall abide
the last forever.

V. I b. w. a p. j. t. t.

C. (w. n. p. b.) is to
be worshiped and
none else.

VI. I b. w. a p. j. t. t.

t. C. (w. n. p. b.) that
all the words of
the prophets are
true

VII. I believe with a
perfect faith that
the prophecies

VII That the blessed
God sent the
prophets.

of our Master Moses ^{IV} that ~~he~~ sent
 (may he rest in peace) Moses, our Master,
 were true; that he (upon whom be peace)
 was the father and
 chief of all wise men
 that lived before him
 or ever shall live
 after him.

^{VIII} I believe with a ^V That ~~he~~ sent
 perfect faith, that all with Moses, our
 the law which at Master, his law
 this day is found which is perfect
 in our hands was
 delivered by God, to
 our Master Moses (God's
 peace be upon him).

VII It is the duty of every Jew to study
 the Torah in the original language in grammatical
 respect as well as in regard to the correct
 interpretation

IX I believe with a perfect faith that of the faithful, the
 the same law is language of our law
 never to be changed and the reading (or
 nor any other to text) and the divisions
 be given us of God (or vowel points)
 whose name be blessed.

X I believe with a perfect
 faith that God (whose
 name be blessed) under-
 standeth all the
 works and thoughts
 of men, as it is written
 in the prophets: He fashion-
 eth their hearts like, He
 understandeth all their works.

XI I believe with a perfect faith that God, (whose name be blessed) will recompense good ways, and according to them that keep his commandments & will punish them that transgress.

XII I believe with a perfect faith that the Messiah is yet to come and although he retard his coming yet will I wait for him till he come.

IX That the blessed God, giveth to man according to his will, according to the fruit of his doings.

X That the blessed God has not reprobated the men of the captivity, but they are under the chastisement of God, and it is every day right that they should obtain his

salvation by the
hands of the Messiah
the son of David.

XIII. I believe with a perfect faith that the dead shall be restored to life when it shall be seen fit unto God, the Creator (whose name be blessed and memory celebrated without end. Amen!)

VIII. That God (blessed be his name) will raise the sons of men to life in the day of judgement.

It will be noticed in the above that the articles of faith do not agree in all respects. Thus for example, we see that number eight of the Rabbinites is contradicted by number six of the Karaites. The articles of faith of the Karaites seem to be modeled after those of Maximides and reflect the trend of thought of the age, both in Judaism and in Karaism, and that is towards crystallization, unification, authority.

Chapter III. The Mystic Movement.

Little did the sabbudists of the early centuries surmise when they prohibited the reading of the philosophical literature, and permitted, even fostered, the reading of the mystical works, that they were rearing a monster that would later try to crush out the very vitals of Judaism. Philosophy was considered non-Jewish, it was regarded as dangerous to the youths to lead them through its labyrinthine

and it was feared that it would take them away from the religion of their father, would lead them to unbelief, even to that which was to be dreaded the most, to Christianity. The mystic literature, on the other hand, was considered thoroughly Jewish, the youth, who could find some hidden meaning in some senseless phrase was praised by all, and brought the adulation of friends not only upon himself but also upon his parents. Soon after he began to read the Talmud (and this was

at a very tender age he began to read the Zohar, and delighted himself in searching out its supposed mysteries. ~~But~~ he did not, but spent his days and night in meditating upon the Zohar; not however on the Bible. In a few words, the Zohar gradually superseded the Bible and became the authority in all matters religious.

It is not necessary for me in this work to trace the gradual steps by which the mystic literature took hold of the minds of the people

and how step by step encouraged by the rabbis, it gradually crushed out the Bible and other learning. All the time was spent in pouring over its pages and even such a thing as learning the language of the country in which they reside, was neglected. We can see into what a pitiable state of affairs this brought the Jews in Poland when they were accused of using Christian blood, and could find no one fluent enough in the language of the country.

to defend them. How different the tale when we glance back, at Nachmanides, proudly standing before the court, and defending his sacred inheritance.

The first outbreak, of any magnitude, caused by this mystic literature was the Sabbatai Zevi movement. It is unnecessary for me to go into details, about this movement in this short work, especially since it is not the culmination, of this influence, and it will be necessary for us to treat at greater length the Traubists

movement since it shows us, this influence worked up to its highest degree. Suffice it to say at this point, that Sabbatai Zvi gathered about him many followers from the year 1651, when he banished from Smyrna. It is doubtful, if he had any intentions of declaring himself, a Messiah, or to bring about the salvation of Israel through himself. He seems to have been rather a quiet man who, nevertheless had a pleasing manner, fine speech, and superb figure.

One who could awe any one.
Yet, as one step gradually led
to another, he at last found
himself in such a position
as to be unable to retract.
Thus after announcing that
he was the Messiah (1665)
and bringing many proofs
from the Kabbala that he
alone could be the long ex-
pected redeemer, he said
that the Kingdom of God
was near at hand, all laws
were abolished, and that men
need no longer observe them.
This sounded well, and no

one seemed to object, as long as it was not carried into practical effect. When however he declared the fast of the tenth of Tebeth as abolished, and that the ninth day of Ab should be celebrated as a holiday, that being his birthday, he at once aroused opposition. Sabbatai, however, continued to gather about him more, and more followers until, at length he was summoned before the Sultan. Here, after some delay he finally apostasized, and even this act

was a necessary step, and a sure sign of his messiahship. Then, however, the report spread throughout Europe that he had become a Mohametan, the people suddenly awoke, as it were, from a stupor ^{and} bethought themselves of their illusion.

(After Sabbatai Zevi there were many more pretenders, or false Messiahs, among the Jews. Among them may be mentioned Abraham Miguel Cardosa, Mordechai Mochiach, Daniel Israel, Jacob Luerido, Chajim

Malach, Löbele Prosnitz, and
 Nehemiah Chaja Chayin. Some of
 these proclaimed themselves as
 successors, others as disciples, of
 Sabbatai Zevi.

Although I am greatly tempt-
 ed to stay and record some
 facts about each of these, for
 the study is fascinating, still
 I must leave them, and take
 up the account of Frank who
 gives us the best example, of
 the great influence of the mys-
 tical works upon Judaism.

Isaiah Leibovitz, or Jacob
 Frank, as he is better known, was

a native of Galicia. He was born in the early part of the 18th century, the exact date being, as yet, not decided." At the age of thirteen he went to Fuchrest and entered the employ of a rich Polish Jew who took him to the orient. Here he spent many years mingling with the followers of Sabbatai Zvi. Being ambitious, and finding that he could not accomplish much while in the east, he started on his way to Poland, where he soon gathered about him many followers.

1) cf. Hartz, - "Frank und die Frankisten."

It seems strange that he could gather people about him, for he had neither the beauty, or physique of Sabbatai, but was rather ugly, and of small figure. He did, however, surround himself with a halo of mystery which seemed to have infatuated the mind, of the men, at that place, and time. In Poland they were persecuted by the rabbis but in ~~Podolia~~ ^{Podolia} and Lemberg they sought converts by distributing tracts. The Gohar was considered of more importance, and holier

than the bible. He soon gathered many followers and this was due to the state of affairs in this country. The Jews were poor, married when but thirteen or fourteen years old, and had to travel from town to town to gain their livelihood by teaching or begging. These were the people who eagerly took up Frank's teachings and this because Frank was wealthy and could assist them.

Soon after his arrival in Podolia he became the recognized chief of the mystics.

He not only taught, a Trinity
 as Sabbatai Zevi, before him
 but, also, announced himself as
 the Messiah, or the successor
 of Beraehya. He taught the
 doctrine of metempsychosis, and
 claimed that the spirit in
 him had formerly lived, in
 Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Sabbatai
 Zevi, and others. He, also seems
 to have taught or, at least
 is accused of having taught
 free love, even, with relatives.
 Because his first name was
 Jacob, he referred, all passages
 of the bible, in which, that

name occurs to himself. Thus he claimed that the verse "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob" refers to him. He also demanded of his followers not only due homage, but even had them insert special prayers addressed to him.

When he & his followers were arrested and imprisoned through the intrigues of the rabbauites, he freed himself, claiming to be a foreigner and told the others to spread the report that they believed in the trinity, and the corpor-

city of God. This reaching the ears of the bishop, was taken up by him, and when twenty offered to become Christians, he thought that by having them near him, he could gradually convert them all, and, perhaps, in time all Israel.

The bishop, however, soon became nothing more than, a tool in the hands of Frank. No sooner released, they demanded a disputation with the Talmudites, claiming that the Talmud taught it as a duty for the Jews to destroy and annihilate the Christians, and

use their blood. The rumors spread like wild fire, and the terrible curse which seemed to have abated again played havoc. A disputation was called for June 20, 1757. The rabbauites had to attend under penalty of a large fine. When however, they did assemble they had no one who could talk the native or current language with any fluency. Thus, after a short disputation the Frankists seem to have been declared the victors. The Tahum was condemned, and

the Jews were forced to pay a fine of five thousand Gulden. Therefore, many copies were burnt in the larger cities on November 12, 1757.

Fortunately for the Tabernites, the bishop, died suddenly, on November 17, 1757, and the new bishop not, allowing himself to be deluded by Frank forced him and his followers to give up their land. From now on they were treated as an alien sect and thus had to endure all the tortures of martyrdoms.

wherever they went. They, ap-
 pealed to the Polish King, who
 restored them, by decree of June
 11, 1758, to full privileges. This
 was of no avail to them since
 all the clergy were against
 them. Luckily for them the
 archbishop went to Lemberg
 and an Administrator took
 his place. This man ^{was} desirous
 of making a name, and this
 could be acquired most easily
 by converting the Jews. He gave
 ear to the petition of Frank
 which claimed that he, and
 his followers believed in, as

trinity, and similar doctrines, and that they were ready to convert if they only could have a disputation with the Talmudists first. This was granted, and the date set for June 10, 1759. Again did the Rabbauites have to defend the Talmud and again were they not equal to the task for they could not ~~speak~~ speak the language fluently. The disputation lasted three days but there was no result since neither side could speak Polish or Latin.

After this they were asked to convert, and upon the advice of Frank, they did thus. Frank was converted in Warsaw with the king as his god-father.

Jealousy, however, arose in the camp, and some of his trusted followers betrayed him and his motives so that he was arrested by the general of the Inquisition, and condemned to prison for life on January 26, 1760. Here he remained for thirteen years, closely watched and finally was released by the

Russians. After his release he again practiced his frauds even until his death in 1791.

He was a thorough egotist. He imposed on all who in any way came in contact with him and thus even Scheuk-Bink in a monograph "Die Polen in Offenbach" claims that Frank was the Russian emperor Peter III, and his daughter, a Romanowa. This will show to what an extent his impostures went. His hatred for the Pal-

mud knew no bounds. At every opportunity, he would decry it and claim it contained blasphemies upon the Christians. And this hatred was caused by the extra work he put on the Zohar. This was his law book, all other books were secondary. This was the culmination of that movement started by the rabbis themselves and which culminated as we have seen in bringing disgrace upon the heads of the rabbis, for they could not defend the Talmud.

against this new Hercules that
had arisen. Many and fervent
were the prayers offered in
which they acknowledge their
mistake secretly, and to the
world they announced it
when they decreed, that only
those who are thirty years old
should be allowed to study
the Zohar, and then only, if
they had previously studied
the Talmud.

Part Two.

Anti-Talmud Movements

Among the Gentiles.

Chapter I. Justinian's. Novellae.

It seems remarkable, that within a decade after the Talmud was completed, traces should already be found of its being prohibited. Among the Novellae of Justinian we find, one (#146) *περὶ ἑβραίων* issued in the year 553 C.E. In this we find *δευτέρωσις* which has given a vast amount of trouble to the historians. Some claim that this word means the Talmud¹⁾.

¹⁾ This is the date given by Strartz. Ginz in his *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge* ed. 1832 p. 10 puts the date as 541 C.E.

²⁾ cf. "The Talmud." J. O. Society 1895 p. 11. by Emanuel Heintich.

some claim that it is, only the Mishna, while Gratz thinks that it means Hagadic interpretation of scriptures or the Midrashim.¹⁾ In order to understand this word the better, and to come to some conclusion with regard to it, let us examine it first, as a part of the Novellae, as a whole, and then as a part of the sentence in which it is placed. The Novella speaks of the service in the synagogue, and of affairs connected with the synagogue. This idea, claims Gratz, is enough to cause us to reject the idea of

¹⁾ cf. Gratz, Geschichte d. J. Vols p 27, also note 7.

the Talmud. He can, however, look back and taking the Novellae as a whole still cling to the idea that it refers to the Talmud. We know that, in all synagogues there is, also, a school and that, after services men remain to study the Talmud. Now we can say that, this was the case also in older times. The Talmud had just been completed, and it undoubtedly took its rank immediately, among the great law-books of Israel. It was consulted and studied, and it

was thought of more than the Bible.

The sentence in which this word occurs reads, as follows,

τὴν δὲ πᾶρ' αὐτοῖς λεγομένην δευτέρωσις
ἀπογορεύομεν παρτελῶς¹⁾

This gives us little if any assistance in disposing of this difficulty. If we look further, we find the words are also called ἄγροφοι κεροφωνία, vain writings "babble". Then it continues as follows - "But the so-called δευτέρωσις I forbid entirely, and this because it is not contained in sacred writ,

1) That which is called by them, δευτέρωσις we forbid entirely.

nor, delivered by God through his prophets, but is, an invention of man, which speaks out of the earth, and contains nothing Godly, about it.

This I think, adds weight to my contention that it may refer to the entire Talmud. The latter part, of the quotation from, one of the papal bulls against the Talmud.

Thus while, we cannot say definitely that the word δευτέρως refers to the Talmud

can we say that our explanation
is as plausible, as that of any
other. So early as Justinian
we can trace a movement
against this book, the per-
secuted of the persecuted, and
from this time on we find
many who attack it but
just as many who defend
it.

Chapter II.

Actions of Popes, and Potentates, against the Talmud.

From the day that Nicolaus (Rochelle?) Komin of Lupella in order to wreak vengeance on the Jews embraced Christianity and denounced the Talmud before Gregory IX (1239) up to the French revolution there were continual decrees against the Talmud by both pope, and potentate.

The Komin affair will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. Suffice it here to say that Gregory IX issued a decree to the rulers of France

England, Portugal, and Spain.

In the first named country, a disputation was held in which the famous Tosaphist Rabbi Jehiel of Paris, defended the Talmud. He seems to have been successful still too, and some say four years later (1242 or 1244) twenty four wagonloads of the Talmud were burnt in Paris.

In 1248 The Jews of France appealed to Innocent IV who a year before had refuted the blood accusations. The popes wrote to his legate Edo, of Paris. This one appointed a

commission to examine the books
and these decreed that the book
was full of mistakes, and er-
rors, and condemned it to be
burnt.

In 1264, an apostate Jew,
Pablo Christiani, who had been de-
feated in a battle of words by
Nachmanides¹⁾ (1263) denounced ^{the Talmud} to the
Pope, Clement IV. This pope issued
a decree to the bishop of Tar-
ragona, telling him to confiscate
the books, and submit them
to censors. These examined the
book, expunged certain passages
and returned them to their owners.

1) for fuller discussion of this see Pt II Chap IV

When the Jews were expelled from France (1306), and settled in one of the Provinces of the King of Majorca, the latter ordered all Talmuds to be handed to the auto-da-fé.

King Philip V who, as a rule, was friendly to the Jews, was nevertheless powerless, and could not prevent the clergy at Montpellier from burning two wagon loads of the Talmud (1317-1320). The clergy justified this act by saying that the Jews had outraged the image of Christ on Purim.

Owing to the impoverished
 state of the treasury of King John
 of France, he allowed the Jews
 to return in 1356, guaranteeing
 them protection for twenty years.
 One of the conditions on which
 they returned was, that the Tal-
 mud was not to be confiscated.

We now come to a very
 important point, and that is
 a decree for a disputation by
 Benedict XIV, one of the three popes
 who claimed the throne of Peter
 at Rome. This man thought
 that if he could convert the
 Jews, it would be a great vic-

tory for the church, and would
 obtain for him the recognition
 as pope. With the consent of
 king Fernando of Arragon he is-
 sued a bull, ordering a dis-
 putation, at Tortosa. This dispu-
 tation lasted from February
 1413 to November 1414. The Jews
 were ably defended by Hon
 Vidal Benvenisti, and Joseph Al-
 bo, the Christians were represented
 by an apostate Herminio de
 Santa Fe supposed to be Joshua
 Lorqui.

This one changed the usual
 method of attack. He went forth

to prove that, according to the Talmud the Messiah had, already, appeared, and that this Messiah was Jesus.

The pose opened up the discussion by saying that they were assembled not to prove the truth of Judaism or Christianity but that Jesus was the actual Messiah.

Geronimus, however, was not as cautious. He stated his side and ended with the quotation from Isaiah (I¹⁷⁻²⁰) "If ye be willing and obey, the good of the land shall ye eat, but if ye

be unwilling, and defiant, by the sword shall ye be eaten."

Benvenisti replied, that they had been invited for a disputation, and were immediately threatened with the sword.

For sixty-two days Herminio quoted the well known passages from the Talmud and Midrash which the rabbis easily refuted. Finding, however, that he was unsuccessful in this, at the next meeting he attacked the Talmud as a whole, claiming that it was the cause of the stiff-neckedness of the people.

In answering these new charges the Jewish party was divided. One party headed by the speaker Abn Vidal Benvenisti, and Joseph Albo said that the Agadic passages were binding but must not be taken literally, the others, claiming that the Agadic passages were not binding.

None of the Jews showing any desire to become Christians the schismatic pope, dismissed them, and soon after issued a bull (May 11, 1415) forbidding the reading or study of the Talmud and forcing the Jews to attend

Christian services three times a year.

This bull had little effect for soon after the council of Constance (1414-1418) deposed this pope. One of the preachers who traveled through Spain in order to reclaim its subjects for the new pope Martin V said of him - "such a person, as this pope deserves to be tracked and to be struck down by every Christian!"

In the year 1442 Pope Eugenius IV forbade the Italian Jewish community from reading not only the Talmud but even all Talmudic literature.

1) Mr. H. Hosten - Ankläger und Vertheidiger des Talmud. page 14. Frankfurt 1897

At the beginning of the sixteenth century occurred the most important Talmudic movement. The Dominicans of Frankfurt with designs on the wealth of the Jews, began with the aid of an apostate Pfefferkorn to persecute them and to wage war against the Talmud. When their schemes seemed mature and ready to burst with a destructive violence upon the Jews, a defender, and this time from the Christians, John Reuchlin appeared. A battle of books, as it has been aptly called was waged

1). Prof. Heitsch of our college thinks that their aim was to obtain the same power in Germany which they were exercising in Spain i.e. to be the chiefs of the Inquisition.

and through it the Hebrew tongue was spread throughout Europe and different universities started professorships in Hebrew.¹⁾

Luther, who, at the beginning of this Reformation, seemed to be friendly inclined towards the Jews, and who thought ^{that} as soon as the Catholic persecutions were removed, they would flock to Christ, suddenly turned against them when he found them as stiff necked as ever.

An apostate Anton Margaritha an alleged son of the rabbi of Patisbon, is said to have preferred

1) For fuller discussion of this movement see Pt II Chap V

charges against the Jews. Luther, therefore, advocated in 1543-44 that all synagogues should be burnt, and that the Talmud and all works were to be taken from the Jews by force. Mr. H. Heutsch, however, thinks that these words cannot be taken literally but that they are the words of a genuine speaking while aglow with passion and do not represent his true attitude towards them.

Although Pope Julius III (1550) was, as a rule friendly to the Jews, still when four converts, two of them

grandsons of Elias Levita, appeared before him, and denounced the Talmud, he could not do otherwise, than issue a decree against it, (August 12, 1553) and gave the entire affair over to the Inquisition.

The Inquisition ransacked the houses of the Jews, at Rome, took from them the Talmud and all kindred books, and burnt them publicly on Rosh Hashanah (Sept. 9, 1553). The same thing was done in many other cities.

Since the agents of the Inquisition took other books be-

sides the Talmud, the Jews appealed to Julius III, asking him to revoke, or modify his decree. Thus it was that, on May 29, 1554, the pope issued, a bull making it, a crime for the Jews, to refuse to give up the Talmud, and warning the bailiffs, lest they seize other books.

Paul IV (1555-59) was, one, of the most zealous persecutors of the Talmud. Under his popeship, almost all the copies, of the Talmud were destroyed. A school was organized, at Cremona, under the protection of the governor of Milan

(1559). Further many copies of the Talmud were secretly sent. Later, the pope even urged the governor of Milan to destroy all the copies of the Talmud. An apostate Jew, a Kermician, Sicutus Senensis urged the building of a pyre. The governor, however, did not ~~believe~~ believe the charges made against the Talmud^{ed} and asked for more witnesses against ~~the Talmud, and asked for more~~ it. Thereupon, Vittoria Clivano, and Joshua dei Pantori, baptized Jews swore to the accusations and thus on April 17, 1559 there were

publicly burnt between, ten, and twelve thousand copies, of the Talmud.

Fortunately for the Jews, the pope soon died, and his successor Pius IV was more tolerant. At first the Jews brought it about that a decree should be issued, lightening their burdens, and then by various machinations they obtained still more favors. The Pope issued a bull, on March 24, 1564 permitting the Talmud to be printed, if the name Talmud was omitted, and all objectionable passages had passed

through the hands of the censors.

These happy days were not to last very long. The following popes were not as tolerant as Pius IV, and again forbade the reading of the Talmud. Pope Gregory XIII (1572-85) ordered the Jews to give up the Talmud to the Inquisition, and if this were not done, the agents of the Inquisition could pass from house to house in search of it. He even went as far as the schismatic Pope Benedict VIII and forced the Jews to attend Christian sermons three times a year.

It seems to have been the misfortune of the Jews that the reign of the good popes was very short. Pope Sixtus V (1585-1590) was favorably inclined towards them. He removed all disabilities except attending divine services. He allowed them to return to the papal states and in a bull of October 22, 1586 permitted the printing of the Talmud if first corrected by the censors. He died, however, on August 7, 1590, and thus the Jews could not take advantage of his tolerance.

On August 7, 1540, at a meeting of the Index-congregation before Cardinal della Rovere, set rules were established for the expurgation of the Talmud. These were later set forth in the Canon or Liber Expurgationis published not later than 1542. This book contains a list of the Hebrew books, and from these passages are quoted which must be omitted either entirely or else must be changed.

Clement VIII (1542-1605) was just the opposite of the last mentioned pope. Under him the

Jews were expelled from the papal states and all old edicts, against them were renewed. All persons found in possession of copies of the Talmud in which there was anything ~~in which~~ that could possibly be objectionable, were severely punished. In order to avert the wrath of the infallible God whose throne was in Rome the Jews became their own censors and cut out all passages about idolatry and all passages praising themselves.

After this the popes kept

up the decrees against the Talmud, and the Jews. Now the the continuous searching for this book, and the fire kindled under it kept alive the religious zeal of the true believers. Every ten or fifteen years a new search would be instituted, and the day of burning would be a holiday. No longer though could this procedure be carried on with the vim and vigour of the former days because the church was no longer a unit, but divided against itself.

Chapter III. Nicolaus Homi versus Sabbithiel.

In vain did the popes^{es} seek for the secret of the Jews' strength, and stubbornness. As the Philistines in search of the secret of Samson's strength had to ask the assistance of Delilah, who through her influence upon her husband, at last learned the secret from his own lips, so did it remain for a Jew, a convert, to poison the balm which had soothed Israel in the times of persecution.

Nicolaus Honin, of Lupella, an apostate, was the traitor. Some claim that he was, a Mainunist and that, on this account he was expelled from the Jewish congregation; all admit that he was excommunicated, and, in order to be able, the better to wreak vengeance both upon Judaism and the Talmud, became a convert. All admit that he was learned in Hebrew lore.

He went to the pope Gregory IX at Rome and brought accusations, against the Talmud. These accusations, thirty five in

number may be divided into the following classes: - First, consisting of nine & called "Mistakes" (*Errores*); second, consisting of four - blaspheming men (*blasphemiae in hominibus*); third, consisting of eleven - blaspheming God (*blasphemiae in deum*); fourth, consisting of five - blaspheming Jesus and his mother (*blasphemiae in Jesum, atque ejus matrem*) and the fifth, consisting of the remainder, accuse the Talmud of foolishness (*stultitiae*).

The pope, does not seem to have been overanxious to carry on any such campaign. He did

not prosecute it in the papal states. He sent messages, to the various catholic countries, but none of these seemed over anxious to execute the decree. Only in France, and that in Paris was there found one bishop, "more catholic than the pope," who immediately set about to do the work. France, indeed, seemed to be the proper place to start such a persecution, for it at this time was the center of talmudic learning.

In order to be the better able to carry on his nefarious

traffic, Romin seems to have
 translated into Latin, all sect-
 ions of the Talmud which
 seemed to be of avail to him.
 In the latter part of the thir-
 teenth century there appeared
 a book "Extractum de Talmud,"
 which seems to have been
 written from manuscripts of
 Romin. Part one takes up in
 regular order the different
 Mesachtoth and quotes the in-
 criminating passages. Part
 two gives a full list of
 the thirty five articles of ac-
 cusation, a list of the Amoraim

and quotations of Rashi, against the Talmud.

In a letter of June 9th, of the thirteenth year of the pontiff Gregory IX we find the following: "We found it proper, to urge and arouse you, beloved brethren, through the power vested in you through this apostolic letter, that, on the first sabbath of the coming forty days, of fast, when the Jews assemble in their synagogue, you seize ^{at our command} all the books of the Jews in your province, and deliver them to the

1) Mr. Kisch in article in M. G. H. J. 1874 the date is given as June 20.

Dominicans for safe keeping, and to call in the aid of the army if necessary."

Obedient to this order, on a Sabbath in March 1240, while the Jews were assembled in their synagogues, all their books were seized. The king then ordered a public disputation to take place on Monday June 25, 1240 between the ecclesiastici and some rabbis. At this disputation nothing but the thirty five articles of accusation of Klounis was to be considered. The court, especially the queen took much interest in it.

1) cf. Hr. Alois Müller, "Zur Leidensgeschichte des Talmud"
in Ben Chananya Vol. 5 (1862) p. 206 +

Four rabbis were selected to represent the Jews. These were Rabbi Jechiel, called in the Hebrew sources הקלף הגדול, Rabbi Juda ben David, Rabbi Samuel ben Salomo, and Rabbi Moses of Concy.

The men upon whom the burden of the disputation fell were Rabbi Jechiel, in behalf of the Jews, and Abner in behalf of the ecclesiastics.

Rabbi Jechiel shows wonderful versatility, and a knowledge not only of the Old Testament, and the Talmud but, also of the evangelists

and the Church Fathers. He quotes Hieronymus twice. Besides this we are surprised at the liberalism of the man, and the deliberate manner with which he met the various arguments of his adversary.

He demanded of Horni, the exact place where each quotation can be found. This Horni did until he came to the phrase, "the best of the heathen, kill." He could not say where this is found, and Ischiel finally drove him to acknowledge that he had found it in Pashi.

Jecheil, answered this by saying that Tashi was not, an infallible, authority. Many, other accusations he set aside by boldly claiming that the Hagadie passages were not binding.

His greatest trouble came, however, when Blouin read the passages which scoffed at Jesus and Mary. The nobles, were enraged, and would have done personal violence, to the man, had it not been for the presence of the king, and queen. Rabbi Jecheil, however, remained firm, and when his turn came

to answer, "said, that this did not refer to Jesus, the Christian Jesus but rather to a man of the same name who had lived two generations before. This does not seem to have been a trick but an honest conviction because in the passage Jesus is said to be the disciple of Joshua ben Brochja who was supposed to have lived two generations before Christ.

Again there was a great uproar when Hillel claimed that לכבוד and לגאון referred to the Christians and besides this that the Jews had a separate moral code for

dealings with fellow Jews, and with Gentiles. In answer to the first part Jechiel said, that these were referred only to idolators and that the Christians were never considered idolators. In answer to the second he quoted passage after passage, where the Jews were ordered to have a lovable intercourse with the heathens, and from this he drew an analogy, that if they were to treat the heathens, idolators, thus how much the better, ought they to treat the Christians who believe in one God.

He, also, quoted with good effect the saying that "the righteous ~~men~~ of all nations have a part in the future world." This was also an insinuation, at the Christian doctrine of salvation, only to the believers.

On the third day Rabbi Juda ben Hoid was called. This one without having heard the defense of Rabbi Jecheiel gave the same explanation of this, satisfying the assembled, the others were not asked to participate.

The assembly dispersed, and

the decision seems to have been in favor of the rabbis for no immediate decree for burning ~~the~~ The Talmud was issued.

Encouraged by this, the Jews asked for the return of their books. This was granted to them after Archbishop Hatler of Sens had pleaded for them before the king.

Thus this matter seemed to be at an end. When, however, the archbishop, who had intervened in behalf of the Jews was stricken by a sudden death, the enemies of the Jews

saw in this, an, omen, to renew their agitation against, the Talmud. By these means, they brought it about, that, the king issued, an, order for, the building of a pyre. Thus on Friday June 26, 1242¹⁾ twenty wagonloads of the Talmud were burnt in Paris. After this, the homes were searched for hidden copies, and these also were burnt.

The Jews however,, appealed to the new pope Innocent IV. He wrote the king that, all books that were not considered dangerous, to Christianity should

¹⁾ For full discussion as to the exact date of the first burning of Talmud, compare Gruetz-Geschichte d. J. Vol VII Note 5.

be returned since the Jews claimed
that they could not practice their
religion without them. After a
thorough search, however, all
books were ordered to be returned
^{to the inquisition} and thus in May 1248 the Jew
of France was told that the
Talmud was forbidden for all
times.

Chapter IV. Machmanides.

The Romanians tried to obtain the upper hand in Spain. In order to do this they naturally turned towards the Jews whose conversion, oppression or expulsion would bring their order into high favor with the populace. This could only be brought about by an apostate Jew, and such a one they found in Pablo Christiani.

Through the influence of Raymond de Tñafort upon king

James I of Aragon, this apostate was appointed, as missionary to the Jews. He traveled from place to place, forced the Jews into disputations with him, but all in vain. The Jew would not become ~~a~~ Christian.

This method not being very successful, a grand disputation at Barcelona before the king and his court was determined upon. The most prominent Jew was called, to represent the Jewish interests. This was Nachmanides. This scholar received an order from the king

to appear in Barcelona in July 1263. Without being given any time for preparation he was forced to say that he was prepared for the disputation. And little did this master mind need fear such as the apostate Pablo Christiani.

Amidst the pomp of court, surrounded by the dignitaries of state, the disputation was opened. Rachmanides, immediately claimed the right of free speech. After some discussion this was granted, and then with wonderful coolness, he said that the subject

matter before them need, at
 once be defined, and he divided
 it into three parts. First - Has
 the Messiah appeared? Second -
 Is he to be considered a God
 or man? Third - Has Judaism
 or Christianity the right belief?
 This was acceded to by all.
 Then the discussion began but
 not in the rude barbaric way
 in which Amin² & Rabbi Jehiel
 went at each other, meta-
 phorically speaking with ham-
 mer and tongs but in the quiet
 sedate, polite method of the more
 polished Southerners.

Pablo Christiani, did not attack the Talmud but claimed that certain passages in it referred to Jesus. Besides these, Nachmanides had to explain all the so called Jesus passages in the Old Testament. This was not very difficult for a man of his abilities, and ^{he} easily cornered and downed his opponent. This lasted for four days, and Nachmanides was declared the victor. The king is reported to have said that he had never heard so unworthy a thing so

worthily defended.

The Hominicans, however, were not satisfied. They spread the rumour that Pablo Christiani had cornered Nachmanides, and the latter, in order to avoid disgrace had fled. Such however was not the case. He spoke on the following Sabbath in the synagogue in the presence of royalty and, in vain, was he interrupted by Raymond de Peñaforte.

Soon after Nachmanides finding that the Hominicans were persistent in their story that he

had been defeated, decided to protect himself by publishing a true account of the disputation. He received a sanction for this from the archbishop. Some copies of it were spreading far and wide, and one copy, falling into the hands of a Dominican who knew some Hebrew, complained that it was dangerous, and would arouse hatred against the church.

The Dominicans had the king arrest him, and were anxious that the trial should take place before their tribunal. The king, however, organized a special tribunal

which had to hear the case in his presence. Prochmanides claimed that his work contained nothing which had not taken place in the disputation, and since freedom of speech had been granted him, there was no reason for his not being allowed to publish it. The court agreed to this, and would have dismissed it had it not been for the burning desire of the Armenians. In order to pacify these Prochmanides was sentenced to two years exile. He started from his native hearth, an old man, about

seventy years old, and wandered to Palestine there, to spend the remainder of his ~~life~~ days.

Pablo Christiani not satisfied with the little or no advance he was making turned to the Talmud and accused it. Pope Clement IV in 1264 issued a bull to the effect that the Talmud be examined, and if any thing slanderous be found in it that it be burnt.

The commission, however, was more lenient. They did find many passages that ought to have condemned the book to the flames

but they also said that they were convinced that "many places in the Talmud bear witness to the truth of Christianity, and were undoubtedly delivered over by Moses; therefore (ought) the Talmud not be destroyed entirely."

Thus only parts of the Talmud were cut out but the work, as a whole was again given back to the Jews, to be their only comfort when troubles overwhelmed them.

1) cf Grätz - Geschichte d. J. Vol VII p 136

Chapter V. Leuchlin, and the Refuse of Jewish Literature.

Again, was it, an apostate, who should bring, a vast, amount, of suffering upon his former co-religionists. But this time he was more cruel, and relentless, trying every possible method, using both fair, and foul means, and supported by a powerful order, the Dominicans. This was Johann Pfefferkorn.

Little is known of his early life. In his "Handspiegel" he claims that he received his Talmudic knowledge from his cousin, Meir Pfefferkorn, rabbi

of Prague. He extols this man, saying that he was the greatest scholar and authority of his time. Thus we would conclude that his boyhood days were spent about Prague. Further we know nothing. Our next notice of him is at Cologne, whither he had fled to embrace Christianity. Together with this we learn, that he had been a butcher, had been convicted of robbery, and thus converted in order, to save himself. This, however, he later on denied, and cannot even today be proven beyond a doubt.

As soon as Pfefferkorn had joined the Church, the Dominicans at

once saw in him a long looked for accomplice. They were desirous of starting a crusade against the Jews but had no one who could give them material to disseminate in order to arouse the populace.

In 1507 there appeared the first work, in Latin, under his name. It was very mild, inviting the Jews to become Christians. This could not have been written by Pfefferkorn because he is acknowledged by all to have known no Latin. For the next two years one work after another appeared, each becoming more and more abusive.

Finding however, that this method was not very encouraging or instantaneous in its effect he decided to seek the aid of the emperor Maximilian. Before going however, to him he went to his fanatic sister Kunigunde, an abbess, explained to her his mission, and received from her a letter to the king asking him to assist this most worthy and holy undertaking.

Arriving at the camp of the king, who, at this time was busy with a southern conquest, he presented the letter from Kunigunde, and his own demands that

he be given permission to examine and if necessary to confiscate all Jewish books. This was ^{granted} on August 19, 1509.

Armed with this precious document and with revenge boiling within him, he hastened to Frankfurt to carry out the power invested in him. Thus on September 28, 1509 he began his work by forbidding the Jews to go to their synagogue on the Feast of Tabernacles (Sept. 28) and beginning a house to house search for Hebrew Books.

The Jews objected to this treatment and called the archbishop

of Mayence, Israel von Gemmingen, to
 to their assistance. This was granted
 them, and the search had to cease.
 Pfefferkorn was invited by the archbish-
 op to his home, and there in a dis-
 cussion it was agreed that he, Victor
 von Karben, and Tuckliu should assist
 in the examination of the Jewish books
 as soon as Pfefferkorn received new
 orders from the king since the pres-
 ent ones were defective.

Thus Pfefferkorn set out for
 a second visit to the Imperial camp.
 On his way he stopped to see Tuckliu,
 for it was thought that many possi-
 ble objections would be quelled if

unde. This changed the status of affairs, and on November 10, 1509, the King renewed his decree, appointed however Ulrich, as commissioner, and told him to take counsel with the different Universities and associate with himself Reuchlin, Victor von Karben, and Hoogstraten. Herman Hess of the University of Mayence was appointed to direct the confiscation of the books.

About this time the great fair or market was to be held at Frankfurt and the demand was made to seize the books of the Jewish booksellers who would

come. On appeal to the senate of Frankfurt this was denied since the people came under the protection of their different lords.

Again did Pfefferkorn come forth with a venomous work. He claimed that the Talmud, usury and facilities for earning money alone kept the Jews from embracing Christianity. How little did he understand the Jewish spirit? Public opinion seems to have changed, for on May 23, 1510 the king issued a mandate to the senate ordering them to return all copies of the Talmud to the Jews.

until the inspection was completed.

Through some machinations not entirely clear, the King was induced to put an end to this happy state of affairs. Again through the influence of Kuningunde an attempt was made to have the Talmud condemned. The Emperor vacillated. On July 6, 1510, he issued a mandate that the charges against the Talmud were not to be considered proven, and that the archbishop was to get the opinion of the German Universities, Runcelin von Karben & Hoogstraten. Final decision was to be left to him, and

that the opinions were to be brought to him ~~for~~ by Pfefferkorn.

Thus it was left for a non-Jew to come to the rescue of the Talmud. Reuchlin immediately wrote in ~~in~~ favor of the Talmud. In his epistle he says: - "If this book were worthy of being burnt, then would our forefathers, who were more zealous in their faith, than we, have done it long ago. The baptized Jews, Peter Schwarz and Pfefferkorn, who are so anxious to have it burnt, may have private motives."

A little further down he shows true insight into the human

1) cf. Grätz. M. d. J. Vol. 4 p. 104.

nature when he says - "The Jews will then cling to the Talmud, all the more because that which is prohibited is relished". He ends his opinion as follows - "We ought not to take these works away from the Jews or burn them, but rather let us establish at each university two professorships in Hebrew, and rabbinical literature. Then we may be able to baptize and convert the Jews gradually."²⁾

This opinion was sealed, and sent to the archbishop. In some way Pfefferkorn obtained possession of the letter before it reached its destination,

1) Ibidem.

2) Mr. H. Witten - "Aukläger und Verteidiger des Talmud": p. 17.

opened it, and immediately wrote a reply. This work he called Hand-spiegel. Here he not only attacks the Jews most bitterly but, also Reuchlin, calling him, "the enemy of Christianity. Reuchlin was wroth, because his confidence had been betrayed. Up to this time he had been passive but now he came forth in a better and dis-putting reply, entitled "Eugen-spiegel."

(1511).

In this he gives a full history of the troubles, publishes the correspondence and prints his opinion in full. Before this time Pfeffer-

Korn had everything his way but after this Pfefferkorn had to retire for not only Reuchlin but all his friends wrote against him, invented stories and wrote biting satire.

For this work Reuchlin was summoned on September 15, 1513, to be examined on the charge of heresy, and the still graver one of favoring the Jews. All copies of the *Augenspiegel* were condemned to be burnt on October 12, 1513. All had assembled on that day when an order arrived from Ariel ordering the burning to be

, delayed. Reuchlin immediately set
 to work to have the place of trial
 changed. He, therefore, through the
 aid of a few, appealed to Pope Leo
 X. This on November 21, 1513, issued
 an order to the bishops of Spier
 and Worms, that they or judges
 appointed by them should ex-
 amine the charges. They found
 Reuchlin innocent and find
 Hoogstraten the costs. Now it
 was Hoogstraten's turn to appeal
 to the pope. This again delayed
 matters. The pope not wishing
 to decide, left the matter to the
 Lateran council and this body

decided in favor of Ruchlin.

Instead of condemning, the pope now encouraged the Talmud and so Bomberg of Antwerp, a Christian brought out a complete edition of the Talmud in twelve volumes which has been the model for all other editions.

The success of Ruchlin was complete and a friend of his Egidio di Viterbo, also a student of Hebrew, said that Ruchlin, for the second time in history, had saved the Law from destruction and that his followers had ~~not~~ been saved by his masterful defense of this

Literature."

Oefferkorn, on the other hand, was reviled on all sides, and even his boasted knowledge was found to be deficient. Even Buchlin who was very envious of him - "this baptized Jew, has studied in his youth, as is customary, the books of Moses and perhaps some Haftaras. Besides this he knows nothing, for there are many books which I possess and he is unable to read them. And this is the truth"²⁾ Nor does this ignorance seem to have been only in regard to the Talmud. He did not seem to

1) cf. Grätz - Die Reichsalle des Talmud im Verlaufe der Geschichte, in M.G.V.J. 1895.

2) Grätz, M.G.V.J. Vol IX Note 2 p. 519.

have known the Bible. This can be seen from the following. He gave forth a list of the books which the Jews were allowed to keep. In this he gives a list of the books of the bible, among which the following:

חגי זכריה מלכי, כתובים, קשלי, איום.

Granting that the printer is responsible for the false spellings and mistakes how can we account for כתובים. Above it the pronunciation is given as Xovim, so he meant exactly what he wrote. But what book is this? We find our answer when we

look at the Latin names below and we find under this the word *Psalterium*. Thus he meant the book of psalms." The only explanation for this is that he did not even know the books of the bible, and in making out his list he found the word כתובים written on a fly leaf between the second & third parts, and immediately jotted it down, as meaning psalms.

Little, however, does it matter to us, how wise or how ignorant he was, for ^{he} surely met in another Christian, and this a full blooded

of Mr. S. A. Hirsch - Pfefferkorn and the Battle of Books. in Jewish Quarterly Review Vol 4, p. 279

one, his match. The controversy was long, but opened up the eyes of Europe, it gave the Talmud to the press, and when this was once done, no power on earth could exterminate it.

April 3, 1899.