

dwell upon the vastness of his learning or the acuteness of his knowledge. After leaving the Pereira Yeshibah, rumors became persistent that young Spinoza had given utterance to heretical views, such as had led Uriel Acosta into trouble. When his father died his relatives disputed his claim to any of his father's estate, but he succeeded in taking possession of one bed as an heirloom. Two of his companions elicited his opinion that, according to Scripture, angels were merely phantoms, that the soul is identified in the Bible with life and regarded as mortal, and that in calling God "great" the Scriptures attributed to Him extension. He was summoned before the "Beth Din" and he made no concealment of his views. His teacher, Morteira, offered him, on behalf of the congregation, a pension of 1,000 florins a year, provided he would not give public utterance to his heretical views. This he refused and the congregation proceeded to his formal excommunication with all the curses written in the law—"Cursed be he by day, cursed be he by night, etc." A fanatical Jew even raised a dagger against him after leaving the Synagogue. He was thus cut off on July 27th, 1656, at the age of twenty-three years. Obligated to leave Amsterdam for a neighboring town, he supported himself by grinding optical glasses, living a brief but profitable life, without reproach, unselfish and unworldly, quietly pursuing his philosophical studies. "The Ethics" was his great work. He rejected Revelation and elaborated a system which is a combination of Pantheism and Fatalism. He died at the age of forty-four years, apart from all Jewish or Christian prepos-