

even after Aristotle became *the* sage of Jewish literature and the wisdom of the Greeks was discovered to be "bordering on the path of the faith." Nor could it be otherwise. Starting from the same premises, such as the inspiration of the Scriptures, their binding authority upon every Jew, and fully admitting the claim of the Rabbis to be the only legitimate interpreters of these Scriptures, — much as the various schools differed in their definition of inspiration and in their method of eliminating isolated Rabbinic opinion, — and sharing in the same hope of the nation as it found expression in the doctrine of the advent of the Messiah, — much as they differed in the description of his person and the miraculous details accompanying his appearance, — they could not but arrive at the same general conclusions. Practically, they only differed to agree in the end. It was only in this way that it came to pass that Maimonides' résumé of the Creed became soon the object of numberless hymns accepted by the Synagogue at large, and even mystics wrote commentaries to it; whilst there were very few — perhaps none — of the rationalising school who would have had any scruples to read their prayers from the common Prayer Book used in Germany or France. If it was not exactly uniformity, the unity of Israel was well maintained — "union of doctrines, of precepts, of promises."

It is one of the most interesting of religious phenomena to observe the essential unity that the Synagogue maintained, despite all antagonistic influences.