

interpretation, more often re-interpretation. The object of the following pages is a different one. The task I set myself was to give a presentation of Rabbinic opinion on a number of theological topics as offered by the Rabbinic literature, and forming an integral part of the religious consciousness of the bulk of the nation or "Catholic Israel."

Keeping this end in view, I considered it advisable not to intrude too much interpretation or paraphrase upon the Rabbis. I let them have their own say in their own words, and even their own phraseology, so far as the English idiom allowed. My work consisted in gathering the materials distributed all over the wide domain of Rabbinic literature, classifying, sifting, and arranging them, and also in ascertaining clearly and stating in simple, direct terms the doctrines and theological concepts that they involved, in such a manner as to convey to the student a clear notion of the Rabbinic opinion of the doctrine under discussion. In cases where opinion differed, the varying views were produced, and so were inconsistencies pointed out, stating, however, when there was sufficient authority for doing so, what the prevailing opinion in the Synagogue was. Where such authority was lacking, it was assumed that the Synagogue allowed both opinions to stand, neither opinion containing the whole truth, and being in need of qualifications by the opposite opinion.

On the other hand, I made little use of such matter as may be described as mere legend and fancy, fall-