

heresy,¹ and which in its essentials always was under the control of the synagogue at large, may fairly be regarded as such a test. Now there is no reason to doubt that in its broad outlines this liturgy — as far as the Prayer Book is concerned — has its origin in the earliest Tannaitic times, whilst certain portions date from the pre-Christian era, but it is at present so overgrown with additions and interpolations, that the original contents are hardly discernible from the constant accretions of succeeding ages. The Talmud, and even the Mishnah, occasionally quote some ancient liturgical passages, and these might prove useful in helping us to fix their date.² But, unfortunately, it was not thought necessary to give these quotations in full. They are only cited by the word with which they begin, so that we are left in uncertainty as to the exact contents of the *whole* prayer, and have only guesses to rely on.

Even more embarrassing than these textual difficulties are those defects which are inherent in the peculiar nature of old Rabbinic thought. A great English writer has remarked "that the true health of a man is to have a soul without being aware of it; to be disposed of by impulses which he does not criticise."

¹ See I. Elbogen, *Geschichte des Achtzehngebetes*, Breslau, 1903, 34, note 4.

² See *Mishnah Tamid*, 5 1. *Pesachim*, 118 a. Cf. Landshut *דגין לב* to the *שמינה עשרה*, and Elbogen, as quoted above. See also Schechter's notes to *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (edited by S. Schechter and C. Taylor), to XXXVI 17 c (p. 60) and LI 12 c (p. 66), and *J. Q. R.* 10⁴, p. 654.