

its real and imaginary longings — there runs, parallel with this Mishnah, a vast literature, known under the name of Agadah, scattered over a multitude of Talmudical and Midrashic works, the earliest of which were compiled even before or about the time of the Mishnah, and the latest of which, while going down as far as the tenth or even the eleventh century, still include many ancient elements of Rabbinic thought. In these *compilations* it will be found that the minds of the so-called triflers were engrossed also with such subjects as God, and man's relation to God; as righteousness and sin, and the origin of evil; as suffering and repentance and immortality; as the election of Israel, Messianic aspirations, and with many other cognate subjects lying well within the moral and spiritual sphere, and no less interesting to the theologian than to the philosopher.

It is these Talmudic and Midrashic works, to which I should like to add at once the older Jewish liturgy, which will be one of the main sources of the material for the following chapters. Now I do not want to enter here into bibliographical details, which may be found in any good history of Jewish literature. But it may have been noticed that I spoke of "compilations"; and here a difficulty comes in. For a compilation presupposes the existence of other works, of which the compiler makes use. Thus there must have been some Rabbinic work or works composed long before our Mishnah, and perhaps as early as