

**Jews.** There is a class calling themselves the Spanish and Portuguese Jews. They have a greater nobility than the Jews to which I belong. There is, no doubt, something noble about them. Generally, the Jew has been reduced to the state of a petty merchant. They cannot be blamed with this, or any meanness connected with it. They keep up the pure Spanish and Portuguese tongues in their families. They pretend that they do not come from the same source as other Jews. They say that in the time of Ezra they never returned with the crowd that went back to Palestine. They went from Babylon to Spain. They are found now in London chiefly, and in the Crimea. They are in numbers in Great Britain and the United States. They have letters, they say, by which they can prove their genealogy with certain tribes. They are very reserved. They do not intermarry with us. Their liturgy is different from ours. There may be truth in what they say; but they have not exposed what they pretend to a critical examination. However, I do consider them more noble than the rest of the Jews.

There are other two classes of which I shall speak;—the Polish and the German. The Polish are the most orthodox. Up till a few years since they were the only people that gave rabbins to the whole world. The Polish Jews are different from the German. They do not like each other. The German are more or less heterodox; but the Polish Jews are orthodox.

What are the traditions? What is the Talmud? Let me tell you how holy these are with the Jews. They are everything with them. If any man devotes his life to the study of these traditions, he is a holy man. They will study them 15, 16 and 17 hours a day. Students of these put often their bare feet in water, to keep them awake during the night. They believe that, when engaged in this, they are surrounded by angels. The more they study the surer are they of eternal life; and if any one has more in his head, he will go to a higher place. Yea more. If any one dies, and has not proved that he was a good Jew, they have as many as possible of these holy men to lift him out of perdition up to the highest heaven.

What do these traditions contain? Everything that a Jew wishes to know. It is not a book confining itself to any particular thing. It consists of twelve parts. They have over 7,000 pages of text, besides commentaries. There is not an hour in the Jew's life but there is a text teaching him how his life is to be. There is not a single act of any kind but there is something prescribed as how it is to be done. Where is the authority? The traditions say that Moses did not receive the five books alone. He received all the prophets, and besides these, he received the seventh law, which was the law of the interpretation of the written law. It was forbidden to be put to writing. It must be given from mouth to mouth.

The Jewish schools in ancient times consisted not of libraries and lectures, but of teachers and a crowd of disciples. A rabbi had, perhaps, 5,000 disciples; and as they went from place to place, whenever the occasion arose, he told them some tradition. In these traditions there is a continual hair-splitting. You may take any one of the commandments, and every one has volumes written upon it of these traditions. They have also something delivered concerning God himself. In some cases it is blasphemous. They make phylacteries. These, they say, are what Moses commanded: "Thou shalt bind them, &c." They are certain boxes of leather containing passages of Scripture, and strung upon the head or forehead. Now they go so far as to say that God puts on phylacteries: and that in them are prayers that he will deliver his people.

I do not give you all this from books. Till I was fifteen years of age I was a devoted Jew. I may tell you that I have not yet read my Bible with that feeling with which I read these traditions. I believed it, and it was sweet unto me.

But what is the cause of all this devotion to traditions? The Jew is laboring to establish his own righteousness; just the same as some Christians who follow the traditions of the elders. Their object is to gain favor by their own works. This is the whole fabric of Judaism. Since the time of Christ they have had heaps upon heaps of nonsense, and a system of religion which is a system of words. These traditions are now in writing. Since they were dispersed, and were put to great disadvantages, the Hebrew language was lost and did not continue their vernacular, they finally concluded that they must commit their traditions to writing. The time when they were put to writing is doubtful. Some say 200 A. D., others 500 A. D. They have now written in twelve volumes, and commentaries upon commentaries upon these. It is true what Leightfoot said: "The Jewish traditions, and the Rabbinical writings, are at the same time the greatest heap of nonsense while they are also the best commentary upon the New Testament." And why? In our day Christians live in a Christian atmosphere. We are far removed from Eastern thoughts, and we read the New Testament with the light of the nineteenth century. On reading the traditions, and seeing what ignorance is among the orthodox, you then have an idea of what these Jews were, with whom Christ and his apostles had to contend. Some parts of the traditions are, however, very beautiful.

These traditions are received by all Jews and particularly by Polish Jews. The Spanish and Portuguese Jews also receive them. The latter, however, receive another part, namely, the traditions of the Jerusalem Jews. The Talmud, which is derived from Babylon, is the traditions to which Jews adhere. The German Jews do not believe so much in them. There are Jews in Germany who are attached