

satisfactory state of Rabbinic documents. A prominent theologian has, when referring to the Rabbis, declared that one has only to study the Mishnah to see that it was not moral or spiritual subjects which engrossed their attention, but the characteristic hair-splitting about ceremonial trifles. There is an appearance of truth in this statement. The Mishnah, which was *compiled* about the beginning of the third century of the C.E., consists of sixty-one (or sixty-three) tractates, of which only one, known by the title of "The Chapters of the Fathers," deals with moral and spiritual matters in the narrower sense of these terms. Still this is not the whole truth, for there are also other tractates, occupying about one-third of the whole Mishnah, which deal with the civil law, the procedure of the criminal courts, the regulation of inheritance, laws regarding property, the administration of oaths, marriage, and divorce. All these topics, and many similar ones relating to public justice and the welfare of the community as the Rabbis understood it, are certainly not to be branded as ceremonial trifles; and if the kingdom of God on earth means something more than the mystical languor of the individual, it is difficult to see on what ground they can be excluded from the sphere of religion. But, apart from this consideration—for it seems that theologians are not yet agreed in their answer to the question whether it is this world, with all its wants and complications, which should be the subject for redemption, or the individual soul, with