

it may have gained currency for a time, the Synagogue finally succeeded in eliminating it as noxious to its very existence.

It is this body of Israel in which the unity of the Synagogue was and is still incorporate that I called occasionally as witness in some cases of religious sentiment wholly unknown to the outsider. I may as well state here that it was my knowledge of this Israel which gave the first impulse to these essays. Having been brought up among Jews who did live under the strict discipline of the Law and were almost exclusively nurtured on the spiritual food of the Talmud and Midrashim, and having had occasion thus to observe them for many years, both in their religious joys and in their religious sorrows, I felt quite bewildered at the theological picture drawn of Rabbinic Judaism by so many writers. I could not but doubt their statements and question their conclusions. These doubts were expressed to friends, who were at once affected more or less by my sceptical attitude and urged me to write down my thoughts on the subject, which in the course of time took shape in essays and lectures. The reader will, therefore, pardon if, in addition to the written evidence, I appeal also in a few cases to living testimony.

The foregoing remarks will suffice to prepare the reader for what he has to expect from this book and in what he will be disappointed. I have also prepared him for my point of view, which is further developed in the body of the book. I have only to