

and synagogues were preparing metaphysics and theosophies to employ the mind of posterity for thousands of years. What did the Rabbis think of all these aspirations and inspirations, or did they remain quite untouched by the influences of their surroundings? Is it not possible that a complete account of such a controversy as I have just mentioned, which probably formed neither an isolated nor an unprecedented event, would have furnished us with just the information of which now we are so sorely in need?

In the Jewish liturgy we meet with similar difficulties. It is a source which has till now been comparatively neglected. Still, its contents are of the greatest importance for the study of Jewish theology; not only on account of the material it furnishes us, but also for the aid it gives us in our control over the Talmud. For the latter is a work which can never be used without proper discretion. Like many another great book of an encyclopædic character, the Talmud has been aptly described as a work "full of the seeds of all things." But not all things are religion, nor is all religion Judaism. Certain ideas of foreign religions have found their way into this fenceless work, but they have never become an integral part of Jewish thought. Others again represent only the isolated opinions of this or that individual, in flagrant contradiction to the religious consciousness of Catholic Israel; whilst others again, especially those relating to proselytes or the Gentiles, were in many cases only of a transitory character,