

THE EPISTLE

OF

RABBI SAMUEL THE ISRAELITE,

TO

RABBI ISAAC,

HEAD MASTER OF THE RABBINICAL SCHOOL AND THE JEWISH
SYNAGOGUE, IN SUEJULMETA IN THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO.

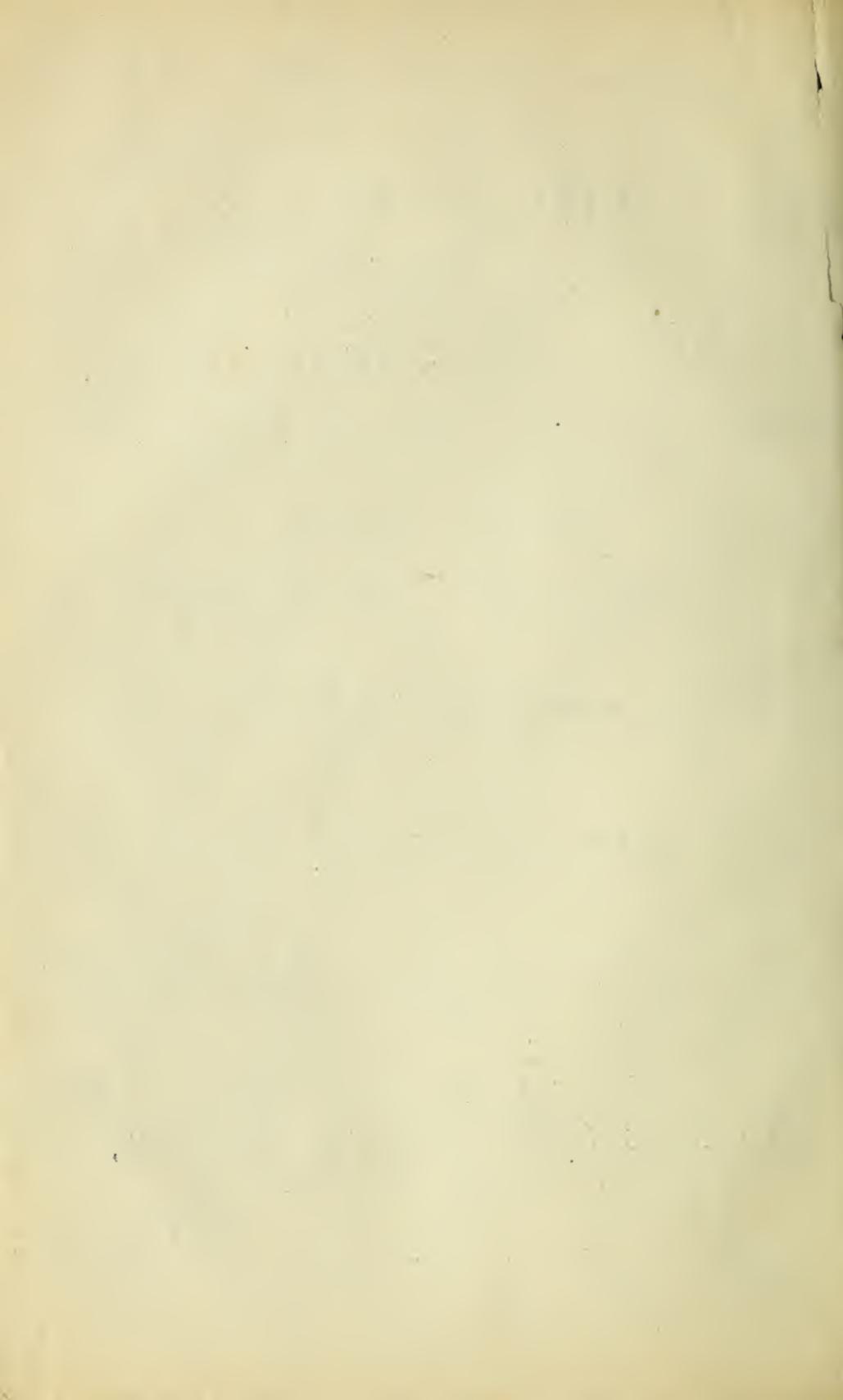
WRITTEN IN ARABIC IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY OF THE
CHRISTIAN ERA;

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH.

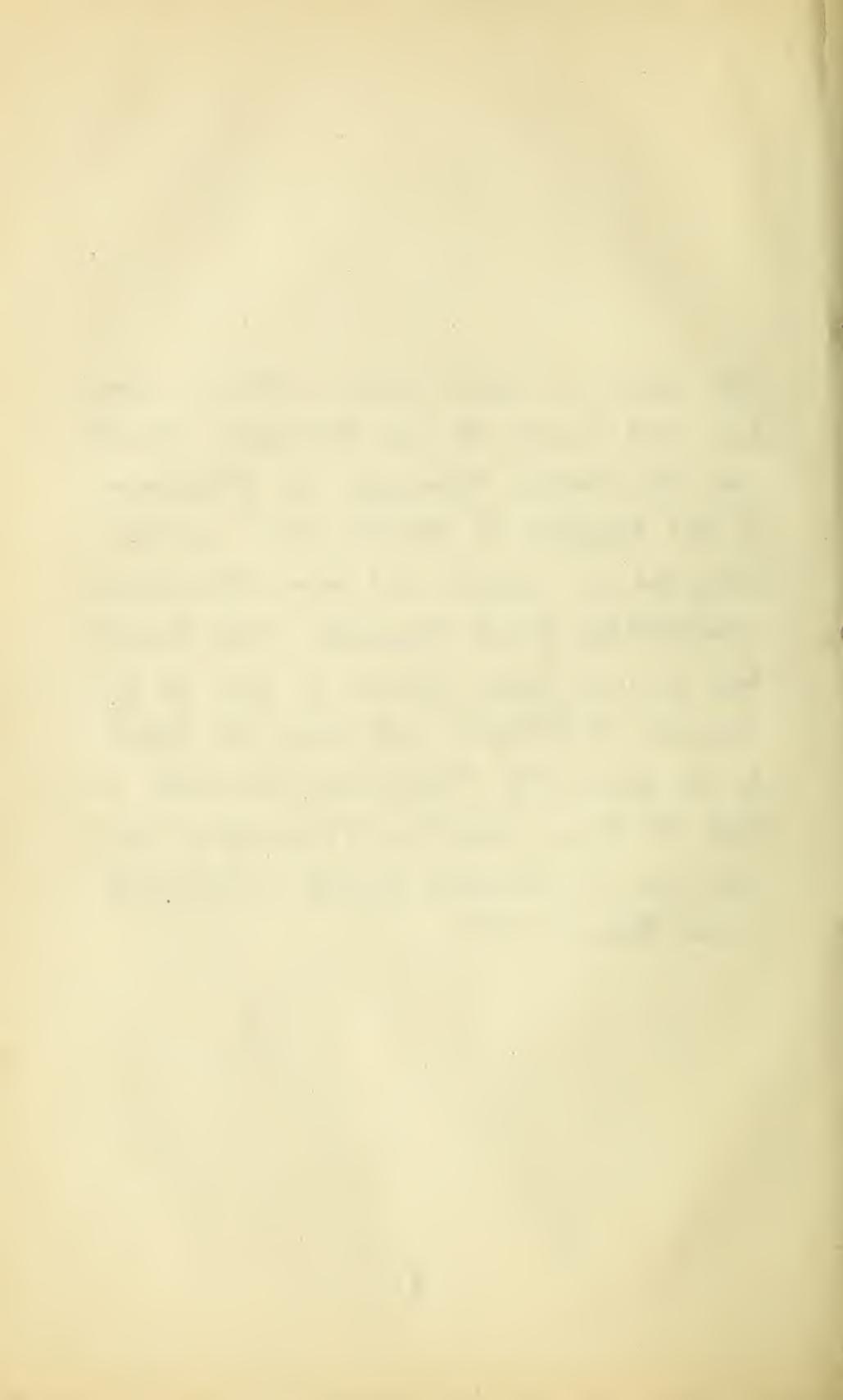
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THE Epistle of Rabbi Samuel to Rabbi Isaac, the head master of the Rabbinical School and the Jewish Synagogue in Subjulmeta, in the kingdom of Morocco, was originally composed in Arabic, and was subsequently translated into various languages. Rabbi Samuel was born of Jewish parents in Sem, in the kingdom of Morocco, and wrote his Epistle in the year 1072. The present translation is from the Latin, printed in Würtemberg, 1836; and from the German, printed at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, in 1544.



THE EPISTLE.

GOD preserve you, dear brother, and grant that you persevere until this our captivity is at an end, and we are gathered in again from our dispersion ; yea, until our hope draw near, and God show his approval of our manner of life.—Amen. I have known and experienced that the perfection of science in our days has received great light by your interpretation ; and that you are our hope for instruction, as well in the Law as in the Prophets. Wherefore, I am longing as well to participate in your teaching, as to communicate to you the suggestions of my heart, concerning the things which refer to the Law and the Prophets, and about which I am anxious and in fear. I take refuge in the discernment of your wisdom, in sending you an Epistle ; in the hope that, if so be the will of God, I might by you be strengthened in truth, and delivered from doubts.

CHAPTER I.

Why is the wrath of God upon the Jews ?

I WISH, Sir, to be instructed by you, from the testimonies of the prophets and other scriptures, why we Jews are afflicted by God with that captivity wherein we now are, and which might be termed the perpetual wrath of God, since it comes not to an end. For a thousand years, and even more, have elapsed since we were made captives by Titus. We know also that our forefathers worshipped idols, killed the prophets, and rejected the law of God ; and for all these transgres-

sions they were kept only seventy years captives in Babylon ; and after the period foretold by the prophets, God became again propitious to them, and led them back into their own land. Although, according to Scripture, the wrath of God was at that time far more violent than ever before, yet their punishment for so many sins lasted not more than seventy years. But now, Sir, the wrath of God wherewith he punishes us does not end, nor is there any end of it promised in the prophets. If we would say, that the wrath of God which at present rests upon us be from the same causes as those for which our forefathers were captives in Babylon, and that they had not sufficiently atoned for their sins, we call God a liar, which be far from us ! For the true and glorious God has announced our captivity by the prophets, and put its end after seventy years. Therefore this is no satisfactory answer, but an unprofitable excuse, or an evasive subterfuge which cannot meet with the approbation of the intelligent. Should we further say, that in that redemption from Babylon God had compassion on one part of our people, but none on the rest ; and those on whom he had compassion he brought back into their land, that they might rebuild the temple, according as the prophet Jeremiah says, and that we are of those on whom he had no compassion ; then the Christians will say against us, that God has had compassion on those who worshipped idols, and killed the prophets ; but us who have committed none of these sins, he has afflicted and still does afflict ; and also that the sins of our forefathers were punished by divine vengeance within a certain time, that on them God had compassion after seventy years, and therewith he put an end to their punishment ; but our afflictions and punishments, which have no real cause, do not end, since we have been suffering more than these thousand years ; nor is there an end foretold to such affliction, either in the Law or in the Prophets. Wherefore, Sir, when God has punished our forefathers for idolatry and killing the prophets, both guilt and punishment has been announced in Scripture ; and

since God does not punish twice the same offence, it follows that their sin has been atoned for by the seventy years' captivity; and since again God does not punish a whole nation except for a sin of which they are all guilty, it must then also follow that we all have sinned after the seventy years' captivity, and must have committed sins greater than those of our ancestors, in idolatry and murdering the prophets, since God punished them only seventy years, and not longer; but us he is now punishing longer than a thousand years, after having dispersed us to the four corners of the earth. But whatever may happen, we are at all events of God, though we have no excuse for what has been said. Answer!

CHAPTER II.

Proofs that the Jews are kept in Dispersion on account of a great Sin committed by them, and Evidences against their mode of Observing the Law.

SUPPOSING then, Sir, that we are under some capital sin, I ask you to teach me—since God has dispersed us from Jerusalem into this most protracted and perpetual captivity, whether in this captivity we began by our own authority and self-will, without any special command of God, to observe the circumcision, or Sabbath, or other commandments which we keep according to the Law of Moses. For we are aware, that from the time that Titus destroyed the holy city and burnt the temple and the books, we were dispersed into the captivity; and from that time, sacrifices, oblations, and holocausts ceased legally among us. God has never since promised by any prophet or prophecy that we are to return to Jerusalem into the former condition, nor has he ordered us to keep the above-named ceremonies. Whence it seems to follow, that we accepted and keep those ceremonies not from God, but from those who were in the wrath of God. And our adversaries may rightly tell us: “Since you

keep circumcision and the Sabbath, and read the books of Moses and the prophets in the synagogues without the command of God, why do ye not likewise reassume the sacrifices and the priesthood, retain your kings and princes, holy anointings and incense? and why do ye not build the altars, and keep the ceremonies and all other things stated in the law, as ye do keep the Sabbath and circumcision, and many other things of your tradition, without the command of God? And thus in either way do ye incur the charge of offence: whether ye hold the fore-named things against the will of God, or whether ye say, it is the will of God and his pleasure that ye do keep them, and yet ye cannot prove it to be so. Why do ye not keep many other things, as aforesaid, and which are in your power of performing? If, however, you should say, that the kings, and those under whom ye live, would not allow you to perform them, yet they allow many things ye do, as circumcision, reading in the synagogues, &c." It seems to me, Sir, that we have no sufficient answer to give to all these arguments. But whatever may happen, we are at all events of God.

CHAPTER III.

How the Observance of the Ceremonies of the Law by the Jews is not agreeable to God, on account of the Sin in which they are.

God speaks by the mouth of the prophet Zechariah, (vii. 5,) saying: "When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even these seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?" It is indicated in this quotation, that as long as we were in the seventy years' captivity, we were without a Lord, without fasting and Sabbath, which was worth nothing, whilst the wrath of God was upon his people. Yet this first wrath was short, and lasted only seventy years; but the wrath in which we now are, lasts long, and seems to have no end in the prophets. Wherefore, I fear, Sir,

that as God has sent our fathers in that short captivity without law or ceremonies, and has not accepted fasting and other observances of the law, until the time of the punishment, namely, seventy years, had ended; so neither does he accept the works of the law, which we perform, in this last captivity. It is therefore certain, that we live under a greater sin than our forefathers lived in Babylon; wherefore also is the wrath of God greater upon us than it was upon them; and wherefore, lastly, our works are less pleasing and more rebuked. For, since for killing the prophets and serving idolatry they were only seventy years in captivity, we are captives—now for one thousand years—for a far greater—yea, the greatest sin; and which captivity is termed by the prophet Daniel, in the ninth chapter, a “*desolation.*” The first captivity was called a transmigration, and after its time had passed, they were brought back to Jerusalem, but the present is termed an eternal desolation; in which God surely will not have mercy upon us, as he had mercy with our ancestors in Babylon, comforted them by the prophets, granted them deliverance, and all were united together. But to us, who have been dispersed through all the kingdoms of the universe, nothing has been promised. But be it as it may, we are at all events of God.

CHAPTER IV.

On the Blindness of the Jews.

I WONDER very much, Sir, that we daily hope to be redeemed from our present captivity, and continually speak of it, expecting soon to be brought back to Jerusalem; we are either struck with blindness, or we are deceivers of the simple ones. For it is certainly true, that after our dispersion by Titus, no prophet ever appeared amongst us, who promised us to return to Jerusalem; nor did any prophet appear, after the seventy years' captivity, who spoke of this our captivity which

does not end until the end of the world. And thus Daniel calls it, in the ninth chapter, a desolation without end. Wherefore, since such a captivity can only rest upon our whole nation for a far greater sin than idolatry and the killing of the prophets, for which our forefathers were punished, I fear that God has no mercy upon us, because we persevere in such a national sin; nor will he have mercy upon our dead. But whatever may happen, we are at all events of God.

CHAPTER V.

How the Jews deceive themselves and others.

IT seems to me, Sir, that we deceive ourselves and others with us. For we find in the Book of the Law and in the Prophets how God made manifold promises of redemption to our people, and a gathering-in from their captivity. But when we consider well all the promises which we received, we see that they have either been entirely fulfilled in the seventy years' captivity, or are entirely prevented from being fulfilled, on account of our sins; of which I will give you an example in Ezekiel, who says, (xxxix. 25,) "Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel." Observe, that what God promises us in this and other passages in Ezekiel, has long been fulfilled in the seventy years' captivity, with many other more full or more limited promises indicated in many passages of the Holy Scriptures. And all happened before we fell into our last captivity, which takes no end, and in which we are now more than a thousand years; and the end of which we find indicated in none of the prophets, nor in any of God's promises, wherever our deliverance and regathering is spoken of; whence follows that we committed a greater sin, for which God now punishes us without end, and in which sin we are, and persist: or God would not delay his mercy so long, nor keep up his wrath against us. We see in

the Scriptures, that all sins which our forefathers committed before the seventy years' captivity elapsed, have been punished with captivity; and out of many examples allow me to notice but a few. Our forefathers sinned who went out of Egypt, wherefore they did not participate in the promise made unto them, to see the holy land; but they died in the wilderness. Moses sinned at the waters of Meribah, and he reached not the holy land. Aaron sinned, and bare his punishment. The priest Eli sinned, and brake his neck, and died; and his descendants were deprived of the priesthood which God had promised unto them. But such promises were always to be relied on, where people did not forfeit them by wickedness; as indicated in the lineal descendants of David, who were deprived of their royal power. So promised the true and glorious God to Abraham and his seed, that they should possess the holy land for ever; yet did they lose it repeatedly, on account of their sins, and repeatedly it was given back to them. But, alas! for our last sin we lost its possession, now more than a thousand years; there is no hope ever to regain it, because we all persist in the self-same sin, for which we lost it. It is only wonderful, Sir, since we all confess to have committed a great sin after the Babylonian captivity, that none of us can say *what* this great sin is. And, even if some of us in some way see the sin and guilt, which has brought us into our present misery, yet no one declares it to his neighbour, or draws a profitable inference from it.

We all are discomfited; we see evidently that God was with our forefathers by the prophets, as by Jeremiah and others, during the seventy years' captivity. He gave unto them Salathiel, and princes, and rulers, and priests, with whom they went out of Babylon, after having accomplished their penitence. With God's approval they built Jerusalem, and the temple, and other cities; and he poured out upon them the abundance of mercy. And yet in our present captivity, there is with us now none of the prophets, nor even God, as it appears. Wherefore I cannot leave off in-

quiring which be the sin, for which we are now more than a thousand years in captivity; and have neither king, nor prophet, nor priest, nor altar, nor sacrifice, nor oil, nor incense, nor purification; and are despised and contemned by all the world as unto God. In our heart only pride reigns, by which we stand up against all the world. But I have stated to you all I am thinking on the subject. Yet whatever may happen, we are all of God.

CHAPTER VI.

On the Sin for which the Jews are in their present Captivity.

I FEAR, therefore, Sir, that the sin for which we are in our present desolation and captivity is that sin of which God spake by the prophet Amos, when he says, (ii. 6,) "For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver." This is not to be understood as according to our teaching, which says that the righteous here is Joseph, the son of Jacob, who was sold by his brethren to Egypt; and whom I also should have meant it to be, if divine Scripture had not placed the sin of selling as the fourth in number among the sins or crimes of all Israel. And verily, the Christians, to whom the study of sacred books seems to be delivered from God, answer our fore-mentioned teaching, and say that the first of the four transgressions of Israel is the selling of Joseph by his brethren; the second sin points to the worship of the calf on mount Horeb; the third to the killing of the prophets, for which we lived seventy years in captivity; and the fourth crime of Israel was, as they say, the selling of Jesus, who in fact has been sold after the seventy years' captivity. And if, Sir, we intend to persist in our teaching, and refuse that of the Christians, it is necessary that we should assign various crimes to Israel, *before* the selling of Joseph; so that

this selling should be the fourth transgression. This, however, we can by no means maintain, since the testimony of the book of Genesis is against us, in which we find the selling of Joseph as the first crime in order, laid on the sons of Jacob; whilst the prophet Amos dwells distinctly on the fourth sin, the selling of the Just One, wherefore we were to come into this captivity; out of which, God threatens us, we are no more to return into this promised land, when he says: "And for the fourth, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." This seems to me to be the selling of the Just One, for which we have now been more than a thousand years under punishment, have profited nothing among the Gentiles, and have no hope to profit any more.

CHAPTER VII.

Jesus the Just One, the Lord of the Christians, was unjustly sold.

I AM afraid and fear, Sir, that Jesus, in whom the Christians believe, may be the Just One who was sold for silver, according to the prophet Amos; and I apprehend also that to him refers the testimony of the prophets, which the Christians apply to the same Jesus, as is found in Isaiah, (xlix.4,) "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." Again, (Isa. liii. 7,) "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Again, (Isa. liii. 3,) "A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Again, (Isa. liii.,) "He was despised, and we esteemed him not." Again, (liii. 10,) "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." Again, (Isa. liii. 8, 9,) "For the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his

death." I fear that the wicked were our forefathers, and the rich were Pilate, Herod, Annas, and Caiaphas; as David speaks, (Ps. ii. 2,) "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed." I fear he is the same of whom Isaiah (liii. 12,) speaks: "He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Again, David says, (Ps. xciv. 21,) "They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood." Again, (Jer. xxxi. 22,) "The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man." Of whom Zechariah (xiii. 6) speaks: "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." Again, (xii. 10,) "And they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son."

Thus the prophet here agrees with the Gospel history of the Christians, where the death of Jesus is related: when on the cross they pierced him with a spear, and blood and water gushed out. Again, says Habakkuk, (iii. 13,) Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed."

CHAPTER VIII.

How the Dispersion of the Jews was fulfilled, according to Daniel, after the slaying of Jesus.

I AM terrified, Sir, to consider who the Just One without sin, of whom the prophet Isaiah speaks, and the Just One sold for silver, of whom the prophet Amos, as above stated, also speaks, may be; in consequence of which sinful selling God will not lead Israel again into the land of promise. Further, it seems to me also to have been fulfilled what the prophet Daniel says, (ix. 26, 27,) "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people

of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." There is no doubt but that the destruction and perpetual desolation here spoken of, is the captivity in which we have been now more than a thousand years. And evidently, says God by the prophet, that the perpetual desolation shall be after the slaying of Christ; and our desolation took place after Jesus was killed. Nor, in fact, has God threatened us with a perpetual desolation unless after the slaying of Christ; wherefore, if we should say that we were in desolation before the death of Jesus, the Christians would answer that before his death there was only a captivity of seventy years, after which we were brought back into the land of promise, where we stood again with God in grace and honour. And I see no way of evading this prophecy of Daniel, since in fact it proves to us that when, after the rebuilding of the temple, seventy weeks should have passed, then should Jesus be killed by our fathers; and so Prince Titus came with the Roman people, and acted with us according to the prophecy. Should we now say, that Christ is still to come, and has not yet come; and that we still shall repossess the land of promise, and rebuild the town, and repossess the grace and honour of our God in our land; and that this desolation will not be perpetual;—then the Christians will answer, that we have still to slay Christ, the Messiah, and Titus and the Roman people are still to overrun us! and another desolation is still to take place, worse than that which has lasted a thousand years. Against this, Sir, there is no evasive excuse; but be it what it may, we are at all events of God.

CHAPTER IX.

On the Two Comings of Christ.

I FEAR, Sir, that Christ has already come, and has fulfilled his coming; for we find his twofold coming in the Scriptures. The first coming of Christ is that described in the prophets to be in poverty and humility; the second in glory and majesty. On his first coming God speaks by Zechariah, (ix. 9,) "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." And Isaiah describes him as despised and rejected (liii. 3,); Daniel, as slain (ix. 26,); Zechariah, (xi. 12,) and Amos, (ii. 6,) as sold; all which, as I have already written, and shall still have to write in my letter, has been literally accomplished. For we despised him, that is, we did not acknowledge him, and stood with power against him. But his glory and majesty shall be manifested in his second coming, when fire and flame shall precede him, (Ps. xviii. 8,) and surround his enemies in a circle, (Isa. ix. 5,); as David and Isaiah speak of him. And I fear, Sir, that Christ will not judge otherwise, except with fire unto death, because we killed the prophets who announced him to us. So God testifies against us in the Scriptures, as we find in the second book of Chronicles, (xxxvi. 16,) "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." And thus we have slain the Just One, wherefore we are in the wrath of God without end; yet we are nevertheless of God.

CHAPTER X.

The First Coming of Christ.

I FEAR, Sir, that God evidently announces the two comings of Christ, by the prophecy of Isaiah, when

he says, (li. 9,) "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old." Twice he says, Awake, on account of his twofold coming; and the first coming of Christ he clearly describes with reference to his bearings and rejection, throughout the fiftieth and fifty-third chapters. Especially when he says, (liii. 2,) "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." His first coming is also stated in Isaiah ix. 6, when the prophet begins to say: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given;" and soon after adds to it the Lord's second coming, when he continues: "And the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." But the prophet Zechariah (ix. 9) describes him as "lowly, and riding upon an ass," by which he also indicates his first coming in humility; but his second coming in power and majesty, as "He shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." Again Daniel says, (vii. 13, 14,) "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." This, Sir, is evidently Christ in his second advent; when he will sit before the Ancient of days, who is God, to judge, as he sat in his first advent before our fathers, the Jews, to be judged. This second coming of the Messiah, who is Christ, the prophet David also indicates, when he says, (Ps. xcvi. 13,) "He is come, for he is come to judge the world." Of his first coming, which was poor, in humility, the Psalmist simply says: "He is come;" but of his second coming, which is still to be with power, he says: "He is come to judge

the world." So speaks Zechariah, (xiv. 3, 4,) "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east." We, however, do not say that God in his essence and nature, has either feet, or flesh, or any thing that is bodily, or whatever belongs to bodily creatures. David again speaks of his second coming, as indicated before, and says, (Ps. xvii. 3,) "A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about." But we do not say, that God, in his divine being, does look around; and that something can take place round about him. Yet such truths of the prophets are to be interpreted literally, as well when they speak of the Lord's humility, as when they speak of his majesty. Again, Malachi says, (iii. 1, 2,) "Behold, he (the Lord) shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's sope." As such the Just will appear, when he shall come to judge at his second coming; and the prophet further describes him in the same chapter, (ver. 5,) "And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts." And so says Ezekiel, (xxxiv. 22,) "Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle." And so it was, and so it shall still be. For at his first coming none of us did acknowledge the Saviour, because he did not surpass the boundaries of human nature, as related by Isaiah in his fifty-third chapter. I fear, therefore, that our forefathers have failed and erred in the first coming of their Messiah; wherefore we live in our present captivity, which knows no end. But we are still of God.

CHAPTER XI.

The Second Coming of Christ, which will be with Power to Judge.

I FEAR, Sir, that this must be the Righteous One, who is to judge all with power in his second advent, and who was the Saviour of all at his first appearance. Of him David speaks, (Ps. xx. 6,) "Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand." So says Isaiah, (xii. 3,) "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," which is to be understood of baptism. For in his first coming Christ brought salvation by water; and in his second he will judge by fire. Of the same Saviour Job speaks, (xix. 25,) "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Mark, Sir, that he calls his Redeemer God; but it is evident, that the eyes of the flesh shall not see God; wherefrom we must conclude, according to Scripture, that the Redeemer of whom we speak, is the righteous God, who alone can be called the Just One, since he committed no sin; as God testifies by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah, (liii. 9,) "Because he has done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." It is never said, either of Moses, or of any other of the prophets, that they were righteous saviours and without sin; for Moses sinned, and so did all the other prophets, as you know; wherefore none of them is called in Scripture the Just One; and this name is ascribed to him alone, whom we consider in our letter. And doubtless, no one can be saved, but he who believes in his first coming; and those who do not believe in it, have no cause to hope to be saved in his second coming, but they are guilty of death. For since those were guilty of death who did not believe in Moses, and disobeyed him who was a sinner; how much more are they worthy of fire, who not only do not believe, but also blaspheme the righteous Lord, who knew no sin whatever? But after all, we are still of God.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the Ascension of Christ.

WE find in the Scriptures that Christ is to be raised from earth into heaven ; and I fear, Sir, that this has been accomplished in him who was slain by our forefathers, and of whose exaltation David speaks, (xxiv. 7—10,) “ Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ; and the King of glory shall come in.” Then the angels ask, “ Who is this King of glory ? ” and it is answered to them, “ The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle ; the Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.” But it is manifest, that the righteous Lord, in his first coming, was not “ mighty in battle ” and “ the Lord of hosts.” But at his second coming, when he shall sit to judge the world, then will the fire burn round about him, and kindle his enemies, and try the just as silver, and no one shall prevail against him, nor will there be room for battle. So speaks Isaiah of his exaltation, (lxiii. 1,) asking, “ Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah ? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength ? ” and he answers, “ I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” Then again the Prophet asks, “ Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat ? ” and he answers, “ I have trodden the winepress *alone* ; and of the people there was *none* with me.” And I fear, Sir, that the answer touches no one but us, especially when he says further : “ For I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury ; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.” What therefore can we hope of the Just One, who complaineth of us to the angels in heaven, and indicates to them that he has “ trodden the winepress alone ? ” But which other winepress has he trodden in his wrath but us ? For after the first struggle which he went through in his

first coming, we have now been cast out from him for a thousand years; whilst at his last advent, the day of judgment is still waiting before us, with the year of retribution in his heart. Would to God, since we have killed Isaiah,* that we had rather blotted out this prediction from the prophecies, so as no more to be read by any one. What David calls a war, when he says, (Psalm xxiv. 8,) "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle," this Isaiah calls a winepress. We, Sir, we are the vine of which Jacob the prophet and patriarch speaks, (Genesis xlix. 11,) "He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes." This has been fulfilled in us in the first coming of the Messiah. But what shall we do at his second coming? Then shall men stand before the *Man of judgment*, and around in his circle shall glow the fire ready to devour those against whom his sentence will be pronounced; and then there will be no more a time of war, nor time to tread the winepress, nor time for penitence, nor place of refuge; but only a time of justice: and as he himself has been judged without sin or guilt, so will he judge the sinners and the guilty, as God speaks by Solomon, in the Book of Proverbs, (xi. 31,) "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner."

CHAPTER XIII.

Proving more evidently the bodily Ascension of Christ.

I FEAR much, Sir, the above-stated testimonies of the prophets speak of the Righteous One, "who was sold for silver," as says the Prophet Amos; "Who hastrodden the winepress," as says the Prophet Isaiah; "Who led war for our forefathers," as says King David; "Who was taken captive for our sins," as says the Prophet Isaiah; "Who was wounded in his palms," as says the Prophet Zechariah; "About whose clothes they cast

*That the Prophet Isaiah was slain by King Manasseh is an old Jewish tradition, which was kept up also in the Church.

lots;" and "Who finally ascended into heaven," as this and other prophets predicted. But since it is not applicable to God, in his essence, or divine nature, to be raised, or to be exalted, or to sit, or to descend, there follows of necessity, that the Righteous had already come, in whose bodily nature alone all things predicted could have been united. If however, Sir, it should be difficult for you to believe that a human body should ascend into heaven, listen to the authorities and examples which occur in our Scriptures. Thus says the King and Prophet David, (Psalm lxxviii. 18,) "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men;" again, (Amos ix. 6,) "It is he (the Lord) that buildeth his stories in the heaven;" again, (Psalm xlvii. 5,) "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." Of the same says Moses, (Deut. xxxiii. 26,) "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky." Hannah, the mother of Samuel, says, (1 Sam. ii. 10,) "The Lord shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed." David, again, (Psalm xviii. 10,) "He did fly upon the wings of the wind." All these authorities seem to me to prove the bodily ascension of Christ into heaven; and there are besides many other passages which you well know. But I will now quote some examples from our book of the law. Since it is inconvenient to us to believe that Christ ascended into heaven in his body, let us notice that we find in the book of the law, and also in the prophets, that the true and glorious God raised from the earth and lifted up some of our holy fathers. Now, if we doubt not their ascension, on account of their holiness, and the testimony of Scripture, why should we doubt the

The "Pseudo-epigraphic ascension and vision of the Prophet Isaiah," treats especially on this point, a book which was written, according to Bishop Laurence, sixty-nine years after Christ, according to German critics in the third century.

The Jewish tradition is to be found in the Mishna, Tract Jebamoth, chapter iv., quoted in an Old Targum by Assemani, and in several other places of the Midrashim.

ascension, both in body and soul, of the Righteous One, unto whom the Scriptures allow a stronger testimony of holiness than unto the others; and who maintained a severer conflict, and far more struggles of the world, than any of the former. You know, without the slightest doubt, that Enoch the just, and Elias the prophet, were raised in their bodies from this world by God. Neither is it doubted of Moses that he is in heaven in body and soul, for God speaks to him, "Get up into this mountain and remain there;" and he went up and died; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.* And what signifies his sepulchre being unknown upon earth, since he was the greatest prophet and the holiest of them all, but that God lifted him up, and took him in body and spirit, as he lifted up the other holy ones to the place where they now rest? If now we believe in the raising of the bodies of the saints as stated, why are we incredulous as to the raising of the Just One, and that he, too, was lifted up into heaven? of which there are so many testimonies given in the Scriptures; and we ought rather to conclude, that God raised the above-named saints, of whom we do not doubt, in order to prepare the hearts of men for faith, that they should not waver in believing in the ascension of the Just One. But there is still another cause why our people doubt his ascension, because his first coming was a concealed and extraordinary one. So says Isaiah, "It is a man, and who shall know him?" again, (vii. 14,) "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son;" and is silent of the father according to the flesh, therefore we did not acknowledge him; again, Jeremiah, (xxxi. 22,) "How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man;" again, Micah, (v. 3,) "Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth:" and it is to be observed that the prophet neither here men-

* We find in the Midrash Rabbi, Deuteronomy xxxiv., that God lifted Moses up into heaven by a kiss. This tradition is familiar to the Jews; and spoken of with the greatest reverence by all Talmudical teachers to their pupils.

tions the husband of her who travaileth. For the Righteous One alone was born not in the regular way of human conception. So we quoted Isaiah, (vii. 14,) saying, "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son;" but all other men, as Isaac, Samson, and Samuel, whose birth had been foretold, were conceived by men, and born of women in sin and flesh, and all were sinners; yea, even Moses, the holiest of all our forefathers and prophets, sinned, as he himself confessed. So says Job, (xv. 15,) of all the holy ones, "Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints;" but of the Righteous One Isaiah says, (liii. 9,) "He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the Blindness of the Jews, who neither believe that Christ has come, nor understand it.

I FEAR, Sir, it has been fulfilled in us what the Lord spoke by the Prophet Isaiah, (vi. 9,) "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed." And Isaiah asks, "Lord, how long?" and the Lord answers, "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate." In Daniel, (xii. 4,) it is said, "Shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end;" Jeremiah (xvii. 1) says, "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart." Isaiah, (i. 3,) "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." All this was said, because we did not acknowledge the coming of our Lord, the Just One. Therefore God says by Isaiah, (xlii. 17,) "They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed;" whereby

the prophet gives to understand, that God has rejected us, because we have not acknowledged the coming of the Just One, and has gathered unto him, instead of us, all the Heathen *in faith*. Wherefore David wonders and says, (Psalm lxxvi. 7,) "Thou, even thou art to be feared : and who many stand in thy sight, when once thou art angry?" This is our present captivity, in which we have now been more than a thousand years, whilst so much evil never occurred to our forefathers, who worshipped idols, killed the prophets, and transgressed all the commandments.

CHAPTER XV.

How the Blindness of the Jews, and their Incredulity in Christ, has been foretold by the Prophets.

I FEAR, Sir, that because we did not believe in the Righteous One, therefore has happened, and been fulfilled unto us, what God says by Isaiah, (xxix. 11, 12,) "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee : and he saith, I cannot ; for it is sealed : and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee : and he saith, I am not learned."

The sealing of the book here mentioned, is more dangerous unto us than the closing of our hearts ; by which God has hardened us for now more than a thousand years, since we acknowledge none of the prophecies delivered unto us concerning the coming of the Righteous One. Wherefore God speaks repeatedly by the prophets, that Jerusalem shall be destroyed, and the temple shall fall. So we find in Isaiah (i. 7, 8,) "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire : " "And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard," destroyed and desolate. Again, Isaiah, (xxiv. 4,) "The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away." Again, Daniel, (ix. 26,) "And after threescore and two weeks shall

Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary;” which has now been fulfilled for more than a thousand years. Again, Isaiah, (xxiv. 20,) “The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.” Again, Jeremiah, (vi. 30,) “Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.” Again, Amos, (v. 2,) “The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land; there is none to raise her up.” And it seems to me that God brought this fall upon us after the Righteous One was come; and after whom no prophet rose any more amongst us, nor shall rise, as has been foretold. Thus we remain in unbelief, and do not accept his truth; but persevere in denying him. Thus speaks Hosea, (i. 6,) “And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Lo-ruhamah (that is, not having obtained mercy): for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.” And now that God has rejected us, he will no more have mercy upon us, as we have now experienced for more than a thousand years. What profit is it to us to keep the law of circumcision, and the Sabbath? Isaiah speaks, (vi. 12,) “And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land,” as now the true and glorious God has led us away from our land, for more than a thousand years. Again, says the prophet Isaiah, (xxiv. 2,) that old Israel is to perish: “And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest.” What is older than our law, which has departed from us with king, sacrifice, and incense? What greater evil can happen to us? or what do we now expect? Do we not see that we are dispersed now to the four corners of the earth, as Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and other prophets have foretold us? But after all, we are of God.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Reprobation of the Jews on account of their Infidelity; and the Election of the Gentiles on account of their Faith.

I FEAR, Sir, although we are the children of Israel and Jacob, that nevertheless has been fulfilled what God spake by the prophet Isaiah, (lxv. 15,) "The Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name." I fear that we are of those servants, to whom that name is given; as Moses says, (Deuteronomy xxviii. 43,) "The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low;" as now for more than a thousand years has been fulfilled.

The prophet Habakkuk again says, (ii. 14,) "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Again, Solomon says, (1 Kings viii. 41—43,) "Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house; hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name." Therefore, Sir, why do we boast of our peculiar privilege, and why do we contemn the Gentiles, whom Solomon, the prophet and king, has made to participate in the fear of God, in his holy temple? Moses also says of them, (Numbers xiv. 21,) "All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Again, (Psalm xxii. 27,) "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." Isaiah, (lx. 1, 3, 4,) "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see : all they gather themselves together, they come to thee : thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side." Now, dear Sir, who else are these children who shall come from afar into the house of God, if not the Gentiles who served the idols ? They as well as their kings and princes were strangers to God ; and yet God said, that they shall walk into the light of the holy house ; and we shall be in darkness away from it ; as we now have been for more than a thousand years. Also says the prophet Isaiah, (lxx. 1,) " I am sought of them that asked not for me ; I am found of them that sought me not : I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." We see this in fact fulfilled since more than a thousand years. Christ, promised to us according to the law, has come : and the Gentiles, who did not know the law, have come to him, and he gave them a new law, pure and holy.

Again, Jeremiah says, (iii. 17,) " All the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem : neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart." So Zephaniah, (ii. 11,) " Men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen." Zechariah, (ii. 10,) " Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion : for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people." Again, (viii. 20, 21,) " Thus saith the Lord of Hosts ; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities ; and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts : I will go also." All this, Sir, has now been fulfilled, and is daily fulfilling before our eyes ; as you see clearly the various nations and languages reading the books of the Law, and the Prophets, and Psalms ; having set aside all their idols, and none of them ac-

cepted the faith in Moses or Aaron, or the other prophets, without Christ. Neither remains any thing of their belief in idols, since they began to believe in the Righteous One, of whom Habakkuk says, (iii. 13,) "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for the salvation of thine anointed."

CHAPTER XVII.

Of the Justification of the Gentiles, and the Slaying of the Jews.

I FEAR, Sir, that God, the victorious conqueror, has brought the heathen into life by faith, and has slain us in our unbelief, as Isaiah says, (lxv. 12—15,) "Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: Behold my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name."

We see those to be blessed by God upon earth, who received the other name, whilst we have been dispersed into captivity, as into the four corners of the earth, for more than a thousand years; and open signs of God's wrath appeared unto us, not for chastisement, but for destruction. This is the slaughter, with which God has threatened us, that he will slay Jerusalem, and that he will give life unto those Gentiles, which he calls his servants, and who shall accept a name which God promised, but not ere our first name be exterminated, according to the order of God, as the Prophet

Amos fully expresses it, (viii. 11—14,) “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and the young men faint for thirst. They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy God, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.” Yet whatever happen to us, we are still of God.

CHAPTER XVIII.

How the Gentiles, quickened by Faith, have filled the World with the Observance of new Laws.

I FEAR, Sir, that now a thousand years have elapsed, since Jesus was killed at Jerusalem, and the Gentiles were brought through him unto life. For they had nothing good, before they believed in Christ the Lord and in the apostles, and were, perhaps, those fishes of whom the prophet Habakkuk speaks, (i. 14,) and wild beasts, who had no guide. But now, these Gentiles, purified by faith, have their fastings and other observances of the new law, and all that belongs to purification, as contained in the law of the Jews. Thou seest that in every language, and in all places, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the nations trust in the name of the Lord, yet do they not believe in him through Moses, or any other prophet; but God has called them by the disciples of the Righteous One, that went out with God, for their salvation—as the blessed and glorious God had foretold it by Abraham—and those his disciples were our sons, the children of Israel, who under another name were called apostles. I fear much, that they are those of whom God speaks by David, (Ps. xix. 4,) “Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the

end of the world." And these words of the prophet clearly demonstrate that he speaks of them and not of us, especially when he says in the same Psalm, (verse 3,) "There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard," which cannot mean our Hebrew language—for the Heathen were not obedient to the precepts of Moses and Aaron—yea, rather our forefathers killed their prophets, and drove them to flight. But to-day the Heathen know the law of the prophets, possess the knowledge of God, and keep the new law, as the apostles have been teaching them.—But we are still of God!

CHAPTER XIX.

Of the Election of the Apostles instead of the Prophets.

I FEAR, Sir, that the prophecy has been fulfilled which Zechariah says, (x. 3,) "For the Lord of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah;" for since we have smitten the Shepherd of his servants and holy messengers, we find ourselves dispersed all over the world; whilst those messengers, our own children, are risen to preach instead of the prophets. It is manifest also that God after them did no more send unto us any prophet, nor revealed any thing by vision. And I fear that they are the apostles of whom the prophet Joel speaks, (chap. ii. 28,) "Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." My dear Sir, the old men here mentioned are the prophets, who dreamt of the faith of the Gentiles; and the children are the apostles, who reached the faith in reality and preached it. Of them speaks the prophet David, (Ps. xxxiv. 11,) "Come, ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord." But God does not call us, in the general mode of speaking, "sons" in the plural—He names us "Israel the firstborn." Thus says the prophet Isaiah, where Israel is called the vineyard in chapter v. 5: "I will tell you what I will

do to my vineyard : I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up ; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down." But the same Isaiah says of the sons of God, called the apostles, chapter xxix. 22—24 : "Thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine."

If, now, these sons were with us, sanctified according to our law, we should have no need to be ashamed, neither would our faces look pale ; but we should have all honour and glory, and there would be no shame for Jacob. But the sons named, which God ordered with his hand, have been sanctified apostles without us, and not according to our law. Wherefore God gives us to understand, that our law is not their law. So says Jeremiah, (xxx. 29, 30,) "In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity." So the infidelity of the Jews has done no harm to the faith of the apostles, nor will do ; since none of the apostles ever, after they felt the bitterness of our infidelity, returned to our faith.

And it is true that these are the sons, of whom we say that they have always remained steadfast. Nor has God departed from them since the time that they were redeemed by the Righteous King ; but God always remained with them, as Jesus, the son of Sirach, wisely says—"God honours the father in his sons." Of the same honour speaks Malachi, (iv. 5, 6,) "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord : and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to their children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

If, Sir, God has turned the hearts of those children and apostles to our fathers, and, as it ought to be understood, by faith—then must they have gone with our fathers, and with us, into the captivity which takes no end. But God ordained also, that the “hearts of the fathers should be turned unto their children.” What, Sir, then, do we still expect? If we would say that the children here spoken of are others than the apostles of whom the foretold prophecy is to be understood, then must they have been in captivity with us, and not have followed the way of the Just One, in whom the apostles firmly believed, and whom they proclaimed; so that they obtained the glory of God, and the fathers were turned to them. But since our children have come to the right faith of God before us, if our hearts turn to them their hearts will turn to us, and we shall become one people, and have one mind in God, the glorious and the victorious one. Our conversion is to be understood from our unbelief to the teaching and faith of the Righteous One, who is the Lord of salvation to them who believe in him. For he it is whose priesthood shall last for ever, after the order of Melchizedec. He who was a king and priest of the most high God before Aaron was; and see what a difference there is between the sacrifice of Aaron and that of the Just One.—“The Lord has spoken to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, thou art a priest for ever;” not for a certain time, as Aaron, who died one hundred and twenty years old. Again, the sacrifice of Aaron was flesh, and the sacrifice of the Just One was “bread and wine,” after the order of Melchizedec; by which words the Lord clearly shows, by the prophets, that the sacrifice of Aaron ceases when the eternal sacrifice of the Just One—bread and wine—begins.

Still, I love to dwell a little on the Son of God, whom I mentioned above. God speaks by the mouth of the prophet Hosea, (i. 10,) “And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.” Which place,

undoubtedly, is the Church, since the prophet says not "it is," but it "shall be;" and the synagogue, which was the first place of holiness, was already; and God calls the synagogue, by Moses and Aaron and other prophets, his "first born;" and the sons born after it he calls the "sons of the living God." Of him God speaks by Moses, (Deut. xxxii. 43,) "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people."

Now we know that we have killed the prophets, and God took vengeance upon us for seventy years only. But since we have slain the Righteous One and his messengers, God has taken vengeance on us for more than one thousand years. But David says, (Psalm cxxvii. 4,) "As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth." There the prophet compares the faithful to the arrows sent out from the hand of the Almighty; for God has sent his arrows, the twelve apostles, all over the world, into the four ends of the earth, with the teaching of the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets; whilst he has never sent Moses and Aaron out of their holy house to teach. These believing sons of God also arose before God; through them was the first law renewed, after the order of Melchizedec, who instituted the sacrifice in bread and wine; but Israel and our name God has killed, and has changed, through them, our old carnal law, and our name, into a new spiritual law. If, however, God had said, through David, to the Messiah or Christ, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the law of Moses and Aaron," our law would therein have been understood. But God said, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec," who was a friend of God, and foretasted the sacrifice in wine and bread, and not in flesh. But be it as it may, we are still of God!

CHAPTER XX.

The Rejection of Jewish Sacrifices, and the Election of the Sacrament of the Christians.

I FEAR, Sir, that the Lord rejected us and our sacrifices, and received that of the Gentiles ; as he speaks by the prophet Malachi, (i. 10, 11,) “ I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles ; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering.” Therefore is the sacrifice of the Gentiles purer than ours ; and on that account also God teaches the Christians that they should avoid us, lest they be polluted by us ; as we avoided the heathen, as he commanded, when our sacrifice was clean before God, and accepted by the law. You have read also, Sir, what God says by David, (Psalm l. 13,) “ Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats ?” as if he would manifestly condemn the sacrifice of animals. Why then do we detest among the Gentiles the sacrifice of blood and wine, which God instituted, rejecting that of animals ? God testifies by the prophet Hosea, (ix. 4,) “ They shall not offer wine offerings to the Lord, neither shall they be pleasing unto him : their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of the mourners ; all that eat thereof shall be polluted : for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the Lord.” Wherefore our sacrifice in bread was not agreeable to God. So again, Hosea, (vi. 6,) “ For I desired mercy, not sacrifice ; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.” We know also that God ordered to lay before the ark of the covenant bread and not flesh. In Exodus, (xxix. 1, 2,) we find, “ Take one young bullock and two rams without blemish, and unleavened bread, and cakes tempered with oil,” by which bread the sacrifice of the Gentiles is precluded. In another place the Lord speaks to the children of Israel,

(Lev. xxiii. 17,) "Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the Lord," which offering we find mentioned in 1 Samuel, (xxi. 4,) when Ahimelech the priest answered David and said, "There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread." Such and many other passages on the offering of bread, which you are acquainted with, might be added here. So speaks Solomon, (Prov. ix. 1—5,) "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." And who else are the simple, called in by the maidens of wisdom, but the heathen nations, who were ignorant of God, and were called in by the servants of the Lord, the apostles? So the Lord says, "My bread and my wine;" by which he gives to understand that such sacrifices are acceptable to him; and that he has not called our fathers to such a sublime and spiritual offering. For they were the wise in the law; occupied with the sacrifices of the law, which was not left to us, but we were deprived of it now for more than a thousand years; on account of the sin which we committed against the Just One!

CHAPTER XXI.

Why God abolished Fastings, Sabbaths, and Sacrifices of the Jews, and chose those of the Christians.

I AM greatly in fear, Sir, on account of the words spoken by the glorious and mighty God, through the prophet Malachi, in chapter i. 2, where he thus touches the sacrifice of the Gentiles, "For from the

rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in *every place* incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering, for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts." Wherefore I conclude, that our sacrifice was only accepted by God in *one place*, that is, in the holy temple; of which place, however, and sacrifice, God deprived us, as well as of the land of promise, and dispersed us over all the world, now for a thousand years. Here we see fulfilled the threatening prophecy of Isaiah i. 10: "The vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come." And so also came upon us, what God said by Malachi, (i. 10,) "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand." Again, what is said in the first chapter of Isaiah, (11—14,) "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting."

The Lord's abomination for our sacrifice pre-signifies nothing else but a change of our carnal and gross sacrifice, into the spiritual and subtile one of the Righteous Lord; who instituted the offering of bread, instead of meat, and the offering of pure wine, instead of that of blood. Such spiritual offering is acceptable unto God, and not the sacrifice of slain animals, which are compared by the prophet to a "stinking carcase." But be it as it may, we are still of God; and shall return to him, after all that may occur to us. Why, however, do we not believe that which God has so clearly spoken through the prophets, and indicated concerning our sacrifices! Further, God speaks by the prophet Jeremiah, (vii. 21—24,) "Thus saith the

Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward."

CHAPTER XXII.

Proofs of the Rejection of the Synagogue, and of the Election of the Church, by the word of God to Rebecca.

I FEAR, Sir, that which we find written in the book of Genesis must be understood of the Synagogue and of the Church. In chapter xxvi. 23, God speaks to Rebecca, the wife of Isaac, "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the older shall serve the younger." Now, Sir, Rebecca was the mother of Jews and Gentiles. The greater nation, and first-born, was the Synagogue, gifted by God with the greatest wisdom and honour. The second-born and lesser nations were the Heathen, persevering in infidelity and ignorance. But, Sir, God has slain Israel, as Isaiah describes it; and the whole Synagogue, which once was the greater nation, was overthrown, and serves the Gentiles, which once were the smaller nations; that the word should be fulfilled, which God spoke to Rebecca, "Two manner of people," &c. David also speaks of the Church, (Psalm xlv. 9,) "Upon thy right hand did stand the Queen in gold of

Ophir." Again, (verse 31,) "The virgins her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee." The Church of the Gentiles is the same Queen, and the different and various languages of those who served her, are "the virgins her companions." For all tongues in the Church agree in the true exposition of the Law, of the Psalms, and the Prophets, whilst the Synagogue has, indeed, but the companion, the Hebrew language.

CHAPTER XXIII.

On the Proofs of the Prophet Malachi.

I FEAR, Sir, the words of the prophet Malachi in chapter i. 10, 11, which we quoted above, "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering." "A pure offering" of wine, and flour, which are pure by nature, and want no cleaning nor washing. The Synagogue, however, wanted the flesh of their sacrifices to be washed; to purge the bowels of the animals which were offered, and to keep the places pure from blood and fat, else it would have been a horror to handle them. Whilst in the sacrifice of bread and wine, which is eaten as it is, there appears nothing impure. So speaks Solomon in the book of Proverbs, xv. 17, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

The dinner of herbs signifies a pure gentleness, and a sincere, silent remission of offences; whilst the stalled ox and hatred therewith signifies "an eye for an eye," and the secret killing of an enemy. The sacrifice of the Jews is a fat calf of enmity, and the sacrifice of the Gentile congregations is a piece of bread in love; of

which Solomon says, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." God also compares, by Solomon, his congregation to a hind, when he says, (Prov. v. 19,) "Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love." This cannot be applied to our Jewish Synagogue, which has not had one hind, but several hinds: which were Moses, Aaron, David, and all the other prophets. But the noble hind, by which the Church of the Gentiles became so agreeable to God, is Christ, the only Lord, to whom nothing can be compared in nobility and grace. Isaiah again speaks, (xliii.,) "I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel." Thus, in fact, we have been disobedient, have neither heard nor seen; wherefore our captivity has overcome us, lasting now more than a thousand years. I fear also our law, which denounces wrath and no mercy, saying, "an eye for an eye," and which was to be immediately executed. But in the evangelical law of the hind is written, in the Gospel of St. Matthew, (v. 39,) "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." David says, (Ps. xxxi. 19,) "Oh, how great is thy goodness, which thou hast hidden to *them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men." It is evident that the people of our Synagogue have greatly *feared* the hard punishment under the law, an eye for an eye; whilst the people of the Christian Church, *trusting* in the mercy of God, when they are smitten in the face, do not smite in return; wherefore God has prepared for them the great goodness which he had hidden to the Jews. Yet we are of God.

* The English version of the Bible has "which thou hast *laid up* for them; the Hebrew text has פְּנֵי־פָנָי, which permits both interpretations; the Septuagint gives, *ἣς ἔκρυψας τοῖς φοβούμενοις σε;* and the Vulgate, "*quam abscondisti timen-
tibus te.*"

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Song of the Christians is acceptable unto God.

I FEAR, Sir, the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah, when he says, (xxix. 11, 12,) "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee : and he saith, I cannot ; because it is sealed : and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee : and he saith, I am not learned ;" and of the sons already mentioned, God futher speaks in the chapter, in the twenty-fourth verse : "They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine." The unlearned of our law are the Gentiles, who now are the Christians, and sing the Psalter, and teach our Law and the Prophets in their churches ; of whom David also speaks, (Ps. cxviii. 1,) "O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things." What else is the new song but the New, and the old song but the Old Testament ? Again, David says, (Ps. xcvi. 1—3,) "O sing unto the Lord a new song : sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name ; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people ;" again, (Ps. cii. 15,) "So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and the kings of the earth ;" which is to be understood of the Christians, and not of us ; we have sung nothing for a thousand years in the temple of God, and therefore David says, (Ps. cxxxvii. 4,) "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land ?" But of the heathen, David says, (Ps. cxlix. 1,) "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints." How then dare we hope and say, that we have and are in possession of our land ? See what the prophet Amos says, (v. 2,) "The virgin of Israel is fallen ; she shall no more rise : she is forsaken upon her land ; there is none to raise her up." But be it as it may, we are still of God.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Jews reprehend unduly the Song of the Christians.

SIR,—God threatens to turn his eyes from us in wrath, but not in bounty; which threatening has been executed upon us since a thousand years. But of the above-named children, who are singing his praises, God speaks by David, (Ps. lxvii. 4,) “O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.” Again, (Ps. lxviii. 4,) “Sing unto God, sing praises unto his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name Jah, and rejoice before him.” Again, (Ps. xcvii. 12,) “Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.” Again, (Ps. c. 4,) “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.” Again, (Ps. xxiii. 7,) “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” Again, (Ps. cxvi. 17,) “I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord;” but not the sacrifice of animals, as we Jews have done. If, now, we would properly consider these and many other prophecies, we should greatly err, if we condemn the Gentiles in their sacrifice of praise, which they offer in their churches by song unto God. For we find in the Law and in the Prophets examples thereof. Thus David speaks, (cl. 3, 4,) “Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.” Another example we have in the Second Book of Samuel, in the sixth chapter, where David praises God “uncovered,” “leaping and dancing before the ark of God, with shouting, and with the sound of trumpets.” His wife, Michal, despises him, and rebukes him for it; wherefore Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child unto the day of her death. We, the Jews, may be compared to her, but the nations are

David's, that sang and rejoiced unto the Lord in humility, as David says: "All that hath breath shall praise the Lord;" but he does not say, all Israel. Thus also the prophet Isaiah says: "The heathen are in the face of the Lord." This means, from the time they were converted, and acknowledged the coming of the Just One. For before his appearance they were heathen, and worshipped idols; and all that is here spoken of them, is to be understood of those nations who have found the Lord in faith, and bring a pure sacrifice unto him every day, as God has predicted by the prophet Malachi. Wherefore, Sir, we do err in the wrath of God. But at all events we are of God.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Apostacy of the Jews from God proved.

I FEAR, Sir, that we apostatized from God and the faith at the first coming of his Just One; for all the sayings and prophecies concerning the Messiah, which we find in our books and in our Law, refer to him; and for this apostacy God has extended the length of our present captivity into eternity. If now we hope and wait for another Saviour, it is of no profit; and the seventy years of captivity in Babylon are, with respect to him, clear evidence thereof. That captivity was but a short one. The prophet Daniel was made captive with us. He was a friend of God, and by him we were counselled, when he promised us to be delivered within a short time. Nor were all the twelve tribes in the one and the same captivity. But our present captivity has reached to more than a thousand years; neither is Daniel with us, nor any other prophet; and the tribes, without exception, are in dispersion and estranged from the holy temple. This must be a clear evidence, that, as some general sin dwells and perseveres in us, so does the wrath of God continue over our nation without hope; and although we wait in expectation, this our waiting is of no avail. If some people would

say that this our captivity is not a general one, and that, in some parts of the world, we have a king and princes, we would accuse them of a lie, and convince them of it. For, if we Jews had a king and princes in any part of the world, they must be of the tribe of Judah, which cannot be the case. See what the prophet Jeremiah says, (xvii. 1,) "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond." We hope to blot it out, but it never will come to pass. The prophet Isaiah especially says, that God will take away from Jerusalem and Judah "the stay and the staff, the judge and the prophet." So speaks the prophet Hosea, (iii. 4,) "The children of Israel shall be without a prince and without a law." We know also, Sir, that there were at the beginning of the world some great and holy men walking with the Lord; especially were they long-lived, as Methuselah, Enoch, and others; yet the life of none of them did God prolong beyond one thousand years. We, however, report amongst us that the Messiah promised unto us was born in Babylon, at the time of our seventy years' captivity.* One thousand and five hundred years have now elapsed since his pretended appearance, which is nothing but a fable. We can by no sound proof defend it, wherever we may teach it in our schools.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Adding, in conclusion, some Sayings, current among the Saracens, concerning Jesus and Mary his mother.

SURELY, Sir, the Christians do not reproach us with the sayings of the Saracens, especially those which are reported to be found in the Koran, and the commentaries thereon. They know that we receive those sayings no more than they themselves do; yet, to our own annoyance, and to the strengthening in faith of

* Col-bô, p. 136, &c.

the simple-minded amongst them, they make use of those Mohammedan sayings, and report that all the Saracens acknowledge Jesus to have been indeed the Messiah, whose coming had been predicted by the Jewish prophets; and they even profess him to have been of nobler birth than their own prophet Mahomet. For, say they, the forefathers of Mahomet were idolaters, and he himself descended from Hagar, the servant of Abraham. But the fore-named Messiah was the son of Isaac, descending from the just and the saints, from the prophets in a direct line to his mother, the blessed Virgin Mary. Of Mary, his mother, it is written in the Koran: "The angel Gabriel has thus spoken to Mary; Oh Mary, God has elected thee and endowed thee with grace; and has chosen thee out from among, and raised thee above, all the women of the world." All the Saracens acknowledge that Christ, or the Anointed, has the power from God to do miracles; to heal every sickness, and to restore from every infirmity; to cast out demons, to revive the dead; and that he knew all the secrets of the heart. They believe that Jesus has done all the miracles stated in the Gospels. The Koran further testifies, in the same chapter of Adamar, that the Anointed, or Christ, knew and knows all things, even the secrets of the heart. This is the word of Mahomet, which he wrote in Arabic, *ישׁוּעַ*, that is, Jesus, who knew every book and every wisdom, and the whole law of Moses, and was every where. They say also of Christ, or the Messiah, that when he was wandering in this world, he despised riches, and disregarded all carnal desires. There are also to be found in the law of the Saracens many articles of faith, which agree with the Gospel of the Christians; and although all their sayings are not to be approved of, since they are greatly in error, yet may they be compared, here and there, with those which the prophets have delivered to us, concerning the Messiah and his first advent.

The Saracens say also that the word, *ישׁוּעַ*, which is Jesus, is a proper name belonging only to God; so that no other man is to be called by it except Christ.

So we find it written in the Koran : “ God has spoken to Jesus, I am thy perfection, I shall raise thee up, glorify and *purify thee from the infidels.*” Wherefore, remember, dear Sir, that the Jewish people in fact, since their thousand years’ captivity, have comparatively been greatly diminished in number as a nation, whilst the Saracens multiply and increase every day. The faith of the Christians has filled the whole world ; but we, the first-born, are dispersed everywhere, are the least everywhere. And verily, even as Reuben, to whom his father said, “ Thou shalt not excel,” (or increase,) did not increase ; so do we neither excel, nor increase ; but few as we are, we live at variance with the other nations, and profit nothing. The evidence of the Christians and of the Koran, which is the law of the Saracens, stands against us ; although, according to my judgment, the Koran is of no value, and stands evidently against our scriptures, since its first teachers and expositors have erred. But what shall we say of the Gospel of Christ ? Supposing that Christ, or the Messiah, has already come ; then the Gospel contains nothing against our law and the prophets. No, and it professes to be a revelation and spiritual perfection of all the promises and prophecies.

But be it as it may, Sir, I have nevertheless taken refuge to you, in order to investigate the first doubts which have arisen in my mind concerning the testimonies and prophecies of our prophets.

THIS interesting production shows how learned Jews at different periods of the present captivity have struggled with the inward conviction of the truth of Christianity, drawn solely from the predictions of Scripture, and the sad condition of the Jewish people in their protracted exile.

Rabbi Samuel had carefully read the Word of God,

and was struck by those many and clear predictions which speak of the Messiah and his work at his first coming, as also the great sin and punishment of Israel in not receiving him, whilst so many Gentile nations who did receive him have been greatly blessed.

Unfortunately he lived at the time of the Middle Ages, when the Christian Church was enveloped in darkness through manifold human traditions, and hence he had not the advantage of that better and sounder teaching now happily adopted in most of the Protestant Churches, which allows to the predictions of the second coming of Christ, and the establishment of his kingdom of glory, as literal an interpretation as is done with regard to the predictions of his first coming in a state of humility. Had he enjoyed the advantage of having this placed before his mind more distinctly, he would no doubt have been much sooner led to see the full truth and value of the Gospel; for while on the one hand he was struck by the literal fulfilment of the prophecies concerning the time of Messiah's first coming, and his work of mercy for the redemption of his people by his suffering and death, he would also on the other hand been led to see that all this was only a work of preparation for a more glorious future, and that a time is yet to come when not only this same Messiah will return in glory to establish his kingdom, but when also his repenting and restored Israel shall occupy a position under his sceptre in the land of Israel, which will be in complete harmony with the numerous predictions respecting their restoration to the land of their fathers, and the exalted station they are yet to fill as a holy people and a kingdom of priests.

Rabbi Samuel, however, found no teachers in the Christian Church at that time who would allow Israel their just hopes of a national restoration to the land of their fathers; and hence he was led to follow the general views of the time, that the predictions respecting Israel, and the glories of Zion and Jerusalem in the latter days, were to be received only in a figurative sense as describing the condition of the Christian

Church. This will account for many of his observations in opening his inquiring mind to his friend, the learned Rabbi Isaac; but bearing this in mind, and reminding the reader that with such interpretation we have no sympathy, we recommend the Epistle of Rabbi Samuel, hoping that under God's blessing the example of his earnestness in studying God's Word with sincerity, and of his real desire to find the truth, may have many imitators, who may thus have conviction brought home to their hearts for the salvation of their souls.