it presupposes a knowledge which made commentaries a necessity even, as we have seen, to the Jews themselves. The opening of Order II. 6, for example, would be unintelligible without a knowledge of the law in Levit. xxiii. 42: “ A booth (the interior of which is) about 20 cubits high is disallowed. R. Judah allows it. One which is not ten hands high, one which has not three walls, or which has more sun than shade is disallowed. ‘ An old booth ? ’ (marks of quotation and interrogation must be supplied). The school of Shammai disallows it; but the school of Hillel allows it,” &c. In the Gemara, the decisions of the Mishnah are not only discussed, explained or developed, but all kinds of additional matter are suggested by them. Thus, in the Bab. Gem. to III. 5, the reference in the Mishnah to the Zealots (Σικάριοι) is the occasion for a long romantic account of the wars preceding the destruction of the Second Temple. In IV. 3 the incidental prohibition of the cutting up of a roll of Scripture leads to a most valuable discussion of the arrange­ment of the Canon of the Old Testament, and other details including some account of the character and date of Job. There are numerous haggadic interpolations, some of consider­able interest. Prose mingles with poetry, wit with wisdom, the good with the bad, and as one thing goes on to suggest another, it makes the Talmud a somewhat rambling compilation. It is scarcely a law-book or a work of divinity; it is almost an encyclopaedia in its scope, a store-house reproducing the know­ledge and the thought, both unconscious and speculative, of the first few centuries of the Christian era.

A good idea of its heterogeneity is afforded by the English trans­lations of Talmudic and other commentaries by P. I. Hershon (London, 1880-5). For miscellaneous collections of excerpts, see H. Polano (in the Chandos Classics) ; Chenery, *Legends from the Midrash;* I. Myers, *Gems from the Talmud;* S. Rapoport, *Tales and Maxims from the Midrash;* E. R. Montague, *Tales from the Talmud.* A valuable general introduction to the Rabbinical literature (with numerous excerpts) is given by J. Winter and A. Wünsche, *Gesch. d. Jüd.-Hellen. u. Talm. Litteratur* (Trier, 1894). The literature has not been fully explored for its contribution to the various branches of antiquarian research. On the animal fables, most of them found also in Indian and in classical collections, see J. Jacobs, *Tables of Aesop* (London, 1889); for myth, super­stition and folk-lore, see D. Joel, *Aberglaube* (Breslau, 1881), and Μ. Grünbaum, *Semit. Sagenkunde* (Leiden, 1893), *Ges. Aufsätze* (Berlin, 1901); for mathematics, sec B. Zuckermann (Breslau, 1878); for medicine, J. Bergel (Leipzig, 1885), &c. For these subjects, and for law, zoology, geography, &c. &c., see the full and classified bibliographies in Μ. L. Rodkinson, *Hist, of Talmud* (New York, 1903), vol. ii. ch. viii., and Strack's *Einleitung,* pp. 164-175.

Ordinary estimates of the Talmud are often influenced by the attitude of Christianity to Judaism and Jewish legalism, and by the preponderating interest which has been taken in the religious-legal side of the Rabbinical writings. The canoniza­tion of oral tradition in the Mishnah brought the advantages and the disadvantages of a legal religion, and controversialists have usually seen only one side. The excessive legalism which pervades the Talmud was the scholarship of the age, and the Talmud suffers to a certain extent because accepted opinions and isolated views are commingled. To those who have no patience with the minutiae of legislation, the prolix discussions are as irksome as the arguments appear arbitrar@@1 But the Talmudical discussions were often merely specialist and technical —they were academical and ecclesiastical debates which did not always touch every-day life; sometimes they were for the purpose of reconciling earlier conflicting views, or they even seem to be mere exhibitions of dialectic skill (cf., perhaps, Mk. xii. 18-23). It may be supposed that this predilection for casuistry stimulated that spirit which impelled Jewish scholars of the middle ages to study or translate the learning of the Greek@@2 Once again it was—from a modern point of view—old-fashioned

scholarship; yet one may now recognize that in the development of European science and philosophy it played a necessary part, and one can now realize that again the benefit was for common humanity rather than for the Jews alone. It may strike one as characteristically Jewish that extravagant and truly oriental encomiums were passed upon such legalists and Talmudists as Isaac Alfazi, Rashi or Maimonides; none the less the medieval Jews were able to produce and appreciate excellent literature of the most varied description. In any case, the Talmud must be judged, like other authoritative religious literature, by its place in history and by its survival. From age to age groups of laws were codified and expanded—the Priestly law of the Old Testament, the Mishnah, the complete Talmud, the subsequent codifications of Alfazi, Maimonides, and finally Joseph Caro. Thus, the Talmud occupies an intermediate place between the older sources and its later developments. At each step disintegration was arrested, but not Jewish genius; and the domination of the Law’ in Judaism did not as a matter of fact have the petrifying results which might have been antici­pated. The explanation may be found partly in the intense feeling of solidarity uniting the Deity with his worshippers and his worshippers among themselves. No distinction was drawn between secular and religious duties, between ceremonial, ethical or spiritual requirements. Modern distinctions of moral and ceremonial being unknown, ancient systems must be judged in the light of those modes of thought which could not view religion apart from life. The Talmud discusses and formulates rules upon points which other religions leave to the individual; it inculcates both ceremonial and spiritual ideas, and often sets up most lofty ethical standards. The bonds, rigorous and strange as they often appear to others, were a sacrament en­shrined in the imagination of the lowliest follower of the Talmud. Some of the keenest legalists (e.g. the Babylonian Rab) are famous for their ethical teaching, and for their share in popular exposition; one of the best ethical systems of medieval Judaism (by Baḥya ibn Pekuda) is founded upon the Talmud; the last exponent of Rabbinical legalism, Joseph Caro, was at the same time a mystic and a pietist; and the combination of the poetical with the legal temperament is frequent. The Talmud outlived the reactionary tendencies of the Qaraites *(q.v.)* and of the Kabbalah (*q.v.*), and fortunately, since these movements, impor­tant though they undoubtedly were for the evolution of thought, had not within them the power to be of lasting benefit to the rank and file of the community. Finally, no religion has been without exhibitions of fanaticism and excess on the part of its followers, and if the Old Testament itself was the authority for witch-burning among Christians, it is no longer profitable to ask whether the Talmud was responsible for offences com­mitted by or alleged against those whose lives were regulated by it. On the other hand, Judaism has never been without its heroes, martyrs or saints, and the fact that it still lives is sufficient to prove that the mechanical legalism of the Talmud has not hindered the growth of Jewish religion.

Apart from the general interest of the literature for history and of its contents for various departments of research, the exegetical methods of the Talmud are especially instructive. There were rules of interpretation, and they give expression to one dominant idea: there is an infinite potentiality in the words of the Old Testament, none is fortuitous or meaningless or capable of only a single interpretation, they were said for all time, “ for our sake also ” and “ for our learning ” (cf. Paul, in Romans iv. 24, xv. 4). This was not conducive to *critical* inquiry; questions of the historical background of the biblical passage or of the trustworthiness of the text scarcely found a place. The interpretation itself is markedly subjective; by the side of much that is legitimate exegesis, there is much that appears arbitrary in the extreme. The endeavour was made to interpret, not necessarily according to the letter, but accord­ing to individual conceptions of the spirit and underlying motive. Thus, the same evidence could give rise to widely differing conflicting interpretations, which may not be directly deducible from or justified by the Scripture. Hence the value

@@@1 The whole subject of Jewish legalism should be compared with Islam, where again law and religion are one; as regards the legal aspect, see the extremely suggestive and instructive study, “ The Relations of Law and Religion, the Mosque el-Azhar,” by J. Bryce, *Studies in History and Jurisprudence* (1901), ii. No. xiii.

@@@2 Some, of the most influential of the Greek works in the middle ages had passed through Syriac, Arabic and Hebrew translations before they appeared in their more familiar Latin dress !