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SAMUEL HOLDHEIM: THE JEWISH REFORMER.

ONE of the most remarkable men whom our century has produced among the Jews was Samuel Holdheim (born 1802, died 1860.) His greatness is not the least shown in this, that through his own energy and consistency he worked his way from the lowest and most narrow religious point of view to a position of complete freedom and enlightenment. Brought up by strictly orthodox parents, Holdheim spent his youth at Kemper, in the district of Posen. There he devoted himself exclusively to the study of the Talmud. So unabated was his industry that even while still a lad he became a master of his subject. Nor did he merely gain acquaintance with the varied contents of the Talmudic folios, but he made the spirit of their disputations so much his own, that wherever their thread might be broken he could take up the loose ends and continue the spinning. The knowledge thus acquired, and the sagacity with which he handled it, laid the foundation for those great works which he published¹ in after years, the influence of which has been so considerable upon the development of modern Judaism in Germany. It was only comparatively late that the youth, already deeply versed in Talmudic lore, became acquainted with letters and philosophy at the Universities of Prague and Berlin. But this learning came to him the more readily since his judgment and understanding were already ripened by studies which demand the utmost depth and concentration. He now recognised that the opinion of the Rabbis, according to which all science and learning outside the Talmud are deemed worthless, was based on a fundamental error, and served only to the serious detriment of Judaism. He forthwith determined to prove in his own life that the union of specifically Jewish teaching with the culture of the age would, on the contrary, produce the richest fruits, and tend as much to the furtherance of Judaism itself as to its recognition in the eyes of the world.

¹ Cf. *Geschichte der Jüdischen Reformation*, Part III., Samuel Holdheim, by Dr. I. H. Ritter, Berlin, 1865.

This intention he began to carry out in 1836, when he was appointed Rabbi at Frankfort-on-the-Oder.

Among the Jews in Prussia at that time, things were at a very low ebb as regards both the conduct of Divine service and religious teaching. On the one hand, the king had forbidden the Communities to introduce any ritual innovations, so that even the Berlin Synagogue, where Kley and Zunz had preached, was compulsorily closed. On the other hand, the State denied to the Rabbis the standing of minister and teacher of religion; their only privileges were to decide in the customary manner about forbidden and permitted foods, to solemnize marriages, and to perform other acts of ritual. Holdheim fought with all his might against this state of the law, according to which "the Jewish religion is merely tolerated, and its members have no recognised church officials." (Rescript, March 11th, 1823.) He demanded "that this sad legacy of a bygone day" should lose its force under the influence of friendly and unbiassed consideration; for, besides the guardianship of Ritual laws, the Rabbi had many far more important duties—to teach the ignorant by enlightened exposition of the Divine word, to convince the doubting, to bring back the erring to the path of duty, to strengthen the weak, to reconcile foes, and, in short, to give to all the blessings and consolations of religion. It was, however, equally necessary "to instruct the Jewish communities themselves in their own religion, to show them something higher in the religious life of their ancestors than the mere observance of certain Ritual laws, and to prove to them that in the sayings and rules of the Fathers there was contained everything great and ennobling that cultured minds could demand." He urged that the men of leading in religion should heal the breach between past and present, and that new laws of the State were also required to cure the ills of Judaism. With voice and pen, in sermon and essay, he gives vivid expression to his conviction of the necessity of such reforms. And this conviction became only the more firmly rooted in his mind as he grew acquainted with Hebrew learning, as it was displayed in the writings of Zunz and Geiger. With what eagerness he read the *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge* of the former, and followed up the articles in the *Zeitschrift* of the latter, may readily be imagined. In a speech on the subject "Prayer and teaching united constitute Jewish Divine worship," he painted a vivid picture of the devotion he deemed truly pleasing to God, and founded in the history of Judaism; with Zunz for guide, he showed that the existing decay in the ardour of Divine worship was a product of later

degeneration. For from Bible times, and throughout the subsequent centuries until the two last (which had lost the sense for it), this fuller conception of worship had accompanied and helped to maintain in freshness and fervour the religious life of the Jews. It was now the duty of the Rabbis, as it had once been that of the prophets and teachers of olden days, to send forth the enkindling word from the heights of their clearer conceptions, and to overcome the stagnation of Divine service which was merely a reflex of the stagnation of life. And in this task the communities should come readily to their help. It was then that he had to contend against the orthodox party, who would not hear of a sermon delivered in the vernacular, and who, regardless of the consequences, desired nothing better than that the Synagogue services and their own lives should drag on in the old grooves.

The sermons which Holdheim delivered in Frankfort were published in 1839 in a collected edition, under the title *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*. All the various forms that Judaism has assumed during the course of centuries are here displayed and estimated at their full value and true significance. The major and minor festivals instituted by the Synagogue, the Rabbinical ordinances of Divine service, are all shown to be so many important links in the religious chain of Judaism. They should facilitate our comprehension, quicken our enthusiasm. It is, of course, true that in these sermons Holdheim still takes his stand on the retention of the ceremonial laws; but by his lofty spiritualisation he sufficiently proves that it is not the perishable shell, but the everlasting kernel—the noble truths and doctrines the former contains—with which he is concerned. About this time, the results of his thought and research having impelled him in the spirit of the Talmud itself to institute improvements in the order of Divine service and in the education of the young, he came violently into conflict with the orthodox party. He was thus not sorry to leave Frankfort. In the year 1840 he was offered and accepted the appointment of Chief Rabbi in Mecklenberg-Schwerin. Here he found himself in complete sympathy with the Jewish "*Oberrath*" appointed by the Grand Duke, and he had besides the opportunity of working in a wider sphere more suited to his great abilities. For he had under his care not one community alone, but a whole complex of communities, and it was his task to instil a high morality and a nobler religious culture into the most heterogeneous elements. He had not merely to instruct, according as the chances of life and special occasion demanded, but as shep-

herd of his people he had to anticipate their spiritual and religious wants, and to give them in popular form the results of his own inquiry and research. He himself felt to the full the difficulty of his new task. For in Mecklenberg, as elsewhere, opinion was much divided on the subject of Form and Essence, Divine and Human, Changeable and Unchangeable in Judaism. But the harder the task the more did it please him, and the keener spur did it offer to those great powers, for whose worthy and exhaustive use he so ardently longed. He became the soul of the council-board, and ever knew how to overcome indolence and self-love, limpness and unthinking stagnation. He was incessantly active in instruction and encouragement; now warning against errors, and now setting right those already committed. On all sides he sought to spread the fire which warmed and illumined himself. He introduced a new order of Divine service similar to that of Würtemberg, the aim of which was to set communal and Synagogue life on a firm basis, and to bring dignity, order, and unity into public worship.

It was about this time that Holdheim became acquainted with the Hamburg "Temple," founded in 1818, in which prayer was offered up in the German mother tongue. When, in 1841, the Hamburg Association contemplated building a new Synagogue and issuing a new edition of its prayer-book, the orthodox Rabbis made a violent attack upon this "Temple." Holdheim hotly took up the cudgels in its defence. He recognised in it "a living manifestation of religious ideas, which still lacked verbal expression, the progressive impulses of modern times that needed yet a coherent and logical articulation. It took its stand," he said, "not in Judaism alone, but was rooted in the very Synagogue itself in its most concrete significance; only it made a just distinction between the material and the religious elements in Judaism, and these latter elements it faithfully preserved." He acknowledged that there were some inconsistencies, but these were inevitable, since the "Temple" had arisen not from thorough-going principles, but from the necessities of the moment. And for this reason further progress was not excluded. Bernays, the orthodox Rabbi of Hamburg, forbade the use of the "Temple" Prayer-book. Thereupon Holdheim recommended it in an essay "Concerning the Prayer-book of the new Jewish Association at Hamburg." He showed that it answered all the requirements of Judaism, and that the community had the absolute right to omit prayers relating to the re-establishment of sacrifices. "Prayer," he said, "is the most holy communion with the God of Truth; hence, a wish that does not really animate

the heart of him who utters it before that Being is no prayer." On the authority of the Talmud and of Maimonides he proves the validity of the "Temple" Prayer-book for every Israelite. Still more emphatically in the following year does he refute an anonymous assailant of the Prayer-book, in the pamphlet: "Heresy Proclamations and Freedom of Conscience." (Hamburg, 1842.) The anonymous writer had attacked Holdheim's former defence on the ground of inconsistency, inasmuch as it appealed to the Talmud, and yet decided against the Talmud. Holdheim clearly shows that the Talmud is neither the work of one man nor of one time, but that it includes within itself the varied opinions of most diverse scholars and of widely divided times; hence, if anyone chooses to refute any particular expression of the Talmud by means of the Talmud itself, he is perfectly at liberty to do so, and is in no wise inconsistent. This latter essay of Holdheim's is one of peculiar interest, for it marks the progress he had made since the commencement of his career. He had set out in complete accord with the received rules of life and faith. Later on, he began to distinguish between the teaching of the later Rabbis, and that of Talmudic times. And now he was at issue with his assailants on the Talmud and tradition itself. They had accused him of unbelief in Divine tradition, and he was glad of the opportunity of frankly stating his convictions. He believed firmly, he said, in tradition, since by it alone could the letter of the Scriptures gain spirit and meaning. But it was the rules only that had been handed down by tradition—the rules, according to which we must proceed in order to discover the true meaning of the Scriptures—and not the contents itself—the results of the application of those rules. All depends, therefore, upon right procedure, and in the Talmud itself controversies often arise as to the right or wrong use of the traditional hermeneutic. Error, therefore, could never be wholly eliminated. "All tradition is in the Talmud, but the Talmud is not all tradition." Just as he had formerly distinguished between the teaching of the Rabbis and the Talmud, so he now distinguishes between Talmud and Divine tradition. "To demand for every expression of every Rabbi in the Talmud traditional authority is to confuse things human and Divine." In the same spirit Holdheim defends his colleague, Geiger of Breslau, when the latter was accused by Tiktin of heterodoxy and illegal innovations. "Geiger never denied tradition like the Karaites, as he was accused of doing, but merely instituted an inquiry into its character, for which we ought to be grateful; neither did he introduce any changes into the laws, but

had merely begun a scholarly investigation of them which was ultimately to be submitted to a competent Synod. The spirit which gave life and movement to the old world of the Rabbis inspires and moves us also. It is the same striving to develop the ancestral religion for futurity, and so to preserve it from ruin. Divine tradition is in itself simply the principle of eternal youth, or, in other words, the principle of perpetual growth, self-regenerated from the seeds placed by God himself in the word of Scripture." Thus did Holdheim's views grow clearer and clearer, and his religious experience deeper and deeper, until in 1843 he published his truly epoch-making work, "Autonomy of the Rabbis and the principle of the Jewish marriage laws: a contribution towards the better understanding of some of the Jewish questions of the day."

The immediate occasion of this book arose from the fact that, in Mecklenburg, marriage and inheritance among the Jews were regulated according to Talmudic laws, whence difficulties often ensued. Holdheim insisted that this state of things must be abolished, and that the laws of the State and not the laws of the Talmud must invariably be followed. This was, indeed, already the case in the rest of the German States, with the full consent and sanction of the Jewish communities. But still more important did it now appear to him to contend against the interpretation which the Prussian Government sought to place upon the then contemplated Act of Incorporation. By this Act citizens of the Jewish faith were to be incorporated together in separate communities of their own, and strictly shut off from the rest of their fellow subjects. Holdheim declared that the Jews did not *wish* to have a separate nationality. Just as excommunication had ceased because it no longer possessed any vital power, so also was the Jewish jurisdiction at large coming to its natural end. This surrender became the foundation of civil and spiritual emancipation among the Jews. By means of the submission of his private interests to the common laws of the country, the Oriental had become European, the stranger a native. Several Governments had, however, thought that they must pay some attention to certain apparently religious considerations, as *e.g.*, that of Mecklenburg, in the case of the Jewish laws of inheritance, according to which the first born son perforce inherits a double portion, while the daughters are left entirely to the father's pleasure. But the fact was that, since the civic incorporation of the Jews into the various countries of Europe, obedience to the laws of the State was transformed in their eyes into a religious duty. The new Prussian Incorporation Act, on the contrary, seemed to be a deplorably retrograde step from the

law of 1812, which separated the Jews in matters of religious worship only, while this new law robbed them of their most important duties, such as the defence of their Fatherland, and, indeed, seemed to aim at a renewal of mediæval isolation. Even the ancient Rabbis, Holdheim goes on to say, made a distinction between obedience to the Mosaic law within and without Palestine, inasmuch as they allowed the observances especially bound up with that land to fall into disuse after the exile. But had they then possessed the true conception of a State, what they ought to have said was this: Whatever Jewish rite or law concerns our State ceases with our State's cessation. Our duty to-day is to fill up this gap, and to effect a consistent separation between matters of religion and civil or political affairs.

Three propositions of great range and importance are brought to light in Holdheim's essay: (1.) The autonomy of the Rabbis must cease. (2.) Matters of religion must be separated from civil or political questions. (3.) Marriage according to the teachings of Judaism is a civil act. The learned men among the Jews at that time already recognised the validity of Holdheim's arguments. Geiger says (*cf. Freund Zur Judenfrage*, 1843, p. 170), "It is to such theologians that we Jews shall owe perfect spiritual freedom, together with complete adhesion to the State with the moral power thence derived. The clearness, decision and consistency with which Holdheim handles these subjects has brought them to such a point that the confused mingling together of the judicial and religious spheres will henceforth no longer be possible." "The book creates an epoch," exclaimed M. Hess (*cf. Israelit I.*, 1844), "in the further development of Judaism and in its emancipation from the impure elements that have clung around it: in its return to its high divine import, and in its progress towards its true mission." Still more eagerly than the theologians did the more liberal lay members of the community give in their adhesion to Holdheim's views. They were only a little doubtful as to the policy of promoting interference on the part of the various Governments in the religious affairs of the Jews, and particularly of constantly mingling together the Talmudic with the purely Reform point of view, according to which the Bible itself is not a revelation, but merely a witness of a revelation, a witness, in other words, of the religious consciousness of our ancestors. This objection was specially raised by a prominent leader of the Berlin liberals, A. Bernstein.¹ Holdheim rejoined that he could not

¹ See Freund's Zeitschrift: "Zur Judenfrage in Deutschland," 1844, p. 35.

understand how anyone at one and the same time could regard the Bible as merely the work of a consciousness of the Divine revealing itself in man, and yet still speak of religion; for himself, he openly declared his faith in positive revelation. "True reform," he said, "can rest only on the assumption that God has given definite laws for definite times and circumstances. To try and carry these laws out in changed times and circumstances in some unreal and factitious sense, is to act against God's will." At this time Holdheim still clung to a simple supernaturalism, and in accordance with it he explained, that God did indeed give the laws of the Bible, but he meant them to remain in force only so long as the circumstances lasted under which they had been given. "If the conditions of life are changed," he said, "it is God himself who has wrought the change, it is he who has thus wrought the abolition of his own laws." Holdheim had to fight a harder battle with the orthodox Rabbis. Thus Samson Raphael Hirsch (who died a short while ago at Frankfort-on-the-Main) laid down the principle that, "Every distinction between eternal and temporary, absolute and relative in religious affairs is both false and conducive to falsehood." To him the Rabbinic laws, like the Mosaic laws, were strictly Divine, the civil and criminal ordinances of the Shulchan Aruch just as binding as the Ten Commandments. Moreover, he violently denounced the idea to which Holdheim had given expression, that the Rabbis had sought to bring the letter of the Mosaic law into harmony with the continually changing circumstances of the time, and he declared that the author of the "Autonomy" had made out the Rabbis to be scoundrels, and attributed to them dishonest manœuvres. But Hirsch and those that thought with him forgot in their zeal that Holdheim had represented the Rabbis as acting in all good faith, and with the complete consciousness of full justification for all their acts. What Holdheim was really seeking to show was that in the Mosaic law we must distinguish between two totally different factors. We have, on the one hand, what concerns the relation of the Israelites to God as human beings, as mortal children to their eternal Father. This factor has a purely religious character. All, on the other hand, that concerns the relation of Israel as a chosen people to *its* God and Lord, he calls relatively religious only. This latter peculiar relationship should be regarded as mere symbolism, since it is founded only on the temporary side of Mosaism, the ideal import of which had, nevertheless, already spiritually permeated the Theocracy itself. For from the very beginning the Mosaic idea embraced the whole of mankind, and its particular embodiment was meant only to

preserve and prepare the way for its universal application. The same people who first realized the Theocracy in their own state, must also be the first to break through its limitations. The Jews, above all other men, must recognise ideal Mosaism as the true religion of humanity. This, indeed, is already indicated in the very beginnings of Scripture, where it is said that man is created in the image of God. Thus Holdheim's conceptions grew gradually clearer and clearer, as he was forced to justify the views he had expressed in the "Autonomy." The cardinal error of the Rabbis, their insistence on the equal and eternal binding force of every precept in the Mosaic code, was more and more peremptorily laid aside. More urgent also, grew his demand for a trenchant distinction between the Pentateuchal laws themselves, while the original opposition of things political and things religious underwent a considerable enlargement.

Another bitter assailant of Holdheim's "Autonomy" was Zacharias Frankel, then Chief Rabbi of Dresden, and later Director of the Hebrew Theological College at Breslau.¹ This was the more remarkable, as Frankel considered himself in contrast to the ultra-orthodox Hirsch as a man of reasoned faith. Holdheim replied with "Religious and Political Elements in Judaism." In this literary duel Frankel's weakness and inconsistency stood out in clear contrast against Holdheim's keenness and strength of conviction. Holdheim had a further opportunity of proving the growing liberality of his views, when, in 1844, a member of the Reform Synagogue, at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, omitted to have the rite of circumcision performed upon his son. The German Rabbis wanted to expel either the father or the son from the Communion of Judaism. Holdheim took up the cause of both with all his energy, although at that time he still regarded circumcision as one of the eternally binding precepts of the Mosaic code. By his pamphlet—"Circumcision, especially in its Bearings on Religion and Dogma" (1844)—he brought order and lucidity into the whole question. He showed that neither on Biblical nor on Talmudic grounds was exclusion justifiable, and that the Jewish religious authorities must avoid all compulsion.

In his "Lectures on the Mosaic Religion" (1844), he sought to show that the Frankfort Reform Society had stopped short at pure negation, and himself made an attempt to complete their work through positive development. To this aim, too, he devoted his pamphlet—"Ceremonial Law in the Messianic

¹ See his *Zeitschrift für die religiösen Interessen des Judenthums*, 1844, Parts v.-viii.

Kingdom" (1845). According to its conclusions, the Talmudic view of the unbroken continuance of the theocratic system—albeit Temple, State, and Autonomy have passed away—must fall to the ground. In our purely spiritual conception of the Messianic idea the special sanctity of the priesthood as well as the outward sanctification of people and places, with all the ceremonial laws thereto pertaining, must for the future disappear. And from the level of this higher consciousness it is already incumbent upon the Jews of today to attempt a withdrawal of separative elements, and thus more and more to effect a union in spirit and in love with humanity at large. In a reply to a critique of Herzfeld's, he adds, "Since the continuance of Judaism is no more actively threatened from without, Particularism in our religion is no longer necessary. No need to wait till the idea of brotherly union has taken root outside our ranks. He who first discovers a truth should be the first to lay it upon the altar of humanity, the first to prove its power by the force of living examples. As Jews it is our duty to outstrip other faiths in the realisation of those ideas that are to prevail in the Messianic Kingdom. As ours, we claim the mission to bring that kingdom to pass. Far higher than the Particularism of legal Judaism is the Universalism of the Prophets, which appeals to all mankind. As surely as we recognise its beginnings in the destruction of our former nationality, so surely is it our duty to promote the building up of that future kingdom where all men shall be as brothers."

It was in the Jewish Reform Community which had been formed at Berlin, in 1845, that Holdheim found the positive complement to the Frankfort Reform Union. In 1846, Holdheim, as the most courageous and consistent exponent of their principles, was chosen as their minister.

On the 2nd of April he consecrated their synagogue. In vivid colours he pointed out to the assembled congregation the high importance of their own work. "New departures in history," he exclaimed, "have often very small beginnings, but if the seed is good, and the power of growth strong, they may gain a force and significance undreamt of by their first founders. The principles for the sake of which this Sanctuary is built contain within them sure seeds of fertility. Preserving all that may still live in our general spiritual development, it is not sought merely to lop off the dead twigs, but to develop living branches, which, nourished by the sap of the tree, may bring forth good fruit. Our essential faith is eternal, for our close and child-like relation to God, by this

our faith revealed to us, and the command of moral holiness are unchangeable and everlasting. But the more we free ourselves from what is merely human in this faith, the changing outward forms, the closer must we cling to what is Eternal and Divine. He who recognises with Hosea that God does not demand sacrifice, must with Hosea remember that God *does* demand love. It is only the attainment of the higher level of inner religious life which justifies an abandonment of outer religious forms, that on a lower level are both a duty and a necessity." So runs the message of the prophetic Judaism that supersedes the Judaism of legality.

Holdheim was the very man who could best teach the young community what it had already accomplished and what it had still to do. For he was able to trace back the whole movement to the very point from which he himself had once set out. And inasmuch as it was no new religion, but simply a new embodiment of the old faith that had been devised; since only the forms were borrowed from the present, but the substance was rooted in the past, it was a piece of rare good fortune that a leader was found in the very man who, of all others, had made the traditional wealth of Jewish learning his own, and in his own person enacted and experienced the whole series of transformation scenes from past inconsistent confusion to present purity and strength.

One of the first tasks Holdheim undertook in the service of the Reform Community was a systematic collection of the scientific results and conclusions he had hitherto gained in the course of his life. These he embodied in a work entitled "The Religious Principles of Reformed Judaism" (1847). The whole falls naturally into seven sections, of which the first sets forth the historic growth of the necessity for Reform. The sacred Scriptures were at all times the source of Judaism, but their exposition had always remained open and free. Yet as a matter of fact the religious life of post-Biblical Judaism had followed one definite line of exposition—namely, the Talmudic. But now since a belief in the validity of this interpretation—with its assumption of a future restoration of the Mosaic sacrificial rites and ritual, and of the agrarian, Levitical and other external laws—has ceased, the necessity for a new interpretation and a new conception of the religious life that is thereby entailed has inevitably arisen. The ideas of truth and morality laid down in the Bible have become of supreme importance for this new interpretation. It entirely repudiates the whole principle of heteronomy, so that for it the conviction of the truths of Judaism, the religious attitude of mind dependent

upon this conviction, and the ethical teaching that these imply, have alone absolute value. The outward forms, on the other hand, which serve to picture forth those truths are merely transitory, and have only a relative worth, inasmuch as they may awaken religious feelings, incite to praiseworthy action, and strengthen spiritual communion through public ceremonial. The election of Israel is explained to mean simply that this people in the midst of heathendom felt itself inspired and led by a Divine providence. But God's all-embracing love knows no distinctions, for he has created all men in his Image, and is the Father of all. From the idea of the theocracy the higher conception is retained that to take part in the life of the State is incumbent on the Jew, and that religion must realise itself in, and by its influence transform, the daily duties of life. The Talmud is honoured as the treasury of important truths, and the literature connected with it as a witness to the development of Judaism. It is the function of Divine service to impress upon our minds the history of our religion, and to root so deeply in our souls its fundamental and joy-giving truths that they become an imperishable possession.

Holdheim's opinions, after a gradual but continuous process of growth, had now fully ripened. Tradition he no longer regarded as originally revealed at Sinai, and now permanently recorded in existing documents, or deducible at any rate from divinely given rules of interpretation. For tradition is but a mirror in which the peculiar conceptions of the Scriptures held by the post-Biblical ages have been reflected: it is a witness and proof of history's power. The intrinsic worth of the Bible itself is only gradually revealed to us by the teaching of history, and the slowly perfected separation of all that is theocratic, political and symbolic from universal and eternal religious truths.

In his paper, "Mixed Marriages between Jews and Christians," he gained a great moral victory over the fanaticism and narrow Talmudism of his opponents. So long ago as the first assembly of Rabbis at Brunswick he had endeavoured to get the principle of marriage with Monotheists accepted. He now took up the question again, not merely on account of one particular instance in which the Königsberg Consistory and the Berlin Rabbis had refused to recognise a mixed marriage, but because the problem was intimately bound up with the whole subject of Jewish Reform. The reform movement, he held, was meant to effect not merely communal, but also general social progress, while before all else it maintained the principle of freedom of conscience, which is so

essential an element in true Judaism. It was only Jewish and Christian zealots, to both of whom the reform of Judaism is an abomination, who could consistently protest against all mixed marriages, as the destruction of Jewish and Christian exclusiveness. But the adherents of reform—having experienced in themselves the power of purified Judaism—trust in its strength, and know that reform is as far removed from religious indifference as is fanaticism from true religion. Marriage is a civil act, and the religious element in its celebration consists in combining with this civil ordinance certain religious conceptions. If, then, the Jewish minister is asked to awaken these conceptions, and to implore the blessing of heaven on a married pair, he is only performing his duty in obeying that call. To bring help towards the diffusion and appreciation of Judaism, we must trust solely to its own essential truth.

For the use of his own congregation Holdheim compiled two small school books—(1) “The Religious and Moral Teachings of the Mishnah” (1854); and (2) “*Jüdische Glaubens- und Sittenlehre*” (1857). In various pamphlets he sought to make them realise the grave necessity of an intimate union between knowledge and culture on the one hand, with a keen and fervent religious life on the other. In this combination there lay to his mind the corner-stone of modern Judaism. His essays “On Improved Religious Education” (1858), and “Reflections on the Mutual Relations of Religious and Secular Education” (1860), are important in this respect. In 1857, he also published “A History of the Rise and Development of the Reform Community at Berlin,” in which he expressed his views as to its value, and the direction in which its future efforts should lie. But his chief work in these latter years consisted in his numerous sermons. Three volumes appeared during his lifetime,¹ in 1852, 1853, and 1855. Upon these his activity was gradually more and more concentrated. Through them he sought to let men enjoy the fully-ripened fruits of his inward experiences, and his unqualified love for the Jewish religion and its literature. Inasmuch as he himself had become calmer and cooler as his views had grown purer and more elevated, the sermons necessarily mirrored forth his full serenity of soul. The restless striving, which more or less blurred his earlier sermons, had now changed to the thoughtful, happy restfulness of assured conviction.

Thus Holdheim attained the summit and final goal of his

¹ After his death a small collection was published, with a preface by Geiger (1869), and a larger one, with a preface by myself.

eventful life. He had struggled much both with himself and with others, and had spared neither others nor himself in his battle against prejudice. In the search for wisdom he had learnt from both friend and foe. He had never let himself be forced from his chosen path by the bitter attacks made, not merely on the scientific value of his achievements, but even more on the character of his purposes and motives. Bearing within himself the consciousness that his own aims were pure, he assumed the same with others, and in the battle of opinions he heeded no interest other than that of truth. But his opponents did not know what to make of him, for they were incapable of appreciating the ceaseless travailing and continuous development of his great mind. They could not value aright his energetic activity of thought. Even after his death he has had to suffer from such misconceptions. No opponent has done him more grievous and baseless wrong than Professor Graetz in the eleventh volume of his "History of the Jews." The very qualities that were Holdheim's most marked characteristics, idealism of disposition and ardent love for Judaism, Graetz denies that he possessed. He utterly misconceives the purity of Holdheim's yearning to remove from Judaism the reproach of particularism and narrowness, and at the same time to awaken its followers to a knowledge of the rich, eternal and all-embracing contents which, long buried under the old forms, its new embodiment is to reveal to the world. For Holdheim was convinced—and I share his conviction—that he had struck out the right path to lead soonest and straightest to the recognition of the everlasting truths of Judaism, and to its ultimate and universal triumph.

IMMANUEL H. RITTER.
