

MIDDLETON, a market and manufacturing town of Lancashire, is situated on the Irk, near the Rochdale Canal, and on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, about 5 miles north of Manchester and 4 west of Oldham. It includes the township of Tonge, an isolated portion of the parish of Prestwich. The church of St Leonards is an old structure of mixed architecture, with a low square tower. The oldest portion of the building dates from the 12th century, but the main portion from 1412, and the south aisle from 1524. It underwent extensive restoration in 1869. The Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, a building in the Tudor style, was founded in 1572. There are public baths and a free library. The prosperity of the town dates from the introduction of manufactures at the close of last century. The staple trade is the spinning and weaving of cotton, and the other industries include silk weaving, calico printing, bleaching, dyeing, ironfounding, and the manufacture of soap and chemicals. There are several collieries in the neighbourhood. The town was at an early period in possession of the Bartons, from whom it passed by marriage in the 16th century to Sir Ralph de Assheton. The population of the urban sanitary district of Middleton and Tonge in 1881 was 18,952.

MIDDLETON, CONYERS (1683-1750), the earliest and most eminent example of the spirit of theological rationalism in the English Church of the 18th century, was the son of the rector of Hinderwell near Whitby, and was born at Richmond in Yorkshire, on December 27 (or, according to another account, on August 3), 1683. He graduated at Cambridge, took orders, and in 1706 obtained a fellowship, which he soon resigned upon contracting an advantageous marriage. In 1717 a dispute with Bentley, upon an extortionate demand of the latter on occasion of Middleton's being created D.D., involved him in an acrimonious controversy, which called forth several pamphlets from his pen full of powerful invective, and among them his first considerable literary performance, the *Remarks and Further Remarks on Bentley's Proposals for a New Edition of the Greek Testament* (1721). "You have laid Bentley flat upon his back," wrote Colbatch. "I scorn to read what the rascal has written," wrote Bentley,—who, however, only resorted to this affected disdain after a fruitless attempt to fix the authorship upon Colbatch, but who might justly have commented upon the impropriety of Middleton's endeavour to visit his grievances upon the text of the New Testament. Private resentment and uncurbed personality were throughout his life too frequently the motive and the note of Middleton's controversial publications. In 1723 he was involved in a lawsuit by personalities against Bentley, which had found their way into his otherwise judicious tract on library administration, written on occasion of his appointment to the honourable office of university librarian. In 1726 he gave great offence to the medical profession by a dissertation contending that the healing art among the ancients was only exercised by slaves or freedmen. Between the dates of these publications he visited Italy, and made those observations on the pagan pedigree of Italian superstitions which he subsequently embodied in his *Letter from Rome* (1729). This cogent tract, while establishing the author's main proposition with abundant learning and wit, gave at the same time the first clear indication of the anti-supernaturalistic bias of his intellect, and probably contributed to prepare the storm which broke out against him on his next publication (1731). In his remonstrance with Waterland on occasion of the latter's reply to Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, Middleton takes a line which in his day could hardly fail to expose him to the reproach of infidelity. He gives up the literal truth of the primeval Mosaic narratives; and, in professing to indicate a short

and easy method of confuting Tindal, lays principal stress on the indispensableness of Christianity as a mainstay of social order. This was to resign nearly everything that divines of the Waterland stamp thought worth defending. Middleton was warmly assailed from many quarters, and retreated with some difficulty under cover of a sheaf of apologetic pamphlets, and a more regular attendance at church. A freethinker in the strict sense of the term he certainly was; but how far freedom of thought was carried by him it is not easy to ascertain. His adversaries—some of them men who gravely maintained that Egyptian civilization originated in the age of Solomon—were unable to fix any serious imputation upon him; on the other hand it is clear that the natural attitude of his mind towards supernatural pretensions was one of suspicion, and that his temperament was by no means devout. That he was nevertheless not incapable of a disinterested hero-worship was evinced by his next important publication, the elegant but partial *Life of Cicero* (1741), a work which, if far below the standard of modern exactness, may yet compare in spirit and execution with the best productions of the Italian Renaissance. It is, indeed, as remarked by Forsyth, "rather an historical composition, in which Cicero is the principal figure, than the portrait of the man himself"; and Dr Parr has pointed out Middleton's unacknowledged obligations to the forgotten Bellendenus, which, however, with the ardour of a discoverer, he seems to have considerably overrated. The work was undertaken at the instance of Lord Hervey, in correspondence with whom also originated his disquisition on *The Roman Senate*, published in 1747. The same year and the following produced the most important of all his writings, the *Introductory Discourse and the Free Inquiry* concerning the miraculous powers then commonly deemed to have subsisted in the church after the apostolic age. In combating this belief Middleton indirectly established two propositions of capital importance. He showed that ecclesiastical miracles must be accepted or rejected in the mass; and he distinguished between the authority due to the early fathers' testimony to the beliefs and practices of their times and their very slender credibility as witnesses to matters of fact. Some individual grudge seems to have prompted him to expose, in 1750, Bishop Sherlock's eccentric notions of antediluvian prophecy, which had then been before the world for a quarter of a century. The same year he died of a decline at his seat at Hildesham in Cambridgeshire, leaving a widow, but no children.

Middleton's most ambitious work is obsolete from no fault of his, but his controversial writings retain a permanent place in the history of opinion. In his more restricted sphere he may not inappropriately be compared to Lessing. Like Lessing's, the character of his intellect was capacious and iconoclastic, but redeemed from mere negation by a passion for abstract truth, too apt to slumber until called into activity by some merely personal stimulus. His diction is generally masculine and harmonious. Pope thought him and Hooke the only prose writers of the day who deserved to be cited as authorities on the language. Parr, while exposing his plagiarisms, heaps encomiums on his style. But his best qualities, his impatience of superstition and disdain of mere external authority, are rather moral than literary. As a scholar he is rather elegant than profound; as a controversialist he has more vigour than urbanity, and more wit than humour. He has been unjustly attacked both as author and as man by De Quincey, who strangely accuses his style of colloquialism, and taxes him with eating the church's bread while denying her doctrines. In fact Middleton's private means were ample, his ecclesiastical emoluments trifling, and his candour obstructed his path to much more considerable preferment. The best general view of his intellectual character and influence is to be found in Leslie Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, chap. vi. A handsome edition of his works, containing several posthumous tracts, but not including the *Life of Cicero*, appeared in 1752.

MIDDLETON, THOMAS (c. 1570-1627), held a leading place among the dramatists of the reign of James I. His

popularity would seem to have first come to a height about 1607. This is a fair inference from the fact that in this and the following year a whole swarm of comedies from his pen were licensed and published—*A Trick to Catch the Old One*, *The Family of Love*, *The Phoenix*, *Michaelmas Term*, *Your Five Gallants*, *A Mad World My Masters*. Only the first of these kept the stage after the author's own generation, though in point of wit and constructive skill it is not superior to *The Phoenix* (a serious comedy) or *Your Five Gallants* (a bustling and gaily humorous farcical comedy). The plot of the *Trick* bears a family likeness to that of Massinger's *New Way to Pay Old Debts*; the titles in fact might be interchanged. A ruined scapegrace outwits his creditors and a usurious uncle by coming to town with a courtesan and passing her off as a widow with a fortune, whom he treats with deferential friendship, but hardly dares to love, ruined and hopeless as he is. His uncle lends him money that he may woo in proper state; his creditors also intrigue to have the honour of supplying him with all the needs of fashion; and the lady receives many costly presents from aspirants to her hand and fortune. Though Middleton was apparently not in high popularity till 1607, he had made his debut as a satirist ten years before; and if Malone is right in his conjecture that the *Mayor of Queensborough* is identical with the *Randall Earle of Chester* mentioned by Henslowe in 1602, he had done dramatic work of a much higher kind. Like *The Changeling*, a later production, in which Middleton had the assistance of Rowley, the tragedy of the *Mayor* is named after a character in the insignificant comic underplot. Such a title scares away readers weary of half-intelligible Elizabethan fun and satire; but Simon the comic mayor is a very subordinate figure in the play, and the tragic portions alike in situation, characterization, and language rank among the very noblest productions of the Shakespearean age. There are scenes in the *Changeling* also which Mr Swinburne, with a judgment that will not be disputed, assigns to Middleton, unsurpassed for intensity of passion and appalling surprises in the whole range of Elizabethan literature. The execution of these scenes is far beyond any power that Rowley showed in single-handed work, but well within the scope of the author of the *Mayor of Queensborough* and *Women Beware Women*. This last play, in which every one of the characters important enough to be honoured with a name perishes at the end in a slaughter so rapid as to be somewhat confusing, was apparently one of Middleton's later works, and the simple and measured development of the plot in the first acts seems to show traces of the influence of Massinger. Middleton's verse, when charged with the expression of impassioned love, contains many echoes of the verse of *Romeo and Juliet*, as if his ear had been fascinated by it in his youth. His language generally proclaims him an admiring disciple of Shakespeare's; and in daring and happy concentration of imagery, and a certain imperial confidence in the use of words, he of all the dramatists of that time is the disciple that comes nearest the master. *The Witch*, by which Middleton's name has of late been linked with Shakespeare's in groundless speculation as being part author of *Macbeth*, is by no means one of Middleton's best plays. The plot is both intricate and feeble, as if the play had been written with a view to the half-comic spectacular exhibition of the witches, with their ribald revelry, their cauldrons, hideous spells, and weird incantations. Charles Lamb's comparison of Middleton's witches with Shakespeare's is one of the most exquisite morsels of criticism; but, when he says that Middleton's witches are "in a lesser degree fine creations," he ought perhaps to have added that they are merely embodiments of the vulgar superstition, put on the stage to excite

laughter rather than fear among a half-believing audience, an audience ready to laugh at them in the light and in a crowded meeting, whatever each might do in the dark alone. That Middleton had any share in *Macbeth* is a conjecture resting solely on the fact that the opening words of the song of the witches about the cauldron in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* occur also in the incantations about a cauldron in the last act of Middleton's *Witch*, and that Middleton's song was inserted by Davenant in an "amended" reproduction of *Macbeth*. If either borrowed the words of this song from the other, that is no evidence of further co-operation; besides all that is common to the two was probably as much public property as a nursery rhyme. There is no evidence as to whether *The Witch* appeared before or after *Macbeth*. Middleton co-operated with Dekker in the *Roaring Girl*; with Rowley in *A Fair Quarrel*, *The Spanish Gipsy*, and *The Changeling*; and with Jonson and Fletcher in *The Widow* (one of the few of Middleton's plays reproduced after the Restoration). Towards the close of his life Middleton got into difficulties with the privy council from writing a very clever political play apropos of Prince Charles's unsuccessful wooing of the Spanish infanta in 1623. The chief personages in Spanish politics and their manoeuvres were represented with most ingenious skill in the pieces and movements of *A Game at Chess*. This play was stopped by royal authority, and the prosecution of the author was allowed quietly to drop. The few unimportant facts known in Middleton's private history are collected in Mr Dyce's admirable edition of his plays. He enjoyed the office of city chronologer, and was often employed to write pageants and masques, in one case at least contracting for the whole exhibition, besides furnishing the words. He died in 1627, and was buried at Newington Butts.

MIDDLETOWN, a city and port of entry of the United States, and one of the shire towns of Middlesex county, Connecticut, lies on the right bank of the Connecticut river, about 30 miles from its mouth, directly opposite the well-known Portland quarries, and 24 miles from New Haven by rail. Built on ground rising gently from the river, with its principal streets keeping the direction of the valley, and the cross streets climbing the slope, Middletown is a place of considerable attractiveness, and the views from the higher points are particularly fine. Water Street, with the wharves and shipping, Main Street, with the commercial houses and hotels, and High Street, with its mansions and gardens and trees, are the leading lines of the city. On the high grounds behind stand the handsome buildings of the Wesleyan (Methodist Episcopal) University. The institution, mainly organized by Wilbur Fisk, D.D., was chartered in 1831. To the two buildings with which it started have been added Rich Hall, with the library of about 30,000 volumes, Judd Hall, with scientific collections of great value, the Memorial Chapel, erected in the centenary year of American Methodism, and the Observatory Hall. Since 1872 the courses of the university have been open to both sexes. In 1882 the number of professors was 20, and of students 191, including 14 females. The Berkeley Theological School (Main Street), founded by the Episcopal Church in 1854, had in 1882 7 professors and 41 students, with a library of 17,000 volumes. A hill 1½ miles to the south-east of the city is occupied by the State General Hospital for the Insane, the principal building having a frontage of 768 feet, and the grounds extending to 230 acres; and on another hill to the south-west of the city stands the State industrial school for girls. As vessels drawing 10 feet of water can reach its wharves, Middletown carries on a considerable trade by the river. In 1882 1613 vessels, with a burden of 240,000 tons, entered the port, and 1613 vessels, with a burden of 350,000 tons,

cleared; and the Middletown district owned 83 sailing vessels and 22 steamers. Both the silver and the lead mines which were formerly worked in the vicinity have been abandoned, but cast-iron, britannia, and silver-plated goods, sewing-machines, pumps, webbing, and tape are among the local manufactures. The population of the city increased from 5182 in 1860 to 6850 in 1880. First settled in 1636, Middletown was incorporated as a town in 1654, and as a city in 1784.

MIDDLETOWN, a manufacturing village of the United States, in Wallkill township, Orange county, New York, 55 miles N.N.W. of New York, at the junction of four railroads. It is a clean well-built place, in the midst of a fine dairy-farming and stock-raising district, manufactures saws, files, felt hats, blankets, agricultural implements, printers' materials, &c., and is the seat of the State Homeopathic Insane Asylum. The population was 6049 in 1870 and 8494 in 1880.

MIDHURST, an ancient parliamentary borough and market-town of Sussex, is picturesquely situated on a gentle eminence above the south bank of the West Rother, on three railway lines, 50 miles south-west of London and 12 north from Chichester. The church of St Denis (restored in 1881-83) is chiefly Perpendicular in style, but the lower part of the embattled tower is probably Norman. At the grammar school, founded in 1672, Richard Cobden and Sir Charles Lyell were educated. A new public hall was opened in 1882. The old castle of the De Bohuns stood on a mound above the river, now overgrown with trees. In ancient times a commandery of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem had jurisdiction over the district now forming the liberty of St John. The prosperity of the town depends chiefly on agriculture. A market is held weekly, and a fair three times a year. The population of the parliamentary borough, which has an area of 26,172 acres, was 6753 in 1871, and 7221 in 1881.

Midhurst is not mentioned in Domesday, being included under Easebourne. In the reign of Henry I. it was held by the king as a minor barony. In the time of Edward I. it passed into the possession of the De Bohuns. From the time of Edward II. till 1832 it returned two members to parliament, but since then only one.

MIDIAN was one of the peoples of North Arabia whom the Hebrews recognized as distant kinsmen, representing them as sons of Abraham's wife Keturah. The word Keturah means "incense"; thus the sons of Keturah are the "incense-men," not indeed inhabitants of the far south incense-land, but presumably the tribes whose caravans brought the incense to Palestine and the Mediterranean ports. So the Midianites appear in connexion with the gold and incense trade from Yemen (Isa. lx. 6), and with the trade between Egypt and Syria (Gen. xxxvii. 28, 36). At the time of the exodus the pastures of the Midianites, or of the branch of Midian to which Moses's father-in-law Jethro or Raguel, or Hobab belonged, lay near Mount Horeb (Exod. iii. 1); and Num. x. 29 sq. implies that the tribe was at home in the desert of the wanderings. The Kenites, who, in spite of their connexion with Amalek (1 Sam. xv. 6), had friendly relations with Israel, and ultimately coalesced with the tribe of Judah, are represented in Judg. i. 16, iv. 11 as the kin of Moses's father-in-law. The Kenites, however, can have been but one fraction of Midian which took a separate course from their early relations to Israel.¹ The main body appear in Judg. vi. as a powerful Bedouin confederation, invading Canaan from the eastern desert, and ravaging the land as similar tribes have done in all ages when Palestine lacked a strong

¹ The admixture of Midianite elements in Judah and the other border tribes of Israel is confirmed by a comparison of the names of the Midianite clans in Gen. xxv. 4 with the Hebrew genealogies (1 Chron. ii. 46, iv. 17, v. 24; Gen. xli. 9).

government. With their defeat by Gideon and another defeat by the Edomites in the field of Moab, probably about the same time (Gen. xxxvi. 35), the recorded history of Midian closes.

A place Midian is mentioned 1 Kings xi. 18, and in later times the name lingered in the district east of the Gulf of Akaba, where Eusebius knows a city Madian in the country of the Saracens and Ptolemy places Modiana. Still later Madyan was a station on the pilgrim route from Egypt to Mecca, the second beyond Aila (Elath). Here in the Middle Ages was shown the well from which Moses watered the flocks of Sho'ab (Jethro), and the place is still known as "the caves of Sho'ab." It has considerable ruins, which have been described by Ruppell (*Reisen*, 1829) and Burton (*Land of Midian*, 1879).

MIDNAPUR, a district in the lieutenant-governorship of Bengal, India, between 21° 37' and 22° 57' N. lat., and between 86° 35' 45" and 88° 14' E. long., is bounded on the N. by Bānkurā and Bardwān, on the E. by Hooghly and Howrah, on the S. by the Bay of Bengal, and on the W. by Singbhūm and Mānbhūm, with an area of 5082 square miles. Its general appearance is that of a large open plain, of which the greater part is under cultivation. In the northern portion the soil is poor, and there is little wood. The country along the western boundary, known as the Jungle Mahāls, is undulating and picturesque; it is almost uninhabited. The eastern and south-eastern portions are swampy and richly cultivated. The chief rivers of the district are the Hooghly and its three tributaries, the Rūpnārāyan, the Haldi, and the Rasulpur. The Midnapur high-level canal runs almost due east and west from the town of Midnapur to Ulubariā on the Hooghly 16 miles below Calcutta, and affords a continuous navigable channel 53 miles in length. There is also a tidal canal for navigation, 26 miles in length, extending from the Rūpnārāyan river. The jungles in the west of the district yield lac, *tasar* silk, wax, resin, fire-wood, charcoal, &c., and give shelter to large and small game.

The census of 1872 returned the population of Midnapur at 2,540,963 (1,257,194 males and 1,283,769 females), including only 122 Europeans and 157,030 Mohammedans. The aboriginal tribes belong chiefly to the jungles and hills of Chutiā Nāgpur and Bānkurā; the most numerous of them are Santāls (96,921) and Bhumijis (35,344). Of high-caste Hindus the returns show 136,500; and the number of Kāyasths is given as 101,663. Among the semi-Hinduized aborigines, the most numerous are the Bāgdis, a tribe of cultivators, fishermen, and day-labourers (76,825). Belonging to agricultural castes there are 1,018,686. The four municipalities are Midnapur (31,491), Chandrakona (21,311), Ghatal (15,492), and Tamlik (5849). Rice is the staple crop. Irrigation is effected chiefly from the high-level canal. Rent rates vary from 10½d. an acre for the poorest quality of rice land to 18s. an acre for the best irrigable lands. The district suffers occasionally from drought; floods are common, and very disastrous in their results. The principal exports are rice, silk, and sugar; and the chief imports consist of cotton cloth and twist. Salt, indigo, silk, mats, and brass and copper utensils are manufactured. Apart from the rivers, communication is afforded by 482 miles of road. The total revenue in 1870-71 was £262,578, and the expenditure £53,777. The prevailing diseases are fever, diarrhoea, dysentery, and cholera. The average mean temperature is 80° Fahr., and the average annual rainfall 66 inches.

The early history of Midnapur centres round the ancient town of Tamlik, which in the beginning of the 5th century was an important Buddhist settlement and maritime harbour. The first connexion of the English with the district dates from 1760, when Mir Kāsim ceded to the East India Company Midnapur, Chittagong, and Bardwān (then estimated to furnish one-third of the entire revenue of Bengal) as the price of his elevation to the throne of Bengal on the deposition of Mir Jafar.

MIDNAPUR, chief town and headquarters station of the above district, is situated on the north bank of the Kasāi river, with a population in 1872 of 31,491. The town has a large *bāzār*, with commodious public offices. It is healthy, dry, and well supplied with water. An American mission maintains an excellent training school, together with a printing press, and has founded several village schools for

the district. Its efforts have been particularly successful among the Santāls, and some of the earliest and most valuable works on their language have issued from the Midnapur mission press. A brisk manufacture of brass and copper utensils takes place in the town; it is also the centre of a large indigo and silk industry.

MIDRASH. Like all nouns of a similar form *Midrash* is the equivalent of the Niph'al participle,¹ and as such yields as many modified meanings as the root *Darosh* (דָּרַשׁ), to search, &c., itself has. The practical significations, however, of *Midrash*, taken in historical order, are as follows:—(1) a book of records; (2) a recension of older, especially historical, materials; (3) search in and explanation of the Scriptures, notably the Pentateuch (in which case the plural is invariably *Midrashoth*); (4) theory as distinguished from practice; (5) a college for study and teaching; (6) an *Agadic* (that is, a free) explanation, in contradistinction to an *Halakhic* one; (7) a collection of such free explanations (in which case the plural is *Midrashim* and occasionally also *Midrashoth*). Of these seven significations (1) and (2) are to be found in the Bible,² (3) and (4) are mentioned for the first time in the *Mishnah*,³ (5) is to be met with in the *Midrash*,⁴ while (6) and (7) are to be found in early Rabbinic writings.⁵

The subject of this article will be—(1) the nature of *Midrash* in the sense of *Agadah*, to the exclusion of *Halakhah* (for which see MISHNAH), and (2) the development of this *Midrash Agadah* into books (*Midrashim*).

The thinking reader of the Scriptures cannot have failed to observe that by the side of their ceremonial element, be it negative or affirmative, permissive or jussive, there is also often to be met with (and sometimes so as to be inseparable from it) a spiritual element. This spiritual element rests chiefly on feeling or emotion, and produces pious works only indirectly. Now the explanation or application of this element, either by the Scriptures themselves or by the rabbis, is traditionally called *Midrash Haggadah* (recitation, preaching) or *Midrash Agadah*⁶ (binding the soul to God and all that is godly).

This *Haggadah* or *Agadah* varies considerably both in nature and form. In its nature it sometimes humours, at other times threatens; it alternately promises and admonishes, persuades and rebukes, encourages and deters. In the end it always consoles, and throughout it instructs and elevates. In form it is legendary, historical, exegetic, didactic, theosophic, epigrammatic; but throughout it is ethical.

And varied as was and is the *Midrash Agadah*, so varied have been its fortunes. Whilst at times it stood very high in the estimation both of the teachers and the congregations in Israel,⁷ it sank at other times very low indeed.⁸ Nay, at one and the same time, whilst some

¹ Comp. Nehem. viii. 8, where מִדְרָשׁ evidently stands for מִדְרָשׁ. See also Kimhi on 2 Chron. xiii. 22, and Schiller-Szinessy, *Exposition*, &c., Cambridge, 1882, p. 11. ² 2 Chron. xiii. 22 and xxiv. 27.

³ See *Nedarim*, iv. 3, and *Aboth*, i. 17.

⁴ *Bereshith Rabbah*, c. lxiii. (on Gen. xxv. 22): וְהָלָא לֹא הִלְכָה אֵילָּא לְמִדְרָשׁ. *Midrash* is used in the East to this day for *Beth Hammidrash*. See MS. Oo. 6, 63 (of the University Library, Cambridge), leaf 135a, lower margin (וְהָלָא לֹא הִלְכָה אֵילָּא לְמִדְרָשׁ).

⁵ Rashi (e.g., on Gen. iii. 8) and *Tosaphoth*, *passim*.

⁶ Those who identify this word as merely the Chaldaic form of the Hebrew *Haggadah* (and they have, certainly, some authority on their side) ought to write it *Agadah* (אַגָּדָה), which, however, is not the traditional spelling of it (אַגָּדָה). Singularly enough, the Latin *religio* is similarly derived by some from *religare* and by others from *religere*.

⁷ *Siphre* on Deut. § 49: "If thou wishest to know Him who but spake and the world came into being, learn *Haggadah*; for by so doing thou wilt recognize the Holy One (blessed be He!) and cling to His ways!"

⁸ T. Y., *M'asereth*, iii. 4: "And R. Ze'erah was teasing those rabbis of the *Agadah*."

rabbis exalted it to the skies,⁹ other rabbis treated it with hatred,¹⁰ or, worse still, with contempt.¹¹ There have actually been teachers whose treatment of it differed with the difference of the occasion.¹² The fact is the Jews liked or disliked the *Midrash Agadah* according to their political condition on the one hand and their proximity to Jewish professors of Christianity on the other. In the hour of prosperity the Jews preferred the *Halakhah*; in that of adversity they ran to hear the consoling words of the *Agadah*.¹⁴ When near Judæo-Christians, whose religious strength and argument chiefly rested on *Agadah*,¹⁵ the Jews disliked it; when among themselves, or when dwelling among Gentiles (heathen or Christian), they showed their wonted partiality for it.

But, whatever were the likings or dislikings of the Jews for the *Midrashoth*, it is certain that these traditions were early¹⁶ committed to writing, and formed into special volumes, known as "Books of *Agadah*."¹⁷ Such were first some of the *Targumim* and then the *Midrashim*. Against writing down the traditional explanations of the Mosaic ceremonial there existed a distinct law,¹⁸ which was observed down to near the end of the 6th century. At an earlier period isolated disciples only, in order to refresh their memory, wrote down short Halakhic notes, which, however, they kept in secret.¹⁹ The *Targumim* and *Midrashim*, on the other hand, were composed very early and were numerous, while their extensive contents were circulated in public.

The *Midrash*, from whatever point of view it may be regarded, is of the highest value. It is of the highest value, of course, to the Jew as Jew first, inasmuch as he finds there recorded the noblest ideas, sayings, and teachings of his venerable sages of early times. In the next place it has value to the Christian as Christian, since only by these ideas, teachings, reasonings, and descriptions can the beautiful sayings of the Founder of Christianity, the reasonings of the apostles, and the imagery of the sublime but enigmatic Apocalypse be rightly understood. But its importance appeals also to the general scholar, because of the inexhaustible mines of information of all kinds it contains. The philologist will find here numerous hints on lexicography and grammar, chiefly, of course, of the Semitic languages, but also of other tongues, notably Greek and Latin. The historian will gather here a rich harvest on geography, chorography, topography, chronology, numismatics, &c. The philosopher will find here abundant and

⁹ *Ibid.*: "Then said to him R. Bo bar [son of] Kohano, Why dost thou tease them? Ask, and they will surely answer thee!"

¹⁰ T. Y., *Shabbath*, xvi. 1: "He who holds it forth becomes burned by it; he who listens to it gets no reward."

¹¹ *Ibid.*: "I never in my life looked into *Agadic* books."

¹² *Ibid.*: "Let the hand of him who wrote it be cut off"; and compare with this T. B., *Bobo Bathro*, 123b: "goodly pearl."

¹³ Beginning of *Pesiktho Bahodesh Hasshelishi*: "First when the money was at hand one desired to hear the word of the *Mishnah* and the word of the *Talmud*..."

¹⁴ *Ibid.*: "Now, however, when the money is not to be got, and, moreover, when we are sick in consequence of the (treatment by the) government, one pines for the word of the Bible and for the word of the *Agadah*."

¹⁵ T. Y., *Shabbath*, xvi. 1, and T. B., *Shabbath*, 116a: "The *Evangelia* and other Christian writings."

¹⁶ See *Tosephto Shabbath*, xiv.: "I remember that one brought before Rabban Gamliel the elder [St Paul's teacher] the book of Job (in the Chaldaic paraphrase); and T. Y., *Kilayim*, ix. 4: "At that time I ran (my) eyes through the whole Book of the Psalms (in the form) of the *Haggadah* [*Agadah* of the Psalms]." R. Hiyya *Rubbok* belonged to the middle of the 2d Christian century.

¹⁷ מִדְרָשׁ דְּאַגָּדָה. See T. B., *Berakthoth*, 23a, *Temurah*, 14b, and the *Talmudim*, *passim*.

¹⁸ T. B., *Gittin*, 60b: "In the college of R. Yishmael it was taught, 'These [see Exod. xxxiv. 27] thou oughtest to write down, but thou must not write down *Halakthoth*.'"

¹⁹ T. B., *Shabbath*, 6b: "I found a 'secret roll,' that is, a roll of *Halakthoth* kept secret. Comp. Rashi, *in loco*."