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*CHRISTIANS IN THE TALMUD.*

IN estimating the Jewish writings as a whole, we must never forget that, after the triumph of Christianity, the Jews were not only hated with all the hatred which the Pagan and Gentile world had always entertained towards their race, but were regarded with very special abhorrence as the descendants and the admiring representatives of those who had crucified their Lord. In all the relations between the Chosen People and the outer world, we see the ruinous results of mutual uncharity. The Mosaic law, while it not unnaturally insisted most on the need of mutual kindnesses between the members of the peculiar race, had yet clearly indicated the duty of the Hebrew towards the stranger. But the pride of nationality, the arrogance of Pharisaism, the exclusiveness of privilege, the selfishness of human nature, had perverted all such humanitarian principles, until it was no calumny against the Jewish Rabbis to say that they had deliberately taught the atrocious doctrine of loving their neighbours, but hating their enemies.<sup>1</sup> And this, as it was the solemn charge brought against the spirit of Rabbinic teaching by Jesus, was the universal belief of the ancient world as regards the conduct and principles of the Jews, whom they charged with cherishing a detestation against all people except themselves,<sup>2</sup> and of whom they believed it to be a fundamental law—

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 43, "Do not shew any kindness or pity to the Gentiles." Midr. Tehillin, p. 26. 4 ap. Schöttgen, *Hor. Hbr. ad. loc.* "The Mishna is full of such passages." Gfrörer, *Jahr. d. Heils.* i. 114.

<sup>2</sup> "Adversus omnes alios hostile odium." Tac. H. v. 5.

Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti,  
Quaesitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in all ages, do hatred and uncharity reproduce their kind. Christianity, indeed, ought to have inspired the hearts of its children with nobler and better lessons; and had it done so there can be little doubt that it would have triumphed over Judaism as it triumphed over Paganism, not with the dominance of an unsparing tyranny, but by the supremacy of a loftier ideal and more holy lives. Had we in general been inspired with the same love towards the Jew which breathed so passionately in the heart of Paul, as to make him even willing to be anathema from Christ for the sake of his brethren according to the flesh,<sup>2</sup> can we doubt that myriads of the Israelites would have been unable to withstand the spell which Jesus has in all ages exercised over the hearts of men of every race and creed?

Thou ! if Thou wast He, who at midwatch came  
By the starlight, naming a dubious name !  
And if too heavy with sleep, too rash  
With fear—O Thou, if that martyr-gash  
Fell on Thee, coming to take Thine own,  
And we gave the Cross, when we owed the Throne,  
Thou art the Judge. We are bruised thus ;  
But, the judgment over, join sides with us !  
Thine, too, is the cause, and not more Thine  
Than ours, is the work of these dogs and swine,  
Whose life laughs through and spits at their creed ;  
Who maintain Thee in word, and defy Thee in deed.

So spake "Rabbi Ben Ezra the night he died;" and in the sins and violences of Christians we see the reasons why the Jew, even amid times of his dawn-

<sup>1</sup> *Juv. Sat.* xiv. 103; *Justin*, xxxvi. 2, 15. *παραδόσιμον ποιῆσαι, τὸ μῖσος τε πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους.* *Diod. Exc. Phot.* xxxiv. p. 424; *Hor. Sat.* i. 4, 142, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Rom.* ix. 3.

ing convictions, was driven to furious antagonism against his rejected Messiah.

By the torture prolong'd from age to age,  
 By the infamy, Israel's heritage ;  
 By the Ghetto's plague, by the garb's disgrace,  
 By the badge of shame, by the felon's place ;  
 By the branding tool, the bloody whip,  
 And the summons to Christian fellowship !

But alas ! owing to man's weaknesses and imperfections, Churches, like other communities, suffering in all centuries from the centrifugal force of internal disunion, have sought to supply the needed centripetal force by the manifold repulsions of their common hatreds against all who were beyond their pale. Toleration was one of the earliest lessons taught by Christ, but it has been historically the latest of all lessons learnt by those who call themselves by his sacred name.

I do not for a moment say that the hatred of the Christian towards the Jew was not evoked and exasperated by an equal intensity of hatred felt by the Jew towards the Christian. We see that hatred in the very first century burning with red flame, alike in the pages of secular histories and in the Acts of the Apostles. The anger and madness which fired "the serpent brood of Hanan" against the earliest preachers of the truth<sup>1</sup> that *He* had risen whom they by wicked hands had crucified and slain, became more and more intense as time advanced. Every circumstance which failed to convince the Jews of the Divine origin of the new religion only inspired a more virulent rage against it. St. Paul paid with his very life for the bitter wrath which he

<sup>1</sup> Acts v. 28.

had inspired by deserting the glorious position of a learned Rabbi, and emissary of the High Priest and the Sanhedrin, for the lot of a persecuted missionary who threw open to the Gentiles the hitherto barred door of religious privilege. The conflagration of Rome, in all probability, gave the Jews an opportunity of diverting from themselves the false suspicion of guilt, by turning suspicion against the Christians, and so avenging on them the edict of Claudius, which in consequence of Messianic disturbances had caused their banishment from Rome.<sup>1</sup> The escape of the Christians to Pella, before the fall of Jerusalem, would be regarded as the act of open renegades, who refused to take part in the supreme struggle of the Hebrew people for its very existence. For those who were trained from earliest childhood to see the hand of God in history, it might have been thought that the destruction of their Temple, and the total desolation of their Holy City, involving as it did the necessary extinction of Mosaism as a possible religion, would at last have opened the eyes of the Jews to the desperateness of a position which God Himself had rendered no longer tenable; and even the dullest eyes, unless they were filmed by centuries of prejudice, might have seen that the scroll of the Old Covenant was shrivelled into ashes by the flame which devoured the cedar wood, and melted the gold, of the Holy of Holies. But the cogency of the lesson was lost in the frenzy which it inspired; and when for one moment, in the successes of Bar Cochba, and the glory of Akibha, and the prosperity of Bethyr, the hopes of Judaism

<sup>1</sup> Acts xviii. 2.

seemed to revive once more, it was on the Christians that the arm of the victorious Mesith fell with most implacable wrath. So that even from the earliest times, and long before concealment of their written sentiments was rendered necessary by fear, the Jews, in their treatises, spoke of the Christians under every possible term of opprobrium. "Christians" they never called them. That name—a convenient hybrid which affixed a Latin termination to the Greek rendering of a Hebrew conception—though invented by the scornful wit of the Antiochenes,—who were celebrated in antiquity for their skill in inventing nicknames,—had been very early adopted by the believers in Christ. It is true that in the New Testament they are spoken of as the "saints," or "the brethren," and that the word Christian only occurs in the Epistle of St. Peter, and on the lips of Agrippa, as the term for a legally indictable offence;¹ but, very shortly after the close of the New Testament canon, the name had been universally adopted alike by friend and foe; and as the mobs of Pagan cities rejoiced in the sonorous epithets of their favourite cry of

Chriſtīānōs  
Ād lēōnēs!

so, before the fiercest tribunals, the youngest martyr exulted in the answer, *Christianus sum!* But the Jews had two reasons against sanctioning the use of this name. In the first place, they would not seem in the most distant way to countenance any connection between the work of Jesus and their own expected Messiah. In the second place, they chose

¹ Except in the historic notice of its origin (Acts xi. 26), the name Christian—as everybody is aware—occurs only in Acts xxvi. 28 and 1 Pet. iv. 16.

to regard the Christians as idolaters, and therefore adopted in their case the practice which they had founded on a literal misinterpretation of the Verse in Deuteronomy which forbade them to take the name of any strange god upon their lips. The same delight in opprobrious nicknames which made them twist Beelzebul, the Lord of Heaven, into *Beelzebub*, the Lord of Dung; or Kir Heres, the City of the Sun, into *Kir Cheres*, the City of Destruction; or Bethel, the House of God—after its desecration by the calf-worship—into *Beth-aven*, “the House of Vanity,” made them invent terms of insult both for the Christians and for Christ. Moses had said, “Ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place;”<sup>1</sup> and the Talmudic comment upon this was—Everything that is made for the sake of false gods must bear a nickname. We must not say Beth Galia, “lofty house,” but *Beth Charia*, “common house;” not Penî Melech, “face of a king” (Moloch), but *Penî Kelef*, “face of a hound;”<sup>2</sup> not Epiphanes, “the illustrious,” but *Epimanes*, “the maniac.” It was on this principle that they spoke not of Tadmor, but of *Tarmod*, or “chaff;” not of Romans, but of *Idumæans*. It was natural, therefore, that they should never use the word Christians, but speak of “Galileans,” “Nazarenes,” “Children of Balaam,” “Worshippers of the Hung,” “Epicureans,” “Saducees,” and, normally, of *Minim* or Heretics.<sup>3</sup> We must not, indeed, charge them with either inventing or monopolizing this method. It was known

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Temura, 28 b.; En Israel, ii. 145 d.

<sup>3</sup> A “Min” usually means a Christian.

both to Greeks and Romans and English, both to Jews and Christians and Mussulmans. Aristophanes, as every scholar knows, abounds in instances. Chrysippus, the great Stoic, was called by his enemies, Chesippus. Tiberius Claudius Nero received, from his bibulous propensities, the nickname of Biberius Caldius Mero.<sup>1</sup> We find traces of the same thing among the Fathers. Cyprianus was distorted into Coprianus; Athanasius into Sathanasius; Vigilantius into Dormitantius; the Arians into Ariomanites;<sup>2</sup> Abelard into Bajolard; Otho of Brunswick called Pope Urban VI. Turbanus, from his turbulence; and Queen Elizabeth addressed Bodin as Badin. The Mohammedans, instead of calling the Parsees "fire-worshippers" (Kaliva), call them *Philiva*, "fools." And as the Jews, when delivered from the illusion of Bar Cochba, "the son of a star," changed his name into *Bar Cozba*, "the son of a lie," so R. Meir turns the word Evangelium into the similar-sounding Hebrew words, און גיליון, "table of lies;" and R. Johanan into עון גיליון, "table of sins."

But we have not nearly exhausted the terms of hatred bestowed by the Jew, more or less openly or obliquely, on the Christian. Thus, as the Mohammedans are called "sons of Ishmael," the Christians are alluded to as *sons of Esau*. "God, who has smitten the Egyptians with one of his fingers," said R. Eliezer, "will extirpate the sons of Esau (Christians) and the sons of Ishmael (Mohammedans) with his whole law; for the first are the enemies of his people, and the second his own enemies."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From *bibo*, "I drink;" *calda*, "hot water;" *merum*, "unmixed wine."

<sup>2</sup> See my "Chapters on Language," p. 246.

<sup>3</sup> Pirke Eliezer, 48.



They are also called *Sadducees*, and it is said that if a Jew is chased by a murderer, or a serpent, it is better for him to fly into a temple of idolaters than of Sadducees, because the former deny God without knowing Him, whereas the latter deny God whom they know. The object of such allusion was not only hatred, but concealment, and we may conjecture that the Christians are often really in the thoughts of the Talmudists when they are using neutral terms, such as *Ger* (proselyte), and *Nosrî* (stranger), and *Goyîm* (heathen). Thus in unabridged passages of the Talmud it is said that "the pious of Israel do not fast on the first day of the week, because of the *Goyîm*," and this evidently means "the Christians," since, in *Taanîth* (27, 2), we find the oblique expression of hatred, "Because it is the holy day of those people."<sup>1</sup> That the Christians are alluded to under the bitter appellation of *Benî Edom* and *Benî Esau* is clear, both because it is expressly stated,<sup>2</sup> and because Rabbis Kimchi and Bechai, writing about Isaiah lxvi. 17, say that *the Edomites* are accustomed to move their fingers in two directions (*i.e.*, make the sign of the cross), and have warp and woof (*i.e.*, the cross); and they use interchangeably the expressions, "these are Edomites" and "these are *Notzerîm*" (Nazarenes, Christians).<sup>3</sup> The reason for these appellations is partly to express that the innate detestation of Jews to Christians is as strong as that which reigned between Esau and Jacob; and partly because it is one of their sad blasphemies that the soul of Esau passed by metempsychosis into the

<sup>1</sup> יום טוב שלהם הוא. Chiarini, ii. 308.

<sup>2</sup> See *Ibid.* ii. 306.

<sup>3</sup> Buxtorf, *Lex. Thal.* s. v. אָדוּם.

body of Christ. This is indeed expressly asserted by Abarbanel in the *Mashmia Yeschona* (nature of salvation), f. 19, 4, and in his "Commentary on Isaiah."<sup>1</sup> "Wise theologians have learnt by tradition that the soul of Esau has passed into Jeshu ha Notzeri" (Jesus the Nazarene).

Other names by which those who abandoned Judaism in general, and the Christians in particular, are designated, are "philosophers" and "Epicureans."<sup>2</sup> The latter name not only inflicted the stigma of Gentile indifference on the name of Christian, but connoted looseness of character. In the dialect of the Talmud, *Phakar* meant "to presume," and some of its derivatives were used to express impurity of life.<sup>3</sup>

One or two of the anecdotes relating encounters between Christians and Rabbis may be interesting to our readers.

1. On one occasion "a philosopher," *i. e.*, a Christian, asked Rabban Gamaliel whether he could prove that God would one day deliver the Jews. "Undoubtedly," answered Gamaliel. "And yet," said the philosopher, "we read in Hosea v. 6, 'God hath withdrawn himself from them,' like a brother who refuses to marry his brother's widow in accordance with the levirate law of Deuteronomy xxv., and when a brother has once done that, he cannot change his mind. God therefore will never return to you." The answer of Gamaliel is a mere verbal quibble on the word "withdraw." "In the levirate marriage," he replied, "it is *the widow* who *draws*

<sup>1</sup> F. 54. 1, 3, 4.    <sup>2</sup> Abhoda Zara, iii. 4; Derenbourg, "Palestine," p. 356.

<sup>3</sup> See Buxtorf, *Lex. Chald.* s. v. פקד. Hence the Jewish name for *lupanar* was *Hephker*.

the shoe from the foot of her brother-in-law : if *he* drew a shoe from the widow's foot, it would mean nothing. Hence, in the prophet's words, 'God has withdrawn himself,' it is implied that *we* have not done so."<sup>1</sup>

2. In the Midrash on Koheleth (i. 8), a story is found which shews the extraordinary scrupulosity of the Rabbis in refusing the smallest semblance of approval to anything Christian. Rabbi Eliezer was accused of Christian tendencies (*Minhootk*). The governor—called by the Jewish transliteration of the Greek word *ἡγεμών*, and probably intended for some Roman procurator—asks him "how a person of his importance could condescend to such futilities?" "The Judge is the witness of my innocence," said Rabbi Eliezer—meaning God. But the governor supposed that this was an appeal to *him*, and at once pronounced him innocent. The Rabbi was, however, deeply hurt by the suspicion of Nazarene proclivities, and his disciples found him inconsolable. At last, R. Akibha came to comfort him, and said, "Perhaps some *Min* has said something to you which met with your approval?" "By heavens, yes!" answered R. Eliezer. "One day I met Jacob of Kephaz Zekaniah in the main street of Sepphoris, and, alluding to Deuteronomy xxiii. 19, he remarked that although the Law forbade the application to the Temple service of the wages of impurity, they might perhaps be used to build baths, &c. 'You are right,' I said; but I could not at the moment recall any *halacha* on the subject."<sup>2</sup> When I had agreed to his

<sup>1</sup> Midrash on Psalm x.; Derenbourg, p. 357.

<sup>2</sup> This remark is a valuable illustration of the servile and outrageous devotion to mere precedent which characterizes all Rabbinitism.

opinion, he said 'that it was what had been said by Jesus.' In spite of this, I did not withdraw my approval of the opinion, and so I have been accused of heretical tendencies." What this Jacob of Kephazekaniah—said to be meant for James, the Lord's brother—meant by attributing his remark to Jesus, is not clear, unless it be one more allusion to Mark vii. 19—a passage to the extreme importance of which, and to its rediscovered interpretation, I have already called attention in the pages of THE EXPOSITOR.

3. Another of these anecdotes is very famous, and is found twice in the *Abhoda Zara*, as well as elsewhere. R. Eliezer Ben Dama, a nephew of R. Ishmael, having been bitten by a serpent, Jacob of Kephazekaniah came and offered to heal him by the name of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> R. Ishmael did not permit this to be done. "Ben Dama," he exclaimed, "it is forbidden!" "Allow me to do it," said Jacob. "I will prove to you from the Law that it is permitted." However, before Jacob could produce his argument, the sick man died. "Happy Ben Dama," said his uncle; "thou hast died in purity, without violating a precept of the wise." This is one of the instances quoted in illustration of Ecclesiastes vii. 26, "Whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her."

4. One of the anecdotes about the Christians found in the *Midrash on Koheleth*<sup>2</sup> is too gross to be quoted, and it is only charitable to suppose that, if it be not the mere baseless calumny inspired by raging hatred, it may have arisen from some con-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Acts xix. 13; *Abhoda Zara*, § 27, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Derenbourg, p. 363.

fusion, on the part of the Jews, between the Christians and some of the infamous sects which adopted and disgraced their name. It is certain that the furious allusions made by heathen writers to the asserted immoralities and Thyestean banquets of the Christians, had their origin in the orgies of Gnostic sects like the Nicolaitanes, who existed even in the first century; and just as the Gentiles confounded the Jews with the Christians, so the Jews might even unintentionally fail to draw a distinction between genuine Christianity and disgraceful Gnosticism.

5. I shall only adduce one other story, quoted by Derenbourg from the same source as the last, namely, the Talmudic Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes.<sup>1</sup> It tells us how R. Joshua was threatened even in his own family by the progress of Christian conversions. His nephew Hananja, arriving at Kephrah Nahum, was bewitched by the *Mins* (heretics, *i. e.*, Christians) to such an extent, that they made him mount on an ass on the Sabbath day. When he returned to his uncle, Rabbi Joshua gave him an unguent which healed him from his bewitchment. But Joshua said to him, "Since you have heard the braying of the ass of that wicked one, you can remain no longer on the soil of Israel." Hananja therefore retired to Babylon, and there died in peace.

The expression, "the ass of that wicked one," is only too plainly and sadly an allusion to the ass ridden by our Lord in his triumphal entry into Jeru-

<sup>1</sup> It consists of three *Sedarim*, and though perhaps not older than the tenth century, probably contains traditions of great antiquity.

saalem, to which there are frequent allusions in Christian and Mohammedan legends; and the suppression of the name of Jesus is in accordance with the practice, to which we have already referred, of only mentioning Him in an oblique and cryptographic manner. The Jews of past generations, when charged with having written blasphemies against the Founder of Christianity, used to reply that neither He nor the Christians were mentioned in the Talmud. The reply was, *in the letter*, true enough. From the editions of the Talmud which were expurgated—in consequence of the Christian censure or Jewish alarm—all passages which *overtly* bore on our Lord and his followers<sup>1</sup> were deliberately struck out; but other passages were left, where the meaning was deeply hidden, and the desperate attacks were only *φωνάυτα συνετόσιω*. In the Basle edition of 1581, the Talmud was revised and mutilated by Marcus Marinus, but in the Cracow edition these passages were reinserted by the Jews of Poland, and they are also found in the Venice edition of 1520, and the Amsterdam edition of 1645. The Polish Jews soon became aware of the danger they incurred by their orthodox temerity in refusing to omit any passage of the Talmud, and they accordingly wrote a synodic letter, in which they ordered their Rabbis, in all future publications, to leave such passages blank, making in their stead a circle, to remind them that such passages were only to be taught to their pupils *vivâ voce*.<sup>2</sup> Generally Christ

<sup>1</sup> They have been collected and published separately. Talmud, *Chasronos Hashash*. "Separat. Ausgabe der von d. censur Gestrichenen Stellen d. Talmud." Königsberg. (Oscar Richter. Leipzig.)

<sup>2</sup> Leslie, "A Short and Easy Method with the Jews." London. 1812. Chiarini, i. 165.

is alluded to as *Pelonî*, "that man," a term which we find even in the Acts of the Apostles;<sup>1</sup> "He whom we may not name;" Absalom; "the Hung" (Talooî, תלווי, Deut. xxi. 23);<sup>2</sup> and such names as Ber. Stada and Ben Pandera, which I have no space here to examine. The angry and wicked blasphemies of late and wretched works like the Toldôth Jeshu (Generation of Jesus), and the Maaseh Talooî ("Work of the Hung"), are regarded with just contempt by the Jews themselves.

6. In later times, however, when toleration of the most absolute kind has been established, there has been a tendency, on the part of some Jewish writers, to allegorize, yet at the same time to defend, or at any rate to extenuate, some of the worst Talmudic allusions.

The contrast between their language on the subject and that of their predecessors is instructive, and our readers must pardon the necessity for alluding to that which, even under the most allegorical treatment, cannot but shock and horrify their hearts.

There is a Rabbinic proverb which says, "Whoever ridicules the words of the wise is condemned to be boiled in hot ordure."

Now this proverb either originated in, or is applied by, a passage of the Talmud, in which is narrated the following story.<sup>3</sup>

Onkelos, the paraphrast of the Pentateuch, is said to have summoned from their graves the three

<sup>1</sup> Acts v. 28.

<sup>2</sup> See my "Life of Christ," ii. 453.

<sup>3</sup> The reference to the Talmud is not given, but I take the story from a Jewish source—*Biblische und Talmudische Studien*, in a paper entitled "Rabbi Joshua ben Hanania." The passage comes, I believe, from Gittin, 57. 1 (Venetian edition).

greatest representatives of the three principles hostile to Judaism, in order to question them upon the motives of their opposition.

The first was Titus, the second Balaam, the third was "*that man*." ["The Jews," says the Jewish author from whom I derive the story, "according to the Law, dare not pronounce the name of Christ, since his being adored as God. Moses says, 'And make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.'"]

Onkelos asked all three of them, "Which people is the most esteemed in the other world?" and they severally answer, "Israel."

He then asked them, "Should a man try to be united to Israel?"

Titus, who represents worldly opposition to the Jews, answers that "it would be difficult, because their commandments are manifold."

Balaam, the representative of Satanic implacable hatred, says, "Thou shalt *not* seek their peace or their prosperity all thy days for ever."

THAT MAN answers, "Seek to do them good; avoid afflicting them: whoso injures them, injures the apple of his own eye."

"Go and see," continues the legend, "the difference that exists between a delinquent of Israel and a prophet of the heathen."

"What is Thy punishment?" asks Onkelos. I dare not write the answer, beyond saying that He replies that "He ridiculed the precepts of the wise."

Now Maimonides, in his preface to the Mishna, says that by "hot dung" is merely meant bad passions, which render us blind; and that *Nec est*



*interim stercus fervens gravius stultitiâ quæ ipsum induxit ut illis illuderet.* He therefore suppresses altogether the special polemical allusion.

But the modern Jewish author from whom I quote says: "Before concluding the report of the legend, we must remind the reader that the Prophet Ezekiel had formerly in his prophetic vision been condemned to eat bread baked of dung, which is afterwards explained by the filth of idol worship among the people of Israel. . . . By the Oriental image of moral filth, we can understand the termination of that remarkable legend. . . . There is no doubt that this dung, revolting as it may seem, signifies nothing but corrupt ideas of worship." He then proceeds to exalt and extol Christ at the expense of Christianity. He says that Christ's "only fault was deviating from the temporal institutions of the Sanhedrin, and that He in consequence fell into the hands of the heathen, who dishonour his memory by their anthropomorphism, blaspheming the Father of all in the name of one of his most devoted sons. There has always existed a misunderstanding on the part of Christians with regard to the Jewish estimation of Christ. We do not, we cannot, hate the Man, the learned and self-denying victim, who willingly sacrificed Himself to his own convictions. Yet our court of justice performed only its duty in condemning Him. He was as well acquainted with the law as were the judges who pronounced his doom, and therefore He besought his Father before his death to have mercy on those very judges by whose fiat He was crucified. Such is our holy law: the delinquent, after having undergone his punishment, is reinstated in his for-

mer dignity, and becomes our poor-suffering brother with us." So that the general upshot of this singular modern apology for a passage which has usually been regarded as the very deadliest which the Talmud contains, is that "greater respect could not be paid to the personal character of Christ than in this allegory, which represents Him as praying even from the grave for his people, with undiminished love and esteem, and forgiving his enemies their bitterness and opposition, though they condemned Him to death!"

7. With one more Talmudic cryptograph I will conclude. It is a legend found in Niddah (xxiv. 6 ; xxv. a).

"Our masters related: Abba Saul says, 'I occupied myself with burying the dead. Once the soil gave way under my feet, and I found myself sunk up to my nose in the eye-hole of a dead body. When I returned, they said it was that of Absalom.'

"Now it may be thought that Abba Saul was a dwarf! But no, he was the tallest man of his age; Rabbi Tarphon stood but up to his shoulders. Rabbi Tarphon was the tallest man of his age, and R. Akibha stood but up to his shoulders. R. Akibha was the tallest man of his age, and R. Meir stood but up to his shoulders. R. Meir was the tallest man of his age, and R. Judah stood but up to his shoulders. R. Judah was the tallest man of his age, and R. Hija stood but up to his shoulders. R. Hija was the tallest man of his age, and Rabh stood but up to his shoulders. Rabh was the tallest man of his age, and Rabh Juda stood but up to his shoulders. Rabh Juda was the tallest man of his age, and Adda

Dialah stood but up to his shoulders. The pistachio tree of Pumbaditha reached but up to the shoulders of Adda Dialah, and common people were but half as tall as the pistachio tree of Pumbaditha."

It appears, then, that Abba Saul must have been as high as two men and ten heads; and if he sank up to the nose in the eye-socket of Absalom, Absalom's head must have been sixty times larger than a man's body, and Absalom himself three hundred and sixty times taller than an ordinary mortal. Many people have taken this story to be a piece of rampant and inexcusable absurdity. It has, however, a very simple meaning, which I may perhaps be allowed to explain in my next paper.

F. W. FARRAR.

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### THE GOSPEL IN THE EPISTLES.

*And by them [the Apostles] in like maner, first without writyng by onely wordes and prechyng so was it spredde abrode in the worlde that his faith was by the mouthes of his holy messengers put into mennes eres. and by his holy hande written in mennes hartes, or ever any worde thereof almost was written in the boke. . . . And I nothyng doubte but all had it so beh that never gospel hadde ben written, yet shoulde the substaunce of this faith never have fallen out of Christen folkes hartes, but the same spirit that planted it, the same shoulde have watered it, the same shoulde have kepte it, the same shoulde have encreased it. . . . And none Evangelist was there nor none Apostle that by writyng ever sente the faith to any nacion, but if they were first enformed by worde and that God had begon his Church in that place.—*  
 Sir THOMAS MORE'S *Works* [ed. 1557], pp. 158, 159.

THE writer of the above extract evidently thought that those persons to whom the Apostolic Letters were addressed could have constructed for themselves a Gospel, had no work of any Evangelist ever appeared. By an analysis of four of these Epistles, we have endeavoured to make this plain. We pur-