

But the "leading astray" may have gone back even further than the days of Pauline propaganda; and we believe that the original charge against Jesus is to be found in the following passage preserved in the Babylonian Gemara.

Psalm 91:10 //

"'There shall no evil befall thee' [Ps. xci. 10]. (That means) that evil dreams and bad phantasies shall not vex thee. 'Neither shall any plague come nigh thy tent'; (that means) that thou shalt not have a son or disciple (who burns his food publicly, like Jeschu ha-Notzri)" [1]

~~A~~ What is the meaning of this strange phrase, "to burn one's food publicly"? Dalman [2] says that this means "to renounce openly what one has learned." Laible [3] is of opinion that "public burning of food is a contemptuous expression for the public offering of sacrifice to idols. That the Christians in their assemblies offered sacrifice to idols was as firmly the opinion of the Jews of old time as it is that of many at the present day [!]. Naturally, therefore, it was concluded that Jesus must have commenced it."

Re. 2:14

In this connection we are further reminded that the charge brought against the Nicolaitans by the final redactor of the Apocalypse is "eating things sacrificed to idols and committing fornication"; upon which van Manen comments: "not because they made a mock of all that is holy and trampled honour underfoot, but

because they, like 'Paul,' had set aside the Jewish laws regarding foods and marriage, freely using food that had been set before heathen deities, and contracting marriages within the prohibited degrees, which in the eyes of the author of the Apocalypse were unchaste unions, just as in the eyes of the writer of I. Cor. v. 1 the marriage of the Christian who had freed himself from scruples with his deceased father's wife (not his own mother) was so, or as in the eyes of so many Englishmen the marriage with a deceased wife's sister is at the present day."

There is, however, no consensus of opinion with regard to the meaning of the phrase "burning one's food publicly." The Rabbis, we must remember, applied the term "idolatry" in the loosest fashion to everything that was not a strict Jewish custom or belief; and it is hardly to be believed that the early Christians, least of all Jesus himself, could have been accused of "idolatry," in the literal meaning of the word, even by their most bitter opponents. I am, therefore, inclined to think that there may be some other meaning of this "burning of one's food publicly." The main point of the accusation is evidently contained in the word "publicly." It was the doing of something or other "publicly," which apparently might not only have been tolerated privately, but which was presumably the natural thing to do in private. Now the main burden of Christian tradition is that Jesus went and taught the people publicly—the poor, the outcast, the oppressed, the sinners, to all of whom, according to Rabbinical law, the mysteries of the Torah were not to be expounded unless they had first of all

purified themselves. These ignorant and unclean livers were '*Amme ha-aretz* (men of the earth), and the Torah was not for them. And if it was that no '*Am ha-aretz* was admitted to the schoolhouse, much more strictly were guarded the approaches to those more select communities where the mysteries of the "Creation" and of the "Chariot," the theosophy of Judaism, were studied. To some such community of this kind we believe Jeschu originally belonged; and from it he was expelled because he "burnt his food publicly," that is to say, taught the wisdom to the unpurified people and so violated the ancient rule of the order.

In connection with this there is a remarkable passage, preserved in the Babylonian Gemara, which demands our closest attention. It runs as follows:

"When our wise men left the house of Rab Chisda or, as others say, the house of Rab Shemuel bar Nachmani, they said of him: 'Thus our learned men are laden' [Ps. cxliv. 14]. Rab and Shemuel, or, as

others say, Rabbi Jochanan and Rabbi Eleazar (were of a different opinion). One said: 'our learned' in the Law, and 'are laden' with commandments [i.e., good works], and the other said: 'our learned in the Law and in the commandments,' and 'are laden' with sufferings. 'There is no breaking in,' that our company shall not be like the company of Saul, from whom Doeg, the Edomite, has gone out, and 'no going forth,' that our company shall not be like the company of David, from whom Ahitophel has gone out, and 'no outcry,' that our company shall not be like the company of Elisha, from whom Gehazi has gone out, 'in our streets,' that

we shall not have a son or a disciple who burns his food publicly like Jeschu ha-Notzri." [1]

Rab Chisda was one of the Rabbis of the Talmud school of Sura in Babylonia, and died 309 A.D. R. Shemuel bar Nachman (or Nachmani) was a teacher in the Palestinian school at Tiberias, but twice went to Babylonia. He was a pupil of R. Jonathan ben Eleazar, who was a pupil of R. Chanina, who was a pupil of "Rabbi." R. Shemuel was, then, presumably a contemporary of R. Chisda.

Rab or Abba was the founder of the school at Sura on the Euphrates, and died 247 A.D.; Mar Shemuel was head of the Babylonian school at Nehardea, and died 254 A.D.

R. Jochanan was a Palestinian Rabbi who flourished 130-160 A.D.; R. Eleazar flourished 90-130 A.D.

The words of the text taken from the Psalms run as follows in the Authorised Version: "That our oxen may be strong to labour; that there be no breaking in or going out; that there be no complaining in our streets."

Doeg, says Cheyne,[2] "had been detained (so one tradition tells us) before Yahwe'—i.e., by some obscure religious prescription, and had cunningly watched David in his intercourse with the priest Ahimelech. Soon after, he denounced the latter to the suspicious Saul, and when the king commanded his 'runners' to put Ahimelech and the other priests to death, and they refused, it was this foreigner who lifted up his hand against them."

[1] "Bab. Berachoth," 17a f.

[2] See article "Doeg," "Enc. Bib."

Doeg is called by the strange title "the mightiest of the shepherds."

went out from David

Ahitophel, the Gilonite, was a councillor of David, and was much esteemed for his unerring insight; he, however, revolted against David and cast in his lot with Absalom's rebellion. He met his death by hanging (2 Sam. xvii. 23).

went out from David

Gehazi (= Valley of vision) was cast out by Elisha and smitten with leprosy for fraudulently obtaining money from Naaman at the time of the latter's miraculous cure by the prophet.

went out from Elisha

With these data before us let us return to our Talmud passage. It is very evident that the whole point of the story has to do with heresy, with "going forth," or with some scandal or breaking of the established rule or order of things, or with paving the way for so doing. We have seen that in the Talmud stories Balaam is a substitute for Jeschu; can it, then, be possible that in Doeg, Ahitophel and Gehazi also we have to do with name-substitutions?

The answer to this question will perhaps be made clearer by quoting the following passages from the Mishna.

"R. Akiba says: He also has no part in the world to come who reads foreign books, and who whispers over a wound and says: 'I will lay upon thee no sickness, which I have laid upon Egypt, for I am the Lord, thy physician.'"

Gospels

Who does dealing in Yahshua's authority body

This interesting passage is followed by one of even greater interest.

"Three kings and four private persons have no portion in the world to come. Three kings, namely,

Jeroboam, Ahab and Manasseh. R. Jehudah says; 'Manasseh has a portion therein, for it is said [II. Chron. xxxiii. 13], "and he prayed unto him; and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom." It was objected to him, He brought him again into his kingdom, but he did not bring him again into the life of the future world. Four private persons, namely, Balaam, Doeg, Ahitophel, and Gehazi.' [1]

Sanhedrin 1190A Mishna 10 1-2

These passages are old, for they are found in the Mishna. To take the saying ascribed to R. Akiba (n. 100-135 A.D.) first. The Gemara [2] says that by "foreign books" are meant *Siphre Minim*. The term *Minim* was for long taken to refer exclusively to Jewish Christians or Christians generally; but this has been hotly disputed of late years by many. It seems certain that though Jewish Christians may be

sometimes included in this term, Minim does not mean them exclusively. Nor does Minim always mean "heretics" in a bad sense, it sometimes means "heretics" in its original signification, that is to say, simply the members of some particular school. That, however, most of the Rabbis considered these Siphre Minim, in a bad sense, to include the Gospel, is evident from a gloss in the Munich MS. [3] where the word Evangelium is caricatured as follows:

"Rabbi Meir calls it, '*Awon gillajon* [blank paper, lit. margin, of evil], Rabbi Jochanan calls it, '*Awon gillajon* [blank paper of sin]."

R. Meir was one of the great redactors of the Mishna

[1] "Sanhedrin," xi. 90a; "Mishna," x. 1, 2.

[2] "Sanhedrin," 100b.

[3] "Shabbath," 116a.

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and flourished about 130-160 A.D.; R. Jochanan was his contemporary. *Gillajon* means literally a "margin," that is, a paper which is left unwritten upon, and is therefore blank. [1] It must be confessed, however, that such apparently meaningless jesting is quite below the level of Rabbinical caricaturing with which we are acquainted, and I am inclined to think that Dalman has not got to the bottom of the matter. I can, however, offer no better conjecture myself.

The formula of healing is an interesting one. Whether or not we are to take "Egypt" literally, or as a substitute for the "body" as it was among certain of the Gnostic schools, must be left to the fancy and taste of the reader; the phrase, "I am the Lord, thy physician," however, reminds us strongly of the "Healers," and the "Servants" of the Great Healer, and suggests memories of some of the derivations conjectured for the names Therapeut and Essene.

We may pass over the three kings in our second Mishna passage, but we cannot pass by the four private persons, Balaam, Doeg, Ahitophel and Gehazi, for the combination is so extraordinary that even the most careless reader must be struck by it. What has Balaam ben Beor to do *dans cette galère*? Whose "company" did he leave? Balaam ben Beor may be said rather to have joined forces with the Israelites; he certainly did not leave them. Balaam came in, he did not "go out."

The point of the story is that there are certain Persons who have no part in the world to come. R. Akiba has just told us of what kind the orthodox

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Jew considered these to be; they were heretics who looked to other Scriptures as well as the Torah, as we know the Gnostics did most freely, and the general Christians as far as the Gospel Scripture was concerned; they were further healers and wonder-makers, which indeed many of the Essenes, Therapeuts and Gnostics set themselves to be, and which general Christian tradition asserts Jesus and the Apostles were.

But why should Balaam head the list of the condemned, when it is precisely the prophetic pronouncement of Ben Beor that the Rabbis were using for all it was worth against Christian dogmatic claims? Balaam here clearly stands for Jeschu, and if this be so, then it is reasonable to suppose that Doeg, Ahitophel and Gehazi stand for the names of some other teachers who had fallen under severe Rabbinical displeasure. Who they were precisely we have now no means of discovering, and the supposition that they refer to Peter, James and John [1] is considerably discounted by the following strange passage from the Babylonian Gemara:

a group of messianic Jews

"Elisha went to Damascus— for what did he go? R. Jochanan has said, that he went for the conversion of Gehazi, But he was not converted. Elisha said to him: Be converted! He answered him: Is it thus that I am converted by thee? For him that sinneth and maketh the people to sin the possibility of repentance is taken away." [2]

Rabbi Jochanan flourished 130-160 A.D. It will at once strike the attentive reader that the words put into the mouth of Gehazi are identical with those

[1] See Streane, op. cit., p. 57.

[2] "Bab. Sanhedrin," 107b.

of the answer of Jeschu to Joshua ben Perachiah as found in the famous twice-told story of Jeschu's excommunication. [1]

The answer is an extraordinary one, and may be taken to mean that the evil (from the point of view of the Rabbis) was irremediable. The thing had spread too far, even if the leaders were now to return to the strict fold of Jewry, the people would still continue to hold the new views which abrogated their servitude to the galling yoke of the Law.

The mention of the name Damascus, moreover, in connection with Gehazi, at once brings Paul to mind, and disturbs the balance of the Peter and James and John supposition as the under-names of

Doeg, Ahitophel and Gehazi.

If by any means, then, Gehazi may be held to be a "blind" for Paul, we have to ask ourselves what has Elisha to do in this connection? Does "Elisha" represent some chief of the Sanhedrin? It may be so, but we should also recollect that the Essene communities and similar mystic associations were always looking for the return of Elisha. They were in connection with the line of descent from the "Schools of the Prophets," and expected their great prophet to return again in power to announce the advent of the Messiah. It is hardly necessary in this connection to recall to the reader's recollection the John-Elias of the Gospel story or to refer the student to the elaborate Gnostic tradition of the incarnation of the soul of Elisha in the body of John under the direct supervision of the Master, as found in the "Pistis Sophia"—later

[1] "Sanhedrin," 107b, and "Sota," 47e.

Jewish leaders prophetic¹⁹⁸ & messianic

accommodations to the necessities of a historicising evolution. The recollection, however, of these and similar ideas and facts makes us hazard the conjecture that "Elisha" in our Mishna passage may be a "blind" for the official head of the chief Essene community, or at any rate of that "company" who looked to Elisha as its spiritual head. It was from this company that "Gehazi" had "gone out." Whether or not the other "companies" of Saul and David may refer to associations of a somewhat similar nature, I must leave for the consideration of those who are fully persuaded that the literal meaning of our Talmud passage, as far as the four private persons are concerned, was the one furthest from the intention of its Rabbinical authors.

left the faith

However this may be, the Rabbis were convinced that the disciples of Balaam en bloc would inherit Gehenna, as we read in the tractate devoted to the "Sayings of the Fathers":

"The disciples of our father Abraham enjoy this world and inherit the world to come, as it is written [Prov. viii. 21]: 'That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, and that I may fill their treasuries.' The disciples of Balaam the impious inherit Gehenna, and go down into the pit of destruction, as it is written [Ps. lxxviii]: 'But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.' "[1]

So there was Peter - Ahitophel - James - Gehazi - Paul

And if there should by any chance be still the slightest hesitation in the mind of the reader that Balaam in these passages equates with Jeschu, the

John 18:15-16

John may not be because he was a kohen known to the high priest.

[1] "Aboth," v. 19.

"A Min said to R. Chanina: Hast thou by any chance ascertained what age Balaam was? He answered: There is nothing written concerning it. But since it is said, 'Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days' (he was either thirty-three or thirty-four years old.) The Min answered: Thou hast spoken well; for I have myself seen a chronicle of Balaam in which it is said: Thirty-three years old was Balaam the lame man, when the robber Phineas slew him." [1]

broken on cross

lita phi

piktus - silate

I am not quite certain what R. Chanina is here intended. R. Chanina ben Dosa was a contemporary of R. Jochanan ben Zakkai, who nourished in the last third of the first century; while R. Chanina ben Chama was a pupil of "Rabbi's," and therefore must be placed at the beginning of the third century; he lived at Sepphoris in Palestine. That this specimen of Rabbinical exegesis, however, may be ascribed to the earlier Chanina in preference to the later, is suggested by the very similar passage in the same Gemara, which reads:

Peter James

"R. Jochanan said, Doeg and Ahitophel lived not half their days. Such, too, is the tenor of a Boraitha [2]: Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days. All the years of Doeg were not more than thirty-four, and of Ahitophel not more than thirty-three." [3]

[1] Bab. Sanhedrin," 106b

[2] A saying or tradition not included in the canonical Mishna.

[3] "Sanhedrin," 106b (end).

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R. Jochanan flourished about 130-160 A.D. As it seems easier to assume that the splitting up of the "33 or 34" between Ahitophel and Doeg was the later development, rather than that the supposed ages of Doeg and Ahitophel should have been conflated into the age of Balaam, I am inclined to think that the R. Chanina of our penultimate passage is intended for the earlier Chanina. If this be so, and the story can be taken as genuine, that is as an old tradition, then we have an early confirmation from outside sources of the thirty-three years of Jesus at the time of his death. But to consider the wording of the passage in greater detail.

Laible translates Min as "Jewish Christian"; but it is difficult to believe that a Jewish Christian of any school can have referred to Jesus as Balaam, and therefore I have kept the original without translation. The academical answer bases itself on the threescore and ten years given as the normal life of man in the Torah. It is interesting to note that E. Chanina knows of no Jewish tradition which gives the age of Jeschu; he can only conjecture an answer by means of a kind of Rabbinical *sortilegium* of texts. Wonderful—replies the Min—that is just what I have read in one of the "Chronicles of Balaam"—a Gospel story apparently. We can hardly suppose, however, that we have a direct quotation from this "Chronicle"; we have plainly a Rabbinical gloss put into the mouth of the Min.

Now Phineas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, was the priestly leader of the army of Israel which destroyed the Midianites, and slew their kings, and with them Balaam son of Beor (Num. xxxi. 2 ff).

But

As Phineas killed Balaam
so Pilate killed Yeshua
Numb 31:6,8 (Pilate) is Phineas

why should Phineas be called a "robber" (Aram, *listaa* from the Greek ληστης), as Laible translates it? Bashi explains this word as meaning "general" (*sar tzaba*), and we should remember that though *listaa* is a loan-word from the Greek ληστης (a "robber"), it was with the Jews rather the title of patriotic leaders, of zealots for the Law, as Phineas was represented to be *par excellence*. The meaning is thus simple and clear enough, and we see no reason for Laible's conjecture,[1] that *Listaa* is a caricature-name for *P'listaa*—Pilate. No doubt it would be convenient somehow to bring Pilate into the Talmud Jesus Stories, but as a matter of fact his name and every incident of the Gospel story connected with him are conspicuous in the Talmud by their absence. If *listaa* was a caricature-name, we should not find the combination "Phineas Listaa," but Listaa by itself. Otherwise we should expect to come across some such doubles as Ben Stada Balaam—a species of combination nowhere found in the Talmud.

There still remains to be explained the curious combination "Balaam the lame man"; but I have so far met with no satisfactory conjecture on this point, and am quite unable to hazard one of my own.[2] Laible conjectures that the epithet had its origin in the breaking down of Jesus under the weight of the cross or the piercing of his feet; but did the Rabbis know anything of what Laible presupposes throughout, without any

hanging lame
before Israel End of Part 2

[1] Op. cit., p. 60.

[2] The article in "The Jewish Encyclopaedia" says: Balaam in Babbinal literature "is pictured as blind of one eye and lame in one foot ('San.'; 105a); and his disciples (followers) are distinguished by three morally corrupt qualities, viz., an evil eye, a haughty bearing, and an avaricious spirit."

enquiry of any sort, to have been the actual ungainsayable history of Jesus?

Finally, with a sublime tour de force of inconsistency, the Talmud gives us a story where Balaam and Jeschu are introduced together in the same evil plight, but as entirely different persons and giving absolutely contradictory advice. This story runs as follows:

Onkelos bar Kalonikos, nephew of Titus, desired to secede to Judaism. He conjured up the spirit of Titus and asked him: Who is esteemed in that world? He answered: The Israelites. Onkelos asked further: Ought one to join himself to them? He answered: Their precepts are too many; thou canst not

keep them; go rather hence and make war upon them in this world; so shall thou become a head; for it is said [Lam. i. 5]: 'Their adversaries are become the head,' i.e., Everyone that vexeth the Israelites becomes ahead. Onkelos asked the spirit: Wherewith art thou judged? He answered: With that which I have appointed for myself: each day my ashes are collected and I am judged; then I am burnt and the ashes scattered over the seven seas.

"Thereupon Onkelos went and conjured up the spirit of Balaam. He asked him: Who is esteemed in that world? The spirit answered: The Israelites. Onkelos asked further: Ought one to join himself to them? The spirit said: Seek not their peace and their good always. Onkelos asked: Wherewith art thou judged? The spirit answered: With boiling pollution.

"Thereupon Onkelos went and conjured up the spirit of Jeschu. He asked him: Who is esteemed in that world? The spirit answered: The Israelites. Onkelos

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asked further: Ought one to join himself to them?

The spirit said: Seek their good and not their ill. He who toucheth them, touches the apple of His eye. Onkelos asked: Wherewith art thou judged? The spirit said: With boiling filth.

"For the teacher has said: He who scorneth the words of the wise is judged with boiling filth. See what a distinction there is between the apostates of Israel and the heathen prophets!"[1]

In the first place We ask who was Onkelos and why Onkelos was he selected as the protagonist in this necromantic séance?

Scholars of eminence, though entirely without reference to this passage, have identified the name Onkelos with the Talmudic Akilas, the Greek Akylas ('AkulaV) and the Latin Aquila. The most famous Aquila in Jewish history was the translator of the Old Covenant documents into Greek, in a slavishly literal version which was held in the greatest esteem by the Jews as correcting the innumerable errors of the Septuagint version on which the Christians entirely depended. We are not certain of the exact date of this Aquila, but he is generally placed in the first half of the second century.

Now Irenaeus, Eusebius, Jerome and other Fathers, and the Jerusalem Talmud itself,[2] say that this Aquila was a proselyte to the Jewish faith. Moreover, Epiphanius[3] states that "Aquila was a relative (the exact nature of the relationship denoted by the otherwise unknown form penqeridhV is doubtful) of the

[1] "Bab. Gittin," 56b ff.

[2] "Megill., "71c. 3; "Kiddush., " 59c. 1.

[3] "De Pond, et Mens., " c. 14, 15.

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Emperor Hadrian, and was appointed by him to superintend the rebuilding of Jerusalem under the new name of Aelia Capitolina; that, impressed by the miracles of healing and other wonders performed by the disciples of the Apostles who had returned from Pella to the nascent city, he embraced Christianity, and at his own request was baptised; that, in consequence of his continued devotion to practices of astrology, which he refused to abandon even when reproved by the disciples, he was expelled from the Church; and that, embittered by this treatment, he was induced through his zeal against Christianity to become a Jew, to study the Hebrew language, and to render the Scriptures afresh into Greek with the view of setting aside those testimonies to Christ which were drawn from the current version on [*sic*,? of] the Septuagint." [1]

With Dickson, the writer of the article from which we have been quoting, we may set aside the account of Epiphanius as a theological romance to discount the value of Aquila's translation; he, however, preserves the interesting fact that Aquila was a "relative" of some kind of Hadrian, and this is strongly confirmatory of our conjecture that the Onkelos, nephew of Titus, and the Aquila of history are one and the same person.

With regard to the Talmud passage, however, in which Aquila plays the part of protagonist, it is not very easy to glean the precise meaning. Onkelos-Aquila is about to become a proselyte to Judaism; whereupon he seeks counsel from three of the greatest foes of Jewry according to Rabbinical traditions. These all are made to

[1] See article "Aquila" in Smith and Wace's "Dictionary of Christian Biography" (London; 1877).

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admit the pre-eminence of the Israelites, if not in this world, at any rate in the world to come. Titus, the plain Roman soldier, says that the Jews' religious rules and customs are far too elaborate, and advises his kinsman to make war against them; Balaam is less extreme in his views and advises a moderate policy; while Jeschu is made to regard the Jews as the chosen race, the specially beloved, the apple of Yahweh's eye, and urges Aquila to seek ever their good.

And yet; the punishment assigned to these three by Rabbinical opinion is in exact inverse proportion to their hostility to Israel. Whatever may be the technical distinction between "boiling filth" and "boiling pollution," they are evidently far more severe forms of torment than the punishment of Titus,

who is burnt simply without the added vileness of "filth" or "pollution."

Moreover, that by "boiling filth" we are to understand something of the most loathsome nature possible, far exceeding even the foulness of "boiling pollution," may be seen from the statement that this " 'boiling filth' is the lowest abode in hell, into which there sinks every foulness of the souls which sojourn in the upper portions. It is also as a secret chamber, and every superfluity, in which there is no spark of holiness, falls thereinto. For this reason it is called 'boiling filth,' according to the mysterious words of Is. xxviii. 8: 'There is so much vomit and filthiness, that there is no place clean,' as it is said in Is. xxx. 52: 'Thou shalt call it filth.' "[1]

And the reason that this "boiling filth" was chosen

[1] Laible, op. cit., p. 95, quoting from Eisenmenger, "Entdecktes Judenthum" (see for latest edition F.X. Schiefel's, Dresden, 1893), ii. 335 ff., who refers to "Emek hammelech," 135c. chap. xix.

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by the Rabbis as the punishment of Jeschu is to be seen in the following deduction ascribed to Rab Acha bar Ulla (who flourished presumably in the second half of the fourth century):

"From this [from Eccles. xii. 12] it follows, that he who jeers at the words of the doctors of the Law, is punished by boiling filth." [1]

What the text in Ecclesiastes is to which reference is made, I am not certain. It would seem to refer to verse 11, which runs: "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd," rather than to verse 12, which reads: "And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh."

And in connection with this the Tosaphoth add:

"Is there [Eccles. xii. 12] then really written [Lamed, Ayin, Gimel] (derision)? At all events it is true that he is punished by boiling filth as we are saying in Ha-Nezakin.[2]"[3]

Dalman[4] adds in a note: "The Tosaphoth mean, although it may not be allowed to derive this punishment from the words in Eccles. xii. 12, as Rab Acha bar Ulla does, 'Erubin,' 21b, it is nevertheless true." But how Rab Acha derived the "boiling filth" even illegitimately from this text is nowhere explained as far as I can discover, and I fear my readers are no less wearied than myself in following such arid bypaths of perverse casuistry.

[1] "Bab. Erubin," 21b, referring evidently to the last paragraph of the passage from "Gittin," 57, quoted above.

[2] That is chap. v. of "Gittin," 56b.

[3] Tosaphoth to "Erubin," 21b.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

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The only thing we learn definitely from all of this is that Jeschu refused to be bound by the exegesis of the Rabbis and their decisions, and in this he seems to the non-Rabbinical mind to have been a wise man, if their decisions were anything like the one before us; whereas for the Rabbis this "scorning" of the words of their doctors was the sin of all sins, and therefore deserving of the greatest torment Hell could brew, and this for the Rabbis, no matter by what means they arrived at it, was the torment of "boiling filth."

We have now come to the end of our Balaam Jeschu stories, but before we pass on to a consideration of what the Talmud has to say concerning the disciples and followers of Jesus, we will append a passage in the Targum Sheni to Esther vii. 9,[1] which is exceedingly curious in several ways and deserves our attention.

The Targum, after relating that Haman appealed with tears to Mordecai for mercy, but in vain, proceeds to tell us that Haman thereupon began a great weeping and lamentation for himself in the garden of the palace. And thereupon is added: "He answered and spake thus: Hear me, ye trees and all ye plants, which I have planted since the days of the creation. The son of Hammedatha is about to ascend to the lecture-room of Ben Pandera."

Tree after tree excuses itself from being the hanging-post of Haman; finally the cedar proposes that Haman be hanged on the gallows he had set up for Mordecai.

[1] The A. V. reads: "And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon."

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Here again, as in the case of Balaam ben Beor, we have as protagonist a character who was ever

regarded as one of the most inveterate enemies of the Jews -- Haman ben Hammedatha. With haggadic license Haman is represented as being in the midst of the "garden" in the midst of the "trees"; and yet it is Yahweh himself (though indeed there seems to be some strange confusion between the persons of Yahweh and Haman in the narrative) who addresses the trees "which I have planted since the days of the creation," and who announces that Haman is "about to ascend to the lecture-room of Ben Pandera."

The word translated by "lecture-room" is *aksandria*, which Levy in his "Wörterbuch" connects with Alexandria, but which Laible says[1] must be explained by *εξεδρα*, the regular term for the lecture room or lecture place of a philosopher; and certainly Laible here seems to give the more appropriate meaning, for what can Alexandria have to do in this connection?

"The lecture-room of Ben Pandera" is then evidently a jesting synonym of the gallows, which in this particular case was not made of wood, otherwise the trees could not all have excused themselves. Here then again, according to Jewish tradition, Ben Pandera was hanged and not crucified, for the word gallows expressly excludes all notion of crucifixion. It is indeed a remarkable fact that the point which is above all others so minutely laboured in Christian tradition, the pivot of Christian dogmatics, is consistently ignored by Jewish tradition.

It is also a point of great interest for us in this strange story that the same or very similar elements

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 91.



appear in some of the forms of the Toldoth Jeschu, in which we find that the body of Jeschu cannot be hanged on any tree because he had laid a spell upon them by means of the Shem; the plants, however, had not been brought under this spell, and so the body was finally hung on a "cabbage-stalk."

That there is some hidden connection between this apparently outrageously silly legend and the Haman haggada is evident, but what that connection originally was it seems now impossible to discover. There may even be some "mystic" element at bottom of it all, as the "garden" and "trees" seem to suggest; and in this connection we must remember that there is much talk of a "garden" in the Toldoth, and that, as we have already seen from Tertullian ("De Spect," c. xxx.), there was some well-known early Jewish legend connected with a "gardener" who abstracted the body— "that his lettuces might not be damaged by the crowds of visitors," as the Bishop of Carthage adds ironically while yet perchance unintentionally preserving the "lettuce" and "cabbage-stalk" link of early legend-evolution.

As on the surface and in the letter all this is utter nonsense, we can only suppose that originally there must have been some under-meaning to such a strange farrago of childish fancies; we will therefore return to the subject when dealing with the general features of the Toldoth. Meanwhile the Talmud stories relating to the disciples and followers of Jesus must engage our attention.