

## PREFACE

By a strange quirk of history until recently the average Christian has tended to know more about the period between the Babylonian exile and the time of Jesus than has the average Jew. Because of the presence of the Books of the Maccabees in the Apocrypha some of their leading characters were regarded as pre-Christian heroes and martyrs along with the mighty men of the Old Testament. The works of Josephus, especially after Whiston's translation in Authorised Version style (1736), became recognized Sunday reading in stricter Christian homes. Both these sources remained unknown to the average Jew, until the rise of Zionism brought the story of the Maccabees back into favour.

Knowledge has seldom, however, meant understanding, even of the Biblical sources involved. This was partly due to the anti-Judaism which so quickly reared its ugly head in the Church. This was intensified last century by Wellhausen's views on post-exilic Judaism derived from his Hegelian presuppositions; this prevented several generations of scholars from doing justice to the ever increasing volume of information on the period.

This book seeks to serve a double purpose. On the one hand it tries to make the post-exilic books of the Bible more comprehensible so far as this can be done without a detailed exegesis. On the other it seeks to discover the main reasons why Palestinian Jewry rejected Jesus at least in the person of its leaders and why it went down to ruin less than forty years later. It is not one more history of the period, for there are enough of them, nor is it a description of the Judaism that lies behind the New Testament and modern Jewish Orthodoxy alike. Here again sufficient work has been done by others.

Most of the material has appeared in *The Hebrew Christian*, the quarterly journal of the International Hebrew Christian Alliance. In its present form the work is intended as a tribute to the organization for its Jubilee.

Since the book is intended for non-technical readers, Jehovah is used in preference to Yahweh and the traditional form of reference will be found for Josephus, for most readers will find Whiston's translation most readily available. Though the name Palestine was not applied to the whole country until after Bar Kochba's revolt, it has been used for the sake of simplicity.

Since there has been no desire to provide a detailed picture of the New Testament background, the last chapter could have been omitted. It was felt, however, that a brief outline of the last tragic years of the Jewish commonwealth was in place. Owing to the way in which the work came into being a certain amount of repetition was unavoidable, but it is hoped that it will not be found disturbing.

Those wishing a more directly historical presentation of the subject will find it in, among others, E. Bevan, *Jerusalem under the High Priests* and F. F. Bruce, *Israel and the Nations*. The most thorough treatment is in Vol. II of Oesterley and Robinson, *A History of Israel*. For those wishing details of the Qumran discoveries F. F. Bruce, *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls* is probably the most suitable work.

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