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According to St Matthew

Douglas R. A. Hare

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BY

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PREFACE

It has long been recognized that the Gospel according to St Matthew has intensified the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. It has frequently been suggested that this intensification reflects the continuing struggle between the Church and the synagogue, a struggle which constitutes an important part of the *Sitz im Leben* of the First Gospel. One aspect of this matter which has seldom, if ever, received sustained and thorough treatment is the theme of Jewish persecution of Christians, a theme which occurs repeatedly in Matthew's gospel. The intention of the present study is to subject this Matthean theme to careful scrutiny, with two questions primarily in mind: (1) Has Matthew exaggerated the severity of the persecution? and (2) How has the persecution influenced Matthew's theology?

The first part of the study is consequently strictly historical. In view of many exaggerated and inaccurate statements concerning the suffering imposed upon Christians by Jews, there is a great need for a reappraisal of the historical data relating to this persecution, in order to establish as accurately as possible the nature and extent of the conflict. Chapter I prepares for this historical study by examining the sociological presuppositions of persecution as related to the Jewish community. In order to evaluate properly the Matthean portrayal of persecution, we must then, in chapter II, examine the evidence found in sources other than Matthew. Here we shall be dependent primarily upon Christian sources, since they alone make explicit reference to the conflict. This is unfortunate, since the Christian accounts are clearly biased and consequently a poor foundation for an objective study. Some control, however, can be provided by rabbinic texts, which, when used with caution as regarding date, can enable us to establish to a limited extent the patterns of synagogue discipline employed in the first century. Rabbinic allusions to the *Minim* provide some indication of the methods used by the rabbis to control nonconformity. Employing both Christian and Jewish sources, we shall examine individually the kinds of ill-treatment attributed to Jews by Christian authors. Attention will also be paid to questions of incidence,

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geography and chronology, the role of Jewish religious leadership, and the role of Jews in Gentile persecution of Christians.

When a historical reconstruction of the persecution has been completed to the extent permitted by our sources, we shall then turn to the relevant passages in the Gospel according to St Matthew. Since we must be careful to distinguish between inherited traditions and the editor's own contributions to the theme, chapter III will of necessity be an essay in *Redaktionsgeschichte*. On the basis of our findings, we shall then evaluate Matthew's portrayal of the persecution by reference to the conclusions reached in the preceding chapter. This will complete the historical study.

The remaining chapters will explore the theological perspective from which Matthew views the conflict. Chapter IV will attempt to establish Matthew's answer to the question, 'Why persecution?' Chapter V will investigate the relationship between Matthew's experience of persecution and his doctrine of Israel and the Church. The Matthean emphasis upon loving one's enemies will be briefly examined. Conclusions will be drawn concerning the relationship between persecution and eschatology in Matthew's thought.

While many of the conclusions reached in this investigation are necessarily tentative because of the inadequacy of the evidence, the author hopes that the study will contribute to a clearer understanding of the conflict between the Church and the synagogue in the first century and to a firmer grasp of Matthew's theology.

Although there have been minor alterations and additions, this work is substantially a doctoral dissertation submitted to the faculty of Union Theological Seminary in New York in 1965. In its present form it is respectfully dedicated to W. D. Davies, who served as chief adviser during the preparation of the dissertation. I am indebted to Professor Davies, not only for his scholarly wisdom and tactful guidance, but also, and especially, for his gracious encouragement and support.

Helpful suggestions regarding this study were offered by Professors J. Louis Martyn and Samuel L. Terrien of Union Theological Seminary. Gratitude must also be expressed to three other teachers, F. C. Grant, George Johnston and John Knox. Although not consulted in connection with the present

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study, they were largely responsible for preparing the author for research in this area.

Most of the writing was done since I became employed by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. I should like to express here my gratitude to President Donald G. Miller, Dean Gordon E. Jackson, and my colleagues in the Biblical Division, who lightened my responsibilities so that this work might be completed.

I should like to thank my typists, Mrs Audrey Jones, Mrs Claire Price and Mrs Arline Wylie for careful work cheerfully performed. Mr Charles C. Hendricks, B.D., a graduate student, has been of great assistance in the preparation of the indices. My last word of appreciation goes to my wife for her help in the tedious tasks of reading proof and preparing the bibliography.

D. R. A. H.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- Ant.* Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*.
- Bauer* W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Literature*. Translation and adaptation of Walter Bauer’s *Griechisch–Deutsches Wörterbuch*, fourth edition.
- Beg.* F. J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, part 1.
- Bell.* Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*.
- Blass–Debrunner–Funk* F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. A translation and revision of the ninth–tenth German edition by R. W. Funk.
- Ecc. Hist.* Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*.
- E.G.T.* *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, edited by W. R. Nicoll.
- H.T.R.* *Harvard Theological Review*.
- J.B.L.* *Journal of Biblical Literature*.
- J.B.R.* *Journal of Bible and Religion*.
- J.E.* *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*.
- J.E.H.* *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*.
- Jos.* Josephus.
- J.Q.R.* *Jewish Quarterly Review*.
- J.T.S.* *Journal of Theological Studies*.
- N.E.B.* *The New English Bible New Testament*.
- N.T.S.* *New Testament Studies*.
- par.* and parallel(s).
- R.G.G.* *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*.
- R.S.V.* *The Holy Bible*. Revised Standard Version.
- S.–B.* H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*.

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ABBREVIATIONS

T.D.N.T. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. A translation of Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* by G. W. Bromiley.

T.L. *Theologische Literaturzeitung*.

T.W.N.T. *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, edited by G. Kittel.

Z.A.W. *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*.

Z.N.W. *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*.

Z.T.K. *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*.

Abbreviations now commonly accepted for the Dead Sea Scrolls are listed by A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran*, p. 421.