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978-1-108-03968-0 - *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance*

A. Lukyn Williams

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A. Lukyn Williams (1853–1943) presents here a wide range of examples of Christian apologetic writings about Judaism. Taking material from the earliest years of the Christian Church until the Renaissance, the book investigates sources with Syriac, Greek, Spanish, and Latin origins. It includes observations on lost or possible books such as the first 'Book of Testimonies' posited by J. Rendel Harris (with whom Williams did not fully agree) which pre-dated the Biblical Gospels; incomplete early treatises; and scriptural extracts. Concerned more with historical detail than with exegesis, Williams' study provides extensive scholarly commentaries on all the texts included and covers possible dates of origin, sources, intended audience, and biographical information about the authors. First published in 1935 with the aim of offering source material in an area often neglected by scholars, the book remains a useful resource for students and scholars of Christian–Jewish relations.

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The statues of the Church and Synagogue at Strasbourg, the former standing upright with cross in one hand and chalice in the other, and the latter in a dejected attitude with bandaged eyes, broken staff and the tables of the law falling from her left hand.

From P. Weber, *Geistliches Schauspiel und Kirchliche Kunst*, by permission of Paul Neff Verlag.

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UNTIL THE RENAISSANCE

by

A. LUKYN WILLIAMS, D.D.

HON. CANON OF ELY

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IN MEMORIAM
FRANCISCI CRAWFORD BURKITT, D.D.
IN UNIVERSITATE CANTABRIGIENSI
PROFESSORIS NORRISIANI
RELIGIOSI ERUDITI
AMICI MAECENATIS
MEDIO IN LABORE ABREPTI
AD MAIOREM DEI GLORIAM

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I regret that although I originally intended to include some remarks on the following Treatises I inadvertently failed to do so.

A. L. W.

March 1936

GREEK

Euthymius Zigabenus, monk at Constantinople, † after 1118. *Panoplia*, ch. viii. Migne, *P.G.* cxxx. 258–306. Academic. Quotations from earlier Fathers.

LATIN

Fulbert, Bp of Chartres, † 1028. *Tractatus C. Judaeos. P.L.* cxli. 306–318. Slight; on Gen. xlix. 10. Some Jews suppose it to refer to the authority of Jewish householders.

William of Champeaux, Bp of Châlons-sur-Marne, † 1121. *Dialogus sive Altercatio cujusdam Christiani cum Judaeo de fide Catholica. P.L.* clxiii. 1045–1072 (in *opuscula dubia*). Interesting (e.g. the Nut, coll. 1048D).

Guibert of Nogent, † not later than 1124. *Tractatus de Incarnatione adversus Judaeos. P.L.* clvi. 490–527. Academic.

Odo, Bp of Cambrai, † 1135. *Disputatio c. Judaeum Leonem nomine de adventu Christi filii Dei. P.L.* clx. 1103–1112. About the Atonement, and a little about the Virginity of B.V.M. Interesting, probably based on a real discussion.

Rupert of Deutz, † 1135. *Annulus sive Dialogus inter Christianum et Judaeum. P.L.* clxx. 561–610. (3rd Book.) Apparently only academic.

Richard of St Victor, † 1173. *De Emmanuele libri duo. P.L.* cxcvi. 601–666. On Isa. vii. 14 only.

Walter de Meula de Castellione, † c. 1200. *Tractatus sive Dialogus magistri Gualteri Turnacensis et Balduini Valentianensis c. Judaeos. P.L.* ccix. 423–458.

Alanus de Insulis, † 1203. *Contra haereticos libri quattuor. Liber tertius c. Judaeos. P.L.* ccx. 399–422.

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PREFACE

I thank my many friends and acquaintances who have suffered my importunity in seeking information from them: in particular Mr Herbert Loewe, Reader in Rabbinics in the University of Cambridge; Dr E. J. Thomas, of the University Library; and my old friend and pupil, the Rev. L. Zeckhausen, of the Church Missions to Jews.

I am also most grateful to the Managers of the Hort Fund, to the University Press, and especially to Dr F. C. Burkitt (whose loss is deplored by the whole University), for substantial assistance in the publication of this book, and to the Editors of the *Church Quarterly Review* and the *Churchman* for permission to use three or four papers published in their journals.

Since my manuscript was completed Dr James Parkes has published the first volume of his comprehensive survey of *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: a study in the origins of antisemitism* (1934). At first I was afraid that he would have made my own work superfluous. But our aims are so different that this is not the case. He has attempted "to present all, not a selection, of the known facts of Jewish-Christian relations", laying special stress on the legislation affecting the Jews in the first eight or nine centuries of our era. My study is very limited, and is concerned solely with the endeavours of certain Churchmen to win Jews to Christ by their writings, or, at least, to protect Christians against the arguments of their Jewish neighbours. The two books are complementary. Dr Parkes concludes that Anti-Semitism is almost entirely the fault of the Church. I am concerned to show that she did take an intellectual, and often a devout, interest in the spiritual welfare of the Jews around her. After reading his book I have added a few references in the notes. I am also deeply indebted to him for calling my attention to an unpublished manuscript of Jacob of Serug, and for permitting me to use the information he gives about it.

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September 1935

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INTRODUCTION

We Christians, who believe that our religion is the One Religion for Jews, Mohammedans and all the world, wonder sometimes what means our forefathers in the Faith used to present it to non-Christian peoples. The ordinary histories, no doubt, tell us of the courage and devotion with which they offered themselves for personal work in foreign lands, and of the marvellous success which was often granted to them. But of their literary efforts to further their cause we are told comparatively little.

Nowhere is this more true than in work among the Jews. Every one knows that Justin Martyr wrote in the middle of the second century a *Dialogue with Trypho*, a document purporting to give an account of his discussion with a Jew whom he met at Ephesus, and, in fact, showing first-hand knowledge of the difficulties felt by Jews in accepting Christianity. But most readers stop there, and many even suppose that Christians did little more by their writings to convince Jews of the truth until the beginning of the nineteenth century. The fact, of course, is that innumerable treatises were composed throughout the whole interval.

The present volume is an attempt to indicate briefly the nature of some of these treatises, as well as the circumstances which called them forth. For it is unfitting that the learning and zeal of the authors of such books should be forgotten. Another reason indeed might be suggested, that the study of these documents will not only recall to the minds of readers their duty to the Jewish nation, but also supply arguments likely to be of assistance in their presentation of the Faith. But, to speak candidly, these writings are not of as much practical help as might have been expected. The arguments too often resemble the armour of mediaeval knights to be of any use to twentieth-century protagonists. Here and there, no doubt, a weapon may be found, which, though blunted by long and unskilful usage, may, when sharpened in its edge or modified in its form, prove of some value. But, in general, the missionary of to-day will find little in these old writers which he can still dare to use. Modern weapons in our spiritual warfare are not only different, but, for our own day, incomparably better.

The origin of this book lies in some lectures given many years ago to a class of young men preparing for Christian work among

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the Jews. For it was desirable that they should know something of what others had done before them, and both learn the mistakes of their predecessors, and also perhaps find some hints as to the best method of approach to those whom they desired to serve. But I was appointed to another sphere of work, and my lectures had perforce to cease, and although I kept an eye open for allusions to the subject, it was only long afterwards that I had leisure and opportunity to return seriously to it.

What then has been written with the object either of winning Jews to Christ, or, at least, of enabling Christians both to understand and to withstand the attacks of Jews upon the Christian Faith? For Jews have never been backward in attack. It will be self-understood that it was not possible to include in our study of the subject such casual expositions of Old Testament passages as are to be found in commentaries or in sermons, even though many of the commentators and preachers have had Jews expressly in mind. It has therefore been necessary to confine the study to whole treatises directly or indirectly concerned with Jews and Judaism.

Yet even here there have been further limitations.

For I have been unable either to see the many manuscripts preserved in various libraries, whether published or not, or to obtain photographs of them. This book therefore deals only with such treatises as were written from the first century of our era to the beginning of the Renaissance, and are available in print. It is also probable that I have not been able to trace even some of these, particularly if they have been published in languages of which I have no knowledge.

It will also be understood that it is not proposed to discuss the right or wrong use of the specific passages quoted by any author from the Old Testament. That is the task of the Bible commentator. Yet the relation of their use in general to the modern methods of interpretation will be apparent on almost every page.

It must be confessed that the subject appeals at first sight only to students of the Bible; or, rather, only to that small section of these which takes an interest in the historical development of Biblical exegesis, and again, and more particularly, to those very few students who desire to apply their knowledge of the Bible to the Christian's task of winning all nations (including the Jewish nation) to faith in Christ.

Yet the subject may well appeal to a much wider class of readers. For example, the present writer, at least, has wished again and

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again that he had a good knowledge of Roman Law, and also of the gradual development of the Latin tongue into the Romance languages; and, again, that he had mastered the geographical and ethnological peculiarities of Syria and Mesopotamia; also, that he understood more of the relations of the Syrian Church to that of Southern Egypt during the fourth to the seventh century; and, again, that he was well acquainted with the history of early mediaeval "France", and the character of its society; and even that he knew more of the origins of the Drama in Northern Europe; and, further, that he had an intimate acquaintance with the history of the latter years of the Eastern Empire.

Besides such details there has continuously been before him the question of the Bible text used by the Christian writers, whether this were of the precise form of the Greek version of the Old Testament which they used, or that of the Syriac version of the New Testament, or even that of the Latin versions, Old Latin or Vulgate. Philosophy, also, as it developed for better or for worse, has had its claims, and, naturally, the growth of Jewish, and especially of Jewish Antichristian, interpretation of the Scriptures. All these subjects have had to be considered by the author, and his attempts to study them have, at least, shown him his own ignorance of "what every schoolboy knows". Yet as he himself has experienced their absorbing interest, so he hopes that some of this may be shared by his readers. In every case he has tried to indicate where fuller information may be found.

It is not improbable that the reader may at first receive an impression of sameness as he studies the various treatises considered in this volume, but further examination will show him that there is not one among them which has not something peculiar to itself, something different from all its predecessors and successors. The writers are, in fact, no mere copyists of other men's productions. Indeed, it is very seldom that we are able to trace any copying at all. Whether this was due to distance, or to difference in language, or of moral environment, or, as is probable, to two or three of these causes together, is not clear. But such is the fact. Of course there is often a great similarity in the interpretation of Biblical passages, which has given rise to the rather careless assumption on the part of modern writers that the later author used the earlier; but in reality, as is often pointed out in the following pages, this affords little or no evidence of literary connexion, but only of the permanence of the same methods of interpreting Scripture which had prevailed in the Church almost, or quite, from the very first.