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978-1-108-03973-4 - *Hermas in Arcadia and the Rest of the Words of Baruch*

J. Rendel Harris

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Hermas in Arcadia and the Rest of the Words of Baruch

Much of the work of James Rendel Harris (1852–1941), palaeographer and biblical scholar, focused on the translation and understanding of early Christian writing, and this collection of two volumes of essays examines two key texts. The first work in this reissue, published in 1896, discusses the book known as ‘The Shepherd of Hermas’. This early work, thought to be written in Rome around the first or second century CE, is composed of three parts: visions, commandments and similitudes. Harris examines aspects of the work, such as how to interpret the ninth similitude – as allegory or literally – and discusses in detail questions about translation. Themes of other essays include the legendary library of Prester John in Abyssinia, the third-century writer Gaius the Presbyter and problems surrounding the fourth-century Codex Euthalianus. The second work, published in 1889, is concerned with the apocalyptic language in the book of Baruch.

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PREFACE.

IN the following pages I have reprinted two essays which throw some light on critical problems connected with the text and interpretation of that famous early Christian book, known as the Shepherd of Hermas. Each of them has been the starting point for important investigations by the leading scholars of our time; and I have endeavoured to indicate the accretions or corrections which they have made to my first statements, so that the student may not only have before him the texts of my researches, which are extant, sometimes in very brief form, in journals not very easy of access, but may also be able to bring the investigations up to their latest point of development.

Of these two essays the first appeared in June 1887 in the *Journal of the Society for Biblical Literature and Exegesis* (Boston, U.S.A.); the second is three years earlier in date; it was first printed in the *Circulars of the Johns Hopkins University* for April 1884, a publication containing many valuable notes on all branches of science, but not generally accessible, nor easy to handle. If the brief paper in question were estimated by the combat of giants which it provoked, I think it would be admitted that it was worth reprinting.

To these I have added a number of other pieces which may, perhaps, be found useful by the critics. Where they do not permanently instruct, they may transitorily please; and where the matter of them may seem to be unimportant, the method will sometimes be found deserving of consideration.

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