

**FORERUNNERS AND RIVALS OF
CHRISTIANITY: BEING STUDIES IN
RELIGIOUS HISTORY FROM 330
B.C. TO 330 A.D. IN TWO
VOLUMES, VOL. I**

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I

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BEING
STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS HISTORY
FROM 330 B.C. TO 330 A.D.

BY

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"The ghosts of words and dusty dreams"

"Old memories, faiths infirm and dead"

SWINBURNE, *Félicie*.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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PREFACE

THE following pages are a modest attempt to bring before the public certain documents of great importance for the understanding of the growth and development of the Christian religion. They are not new, almost all of them having been translated at one time or another into English, French, German, or Italian: but they are all practically unknown save to scholars, are all fragmentary, and with hardly an exception, are difficult to understand without a running commentary. In these circumstances, I have ventured to follow, not for the first time, the advice given by Sir Gaston Maspero to his pupils in one of his luminous lectures at the Collège de France. "If" said in effect that great master of archæology, "you find yourselves in the presence of scattered and diverse examples of any monument you cannot understand—funerary cones, amulets of unusual form, hypocephali, or anything else—make a collection of them. Search museums, journals of Egyptology, proceedings of learned societies, until you think they have no more novelties of the kind to offer you. Then put those you have collected side by side and study them. The features they have in common will then readily appear and in a little time you will find that you will perceive not only the use of the objects in question, but also the history of their development, their connexion with each other, and their relative dates." This has been the end aimed at in this book; and although, like most aims in this world, it has not been perfectly achieved, it may, I think, be said with confidence

that these documents explain and supplement one another in a remarkable degree, and that in the majority of cases sense can now be read into what at first sight seemed to be nonsense. As more fragments of the same kind come to light, also, one has fair reason to hope that those points which are still obscure may be made clear.

The system of references adopted perhaps calls for some explanation. As I have no right to expect my readers to take what I say for gospel, I should have preferred to give my authority for every statement made by me in the text. But there are often many authorities supporting the same statement, and some discrimination between them was necessary unless these two volumes were to be swollen to an intolerable length. The same consideration for brevity, too, has often led me to quote at second or third hand rather than at first. References to well-known passages in the more widely read classical writers and Christian Fathers are not needed by scholarly readers, while to others they are difficult to check or verify. I have therefore deliberately and of choice preferred the less recondite sources to the more recondite, and have never hesitated to refer the reader to encyclopaedias, popular lectures, and the works avowedly addressed to the general public of writers like Renan and Mahaffy, rather than to the sources from which they have themselves drawn their information. In so doing, however, I have never consciously failed to check the statement quoted with the original source, and to see, so far as in me lay, that it correctly represents its purport. A fairly long experience has convinced me that to many readers the "Apoll. Rhod. ac Nigid. Schuster, p. 41" and the "Clemens de div. serv. Su 20" dear to certain German professors and their English admirers mean very little, and to the greater public nothing at all. For the translations which appear in the text or notes I have gleaned from all sources, but, except where expressly

mentioned, I must personally accept all responsibility for them, and in cases in which any doubt seemed possible I have generally added the words of the original document.

Finally, I have not attempted to impress my own opinion on my readers, but merely to give them the material on which they can form their own; and where I have found myself in doubt as to what the facts of the case really were, I have never scrupled to say so. This is not a counsel of perfection, but the one which on the whole seemed to me best. If by doing so I have succeeded in sending to the documents themselves a few readers hitherto ignorant of them, I shall think I have not wasted my time.

F. LEGGE.

6 GRAY'S INN SQUARE,
July 1914.

P.S. The outbreak of the war has caused the publication of this book to be postponed. I regret the delay the less that it has enabled me to make use of several works and studies which have appeared during the last twelve months.

F. L.

ERRATA

VOL. I.

- p. 121, l. 5, for Xerxes read Darius.
p. 141, n. 4, for Prof. C. R. B. Weidmann read Prof. Carl Robert.

VOL. II.

- p. 18, n. 2, for cc. III, xxxl Justin Martyr read cc. III, xxxi; Justin Martyr.
p. 36, n. 1, for Isidore Loeb, *La Cabbale juive*, p. 587. F. Herman Krüger, *La Grande Encyclopédie*, s.v. Gnosticisme read Isidore Loeb, *La Grande Encyclopédie*, s.v. La Cabbale juive; *ibid.* F. Herman Krüger, s.v. Gnosticisme.
p. 37, n. 1, for Thou the King, the Aeon of Aeons read Thou King, Aeon of Aeons.
p. 38, n. 3, for Introduction (pp. xx—xxiii) read Introduction (pp. lx—lxiii).
p. 69, n. 3, for השטמה read השטמה.
p. 72, l. 4, for boundless read thoughtless.
p. 102, l. 22, for Ecclesiasticis read Ecclesiasticus.
p. 129, n. 3, for Canons read Canon.
p. 146, l. 17, for its read Its.
p. 146, n. 2, for the Five Words, translated in the text read the five words translated in the text.
p. 166, n. 2, for 18 Eons read 18 Aeons.
p. 174, l. 1, for die read dies.
p. 183, l. 10, for Books read Texts.
p. 200, l. 10, for Pistis Sophia read Texts of the Saviour.
p. 338, n. 2, for *Journal des Savants* read *Journal des Savans*.