

**JUDAISTIC
CHRISTIANITY; A
COURSE OF LECTURES**

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Judaistic Christianity; a course of lectures by Fenton John Anthony Hort

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A COURSE OF LECTURES

BY

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PREFACE.

DURING the last few years of Dr Hort's life he regularly chose as one of the subjects for his professorial lectures some special aspect of the history of the Apostolic and post-Apostolic age. In this way he traced at one time the various stages in the emancipation of the Church from the trammels of Judaism, and at another the gradual evolution of the conception of an Universal Ecclesia and of ecclesiastical organization. These lectures were not, I believe, primarily designed for publication, but they afforded a convenient opportunity for summarizing and bringing to a focus the results of a lifetime devoted to the patient and single-minded consideration of these fundamental questions. This volume contains the two courses which were devoted to the first of these subjects.

When the end of the academic term brought the first course to a conclusion far short of the goal which he had originally contemplated, he had just reached the discussion of the evidence to be derived from the Epistle to the Romans. As he had recently delivered a full course of lectures on the introduction to that Epistle, he had no occasion to do more than indicate the main conclusions at which he had arrived with regard to it.

The second course, after a careful recapitulation of the points already discussed, carried the treatment of the subject as far as the rise of Helxism. Here again he reached a topic which he had already discussed in detail in a course of lectures on the Clementine *Recognitions*, and a brief reference to results already established sufficed, not indeed to fill in the whole of the outline sketched in the opening lecture of the first course, but at least to indicate his conclusions on every point of primary importance in relation to his main subject.

These lectures cover ground which has been for the last fifty years the chosen battlefield of controversialists. Yet they are not, at least in any partisan sense, controversial. They are constructive. Their object is simply to review the facts of the Apostolic history in relation to a single clearly defined issue, and to restate them in the fresh light shed on them by fifty years of free and fearless discussion.

Dr Hort had a genuine admiration for the genius of F. C. Baur, from whom the whole discussion started, and a generous appreciation of the debt that modern theology owes him for leading the way in the effort to interpret Christian documents in the light of the historical situation out of which they sprang. But he was very far from accepting Baur's conclusions. His own judgement was formed in each case independently after patient consideration of the whole evidence, and with intimate knowledge

of the whole course that discussion had taken both in England and on the Continent.

His ultimate verdict, as these lectures shew, was entirely in favour of the genuineness and the historical accuracy of all the leading Christian documents. Accordingly, though he recognized frankly the force of the objections urged against the generally received tradition with regard to some of the New Testament writings, and indicated with scrupulous accuracy the different degrees of confidence with which he held particular propositions, his reconstruction follows in the main the lines with which Englishmen are traditionally familiar. What is unique in this reconstruction is the clearness with which he grasps the problem set before the Gentile Church by its relation to the Law, and his sympathetic insight into the parts played by the Apostolic leaders during the period of transition before the Old Order had finally given place to the New.

It is enough in this connexion to call attention to his analysis of the grounds of St Peter's conduct in the famous altercation at Antioch (p. 77), to his account of the incidents connected with St Paul's last visit to Jerusalem (p. 105), and above all to his subtle and masterly investigation of the character and sources of the false teaching attacked in the Epistle to the Colossians and in the Pastoral Epistles, questions on which, at least in England, Bishop Lightfoot's conclusions have perhaps too readily been accepted as final.