

Preface

Some years ago I came across the phrase “without prejudice” in a legal document pertaining to the purchase of a small property. It seems to me that the phrase should apply to cases beyond the legal profession. The case between James and Paul, highlighted in the ensuing chapters of this book, should be handled “without prejudice.” I would like to think it has been so in the writing. I trust the reader will find it so as well. Yet I have discovered in the process of writing this book that an evenhanded interpretation of the primary and secondary sources related to the two chief figures under the spotlight is no small challenge.

The recent surge of research and writing about James the Just of Jerusalem has put Paul’s person and proclamation under a different microscope. In some investigations of James, cited throughout the chapters, Paul has become something of a villain, while James is elevated to supersainthood. I had become rather well acquainted with Paul through many years of teaching and writing, and had found him to be an imposing figure with determination and passion that propelled him in mission in the name of Jesus crucified and vindicated by resurrection. His tireless drive to draw people of the nations into community in the name of Jesus Messiah appealed to me. I found him

as one who stayed the course through perilous times. He became an inspiration.

James was something of a minor figure, or so I thought. He did not leave behind any writings from his own mind and hand. But there James was, large as life in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and present as well in the letters of Paul. His person and influence in the formative years of the Jesus movement were no small thing. Paul found that out the hard way. Today James is rediscovered. It is time to bring these two towering figures of the first century together without prejudice: to view them both as politically driven to find genuine identity.

I owe a great debt to the many scholars who have opened up the way to understand the dynamics between James and Paul. Many of them are referenced throughout the work. The group of emeriti professors who meet regularly at the Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg offered themselves as a sounding board for my musing about the internecine politics of Paul and James. Appreciation also to the leaders of an adult study group in Winnipeg for the invitation to present my findings in four sessions. I dare not forget my two good partners in the search for truth, Eckhart Goerz and Harold Dueck. Our hours-long coffee conversations have been invaluable. Among so many others deserving recognition, editor Neil Elliott of Fortress Press is singled out. His brilliant scholarship is well matched with his empathetic spirit. I am very grateful.

As always, my wife, Grace, stands with me in unflinching support. She has my heartfelt gratitude. My sons, Ralph and Brad, regularly inquired how the writing was coming along. Their interest in my work is a valued source of encouragement. To the reader, a hearty thank you for your partnership in the pursuit of truth and justice.

VGS

St. Andrews, MB
September 3, 2014