

MAKING AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY.

THE JEWS, (*Nelson*)

by

Rabbi Raymond Apple

In 105 pages the author of this book succeeds to a significant extent to make non-Jewish people, in at least the larger cities of Australia, as familiar with Jews and their customs as are the citizens of parts of U.S.A. In New York, as one would expect, Jewish people are fully integrated into society, and their language, customs, religious observances and Yiddish are not infrequently well known to the general community, and most are familiar with Jewish terms and observances.

Until the last forty or fifty years, and in some places today in Australia, Jewish customs, achievements and beliefs were generally very little known, or known adversely. A few celebrated figures were recognised as Jews, but on the whole our people were considered "a race apart". Fortunately there has been an improvement in knowledge of our beliefs, achievements, and customs, and our rights. One of the factors in this development has been the direct influence of the Rabbis and communal leaders who have embarked on a positive education programme to place the Jews and their beliefs in proper perspective. There are others, too, such as the efforts of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Jewish writers generally, communal organisations and civic participation on occasions.

This book by Rabbi Apple is designed to clarify the position of Jewish citizens as an integral part of the general community, the wide ranging contributions they have made at all times to the growth of Australia as part of their unique heritage from the past, and the basic principles of their religious beliefs.

Rabbi Apple leaves the reader in no doubt of the universality of Jewish culture and Jewish contributions to whatever country they inhabit as home, and he traces the parts they played in the Australian scene, from the country's inception in 1788, with the consummate skill we come to expect, and indeed get, from him.

All aspects of Jewish life from its origins in antiquity, its emergence in the Bible, and in the prison colony of N.S.W., to an honoured place in the professions and government, are treated with sympathetic understanding, clarity of expression and authority. It was obviously written to be understood — simple, factual, logical; it is one of a series to rank with others to make up a comprehensive picture of Australian society, and the part played by each component. "The Jews" is a worthy segment depicting the gradual development from a small band of men with a proud largely unknown heritage, to influential communities rich in material and spiritual assets, with developed traditional Jewish institutions, a general adherence to religious beliefs, and an awakening to the need to strengthen communal ties with synagogues and Torah.

The format of the book is attractive, convenient for study and reference.

The index is adequate and the suggested follow-up activities helpful. Pictures are carefully selected and add to the general appearance and effectiveness of the text.

I consider this book is a worthwhile addition to Jewish literature in Australia, worthy of a place in every library and school.

The comprehensive review by Louise Rosenberg (Great Synagogue, May, 1981) is such a well balanced analysis of historical events, that I consider it unnecessary to repeat the points so ably expressed by her. The two reviews taken in conjunction should do much to enlighten readers generally, and to remove misconceptions about Jewish beliefs and history.

M. H. Kellerman

AN AUSTRALIAN MINISTRY

by
Rabbi Fabian

An Australian Ministry by Rabbi Dr. Alfred Fabian is a worthy addition to the growing volume of literature on Australian Jewry by Australian authors.

The author, a Rabbi with extensive experience as a minister in three Australian States, and as a European scholar, presented his work in the form of an anthology. His material is carefully selected and classified into eight sections, five of them on Australian institutions, problems and development. In no sense can it be considered a history, but it portrays an historical sense inasmuch as it consists of a collection of sermons, articles and papers analysing, evaluating and criticising current events and social problems that constitute history.

"The Man and his Mission" could well be the title of the splendid review of this book written by Rabbi Apple. (Jewish Times, 2 April, 1981.) The reviewer highlights the application of the author's integrity, profound scholarship, and love of Judaism, keen logical powers of analysis, broad experience, and humane regard for his fellow man, to the diverse problems encountered by Jewry during the past forty years, and to his contribution towards improving our Jewish identity.

Rabbi Fabian displays a real historical sense, a keenness for well researched material and skill in selecting relevant and significant facts. Added to these are his logical approach to problems, his skill in presenting points of view, and his fine choice of language. The result is a series of topics, arranged thematically on vital questions exercising the minds of the community at the time — migration, growth of congregations, Israel, education, conferences and public opinion, and above all the practice of Judaism — the whole a valuable basis for the historical study of the development of the Australian Jewish population and its integration into world Jewry. If he had given us no more than the history of B'nai Berith,