

Alfred Edersheim: A Brief Biography

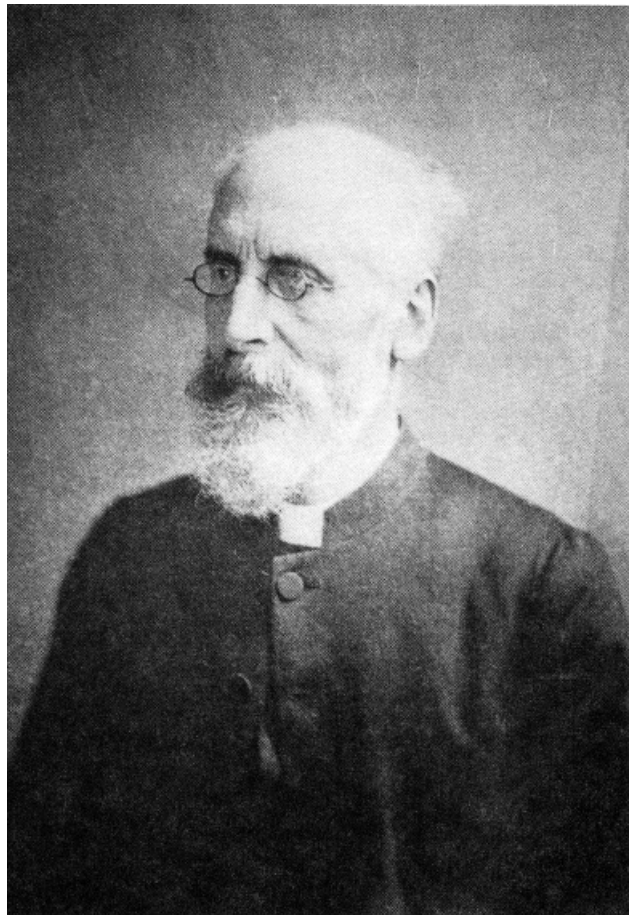
Eugene J. Mayhew

The written labors of Alfred Edersheim have had a profound impact on Bible teachers for over a century; however, his personal life has been shrouded in obscurity. A Jewish convert to true biblical Christianity, he now stands as one of the foremost Hebrew Christian scholars in the history of the Church. This article will provide a brief biography of this unique and gifted believer and will investigate the dynamics that produced such an outstanding scholar of the Old and New Testaments. It will also provide an extensive chronological list of his literary works.

Millions of Bible teachers, pastors and students have benefited from Edersheim's awesome accomplishments in biblical research. Mentioning his name is often associated with depth and trustworthiness in biblical backgrounds and the study of the life of Jesus Christ. A first-class scholar who was a lecturer at Oxford University, he also spent many years as a pastor of congregations in Scotland and England and served in Jewish evangelism in Romania. Even more than a century since his books were first published, many of them are still reprinted on a regular basis and regarded as standard sources by Bible scholars and theologians. Simply speaking, Alfred Edersheim has become a well-established "household" name in the world of biblical studies. His magnum opus, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* published in 1882, is still unparalleled and unsurpassed and stands as the finest work on the subject after 110 years!

With these outstanding accomplishments and his impact now continuing into a second century, several questions arise: Who was Alfred Edersheim? What was his background? Where did he minister? How did he acquire such an astounding

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Alfred Edersheim, D.D., Ph.D.
March 7, 1825-April 17, 1889

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insight into the life of Jesus of Nazareth? And finally, why is so little known about him? As a librarian emeritus from a large seminary once commented, "I have never come across a picture of him and have only found a few bits and pieces concerning his life in all my years in library

science."

This article will examine the life of Alfred Edersheim. Along with this author's recent discovery of a rare and longforgotten book *Tohu-Va-Vohu*, a collection of Alfred Edersheim's thoughts published posthumously in Edersheim's honor in 1890¹, a small work edited by his daughter including her overview of his life, and several other sources, a ...

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