



HEBREW MEDAL FOUND AT WORKINGTON ({}).

*Phot. by R.G.C.*

TO FACE P. 85.

ART. VII.—*A Hebrew Medal found at Workington.* By  
the REV. JAMES WILSON, M.A., LITT.D.

*Exhibited at Carlisle, June 27th, 1912.*

THIS medal, found by a workman last year at Mossbay, near Workington, and lent to me by the Rev. M. H. Banister, is now exhibited with the view of having it recorded in the Society's *Transactions*. It is due to the researches of Mr. G. F. Hill that its identification need cause us little difficulty. In his article on "Medallic Portraits of Christ," in *The Reliquary*, N.S. x., 260-9, he has traced the production of the medal to its source. It was issued not many years ago by an enterprising firm of stove manufacturers whose name and place of business may be for obvious reasons omitted. According to the advertisement:—

This medal is a facsimile of a remarkable coin made in the first century of the Christian era and contains a unique portrait of the Saviour. The original was discovered in the Campo dei Fiori (the Jew Market) in Rome.

In the sensational title of the printed sheet, the figure on the obverse is represented as "the first-century portrait of Christ, one of the earliest likenesses of our Lord." As the advertisement was widely circulated, the forgery was soon exposed in many lands.

The obvious intention of the figure on the obverse is to represent a portrait of Christ. The *aleph* on one side is taken as the first letter of *Adonai*, Lord, and the letters on the other as the initial letters of *Jeshua*, Jesus. The legend on the reverse for half its length is the plain Hebrew for "Christ the King has come in peace," but the latter part has given rise to speculation owing to the

clumsiness of the attempt to write Hebrew. In genuine medals of this nature, the normal inscription around the portrait is *Christus Rex venit in pace : Deus homo factus est*—Christ the King has come in peace; God was made man. It is thought that the second part was blundered by the designer as *veor meadam hassai chai*, which may be interpreted, so far as it is Hebrew, *and light was made of man*. The scholars, consulted by Mr. Hill, agree that the designer “knew little Hebrew.”

In order to emphasize the character of the production, the opinions of the authorities at the British Museum, to whom I sent the medal, may be added. Mr. Allan, of the Department of Coins and Medals, says:—

It is as you suggest of quite modern manufacture. Such medals first appear in the sixteenth century, but the great majority are of modern manufacture. I think this specimen is one of a large number issued as an advertisement by the . . . Co. some years ago, purporting to be a copy of a coin of the first century.

Dr. Barnett, of the Department of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts, takes the same view:—

As you rightly observe, the medal is a modern imitation. I myself remember seeing similar things being sold in the streets of London as facsimiles of a supposed ancient medal, which however was not ancient at all, but was merely a medieval concoction.

Though the thing has no local interest, it has been thought advisable to make a note of it, as it was found within the jurisdiction of our Society.