

A SHORT HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649125302

A short history of Christianity by Salomon Reinach & Florence Simmonds

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

SALOMON REINACH & FLORENCE SIMMONDS

A SHORT HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY

10115
R.

A SHORT HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY

FROM THE FRENCH OF
SALOMON REINACH

AUTHOR OF "APOLLO," ETC.

BY
FLORENCE SIMMONDS
OFFICIER D'ACADÉMIE



A Florentine painting of the fifteenth century
at Narbonne, France.

179777.

23.4.23

19 X 22

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

TO
N. C. B.
S. R.

Printed in Great Britain.

PREFACE

THIS study is founded on the five concluding chapters of *Orpheus, Histoire générale des Religions*, first published in 1909, of which, in spite of the war, more than 30,000 copies have been sold. It has been translated into English, German, Russian, Italian, Spanish and Swedish. Certain chapters of it have become somewhat antiquated; all require revision. While rewriting in part the history of Christianity, I have been careful not to alter its character as a sketch. The bibliography, an important feature even in such attempts, has been brought up to date.

Although I know more than I did thirteen years ago, my general ideas have not varied. Christianity, like all other religions, should be treated by history as a purely human institution; but it is the greatest of all, not excepting Buddhism, because it suits the temper of progressive and laborious nations, and adapts itself to the most various conditions of society. Civilisation and Christianity are united as by an indissoluble marriage tie. Whatever may have been the mishaps and misdeeds of dogmatic theology and ambitious priestcraft, things which I have not tried to conceal, it is certain that Christianity, while opposing a veto to unbridled and degraded superstition, has taught and teaches the world the only moral lessons accessible to every one, thus preserving and propagating the most enduring elements of Hebrew and Hellenic wisdom, and cleansing and softening the animal instincts of the human race. If those gospel lessons, though preached to thousands of millions for twenty centuries, have not yet been assimilated by mankind,

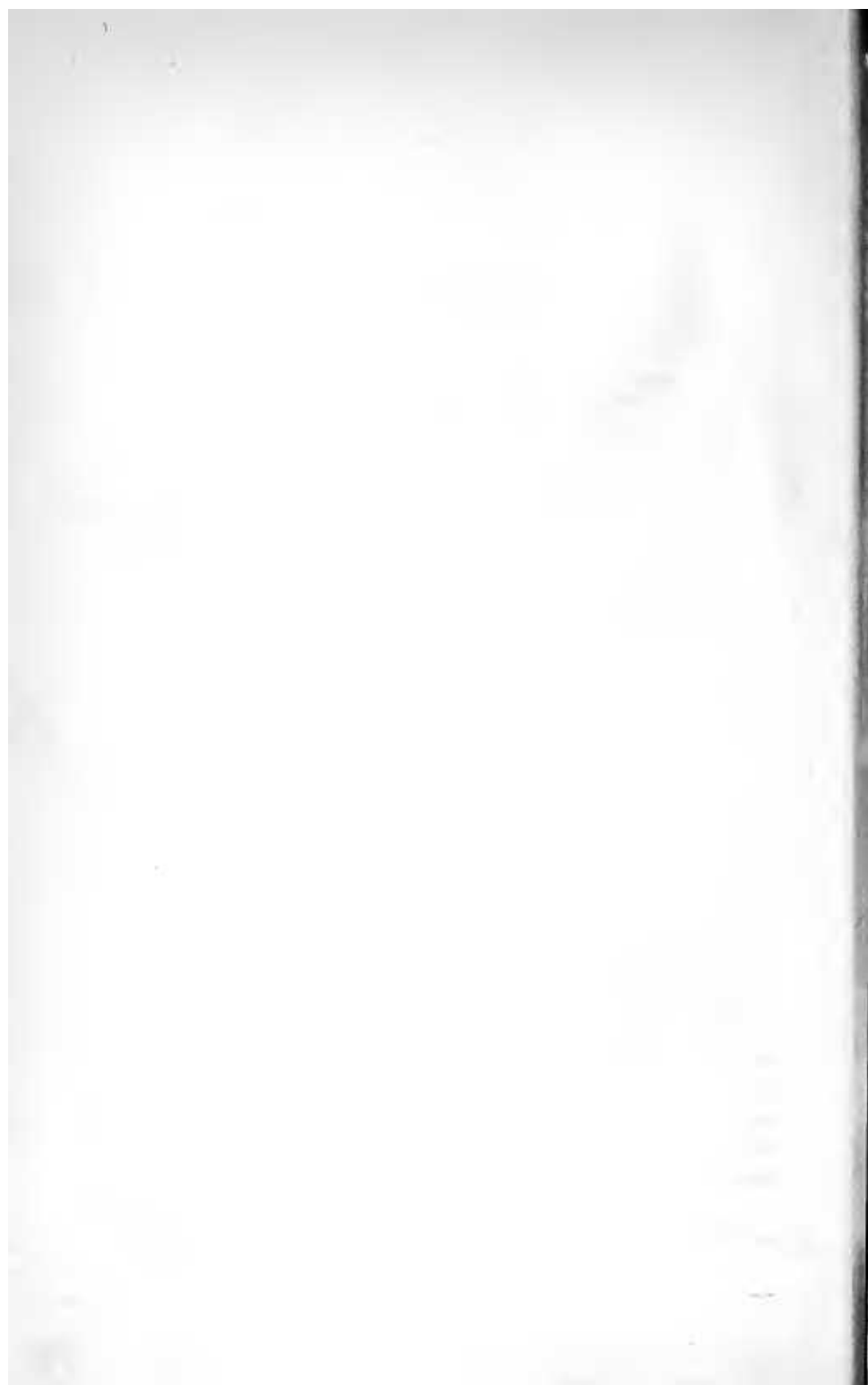
they have at least acted as a permanent antidote against egotism and cruelty. Their beneficent influence is not only a thing of the past, but of the future. I do not share the opinion that they have as yet been superseded by some sort of a lay philosophy or theosophy.

S. R.

St. Germain-en-Laye
March 1922.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I		PAGE
CHRISTIAN ORIGINS		1
CHAPTER II		
CHRISTIANITY: FROM ST. PAUL TO JUSTINIAN		40
CHAPTER III		
CHRISTIANITY: FROM JUSTINIAN TO CHARLES V		62
CHAPTER IV		
CHRISTIANITY: FROM LUTHER TO THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA		108
CHAPTER V		
CHRISTIANITY: FROM THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA TO THE CONDEMNATION OF MODERNISM		151
EPILOGUE		212
INDEX		217



CHAPTER I

CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

Myth and history—The Canon of the New Testament—The orthodox tradition as to the Evangelists—The conclusions of criticism on this point—The date of our Gospels—The synoptical Gospels—Testimony of Papias—The composition of the synoptical Gospels—The Fourth Gospel—The lack of historical authority for the Gospels—The idea of the Messiah—The silence of secular writers—The testimony of Tacitus—Uncertain chronology of the life of Jesus—Uncertainty as to His trial and death—The Docetes—The Christ of St. Paul—The supposed fulfilment of prophecies—The apocryphal Gospels—The Epistles of St. Paul—Chronology of St. Paul's apostolate—The Catholic Epistles—The Epistle of St. John and the verse of the "three witnesses"—The Apocalypse of St. John—The Apocalypse of St. Peter—Various Epistles—The Pastor of Hermas—The Symbols and the Doctrine of the Apostles—The pseudo-Clementine writings—Simon Magus—Antichrist.

1. THE beginning of every history is shrouded in legend; Christianity is no exception to the rule. The Churches insist that the legends of Christianity are pure history; if this were so, it would be the greatest of miracles.

2. Christianity belongs to a group of religions quite different from the official creeds of Judæa, Greece and Rome. The essential feature of the former group consists of initiation into the cult of a Saviour-God, who assumed human form, taught, suffered, died and rose from the dead; the reward of the initiated is salvation. Such were the religions of Osiris, Dionysos, Orpheus, Adonis, Attis, and the like. Christianity is the most recent of its class, the only perfectly moral and decent one, and the only one that has triumphed and survived. But it differs from all the others in a very striking peculiarity: the Saviour-God of the Christians lived in historical times, not in a remote, obscure and unattainable past. So what we may call, for analogy's sake, the *myth of Christ*, the evolution of which can be clearly traced from the time of St. Paul and of the Fourth Gospel, must be distinguished from the *history of Jesus*: