

**SOCRATES AND CHRIST, A  
STUDY  
IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF  
RELIGION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649707317

Socrates and Christ, a Study in the Philosophy of Religion by R. M. Wenley

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](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**R. M. WENLEY**

**SOCRATES AND CHRIST, A  
STUDY  
IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF  
RELIGION**



# SOCRATES AND CHRIST

*A STUDY IN THE PHILOSOPHY  
OF RELIGION*

BY

R. M. WENLEY, M.A.

LECTURER ON MENTAL AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN QUEEN MARGARET  
COLLEGE, GLASGOW; EXAMINER IN PHILOSOPHY IN  
THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON  
MDCCLXXXIX



## PREFACE.

---

THIS brief study, covering as it does a wide and pre-eminently important period of human history, is not in any way exhaustive. Of its shortcomings in many directions I am deeply sensible. Throughout, the design has been to group afresh ascertained facts, to exhibit their inter-connection, and to emphasise their essential differences, rather than to bring forward evidence which had been neglected or even unnoted hitherto. An attempt has been made to show that the development of Greek thought and the peculiar character of Judaism necessarily rendered Christ's work different from that of Socrates. While dogmatic theology undoubtedly contains very many elements derived from Greek philosophy, Christianity at its source is in no wise Greek. Philosophy partly prepared the way for it, and originated not a few doctrines which afterwards became incorporated in Christian dogma. This, however, was only a secondary relationship.

It has been my endeavour to eliminate doctrinal considerations as far as possible, and to lay stress on what is inherent in the Christian religion. As a study in the Philosophy of Religion,—which “seeks to ascertain how much of the content of religion may be discovered, proved, or at least confirmed, agreeably to reason,”—the book aims at being constructive and not controversial. No pretence is made to trench upon disputed points of creed.

I am indebted to many sources of information, and I have tried to indicate my main obligations in the notes. It need scarcely be said that without the venerable Zeller's monumental work this study could not have been undertaken. I should like to add that, in their various departments, the books of Drs Jowett, James Drummond, Kuenen, Wellhausen, and Keim, have been of the utmost assistance. But these writers are in no way to be held responsible for the errors into which I may have fallen.

It may be of interest to state that direction was first given to this review by the preparation of an essay to which the Rae-Wilson Medal at Glasgow University was awarded in 1883. But no part of that dissertation has been reproduced here.

R. M. W.

QUEEN MARGARET COLLEGE,  
GLASGOW, *May* 1889.



## CONTENTS.

---

CHAP.	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTORY—SOCRATES AND CHRIST, . . .	1
II. THE ANTECEDENTS OF SOCRATES, . . . .	13
III. THE MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY OF SOCRATES, . .	31
IV. FROM SOCRATES TO ZENO, . . . . .	70
V. THE SEARCH FOR INDEPENDENCE AND WISDOM, . .	83
VI. SCEPTICISM, COMPLACENCY, AND SUPERSTITION, .	126
VII. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONTACT BETWEEN JEW AND GREEK, . . . . .	149
VIII. PHILO-JUDEUS AND HIS SIGNIFICANCE, . . .	163
IX. THE JEWISH IDEAL OF GOD, . . . . .	183
X. JUDAISM AND JESUS, . . . . .	201
XI. SOCRATES AND CHRIST, . . . . .	236
INDEX, . . . . .	265



# SOCRATES AND CHRIST.



## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY—SOCRATES AND CHRIST.

SINCE the time of Bossuet's 'Histoire Universelle,' as Burnouf points out,<sup>1</sup> many have supposed the various forms of religion to be but corruptions of an original revelation. The Platonic doctrine of reminiscence was resuscitated after a fashion, and employed to explain the apparently inexplicable. If the Greek philosopher thought that man's sublimer moments were simply faint memories of a former pure state, the earlier modern investigators of the "science of religion" believed, similarly, that faith and worship were adaptations of a "primordial revelation." On this theory it would not be difficult to form a comparative estimate of any given religious system. For, if at the outset of the inquiry a *deus ex machinâ* be assumed, it is easy to deal with even the most formidable problems. But, unfortun-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. La Science des Religions, p. 81.