

CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649492459

Christianity and Islam by C. H. Becker

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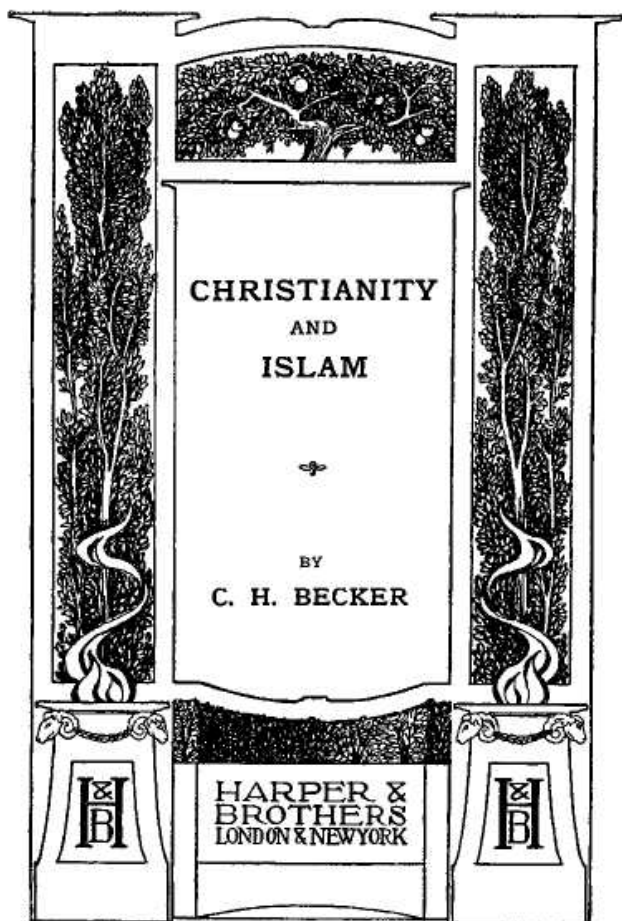
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C. H. BECKER

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HARPER &
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LONDON & NEW YORK

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CHRISTIANITY
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LONDON AND NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS
45 ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1909

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A COMPARISON of Christianity with Muhammedanism or with any other religion must be preceded by a statement of the objects with which such comparison is undertaken, for the possibilities which lie in this direction are numerous. The missionary, for instance, may consider that a knowledge of the similarities of these religions would increase the efficacy of his proselytising work: his purpose would thus be wholly practical. The ecclesiastically minded Christian, already convinced of the superiority of his own religion, will be chiefly anxious to secure scientific proof of the fact: the study of comparative religion from this point of view was once a popular branch of apologetics and is by no means out of favour at the present

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day. Again, the inquirer whose historical perspective is undisturbed by ecclesiastical considerations, will approach the subject with somewhat different interests. He will expect the comparison to provide him with a clear view of the influence which Christianity has exerted upon other religions or has itself received from them: or he may hope by comparing the general development of special religious systems to gain a clearer insight into the growth of Christianity. Hence the object of such comparisons is to trace the course of analogous developments and the interaction of influence and so to increase the knowledge of religion in general or of our own religion in particular.

A world-religion, such as Christianity, is a highly complex structure and the evolution of such a system of belief is best understood by examining a religion to which we have not been bound by a thousand ties from the earliest days of our lives. If we take an alien religion as our subject of