

**THE ROMANCE OF M.
RENAN, AND THE CHRIST
OF THE GOSPELS**

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The romance of M. Renan, and the Christ of the Gospels by Dr. Schaff & M. Napoleon Roussel

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1862*

Three Essays

BY
REV. DR. SCHIAFF AND M. NAPOLEON
ROUSSEL.

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NOTE BY THE AMERICAN EDITOR.*



THIS work is reprinted from the London Religious Tract Society's edition. The same reasons which made its publication desirable in England apply to American society. For, though M. Renan's work may not be very generally read among us, yet its thought and spirit are being largely reproduced by the Rationalistic pulpit and press,—the latter especially. Hence it is necessary to provide a popular antidote for what may be regarded as popular poison. This little volume is such an antidote. PROFESSOR SCHAFF'S

*The title of the second essay of this volume has been placed first, to prevent the work from being confounded with "The Christ of the Gospels" by Tulloch, published by our Western Book Concern.

Essay brings out the true character of the Christ of the Gospels in such bold relief, and with such convincing evidence, as to arm its reader's mind against the insidious weapons of Strauss and Renan. M. Roussel's two Essays grapple boldly and strongly with the false principles on which the work of Renan is constructed. Any man, after carefully considering them, would find it difficult to yield his assent to the plausible positions of that adversary of the Lord Jesus. I particularly commend these pages to young preachers and to young men, whether they have read Renan's work or not; assured, that if they have read it, and have even had their faith shaken, the argument and views herein contained will be likely to restore their faith in the real Christ; while, if they have not read it, they will here see enough of its character to convince them that its aim is evil, and that, like all other weapons heretofore forged by the skill of skepticism against the Holy Child Jesus, it is sure to be soon buried in everlasting contempt.

D. W.

P R E F A C E.



THE *Vie de Jesus*, by M. Renan, having passed through many editions, and been translated into several languages on the continent of Europe, has now appeared in an English form. The Committee of the Religious Tract Society have therefore deemed it incumbent upon them to provide some antidote to the errors of a volume which is being so widely circulated. At the same time they do not think that M. Renan's treatise either needs or deserves a formal reply. It adduces no new facts and urges no new arguments against the Christian faith. It is not remarkable either for depth of research or vigor of logic. It owes its sudden and wonderful popularity, not to its intrinsic merit, but to the beauty of its style and the position of its author. All the reasonings

which have been so successfully urged against other skeptical treatises may be adduced with equal force against this ; and it lies open to many objections peculiar to itself. The admissions which M. Renan has felt himself compelled to make in favor of Christianity are fatal to his arguments against it. He admits the early origin, the authenticity, and the general veracity of the Gospels ; yet he rejects all the miracles which they record, and reduces their narratives to fabulous and mythical legends as often as it suits his purpose. He admits that Jesus was the wisest, holiest, and best of the sons of men ; yet he pities him as the victim of delusion, and apologizes for him as the accessory to, or the accomplice in, acts of imposture and fraud. He admits that Christianity has been the great means of the world's progress in the past, and that it holds out the only hope for the world's progress in the future ; yet he maintains that it was founded in fanaticism, and that it is strong only by its faith in a delusion. These absurdities, indeed, do not

appear on the surface of the book. They are ingeniously veiled by glowing descriptions and paraphrastic statements.

It has been thought sufficient, therefore, to place in the hands of English readers the following essays.

1. A treatise, by the Rev. Professor Schaff,* on the Christ of the Gospels, in which the perfection of our Lord's character, as portrayed by the Evangelists, is set forth as an argument for the Divinity of his person and mission. A character so spotless and perfect, yet so simple and natural, could not be the product of imposture, or the dream of fanaticism. In the words of Rousseau, "It is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that one only should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the Gospels, the marks of whose truth are so striking and

* Reprinted, with revision and additions, from the "British and Foreign Evangelical Review."