

**THE BIBLE IN EUROPE: AN
INQUIRY INTO THE
CONTRIBUTION OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION TO
CIVILISATION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649073535

The Bible in Europe: An Inquiry into the Contribution of the Christian Religion to Civilisation
by Joseph McCabe

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JOSEPH MCCABE

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AN INQUIRY INTO THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION TO CIVILISATION

BY

JOSEPH McCABE

(AUTHOR OF "PETER ABLARD," "SAINT AUGUSTINE," ETC.)

LONDON :

WATTS & CO.,

17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.

1907

LOAN STACK

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PREFACE

RECENT discussions of our educational system have directed attention once more to an historical question of some interest: How far has the religion of Europe been a creative force in the making of its distinctive civilisation? Ever since the Churches entered upon the apologetic phase of their life, they have laid peculiar stress on their past service to Europe, and sought to ground thereon a claim to continued recognition and power. To the majority of people the appeal was effective enough. The co-extension of our Western religion with our Western civilisation, and the permeation of most of our institutions with theological ideas and ecclesiastical traditions, constituted a solid fact that made a minute examination superfluous. When, in addition, a number of obviously sceptical writers urged that the maintenance of religion is essential to the maintenance of our civilisation; when scholars like Mr. Birrell and Mr. Bryce solemnly repeated that the Bible is "the source of England's greatness"; men and women of little historical culture felt that they might continue to lend a sympathetic ear to the solicitations of the clergy.

But the reform of history and the general reconsideration of older convictions have tended to strengthen the attitude of interrogation. The apologetic works, to which one turns for some explicit proof, either offer us only the unsubstantial rhetoric and the strained generalisations of the older fashion of writing history, or else they make indiscriminate appeals to that earlier Christian literature which Mr. Lecky has described as "surpassing in its mendacious ferocity any other that the world has known." Indeed, living masters of