

**STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS  
HISTORY. FIRST SERIES;  
LEADERS OF CHRISTIAN AND  
ANTI-CHRISTIAN THOUGHT**

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Studies in Religious History. First series; Leaders of Christian and anti-Christian thought by Ernest Renan

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**ERNEST RENAN**

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BY  
ERNEST RENAN.

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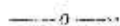
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# CONTENTS.



	PAGE
CHANNING AND THE UNITARIAN MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES, A.D. 1780-1842, . . .	1
FEUERBACH AND THE NEO-HEGELIAN SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY, A.D. 1775-1833, . . .	36
SPINOZA, A.D. 1632-1677, . . . . .	47
THE TRIAL OF GALILEO, A.D. 1564-1642, . . .	72
JOHN CALVIN, A.D. 1509-1564, . . . . .	79
THOMAS A-KEMPIS, AND THE AUTHORSHIP OF <i>THE IMITATION OF JESUS CHRIST</i> , A.D. 1379-1471, . . . . .	93
FRANCIS D'ASSISI AND THE FRANCISCANS, A.D. 1182, . . . . .	108
JOACHIM DI FLOR, JOHN OF PARMA, AND <i>THE ETERNAL GOSPEL</i> , A.D. 12th and 13th Centuries, . . . . .	129
MARCUS-AURELIUS, A.D. 121-180, . . . . .	206

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.



THE present volume is the first of a series it is intended to publish of the fugitive pieces that have been contributed, from time to time, by Ernest Renan to the columns of the *Revue des deux Mondes*, the *Débats*, and other French periodicals, bearing on the subject of religion and its history. The series shall bear the general title of "Studies in Religious History," and the present volume the specific title, "Leaders of Christian and Anti-Christian Thought." In the seven volumes of Ernest Renan, already published by the Temple Company, under the general title of "Origins of Christianity," viz.—(1) The Life of Jesus; (2) The Apostles; (3) St Paul; (4)

The Anti-Christ; (5) The Gospels; (6) The Christian Church; (7) Marcus Aurelius, or the End of the Old World—the English reader has placed before him, for the first time, a complete view of the history of Christianity, from its earliest inception, down to the first half of the third century of our era. The object of the present volume is to set before the reader, in a series of sketches, some of the more important phases religious thought has assumed in the centuries which lie between the middle of the nineteenth and the middle of the third respectively. To this arrangement it may be objected that it is a reversal of the chronological order; which latter, no doubt, has its advantages, especially in a historical survey; chronology being generally regarded, and most properly too, as standing in the same relation to history as the chart does to the mariner; still, as this volume does not pretend to give a connected historical account, but merely a series of historical (or, more strictly, biographical) sketches, it has been



deemed advisable to begin with the phases of religious thought the best known, and proceed by easy stages to the more remote and presumably least known. But the reader is at liberty to follow the chronological order, if he prefers it to the one here adopted, without being put to any very great inconvenience. A chronological table has been added to the table of contents, and he has only to refer to this to enable him to begin at any date his fancy or his convenience may dictate.

Secondary to the object just indicated, the Translator was desirous of investing the present volume with that peculiar interest which attaches to the form of literature known as biography. The following studies, therefore, in addition to their historical value, are strictly biographical. They give us a picture of the lives of men who have left their imprint on the age in which they lived, and especially on its religious thought. By studying the lives of these great men, as presented to us by M. Renan, the reader will be able to explain, to

himself at least, why it is that, in the present day, religion assumes so many faces, even amongst its most earnest and uncompromising votaries.

WM. M. THOMSON.

# LEADERS OF CHRISTIAN AND ANTI-CHRISTIAN THOUGHT.

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## CHANNING AND THE UNITARIAN MOVE- MENT IN THE UNITED STATES.

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PROTESTANTISM is destined to share the law common to things human; I mean, of living and developing without ever attaining a fixed point and a permanent state. This is its privilege, or, if it is preferred, its curse. If it can be believed that there is here below a complete system of revealed truth, given once for all, it is clear that Bossuet was right in his pompous *History of the Variations*, where he represents this perpetual mobility as the assured sign of error. Although, if we assume on the other hand, that no religious or philosophical system can pretend to an exclusive and absolute value, it is evident that we must commend him who possesses in himself such store of flexibility that it can accommodate itself to the progress of humanity, undergo modifications with it, and to pursue it to ever new consequences and to an unknown goal. This tendency of Protestantism towards a more and more purified religious ideal, shows itself here under two quite distinct aspects, according to the divers genius of the two great divisions of the Reformation. Germany, on its side,