

**CHRIST AND  
CHRISTIANITY. THE  
CONQUERING  
CROSS: (THE CHURCH)**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649554904

Christ and Christianity. The Conquering Cross: (The Church) by H. R. Haweis

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Cover @ 2017

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**H. R. HAWEIS**

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# Christ and Christianity.

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## THE CONQUERING CROSS (THE CHURCH)

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CHARLES BURNET & CO.,  
9, BUCKINGHAM STREET, STRAND.

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THE "CONQUERING CROSS" needs little introduction.

Three hundred years have been rapidly spanned in this volume. Like its predecessors it aims at no rigid historical completeness. It presents PICTURES OF THE CHURCH.

The Apostles disappear—representative figures of bishops and martyrs take their place on the canvas. The dim shadows of their ancient heathen rivals confront them for a moment and pass. The confused murmur of old controversies and 'apologies,' drowned in the raging clamour of persecution, startle the ear, but are at length stilled for awhile in the splendid ascendancy of the Christian Church under Constantine.

Viewed as a consecutive narrative, this book must appear defective. Out of the many Persecutions (which become monotonous after a time), only a characteristic scene here and there has been selected; out of the many Martyrs, only a few of the leading types; out of the many Princes, only the most illustrious or notorious; out of the many Apologies, only the most cogent; out of the many Controversies, only the most salient; out of the many Heretics, only the most intellectual or picturesque; out of the many Saints, only the most phenomenal.

The three first centuries of the Christian Church are almost idyllic in their simplicity, sincerity, and purity. There is less admixture of evil, less intrusion of the world the flesh and the devil, more simple-hearted goodness, earnestness, and reality to be found in the space between Nero and Constantine than in any other three centuries from A.D. 100 to A.D. 1800.

· In this comparatively pure ecclesiastical



atmosphere the infant Church first drew breath. Nothing more fertile than the blood of her martyrs, nothing more immortal than her bursts of passionate Belief—Prayer or Praise; nothing more irresistible than her enthusiasm, nothing more faithful and enduring than her fidelity to Jesus.

These were her legacies to the Future.

The error of supposing that we can restore the early piety by aping the mannerisms of the past, or keep alive faith by defending ignorance and applauding bigotry, are amongst those delusions which seem to belong to all old-established religions, and are apparently as ineradicable as they are fatal to their spiritual life and progress.

Jesus has suffered more from His caricaturists than from His crucifiers.

The chasm between Christ and Christianity must be an ever-widening one, until the narrow ideal of the Church is remoulded to meet the ever-expanding

wants of a growing and aspiring human nature.

When that reconstruction takes place, it will be found that Jesus is still King of the World—that God is *here* and *now* (not only in Palestine for a short time 1800 years ago), and that He is willing to recognise and make room for all the essential needs and longings of the human heart.

We shall get rid of the notion that praying is the only good thing; we shall learn by degrees, as one after another department of human activity and joyful endeavour becomes harmonised with the "GOOD LIFE," the meaning of Christ's own words: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." We shall listen with new interest to St. Paul's prophetic and enterprising call—to rise up out of the dead Past and press towards the Future, with its "Christ that is to be." Boundless prospect—inexhaustible resource—infinite adaptation of an essentially divine life to our ever-changing human environment—that is what

is coming, and coming quickly. For the coming Christianity will proclaim with no uncertain sound "that every creature of God is good, and to be received with thanksgiving"—and in the coming Christianity the holy strain of an upward endeavour will never, for one moment, be lost sight of or relaxed: "Yet show I unto you," saith the Apostle, "a more excellent way!"

No one who has the smallest acquaintance with M. Renan's seven brilliant and scholarly volumes on the "*Origines du Christianisme*" will need to be told that my sketches of the Primitive Church are mainly inspired by his researches. Rome and the Catacombs I had the advantage of studying for myself on the spot, with the assistance of my lamented friend, the late Mr. Shakespeare Wood, the *Times* correspondent, and one of the most interesting and sympathetic of antiquaries. My other general obligations to Dr. Stanley, Dean Milman, &c., as stated in my previous introductions, I need not further allude to.

I have taken my colours wherever I could find them; read my authors, like Eusebius,