

**THEOLOGY AND HUMAN
PROBLEMS. A COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF ABSOLUTE IDEALISM
AND PRAGMATISM AS
INTERPRETERS OF RELIGION**

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EUGENE WILLIAM LYMAN

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THEOLOGY AND HUMAN PROBLEMS

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ABSO-
LUTE IDEALISM AND PRAGMATISM
AS INTERPRETERS OF RELIGION

THE
NATHANIEL WILLIAM TAYLOR LECTURES
For 1909-10

GIVEN BEFORE THE DIVINITY SCHOOL OF YALE UNIVERSITY

BY
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To

MY FATHER
WHOSE LOVED MEMORY
AND
TO MY MOTHER
WHOSE GRACIOUS PRESENCE
HELP ME TO UNITE THE SEEN AND THE
UNSEEN WORLDS

PREFACE

THIS volume consists of the lectures delivered at Yale University in December, 1909, on the Nathaniel William Taylor foundation. The lectures are published as prepared for that occasion, in the hope that an attempt at a popular statement of the great themes discussed may have a value of its own.

There are in general two methods open to the worker in the field of theology. They are the method of the cloister and the method of the clinic. These two methods may be distinguished by their predominant motives. The one seeks primarily to protect religion, the other strives mainly to develop religion. The former method aims first of all to gain support for existing religious truth from philosophy, tradition, or the church. The latter method aims to deepen the significance of religious truth and to enlarge its boundaries by liberat-

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ing and stimulating the religious life. The two methods are, in more technical language, the *a priori* method and the method of experience. The one deserves to be called cloistral because it seeks to gain its fundamental truths from sources other than that of man's actual religious experience. The other deserves to be called clinical because in the last analysis it relies for its scientific truth upon the study of the religious life and needs of men.

The two methods are, for various reasons, not as clearly distinguished as they should be. On the one hand a thinker of the cloistral type may be concerned to make his *results*, after they have been gained, as far as possible serviceable to life, and so the fact may be obscured that serviceableness to life is not the *principle* on which he depends for the discovery of truth. On the other hand the thinker of the second type may be led to sink himself deeply into the religious life of the past—and in truth he must be one who knows how to enter into his closet and shut the door—and so men

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may deem his method cloistral, whereas it really is clinical. For this reason it has seemed to me that an effort to bring out the contrast between these two methods, as they bear upon the interpretation of religion, might be of real service. The object of these lectures, therefore, is to determine the relative merits of the cloistral and clinical methods, and then to apply the one adopted to certain great themes of religion.

I desire here to acknowledge my permanent indebtedness, in whatever theological work I may do, to my honored teachers on the Faculty of Yale Divinity School. In the field of constructive theological thinking I owe to the richly suggestive and profoundly spiritual mind of Professor Frank C. Porter more than I well can express. For helpfulness and counsel in regard to the preparation of this volume special thanks are due to my colleague, Professor Warren J. Moulton, and to the Rev. Herbert A. Jump, of New Britain, Connecticut.

EUGENE W. LYMAN.

BANGOR THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
May 26, 1910.