

**ON SOME POINTS IN  
THE RELIGIOUS OFFICE  
OF THE UNIVERSITIES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649246526

On some points in the religious office of the universities by Brooke Foss Westcott

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Cover @ 2017

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Cambridge :

PRINTED BY C. J. CLAY, M.A.  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

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London:  
MACMILLAN AND CO.  
1873.

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## PREFACE.

THE Papers which are collected in this little volume have been printed or reprinted at the desire of friends to whose judgment I feel constrained to yield. There is, I trust, a distinct unity of thought running through them, which corresponds with a deep conviction of the grandeur of the office of our ancient and religious Universities at the present crisis of national thought and life; and I should value no privilege more highly than to be able to convey what I feel on this subject to others, who may be able to regard it more completely and from other points of view.

One circumstance perhaps may lend a value to the opinions which I have expressed to which they could not otherwise lay claim. After a separation from Cambridge, for almost twenty

years, I have been allowed to return to the intellectual home which I had never ceased to honour and love, and to take a part in the public work of the place. It is therefore more easy for me to estimate the real character of the changes which have taken place during that eventful period, than for those who have either watched their realization on the spot through conflicts and doubts, or now regard them only from a distance. It would be mere affectation to pretend that nothing has been lost which belonged to the ideal fulness of our organization; but it would be utter faithlessness not to acknowledge that enough is yet left at Cambridge to enable the University to exercise the authority of a true spiritual power more widely and more beneficently than it has yet done.

In this broadest aspect the work at the University must always be twofold. On the one hand, there is the work of independent research; and on the other hand, there is the work of general education. Neither of these works can be neglected without a real national loss; and

neither of them can be conducted elsewhere under the same salutary conditions as are imposed by the complexity, and by the traditions of university life. At the Universities special study is guarded on all sides from the perilous temptation of degenerating into onesidedness and arrogance by the free interchange of thought; and at the same time general education is brought into close communion with manifold forms of social life.

This latter fact is at present of primary moment. It is easy to appreciate the importance of the labours of the philosopher or of the scholar or of the physicist; and there is comparatively little danger as things are now that they will be left without encouragement at the Universities. There is more fear that the humbler and less conspicuous work of the teachers of average men should be underrated. It is no doubt to be desired that the intellectual standard for admission to the Universities should be raised; but even as it is I cannot but think that the power of the Universities for good is nowhere