

**THE ESSEX HALL LECTURE, 1899; THE  
RELIGION OF TIME AND THE RELIGION  
OF ETERNITY: BEING A STUDY OF  
CERTAIN RELATIONS BETWEEN  
MEDIEVAL AND MODERN THOUGHT**

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The Essex Hall Lecture, 1899; The Religion of Time and the Religion of Eternity: Being a Study of Certain Relations Between Medieval and Modern Thought by Philip H. Wicksteed

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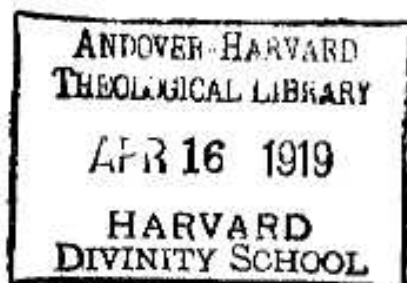
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'Yet it is not easy to combat these conceptions because of the love I bear to the men who put them forward.'

## PREFACE.

THOUGH the purpose of this essay is entirely constructive, the writer is aware that he has occasionally fallen into a controversial tone; and though his aim has been to deal with spiritual realities, he is conscious of having put forward many historical judgments which may be open to legitimate challenge.

There may be readers who will detect his ignorance of periods of human thought a knowledge of which might have corrected one-sided views and shown him that the thing he goes over the sea of centuries to fetch lies near at hand in the very regions where he says that it is not. Others may smile at his insistence on what has always been very nigh unto them in their mind and in their heart and seems to need no enforcing. And yet others may see neither vital power in the ideals he sets forth, nor defect in those he attacks.

Indeed it may well be that he has really given nothing but a chapter of his own spiritual autobiography, while believing himself to be tracing movements in the world's thought. Yet even so, if anyone has been able in maturity to reach what he believes to be clearer thought and higher vitality than his youthful period of storm and stress brought to him, the record of the path he has trodden may be of help or of interest to others. Defects of knowledge and distortions of view will be corrected by the better informed or the more thoughtful; but a certain human interest will still attach to a human experience. The gates of life are many, but life is one.

P. H. W.

May 23rd, 1899.



## THE RELIGION OF TIME AND THE RELIGION OF ETERNITY.

**R**ECENT developments of the High Church movement in England have filled many minds with wonder, some with exultation, some almost with despair. It seems as though nothing were ever settled, as though history were going back upon herself, as though national characteristics and tendencies which we thought had once for all declared themselves, may still vere round ; as though, in the current phrase of contempt and reprobation, we were liable at any moment to find ourselves 'back again in the middle ages.'

Yet it is difficult for the reflective mind to acquiesce in a theory of mere reaction or

retrogression with respect even to a side current of the life of nations; and the question naturally occurs whether this anomalous appearance of retrogression is in any way connected with other movements or tendencies with which we can more easily reconcile ourselves. And in truth, as soon as we examine our surroundings a little more closely, we find that this modern ecclesiasticism with its elaborate pomp of ceremonial, with its lofty claims for the supremacy of the Church, with its jealous attempt to control education, and to lay its guiding hand upon the inmost thoughts and volitions of the individual soul, is but one out of many evidences that the ideals of the Middle Ages, and more specifically of the twelfth, the thirteenth, and the fourteenth centuries, are re-asserting their attractive force. And when we consider what these centuries produced (the great cathedrals of France, for example), a renewed interest in them can by no means be put down off-

hand as purely reactionary and regrettable, except by the narrowest and least spiritually-minded of the sons of the nineteenth century.

Let us examine, then, a little more in detail some of these other witnesses to a changed attitude of the modern mind with respect to the period of the great days of the Papacy.

Perhaps the recovered sense for the greatness of mediæval architecture, which was condemned not so long ago as barbarous, was the first indication of the coming change; and more recently a similar change has come over our estimate of early painting, so that now once again 'the cry is Giotto's.'<sup>1</sup>

Again, the revived interest in Dante, to which the printing presses of Italy, France, Germany, England, and America bear unceasing testimony, is universally and properly greeted as a sign of enlarging and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dante, *Purg.*, xi. 95. Giotto's date is 1276-1336.