

**RELIGION AND ENGLISH
SOCIETY: TWO ADDRESSES
DELIVERED AT A CONFERENCE
HELD IN LONDON , NOVEMBER
9TH, AND 10TH, 1910**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649300570

Religion and English Society: Two Addresses Delivered at a Conference Held in London ,
november 9th, and 10th, 1910 by John Neville Figgis

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

JOHN NEVILLE FIGGIS

**RELIGION AND ENGLISH
SOCIETY: TWO ADDRESSES
DELIVERED AT A CONFERENCE
HELD IN LONDON , NOVEMBER
9TH, AND 10TH, 1910**

Religion and English Society

THE GOSPEL AND HUMAN NEEDS :

Being the Hulsean Lectures for 1908-9. By JOHN NEVILLE FIGGIS, Litt.D. With Additions. FIFTH IMPRESSION. Crown 8vo, 4s. 6d. net.

CIVILISATION AT THE CROSS ROADS.

The Noble Lectures to be delivered at Harvard University in March. By JOHN NEVILLE FIGGIS, Litt.D. [*Ready next Spring.*]

THE RELIGION OF THE ENGLISHMAN.

A Series of Six Addresses delivered at All Saints', Margaret Street. By the Rev. H. F. B. MACKAY, M.A., Vicar. SECOND IMPRESSION. 8vo. Paper covers, 1s. net. Cloth, 2s. net.

THE NEW LENT BOOK

With Introduction by the BISHOP OF LONDON

PRAYER AND ACTION ; or, "The Three

Notable Duties" (Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving). By the Rev. E. E. HOLMES, Hon. Canon of Christ Church. Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. net.

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

LONDON, NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA

Religion and English Society

TWO ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT A CONFERENCE HELD IN LONDON
NOVEMBER 9TH AND 10TH, 1910

BY

JOHN NEVILLE FIGGIS, Litt.D.
OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE RESURRECTION
HONORARY FELLOW OF S. CATHARINE'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

THIRD IMPRESSION

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA

1911

All rights reserved



P R E F A C E

THE pages which follow were not written for publication. They were read at a small conference held in London at the beginning of November, and at the desire of some who heard them are here made generally available. I have not thought it well to remove all traces of their original character as spoken to a small body of Christian people. The situation which they endeavour to elucidate is indicated by the following extract from the letter of summons (not written by me):—

“The religious and moral condition of English Society has become a matter for serious consideration. It is scarcely too much to say that English Society is ceasing to be Christian. There is no very widespread revolt from Christianity, but there is a great deal of indifference to the claims of religion, and a great deal of uncertainty as to the trustworthiness of the Christian tradition. There is an uneasy feeling in many who are incapable of giving it expression that the researches of scientific men and of Biblical critics have produced results adverse to the Christian Faith. Discussions concerning the freedom of the will and the problems of heredity have weakened the sense of personal responsibility

and of personal sinfulness. On all sides there is a silent relaxation of Christian effort.

“At the same time the relation of English Society to the Church is being weakened by the invasion of a large foreign element only partly Christian and wholly alien to the traditions of English Christianity. Occasional attendance at Morning Prayer and Sermon in some country place constitutes the only connection of very many people with the Church of which they are nominal members.

“Happily a strong desire is growing up for information and explanations which such ministries do not usually furnish. It seems probable that a united effort to reconsider the claims of the Christian Church and the responsibilities of its members would just now meet with considerable attention.

“As a preliminary to such an effort it is proposed that a few people shall meet in November and try to arrive at an estimate of the situation.”

To make things clearer I have added in an Appendix a sermon on the same topic, preached last summer in All Saints', Margaret Street. For more detailed accounts of the general condition I would refer readers to the sermons which are being delivered by the Vicar of All Saints', and appearing weekly in the *Church Times*. I only wish that these pages partook of the same fineness of touch, and that I had a tithe of Mr. Mackay's power to light up the subject.

Further, although the situation is grave—and that was the ground of our meeting—I trust that nothing here written carries any note of despair. Never,

PREFACE

vii

I believe, were there more signs of hope. But the hope is not that of bringing back things to the condition of universal conformity. Our hopes will only be realised when we give up, as I have heard it put, "playing at being a majority." Still less would I wish these pages to appear as anything like a wail either about English society or education. Alike in our public schools and colleges and in our social life there is a core of vital religion and a soundness which are the despairing admiration of many on the Continent. The task before God's Church in this land, as it is grander, is also more possible, than that before any other part of Christendom. Only we must realise what it is. In a far greater degree than is elsewhere the case has the Church of England retained the allegiance and even the affection of the educated classes. I do not think that she has retained them entirely, or that we are not feeling that stress which is everywhere apparent. If I did, I should not have written. But I do think that upon us is laid the burden, heavy, but still to be borne, of finding some synthesis between "the faith that was once delivered to the saints" and all that is of enduring worth in the modern world. In a different sense from that common, ours is indeed a *via media*. The Church of Rome, on its official side, has adopted the policy of sitting on the safety-valve; while the modernists on the whole are guides rather stimulating than safe. "Liberal" Protestantism, as the more candid observers (like Professor Burkitt) are now admitting, is bankrupt. The older Evangelical view, unrivalled for its individual sincerity and its hold on the Cross,

has always suffered from a lack of the corporate vision, while it leaned for support on a view of the Bible which is daily becoming more untenable. There are indeed not wanting signs, that all those, whose hold on the supernatural is real, are being drawn together. This *rapprochement*, however, cannot mean the surrender of any one vital element in our Catholic heritage. A solemn duty is laid upon us of the English Church, for whom the sacramental gift and the Evangelical faith are alike integral parts of one living religion—the duty of bringing forth from the treasure-house of the Spirit things new and old. It is in the hope of setting this duty in a clearer light that these addresses are published.

J. N. F.

HOUSE OF THE RESURRECTION,
MIRFIELD, *Advent*, 1910.