

**SOME ASPECTS OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE  
OF NEW ENGLAND, WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO CONGREGATIONALISTS;  
LECTURES DELIVERED ON THE CAREW  
FOUNDATION BEFORE HARTFORD  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN 1896**

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Some aspects of the religious life of New England, with special reference to Congregationalists; Lectures delivered on the Carew foundation before Hartford Theological Seminary in 1896 by George Leon Walker

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**GEORGE LEON WALKER**

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**Lectures**

DELIVERED ON THE CAREW FOUNDATION BEFORE HARTFORD  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN 1896.

BY 

GEORGE LEON WALKER, D.D.



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## P R E F A C E.

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THE ecclesiastical story of New England has often been told, but with primary reference to its external, institutional, and political aspects. The religious life itself — its dominating motives, its characterizing experiences, its manifestations of spiritual power in the careers of the men and women of the nine generations that have dwelt upon New England soil since the landing of the Pilgrims — has been largely neglected. The writer has long cherished a desire to treat this theme with some degree of fullness, proportionate to what he deems its importance. But the limitations of an engrossing profession, and the disabilities consequent upon ill health, have prevented the accomplishment of his design. Yet the wish has been strong within him; and, being invited by the Trustees of Hartford Theological Seminary to deliver the “Carew Lectures” for 1896, he has made use of the opportunity thus afforded him to

present a rapid survey of a field of investigation which he would gladly have traversed in a more leisurely and ample manner, had time and strength permitted him.

HARTFORD, CONN.,

*February 1, 1897.*

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THE  
RELIGIOUS LIFE OF NEW ENGLAND.

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I.

THE PURITAN PERIOD.

THE subject which has been announced for the Carew Course of Lectures this season is: "Some Aspects of the Religious Life of New England, with Special Reference to Congregationalists." It is hoped that the topic, so stated, suggests that what is to be considered is not so much the ecclesiastical story of religious things among our forerunners in these provinces and States, as it is the religious life itself regarded more particularly in its experimental and interior aspects. Of course it will be quite impossible to leave out of view — indeed, to let pass without frequent mention — those ecclesiastical arrangements and semi-political measures which were often the expression, and to some extent also the cause, of the particular qualities of the religious life associated with them. Few communities anywhere have been more distinctly or responsively influenced in the tone and character of their spiritual experiences by social conditions and by legal and ecclesiastical

regulations in religious matters than the communities of New England. It is impracticable to ignore or to obscure the agency of these factors in any survey of the more spiritual phenomena which accompanied or, to some degree, flowed from them. But, though not to be ignored, these more external matters are only secondary in the present design, not alone because they have — especially the ecclesiastical side of them — been made, in quite recent times and by several writers, the subject of a consideration so minute and painstaking as might well incline one to hesitate to traverse ground so carefully surveyed already; but chiefly because these things, in themselves considered, save so far as they affect or illustrate the deeper things of the spiritual life itself, are aside from the immediate purpose of these lectures.

That purpose is to set forth, if it may be, in some degree of clearness, the men and women of different periods of New England story in a way to enable us to see what they thought, and especially what they felt, about those great problems of religious experience which, in one form or another, and with varying degrees of intensity of interest, press upon every generation of our race. For it is this, more than any matter of outward condition or ecclesiastical form, which is the truest bond of fellowship and acquaintance between times and men. If we can understand even a little better than we do the real religious life of our fathers and mothers of two, four, six, and eight generations ago, we shall not only