

**THE CHURCH OF
ENGLAND: ITS NATURE
AND ITS FUTURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649549603

The Church of England: Its Nature and Its Future by H. Hensley Henson & F. T. Woods & A. C. Headlam & E. W. Watson

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

**H. HENSLEY HENSON & F. T. WOODS
& A. C. HEADLAM & E. W. WATSON**

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND: ITS NATURE AND ITS FUTURE

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ITS NATURE AND ITS FUTURE



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

ITS NATURE AND ITS FUTURE

BY

THE RT. REV. H. HENSLEY HENSON, D.D.

THE RT. REV. F. T. WOODS, D.D.

THE REV. CANON A. C. HEADLAM, D.D.

THE REV. CANON E. W. WATSON, D.D.

THE REV. CANON H. L. GOUDGE, D.D.

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

NEW YORK

1919

SEP - 1977

PREFACE

THE lectures contained in this volume were delivered in King's College, London, during the autumn of 1918. Regarded as separate entities they need no introduction, and it would be unnecessary and perhaps impertinent to offer any comment on the opinions expressed by the distinguished scholars who were kind enough to accept the invitation to take part in the course. A word of explanation, however, may seem called for as to the reason why these lectures formed part of one course and why they are now collected in a single volume.

This book is not the manifesto of any school of thought. It contains no programme for the reform of the Church. It does not stand for any one definite point of view. It has, indeed, no unity save that of subject, and no lecturer is responsible for any opinions but his own. The idea which inspired this course of lectures was,

PREFACE

in truth, the opposite of that which inspires most collective undertakings of the kind. It was that of bringing together prominent exponents of different tendencies within the Church and of asking each to state as fully and frankly as possible his views on the great problem which gives its title to this book. The aim was to represent not agreement but difference.

The "symposium" is a method of discussion which has been fruitfully employed in dealing with philosophical problems. It has the advantage of bringing sharply into relief the real point at issue between opposing theories, and moreover of revealing not infrequently unsuspected agreements. There is no obvious reason why the same method should not be equally fruitful when applied to Theological and ecclesiastical questions. At any rate the reader should regard this book as of the nature of a symposium. Thus he will be grievously perplexed if he attempts to use it as a manual from which to draw a consistent body of doctrine on the subject with which it deals; but he will probably

PREFACE

find in it valuable material for estimating the ideals and principles which guide important groups of men within the Church of England.

It may be claimed that the service which these lectures aim at performing is no unimportant one, for they furnish the means of mutual understanding. There is a general agreement that, like most institutions, the Church of England is passing through a critical period of its history. In the ecclesiastical, not less than in the secular, sphere there is a demand for reconstruction. But it is to be feared that in both spheres this agreement hardly extends beyond assent to a general proposition. When we cease to pronounce the words "reconstruction" and "reform" and proceed to the prosaic task of definition the divergence of our ideals and the variety of our conceptions of the goal cannot be concealed.

The ecclesiastical mind, at least in its modern exemplars, is said to be peculiarly prone to the delusion that differences can be bridged by formulas and that hard and irreconcilable facts

PREFACE

can be covered by an ambiguous phrase. But in religious matters, as in all else, the way of progress is the way of understanding. We shall not achieve unity of spirit or arrive at any real co-operation unless we are at the pains to understand one another. It is idle to suppose that we can advance together if we are not prepared to take the preliminary step of envisaging clearly and dispassionately the diverse conceptions which are held among us of the nature and functions of the Church. If these lectures have contributed at all towards this end they will have fulfilled the hopes of those who were responsible for their arrangement.

The lecturers who have contributed to this volume have stated their own positions with sufficient definiteness. They have not refrained from dwelling on their differences. They cannot be accused of attempting to create an illusory impression of agreement. And yet, when due weight has been given to differences, there is left a genuine feeling of an underlying unity of spirit which does not lend itself easily