

**PAINTED WINDOWS:
STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS
PERSONALITY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649666669

Painted Windows: Studies in Religious Personality by Harold Begbie

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HAROLD BEGBIE

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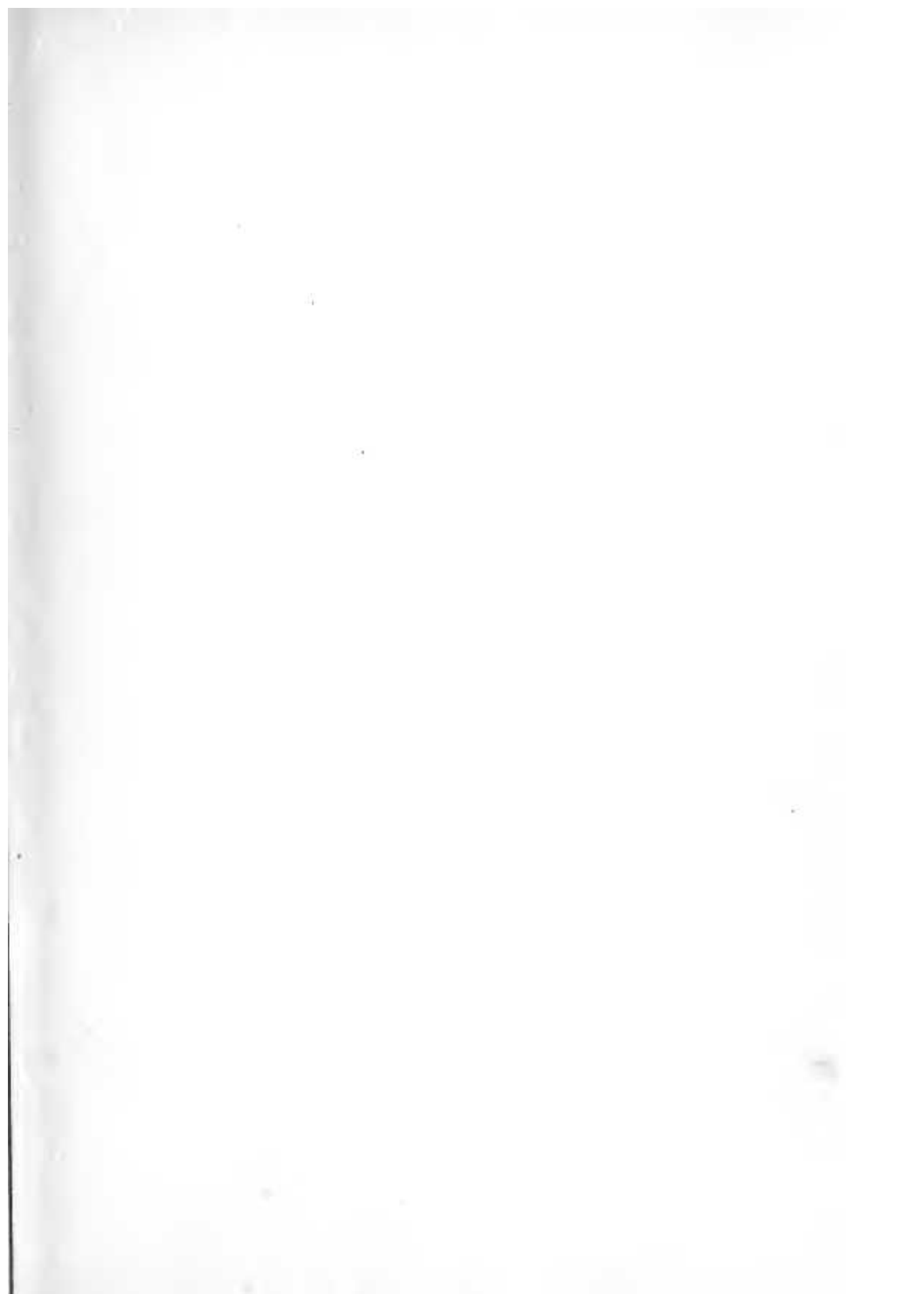
BY THE SAME AUTHOR

*"That valuable public servant,
the Gentleman with a Duster."*

—G. K. CHESTERTON.

The Mirrors of Downing Street
Some Political Reflections

The Glass of Fashion
Some Social Reflections





BISHOP GORE

PAINTED WINDOWS

STUDIES IN
RELIGIOUS PERSONALITY

BY

A GENTLEMAN WITH A DUSTER

AUTHOR OF "THE MIRRORS OF DOWNING STREET"

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY KIRSOPP LAKE

It was simply a struggle for fresh air, in which, if the windows could not be opened, there was danger that panes would be broken, though painted with images of saints and martyrs. Light, coloured by these reverend effigies, was none the more respirable for being picturesque.

J. R. Lowell.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY EMILE VERPILLEUX

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press

1922

BR
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G. P. Putnam's Sons

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Made in the United States of America

*For the information presented in the biographical records connected with
the several chapters the publishers desire to express their indebtedness to
"Who's Who."*



42823
MAY 10 1948

FOREWORD

BY PROFESSOR KIRSOPP LAKE

NO one who believes that the Christian churches have in the past been the moral leaders of western civilization can fail to be interested in the presentation of some of the English religious leaders by "A Gentleman with a Duster" especially if, like myself, he have some passing acquaintance with most of them. Nor can any neglect to regard seriously his warning that the Church is failing as a moral leader.

What is the reason for that failure? It cannot, I think, be found in lack of earnestness; for today all the guides of the churches in England are serious, upright men, who would gladly lead if they could. Nor is it because they are voices uttering strange announcements in the wilderness; if they have a fault it is rather that they have so little to announce. The defect which is disclosed by the pictures given by "A Gentleman with a Duster" is primarily intellectual, and I propose to devote to its explanation the introduction which the publisher has asked me for write for the American edition of *Painted Windows*.

From the third century to the eighteenth the Christ-

ian Church presented views of life and theories of the origin, weakness, and possible redemption of human nature, which were both self consistent and rational. It offered men an infallible guide of life, to be found in the Church, the Bible, and the Christ. Different branches of the Christian church emphasised one or the other, but the three formed in themselves an indivisible trinity. Nor did the laity doubt that this presentation was correct. The clergy were the professional and expert exponents of an infallible revelation which they had studied deeply and knew better than other men, and on which they spoke with the authority of experience. It was firmly believed that to follow their teaching would lead to future salvation; for the centre of gravity in life for seriously minded men was the hope of attaining everlasting salvation in the world to come.

The situation today is changed in two directions. The Church, the Bible, and even the Teaching of Jesus are no longer regarded as infallible. History first abundantly proved that the voice of the Church was not inerrant; then science discredited the biblical account of man's origin and development; and finally the "kenotic" theory of Bishop Gore showed that what were considered the *ipsissima verba* of the Lord himself could no longer be regarded as infallible. The *coup de grâce* to the belief that Jesus must be followed literally was administered by official sermons during the war. This does not mean that men and women within or without the Church do not admire and venerate the teaching of