

**THE STEWARDSHIP OF
FAITH, OUR
HERITAGE FROM
EARLY CHRISTIANITY**

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The stewardship of faith, our heritage from early Christianity by Kirsopp Lake

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By Kirsopp Lake

The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of
Jesus Christ

The Stewardship of Faith

THE STEWARDSHIP OF FAITH

OUR HERITAGE FROM EARLY
CHRISTIANITY



BY

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY

LOWELL LECTURES IN 1913-14

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PREFACE

THE following pages are based on a series of lectures given at the Lowell Institute and in the King's Chapel in Boston in 1913. They have been rewritten and somewhat enlarged, but not seriously altered.

The title, *The Stewardship of Faith*, has been given because I feel that the most important fact which emerges from the study of Early Christianity as I have tried to present it, is that the Church owes its position to the endeavour of past generations to hold up to mankind a standard of life in religion, morality, and politics higher than that reached by the world in general. Christians were men who had seen a vision. Faith was their trust in the Guide who offered to lead them towards it, and of that Faith they were the Stewards. It was expressed in many different ways: in a series of theological and metaphysical propositions; in the splendour and pomp of sacramental liturgy; in the imposing structure of Christian ethics. But all these things were the expression, not the

essence, of the Faith which overcame the world; and the churches will fail in their stewardship if they confuse the expression with the reality, and forget that it is their office to protest against the world as it is, in the interests of the world as it might be.

The responsibility of those who teach Christianity at present is twofold. First, never to lose sight of the vision of a better world, and to teach their pupils to join with them in seeing visions and dreaming dreams; secondly, by the study of the past, and by keeping keen the edge of the intellect of themselves and of others, never yielding to the temptation to obscure the difficulties of fact by taking refuge in the ambiguities of language, to further the exact knowledge of the world as it is, in order that those who have the vision may also have the practical ability to use it in the service of progress.

I have tried to show the way in which the first Christians did this work, by translating their message from the terms of Jewish thought to those of the Greco-Roman world, and adding to it considerably in the process. And I have also tried to suggest that the churches of to-day ought to consider seriously the necessity for moving on in the same direction and giving to the world a

theology which will comply with the reasonable claims of the intelligence, an organization which will be capable of serving adequately the spiritual requirements of human souls, and an ethic which will satisfy both the individual and social needs of a New Age. For a New Age is coming speedily upon us, and whether it is to come in light or in darkness depends on the clearness of vision and singleness of purpose of the Stewards of Faith.

KIRSOPP LAKE.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., *October*, 1914.

