

**ENGLISH SECTS: AN
HISTORICAL
HANDBOOK**

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English sects: an historical handbook by Arthur Reynolds

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An Historical Handbook

BY

ARTHUR REYNOLDS



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PREFACE

THE present would seem to be an especially fitting time to put forth a succinct account of the religious bodies which, whether native or imported, have influenced England and the English-speaking world. Three centuries of division in the ranks of Christian believers having resulted in the sad discovery that Christianity itself is in danger of being entirely abandoned, the thoughts of many are now turned in the direction of reunion. At this juncture, then, it is of particular importance that it should be seen to what extent the various sects approximate to, or diverge from, the Catholic Faith; in what respects they differ from one another; how far they have moved from their original standpoint; on what plea they justify their continuance in separation. The present volume endeavours to trace concisely the history of each of the sects enumerated, and to give the reader an idea of its polity and doctrines. These latter will be found to range from the

orthodox standard of belief to the standpoint of anti-Christian or frankly pagan teaching. Clearly, there is no common measure of all these various creeds and principles, but there is in the case of those sects which, whether they possess a formulated creed or not, do in fact accept, if not the wording, at least the contents of the Nicene symbol. The subject of our diverse beliefs is usually treated in bulky and learned books which only the special student will consult. It is hoped that the small and handy size of this volume will bring to the notice of the general reader the leading facts which illustrate the unhappily divided state of English Christianity. Still more is it hoped that the reading of its pages will kindle a desire to help in removing the barriers which, for whatever cause, have been erected between sect and sect, between the sects and the Church.

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