

**SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
MEN OF
LATITUDE: FORERUNNERS
OF THE NEW THEOLOGY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649269938

Seventeenth century men of latitude: forerunners of the new theology by Edward Augustus George

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EDWARD AUGUSTUS GEORGE

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JOHN HALES

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FORERUNNERS OF THE NEW THEOLOGY

BY

EDWARD AUGUSTUS GEORGE

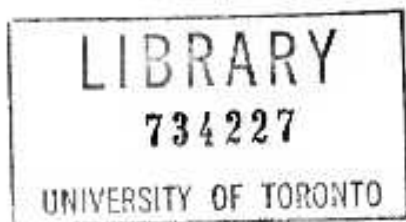
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NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1908

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

Published April, 1908



PREFACE

At intervals during more than ten years it has been the writer's privilege to refresh his spirit by communion with these worthies of an earlier time. In their sweet sanity the violent animosities of their own day are composed, and peace is made also between past and present. In every age, perhaps, there are spirits deep and broad enough both to unify the discordant elements of their own time and to bind all ages together. It is good for the soul to cultivate such company. It makes one believe afresh in "the communion of saints." While partisanship was rushing over the violent cataracts of a narrow torrent, in these spirits there is the placid expanse of broad and quiet streams. In their company we are led through green pastures and beside "the still waters." While others were thinking of the Christ who came to bring not peace but a sword, they were sitting at the feet of Him who said, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

It was a chapter in Professor Fisher's "History of Christian Doctrine," which first called the writer's attention to these men. That book referred him to Tulloch's classic work, "Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century,"

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and by this, in turn, he was referred to the writers themselves. From the time when he opened that literary treasure, "The Golden Remains of the Ever-Memorable John Hales," he was won to the study of original sources. The aim is to present not what some one says about these men, but what they say themselves. Writings of the past need to be reinterpreted in each successive age. It is only in the present that the past can be appreciated. To-day we may value these catholic, irenic spirits, as their contemporaries could not. They were so far in advance of their times that they require the present for their appreciation, they without us not being made perfect.

The quaint phrase of the citations only accentuates the modern thought, or better, proves that the thought is less modern than is commonly supposed. The study of such minds makes for unity, peace, and toleration. Some of the phrasology and thought is doubtless obsolete but continually in the midst of the obsolete is discovered the pungent and vital, like fresh, sweet arbutus found under dead leaves. These studies aim to be a spring-time excursion into an earlier age, in quest of life under winter's death.

The descriptions of the men, their appearance, characteristics, and fortunes, have been gathered for the most part from contemporaries, who saw them and knew them, like Aubrey, Anthony Wood, Clarendon, and Worthington, and often, better still, from friends who loved them, as Simon Patrick loved John Smith, and Whitefoot loved Doctor Browne. Many a glimpse

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is given into the universities, homes, and intimate personal relations of a troubled period. The atmosphere is the "better air" of an earlier time, but without a trace of mustiness, because these spirits stood out in the open, refreshed by the ventilation of the pure air and great winds. They would not be pent in: they were men of latitude.

The writer is under great obligations for courtesies received from the libraries of Yale and Cornell universities, and in particular for the encouragement and aid of Professor George L. Burr, of the historical department in Cornell, and of Professor Lewis O. Brastow, for many years of the Yale Faculty. In correcting the proof, Mr. Henry W. Goodrich has given valued assistance.

The Puritan and Anglican of the seventeenth century are in no danger of oblivion. They should not, however, monopolize the attention in these days of increasing unity and toleration. A revival of interest in these broad-minded men of a narrow age is due to them, and would be congenial to the modern spirit.

E. A. G.

ITHACA, NEW YORK,

April, 1908.

