

**THE UNWROUGHT IRON:
AN INTRODUCTION TO
RELIGION**

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The Unwrought Iron: An Introduction to Religion by Frederick May Eliot

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BY
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Minister of Unity Church
Saint Paul, Minnesota



THE BEACON PRESS
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TO THE
MEMBERS OF MY DISCUSSION CLASSES
IN THE FIRST PARISH IN CAMBRIDGE
THIS BOOK,
TO WHICH THEY SO LARGELY CONTRIBUTED,
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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FREDERICK M. ELIOT

EDITORS' PREFACE

This book should first be read through and then studied. Even a rapid reading of its pages will make it clear that a religion, to be really useful, must be one's very own, wrought out of the unhammered iron of tradition, fragmentary knowledge and transitory experiences. To get that idea constitutes the first step. The second is, through careful study, discussion and meditation, to formulate one's own ideas, evaluate emotions and impulses, and cultivate right attitudes and habits. So to proceed is to develop, each for himself, a saving faith and a serviceable religious experience.

The author of this book has had much to do with young men and women of high-school and college age, and has learned the secret of working with rather than for them in their spiritual strivings. And he well knows that, for the vigorous-minded, religion, to be really effective, must be frankly rational, and must associate itself with the tasks and the opportunities which they already confront.

The Unwrought Iron takes its place among the later books in the Beacon Course in Religious Education and may be used by those who, at whatever age,

are ready to face the supreme realities of life and faith, and who feel the need of a clarified and invigorating religion. It gathers up and vitalizes the work of preceding years in the church school, and introduces the student to the larger life of active service and enriching experience in the church and in the world.

THE EDITORS.

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

"So is the smith, sitting by his anvil, considering the unwrought iron."

The Book of Ecclesiastious.

This is a book about religion, and the point of view from which it seeks to look at this greatest of all human interests is expressed by the title. It is the point of view of the craftsman as he considers the crude material out of which he hopes to fashion something useful; of the artist as he considers the formless, meaningless clay out of which he dreams of creating something beautiful.

The life that is given to each one of us has little value in itself, but it is rich with possibilities. How can we mould and shape this life of ours, so that the rough material may become significant with usefulness and beauty? Which of the possibilities hidden within it can be hammered into reality, and how can we learn the skill that shall make the stubborn material obey our desires? These are the questions that religion asks.

And the answers cannot be taught or learned by any mechanical method. Each one has to work out