

**MASTERS IN ENGLISH
THEOLOGY; BEING
THE KING'S COLLEGE
LECTURES FOR 1877**

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Masters in English theology; being the King's College lectures for 1877 by Alfred Barry

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ALFRED BARRY

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MASTERS IN ENGLISH THEOLOGY:

BEING THE

KING'S COLLEGE LECTURES

FOR 1877.

EDITED, WITH A HISTORICAL PREFACE,

By ALFRED BARRY, D.D.,

PRINCIPAL.

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HISTORICAL PREFACE.

THE "Masters in Theology," who are the subjects of the Lectures in this volume, belong to that period (1558-1662) from the accession of Elizabeth to the Restoration of Charles II., which may be said to have gradually established the position—in some sense unique in Christendom—of the Church of England. They were originally selected, not simply for their intrinsic greatness, but as being fairly representative of different schools of thought. Each has been treated by a different hand; and, at the cost of some occasional repetition, and some slight variations of opinion, I have thought it better to present the Lectures exactly as they came from the pens of the various authors, hardly venturing to exercise any editorial prerogative.

For this reason, however, it seems especially necessary to prefix to the Lectures a short historical preface, to indicate (so far as may be) the succession of the various phases of Theology, which these great writers were designed to represent, in

close connection with the varying fortunes of the Church itself.

(I.) The settlement made in the early years of Elizabeth may be rightly considered as the close of the first section of the Reformation period. It defined, so far as definition was thought necessary, the position of the Church, in relation both to the Roman Communion, and to the various religious bodies which had broken off from that Communion.

In the first place, the renewal of the Act of Supremacy—with the significant change of the title “Head of the Church,” hitherto given to the Crown (under a reservation not always recognised), to the title of “Supreme Governor”—noted its resolute protest against the two chief characteristics of the Mediæval system, viz. the absolute supremacy of the clergy in the Church, and the universal allegiance of all Christian churches to the Pope. For in the Church of England itself it announced the supremacy over all, clergy and laity alike, of Law, passed by the Convocation and Parliament, and enforced by the Crown; and towards the world at large it claimed a national independence, subject only to appeal to a General Council freely chosen, involving a right to determine its own faith and discipline, under the guidance of Holy Scripture, and with due deference to the traditions of the Primitive Church.

In the next place, the Prayer Book of 1559, imposed by the Act of Uniformity, although modelled