

**THE RELIGION OF ALL
GOOD MEN, AND
OTHER STUDIES IN
CHRISTIAN ETHICS**

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The religion of all good men, and other studies in Christian ethics by H. W. Garrod

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CHRISTIAN ETHICS

BY

H. W. GARROD

FELLOW AND TUTOR OF MERTON COLLEGE
OXFORD

*'Habet testimonia Deus, totum hoc
quod sumus et in quo sumus.'*



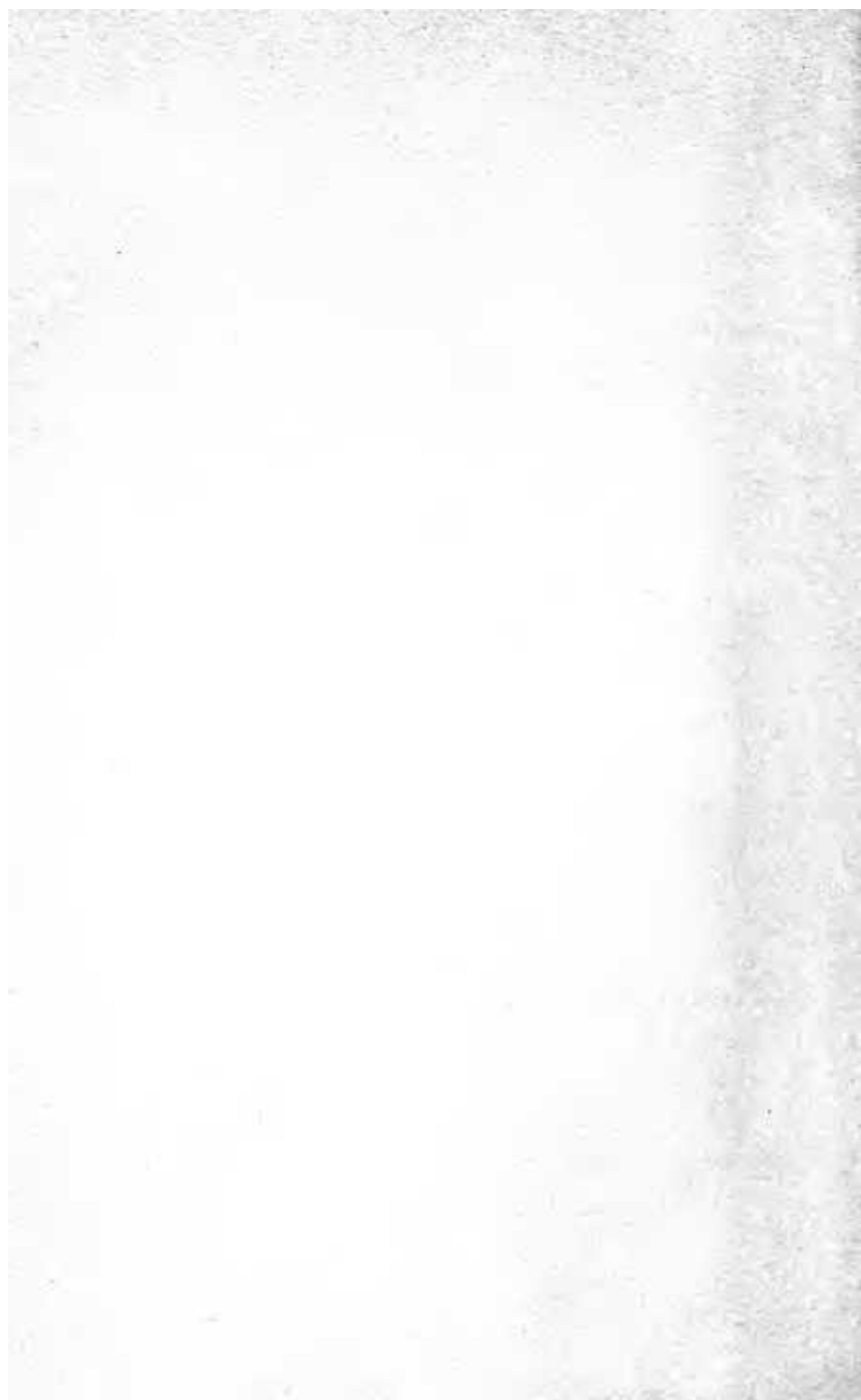
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1906

TO
THOMAS WILLIAM DUNN
TO HAVE KNOWN WHOM IS
A KIND OF RELIGION

164882



P R E F A C E

It is constantly said that the historical criticism of Christianity has for the present generation lost its interest. It is a wave that has spent its force. In a sense this is true. Historical criticism no longer greatly interests those classes whom formerly it did interest. It has begun, I fancy, to appeal to other classes, to whom the force of its appeal constitutes (since they are but ill trained in critical habits) a lively peril. With this I am not concerned. I am here concerned to call attention to the fact that the classes who formerly busied themselves with the criticism of Christianity on its historical side are now interesting themselves in the criticism of it from another side. A generation is growing up which is calling *ethical* Christianity into question just as the two preceding generations called in question *historical* Christianity. Standing myself nearer to this generation than to any other,

and being, from the nature of my profession, in contact on all hands with young men of many types belonging to the educated classes, I say, with some confidence, that never, I believe, was the hold of Religion upon the minds of the youth of this country stronger, nor the hold of Christianity weaker. And, with still greater confidence, I would affirm that the difficulty which young men to-day have in accepting Christianity is not intellectual but moral. I speak that which I know.

The significance of this situation does not need to be emphasised once the situation is made clear. The object of the pages which follow is to induce religious men generally to consider this situation in all its bearings and to excogitate ways and means of dealing with it. This object runs, I think, through all the essays in this volume, and gives to the volume such unity as it possesses. I am aware that it does to some extent lack method and unity. I am aware that in much which I have said there is a want of precision, and that at some points I may perhaps seem exposed to the accusation of superficiality. There are some additions and alterations which I should like to have been able

to make. In particular, there is a certain apparent one-sidedness of which I could have wished by amplification to dispel the impression. Yet even so I have elected to publish what I have written as it stands. If I tried to say what I want to say differently, I fear that I might never say it at all. What I want to say needs, I think, at this time to be said by somebody; and it is better that I should say it imperfectly than that nobody should say it at all. It needs to be said, because it is what many people are thinking and not I alone. I have, of course, had to run counter to a good many 'received' opinions. But I hope I have not laid temerarious and unfeeling hands upon anything that should be truly sacred. I hope also that I have not forgotten my responsibilities towards those who will differ from me. I have not written as the adherent of any religious party, but as one studying ethics historically: and I have written for students of similar interests and not for the 'man in the street': I have written, that is, for an audience where difference of opinion should be not merely conceded but welcomed. And I have written, lastly, as not forgetting that I may one day differ from myself. And here let me say

this: there is a danger that I may change my opinions. But there is also a danger that I may lose the courage of them. Ten years hence I may have the courage only of other people's opinions. My environment is one where the 'shades of the prison-house' too early close in upon youthful enthusiasm. Sooner than elsewhere one ceases to be 'on one's way attended by the Vision Splendid,' and begins to think and feel and speak conventionally and academically. Everywhere around me I hear the praise of the 'middle course,' of compromise, of suspended judgment: and I see the love of truth corrupted into the sophistic passion for believing both sides of a contradiction. I see the folk of my little world the victims all of them of one of two diseases—the disease of having no opinions ('the balanced mind') or the disease of not expressing them ('moderation'). Yet we all know that the just balance is motionless: nor have we ever seen in history intellectual progress born of an elegant *laissez-faire*.

Reflecting upon these things, I have thought it well to say here and now what I had to say upon subjects which the ordinary routine of my duties will perhaps in the future leave me but little