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H. G. Wood

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PREFACE

WHEN the Faculty Board of Divinity in the University of Cambridge honoured me with an invitation to deliver a second series of open lectures in the Michaelmas Term, 1953, the Chairman of the Board, Professor A. M. Ramsey, now Bishop of Durham, suggested that the course should deal 'with the movements of thought and life in the last hundred or hundred and fifty years which have shaped the present religious situation, as if to help answer the question, "How have things come to be like this as to belief and unbelief?"' Obviously, in six or seven lectures one could not hope to do more than focus attention on some outstanding features of so vast a field. I have deliberately refrained from discussing Scientific Humanism and Marxist Communism, since I dealt with them at some length in a previous course. I have only glanced at the important issues raised by the comparative study of religions, in the chapter on religious experience. I have made little or no reference to such important trends of thought as Existentialism and Neo-orthodoxy, or to such vital developments as the Ecumenical movement. But with all its inevitable limitations, I hope the book, which reproduces the lectures almost as they were delivered,

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PREFACE

will be some guide to the right understanding of the history and present position of the debatable matters handled in the chapters that follow.

I am grateful to Messrs Duckworth and Co., publishers of Lady Tweedsmuir's book *The Lilac and the Rose*, for permitting me to use the passages which appear on pp. 2 and 19 f., and to Messrs A. and C. Black for permitting me to quote at length from Dr Schweitzer's preface to the third edition of *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, on pp. 132 and 133.

I would like to thank the Faculty Board of Divinity for giving me the opportunity of revisiting Cambridge and addressing such an indulgent audience on themes of such enduring interest.

H. G. WOOD

May 1954