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978-1-107-67183-6 - The Rights and Responsibilities of National Churches

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The Hulsean Lectures for 1907–8

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by

J. HOWARD B. MASTERMAN, M.A.

Professor of History in the University of Birmingham

Vicar of S. Michael's, Coventry

Examining Chaplain to the Bishop of Manchester

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To SIR OLIVER LODGE, D.Sc., F.R.S.

PRINCIPAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM.

I have not asked your leave to associate this book with your name, for by doing so I might seem to be claiming your support for the views therein propounded; yet I am glad of the opportunity of recording my strong conviction that for you, and many who like you are on quest for that assured conviction of truth that can be restored to our perplexed age only through the travail of human souls, our Church has a home and a welcome—a welcome that loyalty to our Lord gives us the right to offer, and that loyalty to truth does not forbid you to accept.

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“The fact that religion is becoming increasingly significant as a means of consolation and that this point of view is so strongly emphasized, are signs of its altered position in the spiritual life. Religion was once the pillar of fire which went before the human race in its great march through history, showing it the way. Now it is fast assuming the role of the ambulance which follows in the rear and picks up the exhausted and wounded. But this too is a great work. It is however not sufficient; and when religion has disburdened herself of all her dead values, she will once more, in intimate association with ethics, rise to be a power which leads men forward.”

HÖFFDING, *The Philosophy of Religion*.
(English Translation, p. 346.)

PREFACE.

I HAVE thought it best to publish these lectures practically as they were delivered. I have to thank the Rev. J. Neville Figgis for kindly reading them through in MSS. and making several useful suggestions; but he is, of course, in no way responsible for the opinions I have expressed.

It may be well to state shortly the main idea that these lectures are intended to illustrate. It is that Churchmanship and citizenship are the natural expression of the two strongest instincts of humanity—the instinct of self-protection and the instinct of self-sacrifice; that both these instincts find their full scope only under a democratic system; and that the reconciliation of their apparently conflicting claims is to be found in the law of service that finds its fullest expression in the Incarnation.

The question is being asked all round us: Can the English Church meet the needs of the modern world, or is she destined to retreat within ever narrowing frontiers with the advance of the democratic ideal?

viii

PREFACE.

Has she, as many believe, lived her life and done her work, or is she, as I believe, at the threshold of a new and larger opportunity of shepherding the nation into the fold of Christ? On the answer to that question depends the future of England.

May God give us His grace that we may know the day of our visitation, lest our house be left unto us desolate.

J. HOWARD B. MASTERMAN.

THE UNIVERSITY,
BIRMINGHAM.
February, 1908.