
A short history of the Church of England

Kendall John Francis

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A SHORT HISTORY
OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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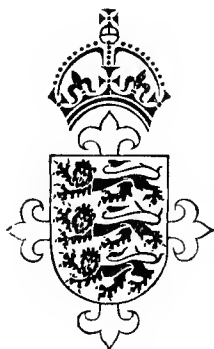
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A·SHORT·HISTORY OF·THE CHURCH·OF·ENGLAND

BY

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Preface

WHEN in a book of this size one has to deal with so large a subject as that of the history of the Church of England, it is obvious that much must be left untold. For details of the events in the long career of the National Church, the reader must therefore turn to larger works. But behind events there lie always the ideas and ideals which led to them; and it is simply the ideas and ideals that have influenced, or in turn have been influenced by, the National Church in its long continuous life which I have tried to describe.

My hope is that I have so far succeeded in my attempt as to make it possible for my readers to place the facts which they gather from elsewhere in their true perspective, and thus to make their study of the subject of real value to them.

J. F. KENDALL.

July 9, 1914.

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CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

OUR earliest knowledge of the people who dwelt in these islands comes from the records which the great Roman General Julius Cæsar kept of his military expeditions. He tells us that he was led into undertaking the conquest of Britain because he found that this island was a kind of harbour of refuge for the people who disturbed the peace in the province of Gaul—*i.e.*, roughly speaking, modern France. But although Julius Cæsar came to England twice, he did not succeed in conquering it. As a matter of fact the conquest was not a reality till at least 100 years later, and it was probably only after Britain had then come to be a part of the great Roman Empire that the

Christian faith was brought to its people. But by whose enthusiasm this bringing of the Faith came about it is impossible to say. There is an old legend that Joseph of Arimathea came with twelve companions and settled at Glastonbury, and in the ground there planted his staff, which budded and grew into the famous Holy Thorn. That beautiful story, however, is only first heard of many hundred years after S. Joseph was dead. The cause which most likely led to the heathen Britons being taught the faith was an outbreak of bitter persecution which fell upon the Christians in South-Eastern Gaul in the year 177. Just as we read in the New Testament that by reason of the persecution of Stephen, Philip and others were scattered abroad, so, too, in all probability as a result of the persecution at Lyons and Vienne, fugitives fled along the great Roman roads to cross the Channel and hide in Britain, as in an earlier day fugitives from the rule of Julius Cæsar had also done.

But whatever were the means by which the faith was first brought to England, there is no doubt about the fact that the Christian Church was a living influence here by the beginning of the third century, for Tertullian, the great Latin Father who lived at that time, speaks of parts of