Preface

In choosing a title for this book I have purposely avoided the word 'Background'—partly because I am tired of it, but still more because the book itself makes no pretence to any sort of completeness. It comprises a group of inter-connected studies in certain nineteenth century writers who have interested me during the past eight years (some of them for much longer). I hope, indeed, that the book may be found to have some unity: I offer it mainly as a preliminary enquiry into the history of religious and moral ideas in the nineteenth century. The subject proved too vast to be treated in one volume, but I hope, in a projected sequel, to fill in some of the gaps and bring the story down to the end of the century.

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