

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THERE has just been issued a new volume of sermons by Professor Theodor Zahn, of Erlangen. It belongs to that series in which the volumes of Dr. Inge and Dr. Hastings Rashdall have already appeared. The series goes by the general name of 'The Scholar as Preacher.' And in that way it is of interest to hear what Professor Sanday has to say of Dr. Zahn.

In his new volume on *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel* (Clarendon Press; 7s. 6d. net), Professor Sanday reviews the recent literature on St. John. He begins with an account of 'the situation in November 1903.' For in that year and in that month Dr. Sanday accepted the invitation of the President of Union Theological Seminary, New York, to deliver a course of lectures there, and just at that time 'the Criticism of the Fourth Gospel had reached a point which, in my opinion, was further removed from truth and reality than at any period within my recollection.' So Dr. Sanday first refers to the books that were published up to November 1903: Jülicher's *Introduction to the New Testament*, the second volume of *Encyclopædia Biblica* with Schmiedel's article, a monograph by Jean Réville, and a commentary by the Abbé Loisy, from all of which and their conclusions he found himself in 'profound dissent.' And then he comes to Zahn.

Professor Sanday does not wholly agree with Dr. Zahn. 'If he were a little less original, he would carry the reader with him more.' But of his scholarship he says: 'It is no disparagement to other workers in the field of Early Christian Literature to say that Dr. Zahn is the most learned of them all. We could indeed count upon our fingers several who know all that really needs to be known; but Dr. Zahn has a singular command of the whole of this material in its remotest recesses. He keeps a keen eye not only on theological literature proper, but on everything that appears in the world of scholarship that might have any bearing upon the questions at issue. An indefatigable industry he shares with more than one of his colleagues; but he is surpassed by none in the vigour and energy of mind with which he works up his knowledge.'

Are these features found in the new volume of sermons? They are there, but they will not be found there by everybody. They were found there by Dr. A. E. Burn, our great English authority on the Creeds, who has done something already to introduce Professor Zahn to English readers, and who, along with another, has translated the volume. But the ordinary reader will almost certainly be thrown off his guard by the apparent simplicity of the sermons. There is an

unwonted simplicity in the very title. Professor Zahn himself called the book *Bread and Salt from the Word of God* (T. & T. Clark; 4s. 6d. net), and would not have it called by any other name. Still it is not possible that a man of Dr. Zahn's accomplishments should be supposed capable of writing only for babes in Christ. The reader who knows even a little of Dr. Zahn will know enough to make him read some passages over again.

When St. John stood at the foot of the Cross he saw our Lord's side pierced with a spear, and at once, he says, blood and water issued from the wound. As soon as he has said this he adds, 'And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe' (Jn 19³⁵). Why does he make this strong assertion of his truthfulness? Why does he make it just at this place?

It is not because he looked upon the issue of the blood and water as a miracle. He had seen greater miracles than that. He saw something more in it than another miracle. That the whole incident made a deep and unusual impression upon him is evident; for not only does he make the assertion of his truthfulness, but he also quotes it as a direct fulfilment of two distinct passages of Scripture.

It is possible that we do not know what he saw in it at the time. Professor Sanday thinks that we do not know. Professor Sanday deals with the incident in his new book. He thinks that what we have in the Fourth Gospel is not what St. John saw in the incident at the moment, but what it had become to him after many years of reflexion. What it had become to him when he wrote after all these years of reflexion St. John himself tells us in his First Epistle: Speaking there of the faith that overcomes the world, he says it is faith in Jesus as the Son of God. And how has Jesus the Son of God made Himself manifest? How has

He come to men? He has come by water and blood (1 Jn 5⁶). 'It is easy,' says Dr. Sanday, 'to understand how what was for him a strange phenomenon at first struck the eye and then dwelt in his mind, and as he often returned to it and pondered over it, at last took definite shape, as a visible emblem, divinely produced, of a principle deeply rooted in the Christian religion, the principle that found expression in its two leading Sacraments.'

Dr. Sanday distinguishes between the fact itself and the train of speculation to which it gave rise. He would not make the distinction often, and he would never make it heedlessly. But it is a distinction which it is always permissible to consider and sometimes imperative to make. He holds that it must be made in the case of some of the longer discourses. 'It has often been remarked,' he says, 'that we are constantly left in doubt where the words of our Lord end and those of the Evangelist begin. Probably the Evangelist himself did not discriminate, or even try to discriminate. A modern writer, in similar circumstances, would feel obliged to ask himself whether the words which he was setting down were really spoken or not; but there is no reason to suppose that the author of the Gospel would be conscious of any such obligation. He would not pause to put to himself questions, or to exercise conscious self-criticism. He would just go on writing as the spirit moved him. And the consequence is that historical recollections and interpretative reflexion, the fruit of thought and experience, have come down to us inextricably blended.'

Does this habit of gliding from historical fact into reflexion upon it discredit St. John as a historian? It does not. It no more discredits St. John than it would have discredited St. Paul had he been a historian. For if St. Paul had been a historian we may be sure, says Dr. Sanday, that he would have furnished abundant parallels for the sort of procedure we find in St. John. St. Paul is not a historian, but he does once lapse into

history, and what do we find? We find that he at once furnishes a parallel which has always seemed to Dr. Sanday very exact and very illuminating. It is in the Epistle to the Galatians. 'You will remember,' says Dr. Sanday, 'the account of his dispute with St. Peter at Antioch (Gal 2^{11ff.}). The first few verses are strictly historical; but suddenly and without a word of warning the apostle glides into one of his own abstruse doctrinal arguments as to justification by works of law and by faith.'

It does not discredit St. John, it establishes his credit. For it is to be observed that in all such cases the fact comes first. The order of thought is from the observed fact to the idea. It is not backwards from the idea to a fact imagined to correspond with it. Professor Sanday is able to lay it down with confidence that in the Fourth Gospel the Evangelist always starts from something that he has seen.

There is an article on 'The Fourth Gospel' in the *London Quarterly Review* for October. It is written by Professor Peake, of Manchester. In that article Professor Peake discusses a passage which has just been quoted, that passage in which the author of the Fourth Gospel, after describing the lance-thrust and the issue of blood and water from the pierced side, makes the strong affirmation of his own trustworthiness. It is a curiously worded passage. It is curious in the English translation; it is more curious in the Greek because of the change of pronoun: 'And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his (*αὐτοῦ*) witness is true: and he (*ἐκεῖνος*) knoweth that he saith true that ye may believe.'

Are there two persons here, or only one? Does the author of the Gospel distinguish himself from some one else, or is he speaking of himself throughout?

The common view is that he is speaking of himself throughout. His habit is to speak of himself in the third person. This is perhaps the

most remarkable example of it, but it is an example. So argues Westcott, strongly, and when Westcott argues strongly he has a way of carrying conviction.

But he has not convinced Professor Peake. For there is more here than the use of the third person. The author says that his witness is true. Why is he not content with that? Why does he add that he knows that he tells the truth? If his readers do not believe that his witness is true, are they likely to believe it because he says that he knows that it is true? Professor Peake is convinced that there are two persons here. He believes that the author of the Gospel is one.

And he believes that the other is Christ.

The author speaks the truth, and he knows that he is speaking the truth. But on this solemn occasion it is not enough to say that he speaks the truth; it is not enough to say that he knows he is speaking it. He appeals to the risen Christ. It is a double testimony; for in the mouth of two witnesses shall such wonderful words be established. There is his own human testimony, and there is the knowledge of the infallible Christ. 'And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true, and *HE* knoweth that he saith true, that ye may believe.'

This view is not peculiar to Professor Peake. It is the view of Zahn, and of others. It is now the view of Professor Sanday also.

For in his new book Professor Sanday also discusses this passage. He does not think that the common view is impossible. He does not think it impossible to believe that the author is 'simply turning back upon himself and protesting his own veracity.' The pronouns are surprising, but even the pronouns are not impossible. 'The use of *ἐκεῖνος* to take up the subject of a sentence is specially frequent and specially characteristic of this Gospel; and as the author systematically speaks of himself in the third person, it seems to me that the word may also naturally refer to

himself so objectified: he who saw the sight has set it down . . . and he is well assured that what he says is true.'

But it is not so likely as the other view. Dr. Sanday has given the passage the best consideration he can, and on the whole he is inclined to agree with Dr. Zahn. The writer would then be making a strong asseveration, like the 'God knoweth' of 2 Corinthians. There would be a near parallel in 3 Jn¹², 'Demetrius hath the witness of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, we also bear witness; and thou knowest that our witness is true.' And especially would it be in harmony with the habit of thought disclosed in the Gospel itself. 'As the Son appeals to the witness of the Father, as it were dimly seen in the background, so also it would I think be natural for the beloved disciple to appeal to the Master who is no longer at his side in bodily presence, but who is present with him and with the Church in spirit: "he who saw the sight hath set it down in writing . . . and there is one above who knows that he is telling the truth."'

And yet it is Professor Sanday's own judgment that when St. John said he saw the issue of blood and water, he was not telling the truth. He was not telling the truth as modern science demands.

For physicians assure us, and Dr. Sanday agrees with them, that 'what the evangelist actually saw was not, strictly and literally, what he has described. The efflux from the side was not exactly blood and water, though it might quite well have had an appearance like that of blood and water, and the Evangelist no doubt supposed it to be what he says. The blood was real blood, but that which looked like water was a sort of lymph or serum. This would serve equally well to suggest the train of thought which the Evangelist attached to it.'

Yes, equally well. For the actual fact is nothing to the Evangelist, and next to nothing

to us. It is the observed fact that is of consequence. Was the world created in six days? No, says the man of science, and he is right. Yes, says the man of ordinary observation, and he is right also. As for the man of religion, he does not mind which of these views should prevail. The ordinary observer, considering all things as he finds them, and considering God the Maker of them all, says 'in six days,' and he is right. That is the best formula to fit all the facts into, so that they may be understood, and remembered, and passed from father to son. The man of scientific training, considering one set of phenomena only, the physical, but considering them much more carefully, says 'six millions of years is nearer the mark,' and he is right also. The man after God's own heart will take the fact as he finds it, the accurate scientific fact or the outwardly observed fact, and either 'will serve equally well to suggest the train of thought' which he attaches to it.

But St. John was a historian as well as a man of God. As a historian, it was of consequence that he should be capable of reporting what he saw. And he did report it. To him the important thing was the observed fact, as it is to the historian always. If he had said 'blood and serum' instead of 'blood and water,' his trustworthiness as a historian would have been seriously shaken. He says 'blood and water,' and we also know that he saith true.

Have we now said enough about Professor Sanday's new book? About the book itself we have really said very little, and we do not intend to say more. For, above all other things, our purpose is to entice men to find the book and read it; and we know that we can serve that purpose best by allowing Dr. Sanday himself to speak for his book. So one other reference may yet be allowed. It is a reference to the section on the use of the word 'Believe.'

It is said that there is a want of progressive development in the Fourth Gospel. In the

opinion of Dr. Sanday the want is more apparent than real. And he has long suspected that one of the reasons for its apparent want of progress has been the ambiguity of its use of the word 'believe.'

Did the disciples and others believe in Jesus at the beginning of His ministry or did they not? The Synoptics seem to say that they did not; St. John seems to say that they did. But have we made allowance for the simplicity of St. John's style? Have we made allowance for the modesty of his vocabulary? When we see the word 'believe,' we take it in the full sense of complete conversion and acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. But there are many stages of belief. St. John has only one word to express them all. But if we were to attend closely to the context, we should see that sometimes he means nothing more than the very first dawns of belief, sometimes no more than quite transient impressions.

Dr. Sanday gives one 'especially interesting' example. 'The writer is speaking of the visit of Peter and the unnamed disciple to the tomb, and he tells how, after Peter had entered, the other disciple also entered, "and he saw and believed" (20⁸); but he immediately adds: "For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." We might perhaps paraphrase: "The wonder of the resurrection began to dawn upon them, though they were not prepared for it. At a later date they came to understand that prophecy had distinctly pointed to it, and that the whole mission of the Messiah would have been incomplete without it: but as yet this was hidden from them. They saw that something mysterious had happened, and they felt that what had happened was profoundly important; as yet they could say no more. The first step towards a full belief had been taken, though the full belief itself was still in the future.'"

Was St. Paul a mystic? To some of us the very question is not without offence. For there

is a way of dealing with the great doctrines of Christianity which has become almost fashionable of late, a way by which they are robbed of all their authority, and the 'mysticism' of St. Paul has much to do with it. First the great doctrines are traced to St. Paul. He is the author of the doctrine of the Atonement, he is the author of Justification by Faith. And then their scope and even their sanity is swept from them—for 'St. Paul was a mystic.'

Yet it seems that either St. Paul was a mystic, or there is no such thing as mysticism. There has been published by Messrs. Burns & Oates, the Catholic publishers of Orchard Street, a life of *St. Catherine de' Ricci* (7s. 6d. net). It is written by F. M. Capes; and it is preceded by a Treatise on the Mystical Life by the Rev. F. Bertrand Wilberforce, O.P., Preacher-General of the Order. Mr. Wilberforce has no sympathy with the modern aversion to the great doctrines of the Faith. Yet he has no hesitation in saying that St. Paul was a mystic. If St. Paul was not a mystic, he does not know what mysticism is.

Well, what is mysticism? What does Mr. Wilberforce think mysticism is? He goes at once to St. Paul. If we desire a short yet comprehensive description of the mystical life, we cannot, he says, have a better than that given by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians (3¹⁻⁴). The Christian mystic is one who, being 'risen with Christ, seeks the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God'; he is one who 'minds the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth.'

But is not this simply the follower of Christ? Is every follower of Christ a mystic? Mr. Wilberforce does not think so. There is, undoubtedly, a way of speaking of the Christian life as if it were a mystical life. But in his judgment that is not the proper use of the word mystical. That is too general, it is too common (though we would it were more common than it is). The proper

use of 'mystical' is attained when the life is lived very fully in the grace of God, and is moved very strongly by the Holy Spirit. In Mr. Wilberforce's own language, 'Mysticism is an extraordinary degree of union with God both in knowledge and in love.'

The spiritual life, in general, says Mr. Wilberforce, passes, or should pass, through three stages. These three stages are expressed by the Psalmist in Ps 34¹⁴—

Depart from evil; and do good;
Seek peace and pursue it.

'Depart from evil.' That is the first stage. It is called the Purgative State of the spiritual life. 'Do good.' That is the second stage. It is called the Illuminative State. The third stage is higher than these. In it the soul, being purified from all sin, and having imitated the life and virtues of Jesus Christ the light of the world, is now united to God in most perfect love. It is called the Unitive Way.

All these stages are sometimes called mystical, but in Mr. Wilberforce's judgment the only really mystical state is that which is called the Unitive Way. For in his judgment the mystical state is supernatural. No doubt the spiritual life in all its stages is supernatural, for it is always the gift of God. But the last stage is supernatural in the common use of that word. That is to say, in it the believer is raised above the ordinary laws of God's dealing with souls. 'It is in the order of grace as miraculous as it would be in the natural order for a man to fly through the air.'

So St. Peter was not necessarily a mystic on the day upon which he uttered the words, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' even though flesh and blood had not revealed them to him but the Father in heaven. But when he ascended the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus, and being carried out of himself by an ecstasy of love, spoke words 'not knowing what he said,'

Mr. Wilberforce is assured that he was a mystic on that day.

And St. Paul was not necessarily and in the proper use of the word a mystic when he said that he was dead and his life was hid with Christ in God. But he was a mystic when he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter (2 Co 12⁴). Not that rapture is the only mystical state. The mystical state is the state of thought and will which makes the rapture possible. The rapture is the evidence and the reward. St. Paul was rapt to Paradise because he was living in an extraordinary degree of union with God; because he was filled at the time both with the love and the knowledge of God.

Both with knowledge and with love. For these two are not one in the mystical life but distinguishable. And the mystics use different words for the rapture which is a rapture of love, and the rapture which is of knowledge. They call the one seraphic and the other cherubic. If the rapture brings a great increase of knowledge it is cherubic, since the cherubim know the divine secrets in the most excellent way. But if the rapture brings excess of love into the heart it is called seraphic, since the seraphim excel all the other choirs of angels in that which is the best of all, for God Himself is love.

Mr. Wilberforce believes that when St. Paul was carried up to Paradise his rapture was cherubic. He increased in wisdom rather than in love. But he would not dogmatise. And indeed knowledge and love are never far apart in the mystical life, since knowledge always leads to love, and love to knowledge. Are there secrets hidden from us here? It is because we have not heart of love enough. There are no secrets hidden from that perfect love which casteth out fear.

Whereof Mr. Wilberforce gives this illustration. Gregory Lopez, a very simple man, but a high

contemplative, was about to die. Knowing that Philip II. of Spain, when the candle was put into his hand at death, had exclaimed, 'Now for the

great secret,' Gregory said, as he himself held the death candle, 'No secret for me,' and smiled with joy as he went to his Lord.

The Person of our Lord.

BY PRINCIPAL THE REV. J. OSWALD DYKES, D.D., WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

II.

WHILE Chalcedon branded as errors the two extreme positions of Nestorius and Eutyches, it left room for both the opposite paths of approach to this central mystery, which for generations had already divided the suffrages of Oriental Christendom—the paths, I mean, which had been chosen by the two rival schools of Antioch and Alexandria. And the striking fact must be noted that of these two, the one which met with least success at the time, and was for many a century left behind by the main stream of doctrinal history, is that in which the modern mind has been led to feel a keener interest and warmer sympathy than can now be evoked by its rival. To understand this is to read in large outline the subsequent movement of christological development.

What appeals most powerfully to a modern theologian in the Christology of the Antiochians, is, first, their preoccupation with the historical Life related in the Gospels, and, next, the emphasis they laid on its ethical features. The former stood connected with the sound and sober character of their exegesis. The latter was a result of their habit of approaching the doctrines of the faith from the anthropological rather than the theological side, and their insistence on the perfection of humanity as consisting in the moral coincidence of man's free choice with the will of God. In this way they came to the problem of Our Lord's Person from the side of His earthly humanity; preoccupied with the historical career of Jesus, desirous before all things to understand and do justice to His moral union with the Father. This ruling conception determined the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia, their representative divine who died only some quarter of a century before the Chalcedon Council. But the attempt to ethicise the incarnation had been at home in Syrian theology long before. Theodore was fol-

lowing on the lines of the earlier Theodore of Tarsus, and, in fact, there were some who traced the genealogy of those views back to Paul of Samosata.

The centre of this Mopsuestian Christology must be found just here: that the special presence of God in Man, being a personal presence, cannot be conceived as other than ethical. Not a presence of the Divine Essence, since that is everywhere; nor merely a dynamic presence, since His power is everywhere operative. But the specialty is, that with Man, who is a free moral Person, God who is likewise a free and moral Person, can be united in a way of ethical coincidence of will and disposition (*ἐν γνώμῃ*)—leading to the entire approval or goodwill of the Father resting on His earthly child (*ἐνδοκία*). So has God dwelt in a measure in all good men, especially in prophets; but so He dwelt without measure and with complete fulness in Jesus Christ His Son. Probably Theodore's best contribution to the subject lay in his insistence that the development of our Lord in knowledge and virtue could be no *θέατρον*, but a genuine human progress culminating in genuine human virtue; and that this human life and character, with its free self-determination and moral victories, was essential to His work of redemption. No doubt Theodore moved loyally within the accepted lines of orthodoxy. The doctrine of the two natures was far from denied. The Logos incarnate in Jesus was still the influence which from the first was supposed to keep the human life of Jesus in such unbroken accord with the Father. Still, in order to do this, the Divine in the God-Man did not infringe in the least upon the freedom of our Lord's ethical choice as a Man. All along He needed, as we do, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and His personal struggles with temptation were the road which conducted