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# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

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## Notes of Recent Exposition.

WHEN the gains of the 'wonderful century,' as Russel Wallace called it, have all been reckoned up, it is possible that the greatest will be seen to be the discovery that persecution does not pay. Like all great discoveries it was made long before it obtained recognition. Latimer discovered it in the first half of the sixteenth century. But it took all these years to persuade the rulers of the people that it was a genuine discovery, and to put it in practice.

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What is the result? The immediate, and it may be momentous, result is an appreciation of Jesus by a Jew. Before the nineteenth century, before the end of it, that was impossible. It was even unthinkable. It was as unthinkable by Jews as by Christians, and by Christians as by Jews. For the persecution of the Jews made it impossible for them to look with other feelings than hatred at the Christian Founder. And the persecution of the Jews made it impossible for Christians to believe that a Jew could look upon Jesus in any other way. But already more than one appreciation has appeared. First, one by Mr. Claude G. MONTFIORE, an English Jew. And now, one by an American, Mr. H. G. ENELow.

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And both Jews are appreciative out and out. You may read them from first page to last without offence. There is not, as yet, either in the one or

in the other, any concession to Christianity. Jesus is a man, and only a man. He is not even the Messiah. But there is a sense of His incomparable goodness. Both writers make it plain that they are proud to think that Jesus—the greatest and most beneficent influence in the modern world—was born a Jew.

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More than that, Mr. ENELow almost grudges Him to the Christian. He says, 'It is well to remember that Jesus died a Jew, and not a Christian. His last prayers were Jewish, hallowed by Jewish tradition and usage. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" "Into Thy hands I commend my Spirit!" He died a Jew, having no idea that he was destined to be called the founder of a new faith, to supersede or destroy his own. That this part fell to him was due entirely to the small group of men and women that had followed him and stood by him to the last, because they loved him.'

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Mr. ENELow's book is called *A Jewish View of Jesus* (Macmillan; \$1.50). It is written in English undefiled and with a glow which one may be pardoned for attributing to the somewhat more than admiration which approaches worship. No doubt there are difficulties in the Gospels. There is the one great difficulty of the divine Sonship, so incredible because so incomprehensible to a Jew.

After that, however, the difficulties are not really serious.

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There is the difficulty about the Pharisees. Mr. ENELow doubts if Jesus found the Pharisees such hidebound hypocrites as the evangelists represent them to have been. There were good men among them as well as bad—which by the way is just what the evangelists say.

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Another difficulty is the trial by Caiaphas. Mr. ENELow sees no way out of that difficulty, and simply cuts the knot. There was no trial before Caiaphas. There was no Jewish trial at all. The Sanhedrin could not have met during the night. And if it did for once, no man could have been tried for his life before it, unless the trial had gone on during the previous day. Moreover, it was unnecessary. Pilate was as alive to the danger from Jesus as the high priest. The Passover was at hand with its perpetual risk of disturbance. He sent his soldiers and arrested Jesus. He tried, condemned, and crucified Him.

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How, then, did the story of a Jewish trial arise? 'When the Gospels were composed, Pilate had become an almost pious figure—a wellnigh Christian soul: efforts were made to exculpate him as far as possible, to minimize his share in the Crucifixion. He is represented as trying to release Jesus, and even his wife is brought in, pleading with him to the same effect. He is made to wash his hands, Jewish fashion, as a symbol of his rejection of all responsibility.' Then the Jews had by this time become the bitter enemies of the Cross, and so the odium of the death of Jesus was deliberately cast upon them.

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That will not do, of course. But its very desperation, and the elaborateness with which it is laid out, throws into clearest light the uneasiness with which a modern Jew thinks of the death of Jesus, and his passionate desire to be rid of responsibility for it.

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It is with especial pleasure one takes into one's hand the third volume of Professor Vincent Henry STANTON'S book, *The Gospels as Historical Documents* (Cambridge: at the University Press; 8vo, pp. x, 293; 20s. net). For it is eleven years since the second volume was published, and one could not help fearing that the author's appointment to the Regius Chair of Divinity had made it impossible for him to complete the work. The third volume deals with the Fourth Gospel. And it is on that Gospel that Professor STANTON'S minute knowledge and astonishingly unbiassed judgment would be sure to tell most reassuringly. Greater than the loss that was feared is the gain that is offered. This volume will determine opinion on the critical problems of the Fourth Gospel for many a day to come.

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Of what consequence is it that we should know who wrote the Fourth Gospel? It is of scarcely any consequence. What is of consequence is the knowledge which its author had of the facts of the life of Christ. If its author was one of the Twelve he had that knowledge. But he may have had it without being one of the Twelve. And if he had, then he had everything that really matters.

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For we know all the rest. We know that the author of this Gospel was a man of deep spiritual experience. We know that he was a theologian and a thinker. The Gospel itself tells us all that. And if, as is most probable, he was the author of the First Epistle, we know further that he was a pastor, 'living in the most intimate communion with, and feeling the most anxious solicitude for, the general body of Christians in the district where he lived.'

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But that is not enough. We need to know if he had independent knowledge of the life of Christ, so that we can take his narrative as confirming that of the Synoptists when he agrees with them, and as demanding separate consideration when he disagrees. We have to know whether or not we can use the fourth as well as the first three Gospels

as authoritative evidence for the person, work, and teaching of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Professor STANTON does not believe that the Fourth Gospel was written by the Apostle John. It is true he sets aside the story of the early martyrdom of John and accepts his sojourn in Ephesus. But he considers it improbable that the Apostle was ever capable of this consummate authorship. 'When St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Galatians he refers to the fact that on one of his visits to Jerusalem he found John, who must have been already middle-aged, holding the position of one of "the pillars" of the Church there, and closely associated with James the Lord's brother, and with Simon Peter, who were unquestionably representatives of Jewish Christianity. And we cannot suppose him to have gone to Asia for a good many years after this. Tradition itself concerning his work in Asia connects it with his old age. It is reasonable to imagine that he migrated there from Palestine either during the troubles which immediately preceded, or subsequently to, the Destruction of Jerusalem. Now although the composition of the Fourth Gospel did not require the Alexandrian training on the part of its author which some have held that it did, and although there need not have been any fundamental difference between the conception of the Person and Work of Jesus in the mind of a primitive apostle and that which we meet with in this Gospel, yet it would be strange that one who had come among the Greek or Hellenised population of Western Asia Minor in the last two or three decades of a long life should have been able in his presentation of the truth to adapt himself to his hearers and readers, laying aside earlier habits of speech and points of view, and should shew also that in his own thought he has undergone development, to the extent that we find here.'

But Professor STANTON believes that this Gospel was written by one who had seen Christ during His life on earth, and who had intimate acquaintance with those who had been His disciples. In

the Prologue the writer speaks of himself with others as having 'seen the glory' of the Incarnate Son of God; and in the First Epistle he includes himself among those who had 'looked upon' and 'handled' the Word of Life.

'These expressions,' says Professor STANTON, 'cannot be interpreted of spiritual sight and touch and hearing because these would not have been referred to merely as experiences in the past; this meaning is also inconsistent with the general tenor of the contexts. One can, however, understand that the claim in question might be made by a youth or boy, younger by some years than the Apostle John, even if the latter was the youngest of the Twelve, but who could remember having sometimes himself seen and heard Jesus, and who had derived a sense of a knowledge, which was at least almost immediate, of the Divine revelation made in the Lord, by intimate association with His personal disciples very soon after His departure.'

It is therefore to Professor STANTON most probable that the author of the Gospel according to St. John was a disciple of the Apostle, not the Apostle himself. That being so, he does not need to apologize for the author, when he does not agree with the Synoptics, on the ground that he was old when he wrote the Gospel; nor on the other hand does he need to maintain that he possessed a more intimate knowledge of the facts than the other evangelists. He can consider every difference on its merits. And, above all, he can use the Fourth Gospel as a reliable source for the facts of the life of Jesus, as well as for the interpretation of the facts.

There are men who cannot understand the importance that is attached to the Virgin Birth of our Lord. Nevertheless the Virgin Birth is a theme of ever-increasing attention. When Professor SANDAY was invited to lecture in America he hesitated between the Fourth Gospel and the Virgin Birth and did the present reviewer the

honour of asking and taking his advice. He lectured on the Fourth Gospel. But at the present time he might have chosen the Virgin Birth.

Now one of the best books ever written on the Virgin Birth has just been published at the Clarendon Press in Oxford. The title is *The Historical Evidence for the Virgin Birth* (12s. 6d. net). The author is the Rev. Vincent TAYLOR, B.D. It is one of the best books ever written, because the author has not settled the matter before writing it. Orr did that on the one side, Lobstein did it on the other; and between the two it was only a race of plausibility. More than that, Mr. TAYLOR has not settled the matter when his book is written. And that is better still. For at the present time, with our present tools and temper, we cannot settle it.

Only the first and third Gospels make any reference to the Virgin Birth. The rest of the New Testament is silent. Mr. TAYLOR will not allow us to say that silence means either ignorance or opposition. It is simply silence. We are left with St. Matthew and St. Luke.

And the first question is, Are the accounts in St. Matthew and St. Luke independent? It is usually assumed that they are; whereupon the one tradition is taken as confirming the other. Mr. TAYLOR does not think that they are independent. Both narratives point back, he thinks, to a simpler, single tradition. What we have is not two independent narratives of the Virgin Birth, but two independent witnesses to a single original narrative.

If that is so we must give up the theory which Dr. SANDAY set forth so attractively, the theory that St. Matthew obtained his version from Joseph, and St. Luke from Mary. It is not only an attractive theory, there are little things in it which lend it great plausibility. But Mr. TAYLOR cannot be sure about it. 'It may be,' he says, 'that St. Luke's story goes back for its authority to Mary; it is very doubtful if St. "Matthew's" has any historical connexion with Joseph; but in either case neither

assumption is justifiable in an historical inquiry. It must be allowed, we think, that our view has sounder advantages. Instead of claiming validity for two diverse traditions, we can point to two very different narratives, which arise out of the same belief and are independent witnesses to its existence in the primitive Christian community.'

Then arises the crucial question. Did the story come first to St. Matthew or to St. Luke? Mr. TAYLOR says St. Matthew. For he believes that when St. Luke wrote his Gospel he had not heard of the Virgin Birth. It was only after St. Matthew's Gospel was written, or at any rate after the belief embodied in St. Matthew's Gospel had become current in the Church, that he heard of it. Then he took up his Gospel again, incorporated the belief in it, and issued it in a second edition.

That is Mr. TAYLOR'S theory. It is well expressed by him. Hear him for a moment. 'In the first instance,' he says, 'St. Luke wrote his Gospel, either in whole or in part, without any knowledge of the Virgin Birth. To him, as to the compiler of the Lukan genealogy, Jesus was the son of Joseph and of Mary. St. Luke's estimate of Jesus was not less high than that of St. Paul and St. Mark, but, as was probably true in the case of each of these writers, no tradition of the Miraculous Birth had reached him. He looked upon Jesus as the Child of Wondrous Promise, and for his analogies he turned to the Old Testament to the stories of Isaac and of Samuel.'

'Some time after he had penned his narrative, possibly after it had been dispatched to Theophilus, but at any rate before the Gospel gained a wider circulation, St. Luke received the tradition of the Virgin Birth. At what time and from what source the story reached him we are quite unable to say; possibly it was from some reader or readers to whom he had submitted his narrative; possibly the story travelled along some independent channel. In any case the probability is that the tradition was imparted to St. Luke by some one who claimed

to possess a fuller and a better account, and whose claim the Evangelist respected and admitted.

It satisfied the mind of St. Luke. Probably the story appealed to him at once as a fitting explanation of the unique personality of Jesus. It was a tradition rich in doctrinal possibilities; it provoked reflection, and it answered questions. The Evangelist saw at once that the story must find a place in his narrative. Fortunately it was not too late, and fortunately again there was a point where it could be included without entailing the necessity of rewriting the first two chapters entirely. He had only to insert the words we have now in i. 34 f. into the address of the angel, and to add to the opening words of the Genealogy the phrase "as was supposed," to obtain a narrative in which truths previously unknown to him found sufficient statement.'

The words which he inserted were: 'And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God.'

Is it possible to be too scientific in the teaching of religion? The demand is made, and with rapidly increasing emphasis, for a religious education that shall be abreast of modern scholarship. It is said that in our Sunday schools, it is whispered that even in our day schools, the teaching of the Bible is out of date. Is it possible that it can be too much up to date? Is it possible that by teaching the Old Testament in exact accordance with the results of historical criticism we are teaching an Old Testament shorn of religious value?

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." I should not be surprised if someone, reading the story of the taking of Jericho as we have it in the Book of Joshua, were to say with something of a

smile, "Yes, that is all very well, but that is not how military operations are conducted in our day."

The remark is made by Dr. John A. HUTTON. Now Dr. HUTTON has always been supposed to be up to date. If he touches the Old Testament in his preaching he is expected to do so with scientific precision. And if he comes upon such an incident as the taking of Jericho, is he not likely either to pass it by or to clear it out of his way? Even if he only reads the story as his Scripture Lesson for the day, will he not point out how natural it is for such a story to be invented in a miracle-loving age, and will he not produce parallels in plenty from the folklore of the world? Or will he not simply shrug his shoulders and say that 'that certainly is not how victories are won in this hard practical world of ours to-day'?

But Dr. HUTTON does none of these things. He deliberately chooses the story of the fall of Jericho for one of his regular discourses, and then publishes the sermon in a volume which he significantly calls *Discerning the Times* (James Clarke; 7s. 6d. net).

For he observes this fact about the story, that it 'is a story which was passed, that is to say, approved for publication, away down in the later days of the Hebrew people, by a body of men who knew the hard discipline of history as you and I have never needed to know it until these very days. The story of the taking of Jericho by an assault of faith was reissued, approved, passed on as a document on which the religious soul could refresh itself, and guide itself, by a body of men in whose veins ran the blood of the captives of Babylon, of men who had seen the city of God sacked and outraged, men who with their wives and children had been driven like beasts across the desert into Mesopotamia.'

The men who passed this story were not trained scientifically. They were not brought up to be-

lieve that miracles 'do not occur.' All that has to be admitted. But then, on the other hand, they 'were not fools, and they were not children. They had no reason to speak about life as an easy thing, or of this world of ours as a place in which all that men have to do in order to achieve great results is to blow a trumpet and walk round about the object whose overthrow they seek.'

And they allowed this story to stand. 'They knew—none better—that it would never find a place in military hand-books; but they hoped it would find a place in the literature of the soul. They knew that the truth and pith of the story would be perceived quite clearly by people in every age who had insight, who had moral sagacity, who had reverence; that it would do little children no harm to take it as a story and swallow it in every detail, for it would leave with them, if all else should go, the tendency, more precious than wisdom, in every great emergency to lift up their eyes to God. And they knew that it would do grown-up people all the good in the world to embrace the principle of this story, the parable and final moral truth of it.'

Dr. HUTTON calls upon us to consider the situation in which these soldiers found themselves. He has considered it himself. He has read the story, 'read it again, and yet again, until my mind, my imagination, my own knowledge of history, my own sense of God, have dealt with it, making of it what they can.' And then he has found that 'there is a certain cream and essence of the whole matter' which rises to the surface and remains for him the true and abiding word of God.

It is this.

'The men who assaulted Jericho were men who set out upon their task as from the very presence of God. They had judged themselves by the severest moral standard that they were aware of. They had abandoned and banished from their own spirits every purpose which seemed

to them to conflict with God's peremptory requirement of them one by one.'

'The business, too, on which they were engaged was one on which they pledged themselves, *that if God should send them victory, they would make nothing out of it for themselves.* They were willing, indeed, as happened later on at Ai—they were willing, so great was their integrity, that God should smite them before their enemies if He could find within their ranks even one treacherous or self-seeking and profiteering man. That is to say, it was a business on which they wanted only to be the instruments of God's will. In such an exalted mood, the story tells us, they set out, men who had nothing to lose because they had nothing to gain, for all their gains had to be devoted to God, with the happiness that such men will always have, the good humour, the patience. For seven days they marched round the city, and on the seventh day they marched round the city seven times. On that seventh day they gave a shout; whereupon the hearts of their enemies failed within them, and, in the swift language of the East, the walls of the city fell flat.'

Is it scientifically impossible still? 'It is a story, I say, which stands and which will stand; for if it does not stand, why, then, nothing stands. Far from it being a strange story, perhaps no lasting victory was ever won on other principles.'

And then to those who would make light of it, in order to turn the edge of its tremendous criticism, Dr. HUTTON proposes this challenge: 'Let me see a nation with this purity and high intention, unanimous under God, in which not one man is left who has the moral taint of Achan, not one man with a private business on hand, a nation patient, friendly within its own borders, believing in God, prepared to endure, ready to go on with things which, in themselves, do not seem to be of direct value, but which, being maintained day by day, sustain the general spirit and keep alive the indomitable will. Let me see *now* such a nation;

and let it be our own nation; and does anyone doubt that this serious universe of ours, which must always be searching for serious instruments, will establish such a nation in the councils of the world? Nay, I should go further. Let me see such a nation, purged of all self-seeking, holding itself the instrument of a holy will; a nation yielding itself freely to its own highest personal and political tradition, seeking nothing in its own triumph but the triumph of those ideas and ideals

which save and secure mankind; let me see such a nation, and is it a thing to be doubted that the arm of the enemies of such a nation should suddenly be paralyzed? For they should see, as, not our own soldiers only, but the advancing hosts of the enemy after the battle of Mons declare they saw, battalions of radiant fighters in the sky, withstanding them, causing their blood to turn into water, overwhelming them with the majesty of God.'

## William Sanday and his Work.

BY THE REV. ALFRED PLUMMER, D.D., FORMERLY MASTER OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DURHAM.

### Third Paper.

OF the valuable by-works, by means of which Sanday prepared himself and his readers for the features which ought to be found in a critical Life of Christ, there are two, and only two more, which require to be noticed: but, for the purpose for which they were written, they are the most interesting and the most instructive.

In 1907 there was the volume with the attractive and significant title, *The Life of Christ in Recent Research*. It consists of seven lectures, three reviews, and a sermon; and the writer tells us that 'the collection as a whole reflects a part of the process of self-education for the larger task.' Of course it also helps, and is meant to help, in the education of others. The doctrinal problems of our day are so far-reaching that for the present they can be handled only tentatively; and tentative handling is just what Sanday gives us. The problems must be faced, but without rash dogmatism, and without fear of criticism. *Nihil temere, nihil timide, sed omnia consilio et virtute*, as Döllinger put it. To many readers the first thing in the volume will be one of the most helpful items, the lecture on 'The Symbolism of the Bible.' Every intelligent reader of the Scriptures recognizes that a great deal of the language must be interpreted symbolically. But the large extent to which this is the case is perhaps recognized by comparatively few; and it is here that Sanday has been a real help to many of us. There is much

in the field of thought, and especially of religious thought, which cannot be defined, or even described directly. We assent to the statement that God is Spirit, but we can form no mental picture of either God or Spirit. We can at best suggest an approximation, and in suggesting we make use of symbolical language. Sanday defines symbolism as 'indirect description.' The Hebrew Prophets, especially Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah, were often told to perform symbolical actions; and nearly all the religious ritual of the O.T. was symbolical. This is true of the highest act of worship both for the Jews and for the heathen. In sacrifice there is the gift to propitiate the Deity, and the food which the worshipper shares with the Deity, in order to enter into communion with Him. Is not much of the story of the Creation, and of the Ten Plagues, and of the Exodus, symbolical? No doubt there is an historical basis; but the narratives which have come down to us are too symmetrical to be pure history; and the symbolism, rightly understood, is very instructive. Details in the descriptions of the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai may be regarded as symbolical of the central truth that the Ten Words really proceeded from God. Apocalyptic literature is mainly symbolical. Daniel and Revelation tell of past, present, and future under symbolical forms.

Our Lord employs symbolism to an extent which Oriental hearers would think quite natural, but