

# 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:



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



<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for the *Journal of Theological Studies* (old series) can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_jts-os\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jts-os_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article]

# *The Journal* *of* *Theological Studies*

JULY, 1903

ROBERT CAMPBELL MOBERLY.

NOT long ago there appeared in one of the quarterlies<sup>1</sup> an article on 'Religion in Oxford,' which attracted a rather unusual amount of attention. It was a curious mixture of very genuine interest in religion with the methods and something of the piquancy of the New Journalism<sup>2</sup>. The tendency of the article was wholesome, because the writer had a really excellent ideal before his mind of what he would like to see; but he was rather exacting, and there was some want of proportion in his judgements of what he actually saw. His summary verdict was that 'there are no great influences in Oxford as there were in the days of J. H. Newman, or of T. H. Green.'

The writer even went so far as to use the word 'appalling.' 'What is the aspect of the University of Oxford now as a place of religion? The question is appalling, and no one could give it a satisfactory answer.' Perhaps some of us were not so much alarmed as we ought to be. We are accustomed to make some allowance for the style of the New Journalism, of which these highly coloured expressions are characteristic, and in which superlatives regularly stand where soberer old-fashioned pens would use the positive.

In regard to that particular startling expression, all I would

<sup>1</sup> *The Church Quarterly Review*, October, 1902.

<sup>2</sup> In criticizing this, as I shall probably have to do, I do not wish it to be supposed that I am entirely hostile. I am well aware that the New Journalism has its merits. Conspicuous among these are its unflinching vivacity and its complete frankness: and there is no lack of these qualities in the article to which I am referring.

say is this. There is no place in the universe where the question as to the aspect of religion might not (in the same sense) be described as 'appalling.' If that is the right word to use of Oxford, what of London? What of this country at large? What of the whole (so-called) Christian world?

If I were to ask myself the same question, I do not think that I should give it quite the same answer. The period of Newman no doubt stands by itself, and about that I will not speak. But the period of T. H. Green I can remember—in its beginnings at least, if not exactly in its zenith—and I should not be prepared to admit that religious influences in Oxford are any less strong now than they were then. Perhaps a question might be raised over the epithet 'great.' And it might be true to say that religious influences now are more diffused, and that they run through a greater number of channels; but in their sum total I believe that they have increased and not diminished. If the writer had undertaken to describe as a contemporary the Oxford of T. H. Green, I believe that he would have found quite as much to discount as he does at present. And, on the other hand, if he were to add up each several item of his own survey—and the list, long as it is, does not exhaust the whole—I suspect that the sum of the forces making for good in different ways would be far from inconsiderable, and well able to bear comparison with all but the very brightest times of Oxford history.

The writer so limits and defines the issue that he is almost bound to give an unsatisfactory answer. Instead of looking at the work going on in the Theological Faculty, and in Oxford generally, according to the Pauline metaphor, as a great building on which many hands are engaged and to which they bring such gifts as God has given them—their gold, or their silver, or their wood, or their straw—he will have nothing less than gold. And even the gold (to change the metaphor a little) must not be in the ingot, it must be minted as current coin. The writer has in his mind throughout one particular class, and a section even of that class (it is the cleverer undergraduate of whom he is thinking). There are certain peremptory questions which he wants to have answered for the benefit of this class, and in the way most acceptable to it. Short of this, nothing seems to interest him or to come really into his calculations.

The result is a picture that is stimulating—I gladly allow—but by no means equally just.

Of course much may be forgiven where the general aim is so good. But the moral I should draw would be somewhat different from that drawn by the writer. The moral I should draw would be that he has himself shown so clear an insight into the wants of his special clients as to be a real call to him to do his own virile part to supply them. I can quite believe that he is already doing so; and that is perhaps an item that has not been reckoned in his account. But let him do the same work for a wider public. Let him set down in black and white, in his own way, the answers that he would give to his own questions. That would be a positive contribution to the best interests of the University, and would not incur—as I am afraid that the article does to some extent incur—the charge of censoriousness.

#### I.

And yet, when all is said, there is truth in the critic's main position—that the meeting-ground of Philosophy and Theology is tactically the key to the battlefield, and therefore the most important to have adequately occupied. And there was also truth in his particular statement that our leading representative on that meeting-ground was Dr. Moberly.

Perhaps, for the critic's special purpose and to satisfy the rather narrow conditions that he lays down, it might be right to substitute, or to consider the substitution of, Mr. J. R. Illingworth. For that special purpose and under those narrow conditions, I should have thought that it would not be easy to find a more ideal writer. We should be told at once that Mr. Illingworth is not in residence, and that he is only an occasional visitor. I should perhaps add that, much as this fact is to be regretted, it is I believe due to no fault on the part of any one, but mainly to considerations of health.

But, putting aside Mr. Illingworth, and for a like reason Canon Scott Holland and the Bishop of Worcester, I should still submit that the University which numbered among its teachers on the one hand Dr. Moberly and on the other hand Dr. Fairbairn, was

not so poor and barren, even in the field of philosophical theology, as our critic would have us believe.

It is characteristic of the article that both these names are summarily ruled out of court; Dr. Fairbairn's because he speaks chiefly to Nonconformists, Dr. Moberly's because he spoke specially to theologians. On the principles of the article it would seem that only the spoken word, and the word directly spoken, could be held to count really at all. A mediated influence, and an influence too fresh to be as yet fully mediated, would not be considered. One only wonders what from this point of view would have been said of the influence of T. H. Green during his lifetime.

When I was in Oxford that influence certainly could not be called 'wide.' And, greatly as I admired Green personally, I cannot from my own point of view forget that his conception of the Origins of Christianity was just the Tübingen theory, pure and simple. He read into the theory his own moral *ἦθος*, which was the really moving thing about him. And no doubt he did more than any one man to stem the tide of materialism that was invading Oxford. But I cannot easily imagine that even he could give the direct intelligible convincing replies that the reviewer desiderates for his questions.

However, for the present I am concerned only with Dr. Moberly, and from this point onwards I shall speak only of him.

The writer in the *Church Quarterly* fully acknowledged his claim to be a philosophical theologian; he spoke of his book *Atonement and Personality* as 'justly praised'; he laid stress on the fact that he was the 'outstanding person' in the Faculty of Theology. But then he went on to qualify this favourable judgement by speaking of him as in a restrictive sense, the 'theologians' theologian,' and (again in the manner of the *New Journalism*, and with all its exaggeration of language) to enlarge on his remoteness 'from modern men trained in other sciences.'

The phrase was ill-chosen, because Dr. Moberly's was essentially a modern mind; he knew well what 'modern men' were thinking about; and indeed it was a distinctive feature in *Atonement and Personality* that it took such full account of these thoughts and met them fairly on the ground of principle. The

very last thing that could be said of the book was that it was 'not modern.'

What the writer meant, however, had reference not so much to the substance as to the form. It was really little more than a way of saying that the book was theology and not (popular or commonsense) philosophy. This we may admit. The book *was* theology; and more, it was theology 'in the grand style'—theology in the style (e.g.) of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*. I do not know how far the *Ecclesiastical Polity* and its author appealed to the non-theological undergraduates of his day. I should hardly imagine that they appealed irresistibly to them. But it is really in the succession of divines like Hooker and Butler that Dr. Moberly stands. They have not been so very plentiful in the Church of England that we can afford to think lightly of them. And for my own part I cannot regard the defective appreciation (so far as it existed) of a certain class of undergraduates as a very fatal condemnation. This does not mean that I think they should be ignored, or that I should not welcome and admire an influence that really told upon them.

This, however, raises a question that I should like to consider rather more at length—viz. what it was that made Dr. Moberly so great, and by the side of this what it also was that put some limitations on his effective usefulness.

Dr. Moberly was great, first and foremost, through his remarkable grasp of principle, and his remarkable power of following out a principle in its finest and subtlest application. His mind, as I have said elsewhere, was, in its characteristic habit, not inductive but deductive.

It was not his way to approach truth by amassing great stores of knowledge. He was not a great reader. German was a sealed book to him, and he did not make any great study of French. What he did read in any language he knew; because he not only had the scholar's accuracy, but his mind played critically round what he read—critically in the sense not so much of literary criticism (though he had clear views as to what he liked and what he disliked in literature) as of the criticism that is logical and philosophical. No one could be keener in detecting a flaw in an argument: no one could penetrate more surely to the presuppositions on which an argument rested. At

the same time he was an excellently trained scholar in Greek and Latin. For any subject that needed to be worked up in the originals he was always perfectly competent; and he would undertake the trouble where it was necessary. But the accumulation of detailed facts had no attraction for him in itself. His absorbing interest was in the general truths that underlay particular facts, the fundamentals of opinion. I shall have occasion to illustrate this presently, and therefore need not speak further about it now.

I see that Canon Scott Holland, in a singularly beautiful notice contributed to the *Guardian* of June 17, speaks in one place of a certain 'indolence.' It may have been so; Canon Scott Holland's knowledge goes back much further than mine. In later years perhaps there was at times a physical languor due to ill-health. But I suspect that what might have the look of 'indolence' may have been only the born thinker's habit of ruminating, where another man would be reading or doing. It was in this way that Dr. Moberly got at his principles. They seemed to come to him by a penetrating intuition. Until the intuition came he was helpless; no piling up of material gave him the clue that he wanted. But when once the clue had revealed itself, everything was plain to him; a sleuth-hound could not follow the track with surer instinct.

There is therefore a marked breadth about all Dr. Moberly's later and greater writings. (I specify these because I do not know some of the earlier tracts. I have in mind more particularly *Ministerial Priesthood* and *Atonement and Personality*.) In these works there is a constant reference of detail to principle, and especially a constant dragging out to light of latent principle that might have escaped observation. There is also conveyed throughout the sense of thoroughness and mastery. The element of tentativeness is unusually small. One has always the feeling that the matter in hand has not only been thought of but *thought out*. The construction is complete and without gaps. Right or wrong, it all coheres together.

These are the characteristics of great work. And there was a breadth of style corresponding to the breadth of treatment. From the first page to the last the books were upon the same high level. A chord is, as it were, struck at the outset, of which

the harmonious echoes go on sounding until the end. There is no straining or effort about it, but one feels that the books were planned upon a large scale, and carried out on a large scale. Possibly the amplitude of style at times amounts to redundancy; but in any case the amplitude is natural. Some writers think, not in clauses or in sentences, but in paragraphs. And this writer was one of them. The paragraphs have their own mode of evolution. They begin with a few short pointed sentences, which become more elaborate and intricate as they proceed; but the intricacy never becomes confusion. There is a stately rhythm in the whole, which sometimes has its unexpected turns but is never ragged or slovenly.

A conception and a style like this always imply moral qualities. And it was so here. There is the glow of a deep conviction, the tension of elevated purpose, the unfailing refinement of a mind 'touched to fine issues.'

All these qualities are great, and constitute the 'grand style.' But it was not quite greatness of the popular sort, to be at once and everywhere recognized. Dr. Moberly, it is true, was not one of those

On whom, from level stand,  
The low world lays its hand,  
Finds straightway to its mind, can value in a trice.

The impression of this is reflected—and exaggerated—in the criticism from which I have started. We ask ourselves why it was so. And some attempt should be made towards an answer. As I am upon this question I will take it in its widest bearings, and will consider not merely the books but all that tended to limit the influence of the man.

Some of the notices speak of him as having 'matured late.' I can understand what is meant, but I am not quite sure that the phrase is the right one. The fundamental qualities of mind were, of course, there all the time. And it is not exactly as though they were crude at one stage and ripe at another. There is no essential difference between the *Essay in Lux Mundi* and *Atonement and Personality*, or the volume of Sermons, *Christ our Life*<sup>1</sup>; but the latest books are more individually characteristic:

<sup>1</sup> There is one sermon in this volume dated as far back as 1892, but most of them are considerably later.



they are like the work of a painter or poet, who does not acquire his own special 'manner' just at first.

Where, as I have said, there was so much that was not only thought of, but thought out, it must needs be that there were the signs of advance. And it is probably true that in later years there was more confidence of utterance.

Canon Scott Holland has skilfully indicated the combination of tenacity and humility in this 'gentlest and humblest of men.' It is quite true that he was intensely humble in his self-estimate and in his estimate of the desire of the world to hear him. But this was very far from making him 'a reed shaken by the wind.' When once he had satisfied himself that a certain position was true no power on earth could shake him from it. I do not believe that criticism of which he could take the measure (and there was little criticism indeed of which he could not take the measure), made the slightest impression upon him.

What I have just said relates to the question of mental growth, it does not really affect the question of extent of influence.

There was an idea abroad that both in speech and writing Dr. Moberly was involved and obscure. 'Involved,' yes, perhaps, though not in the worse sense of the word; but 'obscure,' no.

I have said a word as to the intricacy of the sentences in the latter part of a paragraph, as it reached its climax. But this intricacy had in it nothing irregular; the grammatical structure was always perfect.

And in like manner as to the thought: it might be subtle, but it was never confused. There was never anything in it left to chance. The writer always knew exactly what he meant to say, and he said it with the nicest precision.

There were, however, some things that, especially to the English mind, were apt to be rather disconcerting, and to throw it off the track. The innate delicacy of Dr. Moberly's mind, his sensitive reluctance to wound, made him rather given to circumlocutions. He would prefer two negatives to a positive. And his natural precision of thought would often impel him to introduce parenthetical qualifications of his main statements.

Then he had a quite un-English fondness for abstract terms, which he would coin with the greatest freedom. This gave his writing and speech at times a rather strange appearance.

And there was a deeper significance in it than this. The mind was always moving in the region of fundamental propositions; and this is just the region in which the English mind as a rule rarely moves; so that there was a certain lack of sympathy and mutual understanding between the writer and his public.

Moreover the effect of this was heightened by the fact that our friend's habitual vocabulary was peculiarly his own. Although he was a philosopher, he did not repeat the shibboleths of any philosophical school. He is said to have regretted in later years that he had not received, when young, a more thorough training in the technicalities of philosophy. It is not very easy to realize what difference this would have made. There can be no doubt that he had all the essentials of a philosopher. And yet, as I have said, his writings were really theology and not philosophy; and they fitly continue the line of the great theologians. They belong, however, distinctly to theological *science*. Their function was to explore or enrich, not to popularize; and for this reason they did not satisfy the requirements of the *Church Quarterly* reviewer. It by no means follows that those requirements were really the higher. Advances in science are the ultimately and permanently important thing. The work of popularizing may well fall to other hands.

The same sort of deductions ought perhaps to be made from the effect of the oral teaching as from that of the written. The delivery in preaching, speaking, and lecturing was attractive to the few, but did not attract the many. The secret of this was happily seized in the *Oxford Magazine*: 'Over all lay the marks of severe and continuous self-discipline, *carried even to the exquisite.*' Far back, in early days, the attention to shades and gradations in vocal utterance had been so close that it had become a second nature. The average Englishman slurs his speech and is careless of articulation; there is no people that is so afraid of being 'righteous overmuch' in externals, and the average man is apt to draw the line of 'overmuch' where a scrupulous conscience cannot draw it. There was, however, not a grain of vanity or ostentation in this fastidiousness of Dr. Moberly's. Those are the last faults of which any one would accuse him. It was all part and parcel of his innermost self—just the care and finish and accuracy that were habitual to him, taking effect in speech.

These same qualities came out in another way, which was really, though it would be less noticed, precisely parallel. I do not think that I have ever known such punctuation as that in Dr. Moberly's writings. It is punctuation on the heavy scale, I should suppose on the heaviest possible; but it is gradated with the utmost nicety, and with him it seemed to be inevitable. I cannot imagine him hesitating between a comma and a semi-colon, as the rest of us might hesitate. It was a consistent and coherent system carried out with consummate exactitude.

This wholeness, completeness, closely knit logical unity was characteristic of the man. It came out in the smallest acts as well as in the greatest. It came out in things where the mass of mankind would never think of looking for character at all. It was a rare, a choice spirit, not to be judged by common rules, and therefore not quite appreciated by those who did not know him well enough to possess the key by which to judge him. In this work-a-day world such a spirit is apt not to get its due. For a long time Moberly had not his due. But his hour was come, and was still more coming, just when his work on earth was closed.

## II.

The story of the life is soon told, especially with the light that has been thrown upon it in the two admirable notices in the *Guardian* and in the *Church Times*. The writer of this was a late comer into the circle of friends, and is dependent for the earlier period on information derived from others.

Canon Scott Holland has given us a vivid little vignette of the parents: the brilliant father and the mother who transmitted to the son his personal beauty and the 'old-world delicacy' that hung about him.

The father, Dr. George Moberly, left a very considerable mark on his century, first as head master of Winchester from 1835 to 1866, and then as Bishop of Salisbury from 1869 till his death in 1885. The head master of Winchester was one of the chief allies and supporters of Dr. Arnold in carrying through the reform of our public schools, and he was granted a longer span of time in which to develop his ideas. He was also one of the most efficient and scholarly bishops in the latter half of the century.

The earlier years of Robert Moberly's career seem to have been rather a chequered and qualified success. It is strange that our most philosophical theologian, though he gained a first class in Moderations, only took a second in the philosophical school *par excellence*. We are told (by the *Guardian*) that philosophy was not very well taught at New College about that time. It is more interesting to note that young Moberly won the Newdigate with a poem on 'Marie Antoinette.' He really had all a poet's command of rich and elevated diction; and his power of description was very marked (e.g.) in the recently published volume of sermons.

A single example may serve to show at once the nature of this poetic gift, and the way in which it entered into his preaching. It is from the opening paragraphs of a sermon that I well remember, preached on the evening of Good Friday, 1897, from the text, 'When the even was come' (St. Matt. xxvii. 57):—

'What a contrast is here! After wild excitement, after fierce uproar, after hate and cruelty, after depths inscrutable of sorrow and pain: there is now—stillness.

'Stillness? Silence? Many of the most wonderful moments of human experience are moments of silence<sup>1</sup>. But think what a contrast there may be between silence and silence! There is the lurid suspense, breathless, unnatural, before the crash of the storm, before the thrill of the earthquake, or, there is the calm, fair stillness, when the storm is over, and the dim stars peep out, and the cool air faintly stirs. There is the stillness of prayer, in its rare intensity, when earth joins with heaven: and there is the stealthiness of guilt, in the moment before consummation of appalling sin<sup>2</sup>.'

I may mention, in passing, that it was characteristic of Moberly to begin his sermons in this striking, arresting way.

To resume the narrative. From New College he passed over to Christ Church with a Senior Studentship in 1867. He was Tutor of Christ Church from 1869 to 1876; Principal of St. Stephen's House, 1876 to 1877; and Head of the Theological College, Salisbury, on the nomination of his father, 1878 to 1880. But in these varied offices he had not yet found his feet; diffi-

<sup>1</sup> We may compare with this Ignatius, *ad Ephes.* xix 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Christ our Life*, p. 81.

dence, and a retiring disposition, and the complete absence of self-assertion, seem to have prevented him from taking hold.

A real step in advance came with his marriage in 1880 to a daughter of his father's predecessor in the see of Salisbury, Bishop Walter Kerr Hamilton. In the same year the newly wedded pair went to the College living of Great Budworth in Cheshire. Here they lived together the life so typical of the best of the English clergy, equally welcomed and beloved in the homes of gentle and of simple. The memory of the twelve years thus spent never died out, and the course of the last illness was followed by the old parishioners with touching solicitude. And yet it may perhaps be gathered that the people for the most part understood their vicar with the heart rather than the head. His goodness was recognized by all, though a select few went further.

It was while he was at Great Budworth that an event happened which stands out in Moberly's life as fraught with the greatest significance. I refer to his association with the volume entitled *Lux Mundi*, which was published in 1889. To this volume Moberly contributed an essay on 'The Incarnation as the Basis of Dogma.' The volume had grown out of the meeting for successive years in a sort of vacation party of a little group of Oxford friends. The group gradually widened, though Moberly belonged to it from the first. Common ideas led in the end to common action. There was a greater unity in the essays collected in *Lux Mundi* than in the previous volume of *Essays and Reviews* (1860), or in the later *Contentio Veritatis* (1902). It had the force of a manifesto to an unusual degree; it revealed the existence of a new and compact party (or rather type of opinion) in the Church of England.

In the seventies and earlier eighties, Oxford might be said to be divided between Liberals and Clericals in sharp antithesis. The Liberals were thoroughgoing, and in many cases pronouncedly negative. The Clericals in like manner were in great measure High Churchmen of strict observance. Of course there were other shades, but these two camps covered most of the ground, and between them there was more or less open war.

The writers in *Lux Mundi* were High Churchmen, brought up on the religious and moral ideals of Keble and Newman,

having for their motto, as one of them expresses it, 'He shall not strive nor cry.' But on the intellectual side they had open minds. They were all of them possessed of the best culture that Oxford could offer; and they could not help seeing that truth was sometimes on the side of their opponents. Candour compelled them to recognize this; and further reflection led them to think that the contending theories—the religious and the scientific, the Christian and the secular—were not so incompatible as they were represented. From this there arose a serious constructive effort to harmonize the old and the new—to retain the ancient pieties in a form that should be in full continuity with the past, but at the same time resolutely to face every well-grounded advance made by science in the present.

To most readers of the JOURNAL all this will be very familiar. But it ought to be placed upon record, if we are to appreciate properly the position of Robert Moberly. Not one of the contributors to *Lux Mundi* represented the fundamental principles of the book with more heartfelt conviction; not one strove to carry them out more fearlessly or more thoroughly. And the special field in which it fell to him to work was that of philosophy, especially moral philosophy and psychology.

Moberly served under three Bishops of Chester (Jacobson, Stubbs, and Jayne). The two last, more especially, were well aware of his merits and utilized his gifts in the diocese; and I believe I am right in saying that it was at the instance of Bishop Stubbs (who had been transferred to Oxford) that he was chosen to succeed Dr. Paget as Professor of Pastoral Theology in 1892. In this office he spent the remainder of his days.

It was not to be expected that Moberly's work as Professor would run quite on the same lines as that of his predecessors, Dr. Paget and Dr. King. All three were *winning* personalities; but whereas the other two were winning from the first and drew in their audiences by magnetic attraction, Moberly was one of those who need to be known before the full attraction can tell. In his new office, as at all times, he meekly accepted the comparatively limited appreciation that came to him, though there were never wanting a few who drank in to the full his influence and his teaching.

These few were steadily increasing in number. And still more

among the senior members of the University and among the class of tutors and lecturers Moberly was being 'discovered' and was becoming a power. The effect of his books was coming back to Oxford; and the prophet abroad was felt to be a prophet at home. In recent years it was understood that he was really the strongest figure in the Theological Faculty—not the most variously active or the most learned, but the deepest thinker, the most powerful mind, the mind round which others would rally on a great issue.

In 1900, on the death of Dr. Bright, Moberly was sent as representative of the Chapter to the Convocation of Canterbury. Here he at once began to make himself felt. At last he had found a sphere that was fully congenial to him; for by this time his books had begun to give him the reputation that he deserved. His brother clergy were prepared to listen to him; and this degree of encouragement at once called out his powers. He seemed to step into his place easily and naturally, and took an active part especially in the drawing up of the important report on the position of the laity. I do not doubt that if he had lived a great door was open to him on this side. His clear discernment of principle, his argumentative grasp and penetration, his tact in debate and his special power of unravelling confusions, and presiding over all his wise and considerate judgement, would have been of the utmost value in the exciting years that lie before us.

In all ways it seemed as if the harvest was at last about to be reaped, when the hour suddenly struck and the work ended. It was of a shallower ambition and with a dash of pagan mythological fancy that the poet wrote:—

But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,  
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,  
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears  
And slits the thin-spun life.

It was not for any vulgar 'guerdon' that Moberly laboured. It was no 'sudden blaze' in Milton's sense that he coveted. The whole passage would need to be translated into Christian language before it could be applied to him. He did himself so translate the essence of it. 'I should like,' he said not very long before the end, 'to be thought of as one who wished to say, Thy Will be

done; but I shall try [to live] all I can.' He felt that there was more to do, and that he could do it. If the will to live could have sustained the failing strength, he would have been with us now. But it was a fatal disease from which he was suffering; and it was further advanced than his friends quite knew. The thread of life was too 'thin-spun,' and on June 8 it snapped:—the life, 'but not the praise.'

### III.

The real landmarks in the life of a scholar are his books. In Moberly's case the greatest work belonged to the last period of his career, the second half of the ten years of his professorship (1897-1902). The dividing line should really perhaps be placed at the publication of *Lux Mundi* in 1889.

From the period before this there is just a sheaf of tracts. The first to be given to the public was *An Account of the Question between the Bishop and the C.M.S. in the Diocese of Colombo* (1876). This was the fruit of a six months' journey to India and Ceylon. The controversy to which the pamphlet relates (involving Moberly's friend Bishop Copleston, now Metropolitan of India) is forgotten. But the intense impression which Moberly received and imparted to others on his return is well remembered by those who were intimate with him.

To the Budworth time belong two pamphlets on *Marriage with a Sister-in-law* (1884), and on *Church Courts* (1886); and a small volume, *Sorrow, Sin, and Beauty* (1889). In the same year with the last appeared the *Essay in Lux Mundi*.

I had not, I am afraid, paid proper attention to the *Essay*, and my own first recollection of contact with Moberly's mind dates from a pamphlet on *Disestablishment and Disendowment* (1894). Along with this may be mentioned *Undenominationalism*, a tract on the Education Question, published last year. These may be taken as specimens of the line which Moberly took on public questions. Any one who looks into these will appreciate at once the magnitude of the loss to us. With convictions stronger and deeper than those of most men, Moberly never writes as a partisan. He seems from the very first word to take up the question with which he deals into a region above the reach of party. One is tempted to ask whether it is even now too late for



our Nonconformist friends to take to heart the lesson of the tract last named, and so learn what it is that Churchmen are really contending for. To Moberly it seemed that their cause was based on the principles of true Liberalism, that their standing-ground is that of Nonconformity itself. It seems indeed a strange inversion of parts that Nonconformists, of all men, who have sacrificed so much for liberty of conscience, should seek to make it difficult and even impossible for others to have their own children taught in their own way. That the Church wants to teach its lessons *at the cost* of Nonconformists is a delusion that has some excuse in the intricacies of account-keeping, but is due only to these. She has really purchased her freedom for no light sum.

But I must not be tempted into a digression. The little book *Reason and Religion*, which came out in 1896, somehow did not quite appeal to me. The moment that showed me the full calibre of Moberly's mind was when I first read the Preface to *Ministerial Priesthood* (1897). And if I wished in short compass to convince any one else of that calibre, I would recommend him to read p. viii of the said Preface. The two books, *Ministerial Priesthood* and *Atonement and Personality* (1901), are the legacy left behind which will determine Moberly's place in the history of English Theology. It is mainly from these (and from personal intercourse) that I have drawn the sketch of his mind in the first section of this paper, and on these that I should rest the claim that I have made for him, that he stands in the line of Richard Hooker and of Bishop Butler.

Of the two books there would I suppose be a general agreement in placing *Atonement and Personality* first. Not that I would wish in any way to detract from the impressiveness of the earlier book. To me it seems very impressive indeed. But it had been more led up to by previous work; it was less on its author's own ground, and it gave less scope to his peculiar powers. In *Atonement and Personality* we felt ourselves in the hand of a master. Whether the book in the end establishes its positions or not, it must remain as a mighty effort of constructive thought.

With this book should be taken the volume of Sermons to which I have referred (*Christ our Life*, 1902), and the single important Sermon printed in this JOURNAL (January, 1903); with

*Ministerial Priesthood* (though with some anticipations of the later book) would naturally go the memorable contributions to the Conference on 'Priesthood and Sacrifice' (1900).

## IV.

Unfortunately the time at my disposal for this article is too brief to allow of the calm review of Moberly's writings which I should have liked to make in order to draw out and trace in their connexions the leading ideas contained in them.

A large part of these leading ideas might be said to be common to the *Lux Mundi* school in general. On all the historical side of *Ministerial Priesthood* Dr. Gore had been beforehand with *The Church and the Ministry* (first edition, 1888; fourth edition, 1902). The broad principles from which the two writers started were the same; the most original features in Moberly's contribution would be, I suppose, the critical force and decision with which he brought to light the philosophical presuppositions of the argument and the stress which he laid on the pastoral side of the conception of the Priesthood. There was also an important appendix on the Roman controversy, which was at an acute stage just as the work appeared. And impressed upon the whole was the strong personality and lofty aim of the writer.

Beside the main idea and the main conclusions of *Ministerial Priesthood* there were many incidental positions that Moberly shared with his school, though he gave them specially clear and forcible expression. Such would be the assumptions underlying the argument as to the right relations of form and matter, and of body and spirit.

It was a common principle of the whole school to insist on the central significance for Christian thought of the Incarnation. This appears in the *Lux Mundi* essay, but also came in more incidentally in *Atonement and Personality*. On this side Moberly's writings touched both Dr. Gore's and Mr. Illingworth's (Gore, *Bampton Lectures*, 1891; Illingworth, *Reason and Revelation*, 1902); he also coincides to some extent with the latter in his view of the relation of the Incarnation to belief.

Equally fundamental and equally common to the school is the

opposition to all forms of Individualism. Here we may see working together Mr. Illingworth (*Personality, Human and Divine*, 1894; *Divine Immanence*, 1898), Canon Scott Holland rather more sporadically, Mr. Wilfrid Richmond (*Personality as a Philosophical Principle*, 1900), and Dr. Strong (*God and the Individual*, 1903). But I think it will be agreed that Moberly's treatment of this subject in *Atonement and Personality* was on the largest scale, the most comprehensive and the most searching. Outside his more natural allies Moberly was greatly interested in, and valued highly, the convergence of thought in Mr. Inge's *Christian Mysticism* (1899) and the *Contentio* essay.

The book *Atonement and Personality* was remarkable for the way in which various strands of thought, both from within the school and from without, were drawn together and presented in a masterly unity. The specific treatment of 'Atonement,' though I think in general harmony with the tendencies of the school, was more peculiar to the writer. In this his affinities were rather with Dr. Macleod Campbell (*The Nature of the Atonement*, 2nd ed. 1867, 6th ed. 1886); he wrote in rather marked antithesis to Dr. Dale's well-known book on the same subject.

One of the most distinctive and important parts of the great work was that which touched upon the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the Person of Christ in chapters IV, V, and VIII, and on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in chapters VIII and IX. To the best of my belief the portion relating to the Trinity is original thinking, with antecedents in the patristic writings, but so far as I know not in anything modern that Moberly would be likely to be concerned with. To all this part of the book I should be myself inclined to attach a very special value.

I have the impression that the treatment of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit links on to teaching of the writer's father, Bishop Moberly. But this is an impression that I am not able at this moment to follow out and verify.

Neither should I venture to take upon myself, in this hasty way, to attempt to estimate the exact position in which the argument and conclusions of this great book stand now. It has received criticisms, friendly and unfriendly; but it has not as yet had any examination really commensurate with its importance.

I do not think that Moberly himself felt his position at all shaken. The sermon preached at St. Mary's, and printed in this JOURNAL at the beginning of the present year, was partly a reply to objections that had been brought, and partly a further development of the position. In both aspects it is deeply interesting and, I think it will be allowed, not less effective.

But indeed when once we realize how vast the scope of the book is, it must at once be seen that anything like a hasty appreciation of it must be impossible. It is nothing less than a system, and that almost in the sense in which (e.g.) Calvin's *Institutes* constitute a system. It is a reasoned view, in which part hangs together with part, of the whole Being and Nature of God. I really cannot think of any book on this subject in English that is so searching and so profound. And then it is also a reasoned view of the whole process of the redemption of man.

The nearest parallel that occurs to me in recent times is the work of Albrecht Ritschl in Germany. And it is a coincidence that Ritschl's greatest book should be very much upon the same subject of the Atonement (*Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, ed. 1 begun in 1870; ed. 3 1888-9). Ritschl has founded a school with very wide ramifications. Moberly's book perhaps rather gathers up a number of convergent lines of thought in a single powerful presentation. What will be the course of its history I cannot attempt to predict, but I have no doubt that English theology will be constantly going back to it and drawing from it for many years to come.

W. SANDAY.