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ADAM STOREY FARRAR.

THE death on Whit-Sunday of Dr A. S. Farrar is an event of marked concern for theological studies in England. For fully forty years of active life and work he had held the post of Professor of Divinity and Church History in the University of Durham; and although the numbers of the University have not been large, its contribution to the ranks of the clergy has been more than in proportion to them. The bent of Durham, as distinct from the College of Science at Newcastle, has been distinctly theological; and on personal grounds as well as on those of position the theological teaching naturally centred in the Professor. Other teachers came and went, but he remained. Other teachers gave of their best—and the University has had some excellent teachers on the theological side; but there can hardly have been one in the whole period who filled an equal place in the eyes of the students, or one who did more to make Durham as a school of theological training what it was.

It is true that a teacher who does not write is apt to drop out of the public view. Much to the regret of his friends and colleagues, Dr Farrar ceased to write from the time that he entered upon his office; but in the University at least his light could not be hid, and wherever the *alumni* of the University went his influence could not but be felt.

Adam Storey Farrar was a born professor; and he was a professor by experience and training as well as by natural gift. His career was of the simplest, and it was entirely academical. Born in London on April 20, 1826, and educated at the Liverpool Institute and at St Mary Hall, Oxford, he graduated in 1850 with first-class honours in classics and second-class in mathematics. Soon afterwards he was elected to a Michel Fellowship at Queen's College; and after serving for nine years as Tutor at Wadham, he left for Durham in 1864.

The time when Farrar took his degree—in the same year, as it happened, with his future Dean, Dr Kitchin, who like him took double honours, and was a class higher in mathematics—was no bad period in the history of the University. Freeman the historian, whose date was five years earlier, used stoutly to maintain that the all-round training then given was as good as it well could be, and better than the greater specialization of the latter part of the century. When we remember that between his date and Farrar's there fell Bright the late Professor of Ecclesiastical History (1846) and Stubbs the late Bishop of Oxford (1848), it is evident that at least the first part of his opinion had much to be said for it. Not content with the beaten track of work for the degree, Farrar was an eager student of Natural Science, and took every opportunity of attending the lectures of the professors in that faculty, especially those of Dr R. Walker, Professor of Experimental Philosophy, and John Phillips, Professor of Geology. He often used to speak of the benefit that he gained from these.

Before he went to Durham, Farrar had already published the two books that bear his name, a volume of sermons entitled *Science in Theology* in 1859, and the Bampton Lectures, *A Critical History of Free Thought in reference to the Christian Religion*, in 1862. After that date he published nothing beyond (it is believed) one or two occasional sermons. The two volumes do not seem to have attracted the attention or obtained the praise which they really deserved. It would seem as though the writer, just as his energies were beginning to expand, felt the chill of discouragement and drew back into his shell. He was cast in a sensitive mould; and, although always eager, was apt to be apprehensive, and did not care to incur the ordeal of hostile criticism[1]. Such at least was the impression conveyed to those who would fain have seen more permanent fruit of his really exceptional powers and attain-

[1] One who knew him very intimately writes: 'He resisted the appeals of his friends to publish some of the fruits of his studies, and has left instructions that nothing of the sort should be published. Like other teachers, he had an exaggerated view of the responsibility incurred in publication, and a very high standard of what publication involved to the author' (*Guardian*, June 21, 1905, p. 1030). This is doubtless very true; and yet when once obstacles of this kind had been overcome so brilliantly as they were in the *Bampton Lectures*, it is natural to ask why the impulse did not carry him further. I suspect that the reason lay in the constitutional diffidence which asserted itself after these early publications, and was never again sufficiently mastered.

ments. It is a warning as to the responsibility which an elder generation has towards its juniors. To Farrar's generous nature no such stimulus was needed; he used to expend upon the efforts of his younger friends the enthusiasm which they would have gladly seen devoted to published work of his own.

I will come back to the books: but, before doing so, it is right that I should say more of that which proved to be the main activity of his life, his work as professor. I have said that Farrar was a born professor; and I am not sure that this was not true of him in an even more eminent degree than of any of the other distinguished theologians of the last century. As I look back, I cannot think of one who had at once the same commanding survey of his subject and an equal power of impressing the spoken word upon his hearers.

Lightfoot had no physical gifts at all, except a voice of sufficient strength to make itself heard. He had the sound basis of scholarship common to all the Cambridge school, great capacity for learning, a clear style and lucid arrangement of the scholarly kind, along with admirable common sense in judgement; but he had no taste for philosophy, or for philosophical construction. Hort was born for research rather than for lecturing. His keen analysis and minute exactness of statement went beyond what could be appreciated in a lecture; while his scrupulous attention to qualifying and restricting facts stood in the way of broad and luminous generalization. Westcott had fervour and vision, a wide range of elevated thought, but he was too subtle for the ordinary man; and the subtlety was something rather different from the fine edge of scientific discrimination; it was apt to leave an impression that was vague and elusive.

Bright also had fervour, and the hearer felt that the awe of the other world was upon him. He had a real gift of spontaneous eloquence and imagination, that rose with his subject; but just at the moments when he was most inspired his utterance too often became hurried and inaudible. He could paint a picture with the best, but he was somewhat deficient in the power of shaping and arranging.

This Farrar possessed to an extraordinary degree. His knowledge was encyclopaedic; and his method was also that of the encyclopaedia. He was never more at home than in classifying,

dividing and sub-dividing. Dates and periods were at his fingers' ends. His experience in the study of Natural Science dominated his treatment of literature and the history of thought; methods learnt in the one field, it was natural to him to apply in the other. He used to place in the hands of his pupils a pamphlet, covering seventy-seven pages for the most part of small print, with the prefatory note which follows:

'When I used to attend in Oxford the lectures of the Rev R. Walker, Professor of Experimental Philosophy, I found so much help from the brief analysis of each course of lectures, which he was wont to distribute to his hearers, that, when I came to Durham in 1864, I determined to follow a similar plan in reference to my Theological Lectures. Accordingly I drew up from time to time Synopses of my various courses of Lectures, which when completed and combined, formed this pamphlet. It will be obvious to any one who glances through this Synopsis that much more is here comprised than can be compressed into the short space of a student's life in Durham. I prefer, however, to present an outline of all the various branches of Theological knowledge (though my Lectures are generally restricted to a selected portion of them), in order that those pupils, who may wish hereafter to continue their studies, may have the outline for their guidance.

The parts of the Synopsis which I deem to be the most novel are Part 4 (pp. 17–20), on Biblical Interpretation, and Part 8 (pp. 41–48), on the History of the English Church. The former of these gives a more systematic analysis of the subject than is to be found elsewhere. The latter is the Table of Contents of a work on English Church History on which I have at different times bestowed much labour, but the execution of which will probably have to be left to younger writers.'

The Synopsis is of course only a skeleton; but I am sorry to gather from the *Guardian* article referred to above that there is no chance of its being published. Something of the same kind has been done, or attempted, by others; but I have come across nothing so complete and comprehensive, or so well articulated, as Dr Farrar's. The first impression was given out in 1869; there was a revised issue in 1880, and possibly others later. It is interesting to see in what directions the author believed his own work to be most original.

What has been said may give some idea of the underlying method of the lectures. From this point of view they would have been excellent for any students, and they were peculiarly

excellent for the students at Durham, who have to cover a large extent of ground in a limited time. For them it is difficult to think of a professor who would come nearer to the ideal. And everything else—style, manner and delivery—corresponded. I shall have to speak presently of another gift which the professor possessed, the gift of pictorial presentation and vivid phrase. This too was without the redundance which is in danger of becoming a drawback to those similarly endowed. Farrar was saved from this by his natural sense of proportion and rapidity of movement. He was rapid, but he understood lecturing too well to be too rapid. And his physical presence heightened the effect of what he said.

His figure was tall and erect; his hair touched with grey and rather long, but not unbecomingly long; his voice had just enough nasality about it to make it tellingly clear and incisive. The wearing of the black gown seemed to come natural to him, for his ancestry was Puritan.

The writer of this well remembers a description once given by one of his pupils. 'As he stands there, with the pointer in his hand [it may be guessed that a lecturer of this type would be fond of using maps and diagrams], I could believe that I had before me one of the old Hebrew prophets.' I have spoken of our own Christ Church professor as having had visibly 'the awe of the other world upon him'. Farrar's piety was very genuine, but (as might be supposed) it was of a different and more Puritanic type. It came out in expression, though it had not so subduing a power over the expression. On the other hand, the effort to give concrete reality to what he was saying was very strong. Farrar was always in touch with his audience, especially an undergraduate audience. Among boys, he was a boy. A figure like his could not lose its dignity; but still he did join in the laugh with his audience, and applause at Divinity Lectures was not unknown, or perhaps—from sheer zest and naturalness—altogether unwelcome.

If I have at all succeeded in conveying the impression that I wish to convey, I may well pause at this point and invite the reader to compare notes with me from his own experience, and ask whether he has ever known a theological tutor or professor who was likely to be more striking or more effective. Our

thoughts turn to a certain Canon of St Paul's; but he has not filled exactly the same offices, and, if he had done, it would have been in a somewhat different spirit, corresponding to a different school.

The Professor of Divinity at Durham has duties of various kinds. He holds a canonry in the Cathedral attached to the chair. Farrar did not enter upon his until fourteen years after he first came to Durham as Professor, to take the place of the aged Canon Jenkyns, also a man of real mark in his day. The sermons that he preached as Canon were real University Sermons, of ample length and full of instruction. He knew every stone of the Cathedral, and—it need not be said—was an admirable exponent of its history. Anywhere else than in Durham such knowledge and such a gift would have been exceptional; but at Durham they were shared with not a few who have the privilege of living beneath the shadow of that glorious pile.

On another side of his functions it was perhaps the case that what was part of his special excellence as Professor had its drawbacks. He knew the students individually, and took a deep interest in them, especially in the poorer men, whom he helped generously. But his readiness of sympathy made him easily worked upon; and he was inclined to be indulgent, and perhaps partial, as an examiner. The same quickness of sympathy and readiness to receive impressions and influences made him a rather incalculable quantity in the deliberations of the Senate and Chapter. Generosity was one of his leading traits; but generosity may at times be too impulsive. These were failings which 'leaned to virtue's side'. Farrar was not always judicious; and in public matters errors of judgement make themselves felt; but the warmth of heart which led to them won from friend and pupil alike affection and gratitude.

In the interesting notice to which reference has been made, stress was very rightly laid on the extent to which Farrar utilized foreign travel. Vacation after vacation he went abroad with a select party of friends, who had quaint stories to tell of his little idiosyncrasies, while they all profited by his keenness of interest and knowledge. In this way he had visited most of the historic sites of European and Christian history. His lectures and his books derived vividness and reality from this source:

and one of the great misfortunes of his ceasing to publish was that the results of so much first-hand investigation and study should have had none but a fugitive record. Like not a few other English scholars, Farrar had taken exceptional pains to train himself to make history live. It did live in his active and teeming brain; and now that is still.

English Theology is poorer—irreparably and sadly poorer—for the fact that Farrar's books are only two. If he had written as much as his peers—and they are the great names of the last century—he would have taken his place with them. He had an individual contribution to make to the literature of his time, which none but he could have made so well. None could have ranged over the centuries with a touch at once so firm and so incisive, grouping, classifying, correlating, distinguishing; equally at home in the history of action and of thought, tracing up effects to their causes, bringing light into obscurity and order out of confusion, stimulated by every great idea, and passing on the stimulus to others.

His books shew what he was and what he could have done. A characteristic example of the method of treatment natural to him is a sermon on the Atonement in the volume *Science in Theology*. The text is a verse introducing the narrative of the Transfiguration; and the sermon begins with a really fine description of Mount Tabor, as it is seen by the pilgrim traveller, followed by the comment that 'the rigour of geographical criticism compels us to doubt whether that spot can be the real scene of the event'. The circumstances of the narrative are explained, leading up to the prediction of approaching suffering and death. So the sermon passes to the subject of the Atonement, the doctrine of which is sketched in the different periods of its history. The various theories put forward are weighed and criticized; and at the end the doctrine is restated, with a re-affirmation of the view that it implies in some mysterious way a reconciling of God to man as well as of man to God. The sermon ends as it began with a picture—this time not taken from nature but from art, the famous representation of the Transfiguration by Raphael.

The *Critical History of Free Thought*, Bampton Lectures preached in 1862, is a really astonishing work. It is by it

that the name of Adam Storey Farrar will live in the future, and that his place in the roll of English theologians will be vindicated. *The Guardian* speaks of it as 'still probably the most learned of a series which now includes more than a hundred sets of lectures'; and this opinion may well be endorsed. Few indeed are the volumes of English literature which contain accurate digests of the contents of so many books, or accurate surveys of the processes of thought in so many centuries. It is a special danger and a special failing of the Bampton Lectures to cover too much ground, and to cover it with vague imperfectly formulated generalizations, that are at best but half or a quarter of the truth, and do not bear to be too rigorously confronted with the facts. Farrar's lectures are free from this fault. They are worthy to stand by the side of the best literature of the kind in other languages than our own. The multitude of books referred to had been really read, and their contents and character are at once concisely and carefully described. Farrar was a philosopher as well as a historian; and he handles the great German philosophies with as much ease and decision as the products of English common sense. His accuracy is indeed not quite of the kind which will not displace an accent, but it is remarkable considering the nature of the subject-matter and the number of particulars involved. The utmost that I think could be said in the way of criticism is that the work is evidently throughout rapid work; it is a succession of *coups d'œil* by a mind of ready grasp and keen intelligence; but it might perhaps have gained in real profundity if the mind could have dwelt longer on the objects passed in review before it, and steeped itself more entirely in the spirit as well as in the bare analysis of the different systems. In other words it might be said, that the penetration—clear-cut and scientific as it is—is yet after all somewhat external; it reminds us more of the methods of natural science than of those of the deeper philosophy.

Such a criticism might perhaps be made, but it would be unfair. At least, if we allow ourselves to make it, we should do so with the distinct understanding that, in making it, we are applying the highest standard within our reach. It is always possible to criticize a type of mind by saying that it has something of the defects of its qualities; that, if it had the excellences

of another type besides its own, it would be still more perfect than it is. But the world we live in is not Utopia; and, in the case of the subject of this notice as well as in others, we shall do well to accept with thankfulness the remarkable combination of excellences that we find, instead of complaining that even these come short of an absolute ideal.

Farrar's Bampton Lectures are to this day full of information and instruction. At the time when they were written they were abreast of the best knowledge of the time. The unresting intellectual enthusiasm of the author put him upon the track of a host of questions (especially historical questions) which he did his best to solve. His book is therefore a labour-saving machine, to which any of us may be glad to refer, in place of working out the same results for himself. Other literatures usually have their own books of this kind; but even the foreign student may have commended to him this book of Dr Farrar's, if he desires to trace the history of English thought, and still more if he desires to form an estimate of one of the leading English teachers of the last century. It may help him by the way to appreciate the fact, which is probably more true of England than of any other European nation, that the actual sum of attainment, and in particular of teaching power and equipment, in a nation, is not always in proportion to the amount of its published writings.

This is what we may say to the stranger: but there are many among us who will wish besides to pay such tribute as they can to an invariably kind and invariably generous friend.

W. SANDAY