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The Journal
of
Theological Studies

JANUARY, 1921

WILLIAM SANDAY.

IN Dr Sanday, who passed away on September 16, 1920, England has lost the theologian who formed the greatest present link between her scholars and those of America and the continent of Europe, and, whatever may prove to be the permanent value of his work, one who has left us for ever a noble model of the true tone and temper of the scholar and the controversialist. No one starting on such a career could do better than read the prefaces and conclusions of Sanday's chief volumes, so illuminating as to his own aims and methods, so stimulating and suggestive to future students: one who had read and digested them, and (I would add to them) Mr Shuckburgh's poem on Dr Hort (Hort's *Life and Letters* ii p. 459), would be fully equipped for his task. How true was the sharp line drawn in his Inaugural Lecture as Ireland Professor between the duty of the teacher and the researcher—the teacher's task only 'to make the salient points salient', the researcher's motto 'There is nothing common or unclean', every minutest fact to be considered, valued, placed in its due proportion. How wise and generous the attitude of mind with which he approached traditional expressions of truth—'a spirit of reverence for old ideas which may perhaps be transcended but which discharged a very important function in their day: a spirit of patience which does not at once discard and renounce them, but seeks to extract their full significance: and an open mind for the real extent of their significance' (*The Life of Christ in Recent Research* p. 34). Once more how humble and yet how courageous the recognition that work on such deep subjects may fail to be right, but that an

author may at least deserve to be right. 'But for that the conditions are exacting and severe. First there must be comprehensive knowledge: then there must be sound method: and lastly there must be the right temper or balance of mind' (*ib.* p. 37.) This balance of mind made his work essentially that of a mediator; he could not endure the dilemma 'all or nothing'; he was always trying to see the strong points on each side, nearly always doing full justice to the motives of his opponents, laying his foundations strongly first, building slowly upon them, recognizing his own limitations, willing to acknowledge where he had made mistakes, if he did not feel quite sure of a view 'putting two queries over against it in the margin', very willing to collaborate with others, with great faith in younger students, while trenchant in his criticisms on what he thought wrong, yet enthusiastically generous in his admiration for new views which seemed to him true—witness his review of the work of Dr Moberly and Dr Du Bose, or this estimate of von Harnack, from whom he so often differed: 'Harnack has not only all the German virtues in the highest degree, but he has others less distinctly German—a width and generosity of outlook, a freedom from pedantry, a sympathy and understanding for human weakness, that are all his own.' Through the whole of his life he was attempting to mediate between traditional ideas and the claims of modern criticism, and from time to time he would turn aside to mediate, and always in a chivalrous spirit on behalf of the weaker party, in other controversies, as between Capital and Labour in social questions, between the Ritualists and their opponents in ecclesiastical, as between different conceptions of Priesthood and Sacrifice, different theories of education, as between England and Germany in the Great War. But these nearly all lie outside the scope of this JOURNAL. I must confine myself to his work as a Theologian. For this he equipped himself with great care: having won first classes in the Classical Schools at Oxford and a fellowship at Trinity (1866), he stayed for a few years in Oxford, where he was ordained in 1867, and soon after held two country livings, 1872–1876. This was a time of real preparation: his work left him leisure for study: visits to Germany had already made him acquainted with its language, and he became a thorough student of its theological literature.

This was seen at once in his first book, published in 1872, *The Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth Gospel*, and his later books, *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, *The Life of Christ in Recent Research*, *Modern Christologies*, and notably his address as President of the Congress of Religions in 1908, shew how carefully, and with what a wide outlook he kept abreast all his life with later developments. His first book attracted notice at once for its combination of reverence with freedom of criticism. It was an argument for the Johannine authorship of the Gospel: putting aside the external evidence as inconclusive, he carefully compared each chapter with the Synoptist narrative, shewing that in spite of difference of form there was essential agreement in the character of the Lord and the substance of the discourses: and the work remains of permanent and assured value. There followed in 1876 an equally sound and independent piece of work, *The Gospels in the Second Century*, an examination of the quotations from the Greek Testament in second-century writers; the most valuable part of it being the proof that the third Gospel was prior to Marcion's adaptation of it. These two books marked the author out at once as one who ought to hold a prominent position as a Teacher. Many of us were already looking for the day when he should return to Oxford as Professor; but Durham claimed him first, and from 1876-1883 he was Principal of Hatfield Hall in that University. The only literary output during these years consisted of Commentaries on the Romans and the Galatians contributed to Bishop Ellicott's N. T. Commentary for English readers. In 1883 he was elected Dean Ireland's Professor of Exegesis: the inadequate salary attached to that post would not have enabled him to live in Oxford had not Exeter College come to his aid and elected him to an official Fellowship. These two offices he held till 1895, when he was transferred to the Lady Margaret Professorship of Divinity and a Canonry at Christ Church. This passage from Exegesis to Divinity fell in exactly with the scheme of work which he had long before mapped out for himself. That was, to lay his foundations in exact knowledge of the text and MSS; then to pass to Exegesis and Introduction of the books of the N. T.; then finally to deal with the deeper questions of Theology, with the hope that it might be given him

to write in the light of them a worthy Life of Christ. Before he came to Oxford he had gained a good knowledge of textual problems, not only of the N. T. but also of the old Latin translations of it, and of some of the Fathers. This bore fruit in articles on the Corbey St James (ff), on the Italian Origin of the Codex Amiatinus, on the Cheltenham list of the Canonical books of the Old and New Testament and of the writings of Cyprian (*Studia Biblica*, ii-iii), in a discussion of codex K in *Old Latin Biblical Texts* vol ii (1886), in a careful examination in his Seminar of Cyprian's Testimonia and of the N. T. text used by Irenaeus, and in a volume of Appendices to the N. T. in which he compared Westcott and Hort's text with that of Stephanus and gave a selection of important variants, with illustrations from the Memphitic, Armenian, and Ethiopic versions (1889). The tenure of the Ireland Professorship also saw the publication, in collaboration with Dr Headlam, of the thorough *Commentary on the Romans* (1895), and of the Bampton Lectures on *Inspiration* (1893). His own criticism on this book in later years was that it was too eloquent: a truer criticism would be that it was misnamed: it was not a thorough discussion of Inspiration; it confined the thought mainly to the prophetic inspiration and said little about that of psalmist or historian or of scribe: but it was rather a book of Introduction, full of knowledge and of insight into the contents of both Old and New Testaments. A visit to Palestine in 1902 resulted in a charmingly written and illustrated discussion of *The Sacred Sites of the Gospels* (1903): a visit to America in 1904 in a course of lectures on *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel* (1905). This is one of the completest of his works, dealing with both the external and the internal evidence and weighing carefully all modern views of authorship and structure, containing with them some of his wisest thoughts on the methods of true criticism. He was still quite convinced that the Gospel was by an eye-witness, by the loved disciple, and still inclined to believe that the loved disciple was John. The same year saw the republication of his article in *Hastings's Dictionary* on 'Jesus Christ', under the title 'Outlines of the Life of Christ', the most useful book for theological students that he wrote, introducing them at once to the historical and the theological problems of the Life. His mind was turning now mainly to the latter: that had

been his aim from the first, and it was accentuated by the friendship with Dr Moberly which had resulted from his move to Christ Church. He has himself described his chief debt to his new friend: 'It is strange'—he wrote in criticism of some German thinking—'that it should not be seen that however inward a conviction may be and however internal the process by which it is reached, it must sooner or later express itself externally. Spirit must needs clothe itself with body: and it is only in the outward form that one spirit can communicate with another. The external may come in at different points in the process, but the internal without the external cannot exist. We in this country have learnt this lesson from Dr Moberly and his friends' (*The Life of Christ in Recent Research* p. 44). In the light of this friendship his mind turned more to the conception of *Priesthood and Sacrifice*: he organized and presided at a conference between Churchmen and Nonconformists on the subject and edited the results, pleased to find the amount of underlying agreement that revealed itself (1900). His mind turned also to deeper Christological problems. His *Life of Christ in Recent Research* (1907) was a thorough survey of the modern problems, and shewed how his mind was hesitating on the subject of the 'Nature' miracles. This tendency became more marked in *Christologies Ancient and Modern* (1910), containing a masterly review of the early and the later stages of the theme, and propounding a line of thought of his own in the hope that it might prove a contribution to its solution: a contribution which was worked out more fully in another volume, *Personality in Christ and in Ourselves* (1911). He had been much impressed by the tendency of psychology to lay stress on the subliminal consciousness as a large factor in our thoughts and actions, and it seemed to him that the fact of the gradual emergence of the subconscious into the conscious offered a real analogy to the way in which the Divine Nature in Christ would have emerged into and permeated the human. 'This contribution was not felt to be helpful. It almost ignores the fact that the subliminal consciousness is a very mixed storehouse containing things bad and good as well as new and old: it strangely puts the unconscious on a higher level than that which has become conscious and rational, and places the real union of the Divine

and Human on a lower level than a deliberate harmony of will and love.¹

The same year (1911) saw the publication of the Oxford *Studies in the Synoptic Problem*. His own contribution to this is only a short but very suggestive essay on the conditions under which the Evangelists would have written, both their psychological attitude to their theme, and the external limitations imposed by the difficulty of ready reference to written sources; but the whole work is the outcome of his influence. He had in his first book anticipated the present solution of the Synoptic problem; he had worked through it in detail year after year in his Seminar, and the volume is the joint contribution of those who had attended it. All these later books had been sketches preparatory to the main work of all his aim, *The Life of Christ*. But it was becoming clear that that aim would never be achieved. Time was slipping by very rapidly, and there was another reason: it was necessary to make up his mind more decidedly as to his attitude to the Gospel miracles. This had always been an anxious problem with him: he had tried to hold the balance between the traditional view and the claims of a rather rigid theory of the uniformity of Nature, but by 1912 the balance had gone against the traditional view: he felt clear that while God's power could mould and control the lower laws to higher purposes, yet His Nature required that He should respect the limitations which those laws imposed, and he could no longer accept, though he hesitated to say that he rejected, the Virgin Birth, the literal Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord, and the Nature Miracles. This was the theme to which he recurred again and again in the next few years: he dealt with it in a paper at the Church Congress 1912: it led to sharp controversy with Bishop Gore (*Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism*, 1914), to a friendly correspondence with the Dean of Christ Church (*Spirit, Matter and Miracle*, privately printed 1916), and with a former pupil, the Rev. N. P. Williams (*Form and Content of the Christian Tradition*, 1916), and he returned to the theme in his last public lecture (*Divine Overruling*, 1920) and his Nunc

¹ With regard to the relation of the conscious to the subconscious self I should like to call attention to a sermon by Dr H. Scott Holland, printed for the first time in his posthumous volume *The Philosophy of Faith and the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 95-106.

Dimittis (*The Position of Liberal Theology*, 1920). These critics urged that his view of uniformity was too rigid, that it excluded from the Divine power 'the faculty of initiative, the power of making fresh departures', that greater spiritual power might embody itself in greater external results (the influence of Dr Moberly, who had impressed this truth on him at one time, had been for some years removed by death), that he did not give sufficient weight to the actual testimony for the miracles, that he had not considered how far the times in which the Gospels were written were consistent with the growth of legendary matter: but his own mind remained quite clear; the only limitation he could allow was he would not assert positively more than that his view *might be true*: but to himself it brought conviction and peace: it seemed to have cleared away the last barrier between science and religion and to have introduced a unity in all thought: and he championed it with characteristic sincerity and courage. There synchronized with this change about miracle, partly induced by it, a change in his view of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. He was partly affected in this by Mr E. F. Scott's book on the Gospel, which seemed to him to picture an adequate situation out of which the Gospel could have arisen, but the deciding influence came from the article in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* by Baron Friedrich von Hügel.

Time only will shew what is the value and effect of his Christological discussions: what is certain is that his influence was one of the great factors in bringing about the acceptance of the critical view of the Bible, that he more than any one else in England helped to solve the Synoptic problem and did work that will last on the exegesis of the Fourth Gospel and the Epistle to the Romans, that he made the English mind face the problem of eschatology in the N. T. We in Oxford know that he lifted the level of Professorial work and drew round him a circle of devoted students: all will recognize the strong religious belief in the Divine overruling of History, in the Divine character of Christ, in the universal meaning of His life and of the Atonement wrought by His death. It was my privilege to share the last walk that he took. Three things stand out prominently in my recollection of it. A fortnight before he had given to members of the Churchmen's Union an address

characterized by all his old vigour and felicitousness ; this was nominally an account of the work of Dr Hatch ; it was really also a comparison in respect of style, learning, and scientific method of ten recent theologians, Lightfoot, Westcott, Hort, Pusey, Bright, Liddon, Church, Bigg, Stanley, and Jowett ; and now reflexion filled him with self-reproach that in that address (it is printed in *The Modern Churchman*, October 1920) he had said about Dr Westcott that 'he dabbled in fundamentals' : he felt that he had been unjust to the author of *The Gospel of the Resurrection*. There was delight in the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference, with their vision of the Reunion of Christendom, and also an optimistic view of the future of theological study in England. There was lastly a hope that it might be given to him to do a little more work ; he wished to do this in two directions. He said once that the process of learning would never end for him till life ended (*Christologies Ancient and Modern* p. 5) ; this proved true, and equally true was it that the process of teaching never ended till then : he was hoping to draw out the indications given by the Gospels of the Divine consciousness in the Lord's utterances ; and he was still looking forward to being able to preach once again in the Cathedral : he had asked the Dean and Chapter some months before to allow him to be the preacher on Wednesdays in Lent 1921 : and he told me that his theme would be the lessons to be learnt from the War. That was not to be. But for how much have we to be grateful, for the work, the example, the stimulus, the affection *tam cari capitis*. It would be too exacting to wish for more.

WALTER LOCK.