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matter seriously. The Bishop of Durham, Dr. Hensley Henson, has had occasion to consider the much-debated question of spiritual healing, and he has gone into the whole subject with characteristic thoroughness, and has expressed his views with characteristic courage, in a book bearing the modest title *Notes on Spiritual Healing* (Williams & Norgate ; 6s. net). The title is much too modest to fit the contents. In point of fact, the book is a very careful historical and critical consideration of the claims advanced by faith-healers. The conclusion to which the bishop comes is, as may be imagined, unfavourable. It is not only unfavour-

able, but uncompromisingly so. The criticism is perhaps over-emphatic. But Dr. Henson does not content himself with mere denunciation. He gives reasons and facts. And those who have read any of the numerous books lately produced on the other side, by Mr. Anson, Dr. Dearmer, Mr. Hickson, and Mr. Maillard, should assuredly read what a person of so cool a judgment as Dr. Henson has to say. Among the topics discussed are 'Religion and Healing,' 'The Clergyman's Concern with Sickness,' 'Christianity and Medical Science,' 'Exorcism,' 'Evidence of the New Testament,' 'Lourdes,' and 'The Unction of the Sick.'

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## Abide with Me.

BY RENDEL HARRIS, LITT.D., D.D., MANCHESTER.

I WONDER what you would say if some one were to ask you what was the most beautiful passage in the Life of Christ ; I do not mean the most beautiful saying or the most lovely of the parables, but the detached or detachable story in the Gospels which may claim to be the highest in art and the richest in grace and in delicacy of touch and in depth of possible interpretation. Probably you would reply that you had never thought of reading the *Gospel* in such a way as to be able to answer the question ; you might be sure that Shakespeare's *Tempest* is the most beautiful of all his plays, and perhaps the composition most instinct with spiritual meaning and lessons, but as to the *Gospel*, we have hardly been in the habit of asking such questions as 'What is the most dramatic incident ?' or 'Which is the most exquisite narration ?'

Well, I can quite understand that there is a measure of difficulty involved in the subject itself. We can't quite treat Jesus as if He were Prospero, even though each has a magician's wand and works marvels on air and earth and sea, including the great marvel of the forgiveness of one's enemies ; nor are we likely to try and force contrasts between Miranda and Mary Magdalene because they happen to have the same initial letter. Reverence restrains us ; we are sure that the same canons of literary criticism cannot always be applied ; or, if applied, it is not every one that can be trusted to make the

application. On the other hand, even irreverent or imperfectly reverent people have often the skill to point out to us the very things which an excessive reverence may have obscured. The person who reads the *Gospel* like any other book will often be the very one to convince us by his judgments that it is not like any other book.

Now if I were to try to answer my own question, I should find it easier to get the right reply if I first consulted Renan and the *Vie de Jésus*. This book is, for most critics, out of date, a burnt-out firework, an exploded mine of the devil's artillery ; but they are wrong. It is one of the great books still on the greatest of themes. I remember well that when I was in residence at Woodbrooke, a group of students came to me to know if I would read the *Vie de Jésus* with them ; I said, 'Yes, if you will read it in French.' So a dozen of us read it that way together, and it was one of the best classes we ever had. It is talked of yet. I don't think we ever believed less in Jesus on account of reading Renan's Life of Him. Now M. Renan regarded the *Gospel* of Luke as the most beautiful book in the world, even though he minimizes its historical value : and if we were to ask him which is the most beautiful incident in the most beautiful of books, the passage where Luke is most himself, he would very likely have said that it was the story of the walk to Emmaus. If he did not actually

say this, let me say it for him ; and if he should object and say that a historian has no use for either resurrection or revenant, we will tell him that he is somewhat out of date, and that we have Lodge as an appendix to Luke !

And here is another method in which we may estimate the beauty of the story. It has reacted in three ways : first, on the literature of subsequent times ; second, on the art of the greatest painters ; third, upon the devotion of the spiritual men from the beginning to the present time. Suppose we take these points in order.

First, there is literature. People nowadays do not read Cowper ; his poetry has passed away, and, strange to say, his letters have outlived his verse. I admit that they are amongst the most beautiful in the English language. Our forefathers, however, did not read the letters to the same extent that they did the verse. The verse carried the prose. They were brought up on Cowper, and learnt long sections by heart. One still sometimes may hear an aged Friend repeat in Meeting the versification which Cowper made of the *Walk to Emmaus*. You don't know it ! Then let me be the aged Friend for a few moments, and recite it to you :

It happened, on a solemn even-tide,  
Soon after He that was our surety died,  
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,  
The scene of all their sorrows left behind,  
Sought their own village, busied as they went  
In musings worthy of the great event :  
They spake of him they loved, of him whose life  
Though blameless had incurred perpetual strife,  
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,  
A deep memorial graven on their hearts ;  
The recollection, like a vein of ore,  
The further traced enriched them still the more.

A stranger joined them, courteous as a friend,  
And asked them, with a kind engaging air,  
What their affliction was, and begged a share.  
Inform'd, He gathered up the broken thread,  
And, truth and wisdom gracing all He said,  
Explain'd, illustrated, and search'd so well,  
The tender theme on which they chose to dwell,  
That, reaching home, ' The night,' they said, ' is near,  
We must not now be parted, sojourn here.'  
The new acquaintance soon became a guest,  
And made so welcome at their simple feast,  
He bless'd the bread, but vanished at the word,  
And left them both exclaiming, ' 'Twas the Lord.'

Second, what Cowper did in verse, Rembrandt did, with even greater insight, with his art. Most

of us know the picture in the Louvre, so often copied, of the Supper at Emmaus. It is the greatest of Rembrandt's. But those who study the art of Rembrandt know that it was not reached all at once, that complete and perfect idealization of the scene. He left other ventures, etchings and the like. He was not clear as to how the revelation of the Hidden Stranger was to be made. One of the sketches shows Christ's place at the table empty, except that a radiancy of glory, with an embedded cross, occupies the place of the vanished Figure. But this seems rightly to have been discarded. It was not near enough to the Scripture, which tells us that He was known to them in the breaking of bread. The Stranger had, in fact, suddenly and automatically taken the head of the table. They had seen those hands doing that very thing over and over again. It was the Pre-Eucharist of all Eucharists. It was the same touch, the same action, the same characteristic raising of the eyes to heaven, the same moving fingers. A closer glance revealed mysterious marks in hands of benediction on the bread. No need of any higher effulgence, nor of any further cruciform delineations ! You look at the two friends : one has his face turned away from us, but his hands are clasped. The other, the elder of the two, has the light in his eyes. The servant approaching the table has turned into a statue. That is his contribution to the Adoration. The light and shade with which Rembrandt made magic are both of them saying, ' It is the Lord !'

Every great scene in the great story finds, sooner or later, its great artist : Raphael must have the Transfiguration for his own ; Van Dyck, the Descent from the Cross almost for his own ; but Rembrandt will for ever be remembered by what he recalled to our remembering, the scene at Emmaus.

Our next thought is that the lovely story in Luke has become a permanent enrichment of the song of the Christian Church. We are all of us familiar with ' Abide with me,' in which Mr. Lyte versified the sentence of the Gospel, where we are told that ' They constrained him saying, Abide with us for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent.' Very few people who sing it, realize that it was an old folk's hymn, according to Lyte's interpretation. He wrote it down in Devonshire, on Brixham Head, with the waves of the Channel below him, and the waves of another Strait before him, and not so very far in front. Do you hear the sea in the lines ?

'Ebbs out life's little day.' Landsmen don't talk that way, and it is only Jesus who sets the ebb tide to music. The most rapid scrutiny of the lines, either the first or as far as the last, will verify one's statement as correct: 'Life's little day': 'My closing eyes.' I was talking recently with a class of students of the need for a re-arrangement of the Hymn-book, so that Natural Religion might have the precedence of Revealed Religion, and go before it as a sort of sacred prelude to the greater Orchestra. If there is any reconstruction to be done, the new book must have at its end an Old Folk's corner, where the hymns for the Evening of the Day, the so-called Evening Hymns, will be given back to the section for the Evening of Life. The *Nunc Dimittis* will, of course, be there, and 'Brief life is here our portion,' and the 'Land of pure delight,' and 'Abide with me.'

At the same time we shall have to maintain that

the Brixham interpretation of Emmaus is not Emmaus. Rembrandt will correct us, will limit our choice of figures. One old man and one young man: have you realized them that way? And both of them saying, 'Abide with me': the elder one saying it first, and the younger saying, 'Yes, do stay with us.' Neither of them now talking in a minor key.

Well! we are come to the end of another year of life. We may wish it were longer, it could hardly be shorter, for it speeds away so fast. We can't make an anthem for our coming days by saying to one another, 'Abide with us,' but, if we have seen, during our pilgrimage here, any vision of His face and hands, we can repeat the ancient prayer, and entreat Him to make our house His home and put His benediction on our moving tents. Like the two of old time, we may start out to go to Emmaus, and may find Emmanuel.

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## New Testament Criticism in Relation to the Christian Religion.<sup>1</sup>

BY PROFESSOR W. MANSON, D.D., NEW COLLEGE, EDINBURGH.

### I.

THE first task of the New Testament student is, of course, to understand the New Testament itself, and to give its text a chance. So simple and obvious as this principle may appear, it is by no means superfluous in a day when generalizations based on comparative religion, or theories of religion based on modern psychology, conspire to run away with the student, and to relegate philology and exact linguistic science to a secondary place in his mind. Over and over again we need to remind ourselves that only the tested and measurable fact has moral value, whereas the untested hypothesis may be the most immoral and debilitating thing in the world. In the development of a philological conscience, therefore, and in the calling to his side of whatever aids the linguistic and textual calculus

of the present day affords, the student has his primary task, one which he may not depute, and which is morally prior to the speculative ventures of his mind. Whatever value comparative religion and psychology may possess, the New Testament religion is still more important. It is more important than any analogies which may be discovered to it elsewhere, and it is more important than any theory of the way in which religion is developed and nourished within the brain. Psychology may determine the mode of religious as of other experiences, it cannot decide as to their validity. If pursued to the point at which all forms of consciousness are given the same value, or at which they are all given no value at all, psychology is not a science of reality, but sheer nihilism.

Again, the student whose primary task is thus with the scientific exegesis of the New Testament, will always, as part of the reality with which he is dealing, remember the peculiar sanctity which

<sup>1</sup>Inaugural Lecture, New College, Edinburgh, October 8, 1925. The Lecture, as given, opened with certain *personalia*, appropriate to the occasion, which are here omitted.