

July 2, 1914.

DR. SANDAY'S POSITION

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PART I.

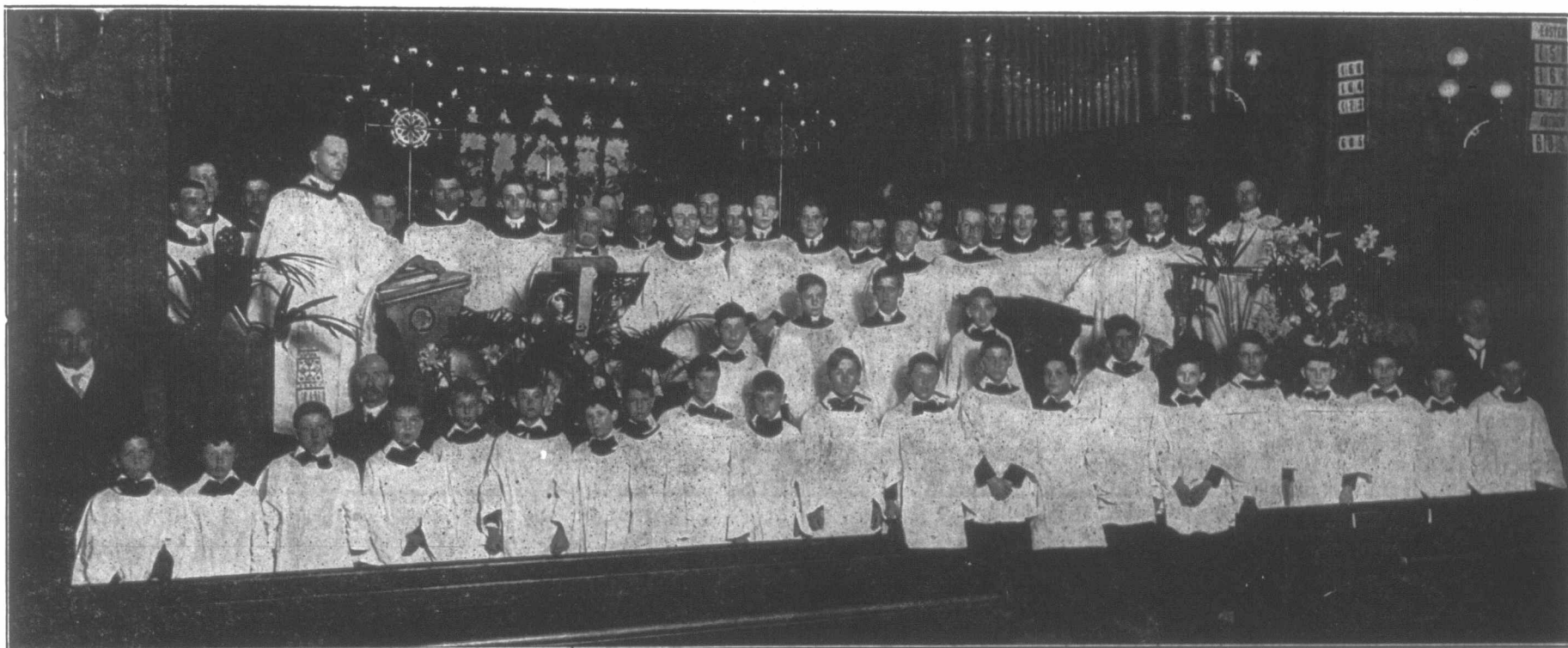
CERTAINLY, there is no man in England who has a better claim to come under the Bishops' plea for patience and toleration towards the tentative efforts of scholars to mediate between the old Formulæ of Faith and the new Learning than Dr. Sanday. He is himself a model of patience and toleration. He records, in this last pamphlet of his, with most touching frankness, the long years of preparation and of labour, of study and of thought, through which he has been led to his present conclusions. Very slowly, very deliberately, very carefully, he has moved from point to point. He is the last man to accuse of rashness, or haste, or lack of feeling for others. And then, his whole being is steeped in the Spirit. He lives very near to God. He is blessed with a most winning simplicity of soul, and a most tender humility. He is devout, gentle, saintly. He has served his Master so long and so loyally. He has consecrated all his gifts to this supreme service. He has won the honour and love of all who have the joy of knowing him. It is a very serious matter, therefore, that he should have arrived at this verdict of his: and should, in particular, claim to extend that principle of Symbolism, which, as the Bishop of Ox-

issues at stake. He appeals to what they have done, as if it would strengthen his own position. Yet, surely, they are perilous witnesses for him to call at this juncture. The Bishop would retort that they exactly illustrate the mind and temper against which he is warring. In stripping Christ of His supernatural characteristics, they have obviously reduced the value of His personality. Nobody can read them, without recognizing that this disaster has followed inevitably. They offer us no Christ whom we could dream of worshipping. Nor do they themselves discuss Him in terms which would allow for His holding the supreme and incomparable position assigned to Him from first to last by the Catholic Creed. Most of them, under the influence of the Ritschlian tradition, refuse all interpretation of Christ that would transcend the limits of experience. They are, on all philosophical counts, agnostic. They attempt a positive and scientific account of the career and teaching of the historical Jesus, regarded as a purely human phenomenon. By this process, they necessarily omit the heart and core of the Christian Creed: for that is centred and concentrated on events that carry you beyond the limits of the earthly life,—i.e., on the redemptive

critical school, as they discuss the psychological development of the Christ-consciousness, we lose all sense whatever of having under our scrutiny that which might be the object of adoration and worship. Any such possible character has long ago vanished from out of the terms of our analysis. And in passing from the school of Harnack to that of Schweitzer, though the conditions involved in Faith are recognized, at least in their eschatological aspect, and though the critic himself has a fervent missionary belief, the case, so far as Criticism goes, is not bettered. For, when once Criticism presents us with the picture of a poor blundering peasant who, in recoil from a disastrous misjudgment of his own, sets himself violently to force the pace, in order to bring about the catastrophe which had refused to respond to his anticipation—well! all question of Adoration, surely, is at the end. We have no basis left on which to build. No! These are not helpful allies for Dr. Sanday to summon to his side. They do but illustrate the limitations of their critical methods, which prohibit them from accounting for the religious value and significance of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is exactly what the Bishop of Oxford declares will be the consequence of following the same methods here at home.

OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW.

Dr. Sanday will not have it that the actuality of the New Testament differs vitally, in its bearings upon our belief, from that of the Old: and he thinks that the popular tendency to glorify a great



THE CHOIR OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, TORONTO

THIS ILLUSTRATION IS AN UNUSUALLY GOOD ONE, SHOWING ONE OF THE BEST MALE CHOIRS IN CANADA. DR. EDGAR R. DOWARD IS ORGANIST AND CHOIRMASTER. HIS WELL-KNOWN FACE IS EASILY NOTED ABOVE, ALSO THE FAMILIAR FORM OF THE RECTOR, REV. T. G. WALLACE, M.A.

ford allows, necessarily applies to words like those describing the Descent into Hades or the Session at the Right Hand of God, to the Gospel presentation of the historical facts of our Lord's Birth and Resurrection. While emphasizing his personal belief in the facts, and in their essentially supernatural character, he, nevertheless, finds the record of what occurred to be deeply affected by symbolic expression.

NO JUDGMENT OF THE CHURCH.

Now, this is not to be taken as what the Ecclesia Anglicana stands for. The Declaration says otherwise: and Dr. Sanday accepts the decision of the Bishops to make the Declaration. It is the effort and offer of a scholar, engaged in the prolonged work of re-interpreting ancient documents under conditions of extreme complication, and in view of a subtle and perplexing intellectual situation. Such an effort is temporary, individual, partial, limited. It needs the discipline of time to sift and search it: it must be tried in the fire of criticism. Many things will have happened, by the time that it is settled and done with. It challenges our earnest attention, and examination. And there are thoughts which come at once to mind, on reading the statement made by Dr. Sanday, and reviewing his grounds of decision. It is curious, for instance, that in recalling to the Bishop of Oxford the immense labour of German Criticism on the Gospel Problem, he should seem to regard their work as adequate and reassuring in the light of the immediate

work of the Cross seen in the light of the Resurrection. Christianity springs out of the Resurrection. It is unintelligible, unless its origin and momentum are found in the Risen Lord. The mere life failed to create a religion. It proved unable to establish a Faith that survived the death of Christ. It offered no final solution of the mystery of life. Rather, it deepened its trouble and its perplexity. The Christ had not entered on the life which makes Him our salvation until after the Cross and Passion—until Death had set His powers free—until He was seen and known as alive from the dead. The Criticism, therefore, of which we are speaking, has omitted all that makes Christ the living Head of the Church which is His Body. As a scholar of the day writes:—"Liberal Protestantism, regarded as an intellectual system or position, is not Christianity in any sense which the word has hitherto borne—inasmuch as in it the fundamental Christian dogmas are ruled out on principle as being inadmissible, and it is consequently impossible to interpret the story of Jesus as, in the old sense, a Gospel of the power and grace of God," ("The Relations between Dogma and History," by A. W. Rawlinson, in "Irish Church Quarterly," April, 1914). We all know the meagreness of the residuum to which the great Harnack himself has reduced the original and essential Gospel of Christ. Having to discover all of it within the limits of the scanty record of the tiny fragment of the earthly life of Jesus, he has to cut it down to a declaration of the Fatherhood of God. In reading the books of this

life by a cloud of myth remains much the same as it ever had been, and that the Old Testament stories and prophecies are apt to materialize in the New. But is it not true that the note which makes the Old Testament so remarkable is its tendency to get away from myth and throw legend behind it? It begins much as other religions do: but its salient assertion is that God comes out in the act, that God is actually alive in history, that He really does things which abide, and that sheer and unmitigated fact is the material of revelation. All its highest spiritual teachers, i.e., the Prophets, are entirely free from any legendary tendency. Practically no myth at all grows up round them, and their spiritual force does not seem to ask for any such assistance, nor is there any inclination abroad to give it them. Yet their lives are momentous enough, and tell on the popular imagination, but tell on it in their naked morality, undecked by adventitious aids. This is surely most remarkable: and the climax is reached when the last and greatest of them all—the man who kindles the wonder and imagination of the people as no one born of woman had ever done before, the man who shook the very heart of the nation to its depths so that all men were doubting whether human spiritual power could ever go beyond his, and were musing in their hearts whether he were not indeed the consummation of the human race, the Christ—came and went without evoking any mythical tales, or leaving behind him a record of wonder. "John did no miracle." That is the strong word that we have to remem-