

**BROADCHALKE SERMON-
ESSAYS ON NATURE,
MEDIATION, ATONEMENT,
ABSOLUTION, ETC.**

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Broadchalke sermon-essays on nature, mediation, atonement, absolution, etc. by Rowland Williams

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ROWLAND WILLIAMS

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orig.
Theob.

BROADCHALKE

SERMON-ESSAYS

ON

Nature, Mediation, Atonement, Absolution,
etc.

BY

ROWLAND WILLIAMS, D.D.

AUTHOR OF 'CHRISTIANITY AND HINDUISM,' AND TRANSLATOR OF 'THE
HEBREW PROPHETS UNDER THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE.'



WILLIAMS AND NORGATE,

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1867.

P R E F A C E.

THESE Sermons, or Essays, expanded for the most part from mere preaching notes of a simpler kind, preserve their doctrine, but hardly their form, having undergone a change, the nature of which is expressed by their compound name.

If the term "Ritual" seems introduced with disparagement, I wish it understood that I have not, except in Sermon XV, had existing controversies on that subject before my mind.

A passage in vol. iv. of M. Merle d'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation*, in which that distinguished writer gives a highly coloured view of the effects of a decision by the Judicial Committee of Her Majesty's Privy Council, has been discussed in the Bishop of London's recent charge, kindly, and if not with the distinctness I might wish, with far higher authority than I could pretend. I might have wished it brought out, that the alleged charge as to the Atonement would not bear so much as submission to the tribunal; that the denial of "a fiction of merit by transfer" is held by the promoters of the suit, and by their spiritual kindred, far more emphatically than by the clergy-

man against whom they turned it into a crime ;* while the scriptural explanations which even more than Inspiration formed the subject of the suit, are, if their truth is doubted, yet to this day as little refuted as if their suppression without refutation were the thing chiefly desired. Since the two Primates, whom M. d'Aubigné esteems, though he desires the eminence of their office abolished, concurred in two-thirds of the judgment, he should either infer that it was not very wicked, or proceed to urge what he thinks so desirable, "a public act, which would bring back "that Church," (*i.e.* the Anglican, by a clean sweep of Prelacy,) "to her holy origin, and would be a source "of great prosperity to her."—Book vi. chap. xvi.

We may leave our Genevan critic his estimate of Episcopacy, and take time to consider his proposal for

* "Deus non facit salvos *fictè* peccatores," are the famous words of Luther. "Deus non facit salvos *fictè* justos," might be a retorted summary of Dr. Newman's Lectures on Justification. *Figment* is the word with Bp. Ball, and with some of the Oxford school; *fictio*, with Whately and F. Robertson. That a grave tribunal went out of its way to call one of the common-places of Divines on all sides 'unbecoming,' is difficult to explain in any complimentary manner.

It was the solitary redeeming feature of Dr. Pusey's aggrieved agitation, in parallel with Archbishop Manning, that he abstained from being exceedingly shocked at the acquittal upon this head. It would have been a refinement of generosity, more to be desired than expected from him, to have come forward and said, "Dr. Williams has but "expressed lightly, in an *obiter dictum*, in a Review, a mild form of "what all our old moralizing Divines held, and what I and all my "friends, including the Bishop of Salisbury, hold with far greater "intensity,"—if not, he might have added, with Novatian rigour.

giving the Church a separate Parliament from the Nation ; but we must wish that the historian of a great epoch had not neglected the accession of documentary evidence, which has thrown light in recent years upon his subject ; we might have spared his opinion upon a contemporary trial, until he had acquainted himself with the issue joined, the pleas submitted, the judgment given, and the parts taken in it by members of the tribunal whom he selects for exception. Could he even explain, in what respect my views of the Atonement, and of Prophecy, differ from those expounded by one of the two Primates as Bampton Lecturer, and implied by the other in his latest charge at York, in 1861 ? I am persuaded, that had he only so much as a glimmering conception of my views of Hebrew Prophecy, and of the solid grounds on which they proceed, he would not attempt to place them in a different category from those of his master Calvin.

That which stands in need of an explanation, which it has not yet received, is not the failure of a prosecution which could only create confusion, but the moral possibility of its being instituted. Evidently, nothing in volition, doctrinal statement, or logical tendency, rendered whatever theological difficulties perplex our age, less for the plaintiff, or greater for the defendant. Neither rationalistic hypothesis, nor preliminary negation (*e.g.* in respect of miracle or prophecy,) could be ascribed more truly to one than to the other ; nor would it bear being said face to face, that the defendant excluded *blood*, except in the

same qualified or antithetical sense as that in which the Prosecutor excludes *all Divine graces* from the Atonement; while on the Sacraments, a theory which would turn Grace and Faith into Materiality and Contact, seemed directed with lamentable impunity against our Catechism and Articles. Persons who now bid us be alarmed at ritualistic display, saw with indifference, or approval, an attempt to enforce the essential principles which alone render ritualism dangerous, and if carried out with consistency, idolatrous.

The process succeeded, amidst complications of personal circumstance, so far as to transfer discussion from its proper ground, whether historical or theological (where alone it could be of any value), and to make one, who lived much out of the world, appear responsible for the strong opposites* of nearly all his most cherished convictions or habits of thought and action. It failed in assailing the principle, that the standards which guide our religious teaching, protect our literary or scientific researches, and leave the duty of communicating them subject only to its natural tests.

This is not the place to dwell on the circumstances which rendered that limited amount of success possible; nor is there any use in recurring to an outrage, unless misrepresentation render recurrence necessary. Therefore I will not repeat what was said by me at the

* The negative sections, represented in more than one weekly journal of signal ability, had, and appear to have, their own reasons for wishing my case not to be understood.

time in my Sermon on *Persecution for the Word*; although the statements in that Discourse were well weighed, (notwithstanding the distortion of them by one from whom better might have been hoped,) nor has there been the slightest attempt to refute or disprove them; so that my view of the case, with a few grains of allowance for expressions savouring of the hour, remains unchanged.

Before all things, good faith.

