

**CANON LIDDON: A MEMOIR; WITH
THE FOUR SERMONS PREACHED AT
ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL IN APRIL AND
HIS LAST SERMON PREACHED AT ST.
MARY'S, OXFORD ON WHITSUNDAY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649353255

Canon Liddon: a memoir; with the four sermons preached at St. Paul's Cathedral in April and his last sermon preached at St. Mary's, Oxford on Whitsunday by Henry Parry Liddon

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

HENRY PARRY LIDDON

**CANON LIDDON: A MEMOIR; WITH
THE FOUR SERMONS PREACHED AT
ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL IN APRIL AND
HIS LAST SERMON PREACHED AT ST.
MARY'S, OXFORD ON WHITSUNDAY**

0

Henry Parry

CANON LIDDON

A Memoir

WITH THE

FOUR SERMONS

PREACHED AT ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

IN APRIL

(Reprinted from the "Family Churchman")

AND HIS

LAST SERMON

PREACHED AT ST. MARY'S, OXFORD

ON WHITSUNDAY.

S

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED AT

"THE FAMILY CHURCHMAN" OFFICE, 8, SALISBURY COURT,

FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

1890.



THE LATE CANON LIDDON

Memoir.

MANY besides Churchmen will regret the death of Canon Liddon. He had become so universally recognised as our greatest preacher and theologian, that, although a leading member of the High Church party, he was regarded by all sorts and conditions of Christians as the chief exponent of Christian doctrine. As is already known, he died at Weston-super-Mare, on Tuesday morning, September 9th, at the house of his brother, where he had gone for change of air. He had previously been staying with his sister at Standish Court, Stoneham. But it was deemed advisable to move him to Weston on the Friday before, and, although the journey fatigued him, no symptoms more serious than usual were manifested. Indeed, he was able to take a daily carriage drive, and on the morning of his death partook of breakfast apparently in no worse health than on the previous day. Soon afterwards, however, he was found in a fainting condition, and before medical aid could be procured he had expired. The sad news was conveyed to the Canon in Residence at St. Paul's Cathedral (Canon H. Scott Holland) in a telegram from one of the nieces of the great preacher, which ran briefly: "My uncle died suddenly this morning."

Henry Parry Liddon was born at North Stoneham, in Hampshire, and was the eldest son of Captain Matthew Liddon, R.N., who commanded Her Majesty's Ship *The Griper* in the expedition under Sir Edward Parry in search of the North-West Passage. Sir Edward Parry was the boy's godfather, and soon after his birth Captain Liddon moved to Colyton, in Devonshire, and much of H. P. Liddon's youth was spent with an aunt at Taunton. He was born in 1829, and had, therefore, barely completed his sixty-first year at the time of his death. He received his early education at King's College School, and in the year 1847 he was nominated a student of Christ Church. Those who recollect him as an undergraduate speak of him as having been already keenly interested in religion, and as having professed himself a loyal follower of the Tractarian leaders—men whose influence, though it had been momentarily checked by the secession of Newman, was still very considerable. The young student of Christchurch was especially brought in contact with Pusey, and also, away from Oxford, with the

gentle personality of one whom he afterwards described as "the best and wisest man whom he had ever known intimately in life"—John Keble. Meantime he read for the schools; but by some accident, though he was a good scholar and a keen logician, he only obtained a Second Class in the examination for his degree (1850). In the next year, however, he obtained a University distinction—the Johnson Theological Scholarship—and he was in due time confirmed in his studentship. He was ordained deacon by Bishop Wilberforce in 1851; and there are still those who remember the keen interest with which, in the intervals of the examination, he discussed theological questions in the garden of Cuddesdon Palace. He was at this time, indeed, studying not only the matter, but the form; and already he had laid to heart the lessons of that great school of ecclesiastical preaching, as distinguished from the popular preaching of Protestantism, which had never died out in France from the days of Massillon and Bourdaloue to the days of Lacordaire. Of the last-named Liddon always professed himself a devoted admirer, but it was rather on the school than on any single member of it that he formed his own well-defined and most impressive style. But his early work as a clergyman did not lie much, or at least exclusively, in the direction of preaching. In 1854 he was appointed Vice-Principal of Cuddesdon College, then recently founded by Bishop Wilberforce as a nursery of young clergy; and it may truly be said that the influence of Liddon during the five years that he held the post had much to do with fixing the character of the college and determining its success.

His principal at Cuddesdon was the Rev. A. Pott, now Archdeacon of Berks; the chaplain of the college was one Edward King, now Bishop of Lincoln. To these three men, undoubtedly, Cuddesdon owes all its fame and more than half of its usefulness. It was at Cuddesdon, however, that Dr. Liddon had his first taste of theological strife. Mr. Golightly, the last of the trenchant Protestant controversialists, returned again and again to the attack upon the college in the *Quarterly*, and again and again was repulsed by the success, as well as by the silence, of his opponents. However, the Bishop was greatly impressed with the strength of Mr. Golightly's position, and, true to his characteristically candid manner, made no attempt to conceal his feelings. Hence the crisis which, after five laborious years, checked the career

of Liddon and threatened to transform the character of the seminary. True, the Bishop had reason to waver, even at the last moment. Writing to Mr. Golightly in 1857, Dr. Wilberforce said: "I think my vice-principal eminently endowed with the power of leading men to earnest devoted piety; but with such a man I do not think I ought to interfere except as to anything substantially important." In 1858, however, when Mr. Pott resigned the principalship, Mr. Liddon also tendered his resignation of the vice-principalship, and the Bishop accepted it after consultation with Mr. Butler, now Dean of Lincoln, whose curate Mr. Liddon had been at Wantage, and the Bishop based his decision not only on "abstract doctrinal difference as to Holy Communion, but it is as much or more a moral question. I am sure he is entirely honest. In exact proportion to the fulness of my conviction that he is honest, and it is entire, rises the conviction that in this matter he is not, so to speak, trustworthy—that is, that there is in him a strength of will and ardour, a restlessness, a dominant imagination, which makes him unable to give to the young men any tone, even exactly his own tone." The Bishop with regret accepted his resignation, but his friendship with Mr. Liddon never abated. Moreover, Cuddesdon is the same Cuddesdon still.

A very important epoch in Liddon's life was his appointment as examining chaplain to the then Bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Walter Ker Hamilton, a man of saintly life, and a pronounced High Churchman. He was one of the three men who most influenced the life and thought of Liddon, the other two being Keble and Pusey. In 1864 Bishop Hamilton appointed Liddon to the prebend of Major Pars Altaris in Salisbury Cathedral. By this time his fame as a preacher was beginning to spread, and when, in 1863, he was for the first time appointed Select Preacher to the University of Oxford, St. Mary's was soon crowded. Already the voice, the manner, and the style were there which have since that date charmed so many scores of thousands of hearers; but at that time all was new except to those who, in some foreign church, had chanced to hear a Dominican brother. The sympathetic tones, the subtle, insinuating argument, the rhetorical artifice, concealed behind extreme simplicity of language; the dogmatic certainty of the preacher's central positions; above all, the fervour of his own personal persuasion, making itself felt through physical exertion that

was plainly too severe for him—these things at once made it apparent that a new great preacher had come before the world. Accordingly, when it was announced that Prebendary Liddon was to be the Bampton Lecturer for 1866, the interest of the announcement was felt far beyond the limits of the University. The subject chosen showed the preacher's courage; it was nothing less central, nothing less vast, than "The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The lectures showed no little learning; as printed, with a full apparatus of notes, they show a great deal; but their real strength lay in the skill with which the orthodox case was presented, the weak points in the opponents' case laid bare, and the religious feelings and hopes of Christians appealed to. From the time of the delivery and publication of the Bampton Lectures there was no doubt whatever that, among the more scholarly and controversial preachers of the Church of England, Liddon had taken the leading place.

In the year of the Bampton Lectures, Mr. Liddon was chosen as a member of the Hebdomadal Council at Oxford; and this position he held for three "turns" of three years each, till 1875. He was at the time, as the election implied, resident in Oxford; and his nomination may be said to have signalised the fact that he was regarded, and consented to be regarded, as one of the active leaders of the Church party in the University. He filled in University politics the anomalous position of one who, though a Liberal in the politics of the country, held tenaciously to the old lines, especially on such points as the retention of Greek, and, until 1871, the retention of religious tests. He acted, in fact, with Dr. Pusey, whose lieutenant he really was; and on all such matters as the founding and organisation of the Theological Honour School, he naturally represented the clerical claims in their extreme form. In 1870 he accepted the appointment to Dean Ireland's Professorship of Exegesis, and it need not be said that his lectures, during the twelve years that he held the post, were crowded, not only by candidates for orders, but by others. It can hardly be said that his influence in Oxford, outside the lecture-room, the Council, and the University pulpit, was quite as great as those of some of his contemporaries. Probably his colleague, Dr. King, the present Bishop of Lincoln, had more direct personal influence upon the characters of young High Churchmen.

In 1870 Liddon was appointed Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's, and about the same time was made D.D. and Hon. D.C.L. The partial removal to London which the canonry implied brought his person, his voice, and his work before the notice of thousands of those to whom he had till then been a mere name. His first systematic appearance in London, however, was not at St. Paul's, but as Lent Lecturer at St. James's, Piccadilly, where he delivered to thronged congregations the sermons which have since become so generally known under the title of *Some Elements of Religion*. These, and, still more, the sermons preached during his annual residence at St. Paul's, differed in many respects from the sermons preached at Oxford. Like a true orator, Dr. Liddon had a ready perception of the character of his audience. At Oxford he was didactic, dialectical, even learned on occasion. In London, though the religious basis was the same, his aim was to be above all things simple, clear, and consistent. Canon Gregory, with the support of Dean Mansel, had already introduced a great many beneficial changes in the services of St. Paul's when Liddon came into residence, but much remained to be accomplished, and upon this task he set his heart. Almost his first sermon in the cathedral revealed his mettle, when he denounced the ordinary cathedral congregation as "mainly sightseers—practically heathen." From the first he began to take a personal interest in the staff of the cathedral, urging and helping them to become thorough Churchmen in deed as well as in word. In its effect this policy secured for the services of London's great cathedral a respect which is hardly shared by any other cathedral or collegiate church in the country. Sunday afternoon at St. Paul's, with Liddon in residence, re-peopled the City on the day of rest. All ranks and conditions of men flocked to him—Roman Catholics and Nonconformists quite as readily as Churchmen. Visitors to London, especially Americans, felt that such an experience was indispensable to their programme of sightseeing. And with what wonderful command of vast congregations the eloquent preacher disposed of his voice, his argument, and his oratorical manner only one—but not less than one—such experience could prove. It has been said by an experienced observer that Dr. Liddon at St. Paul's offered an almost unique example of a preacher who habitually held the close attention of a