

### **Henry Parry Liddon – the hidden man.**

The title of this talk presented itself. I was given the brief of speaking about Henry Parry Liddon, the Nineteenth Century Churchman, and specifically about him “as a person - his family life, friendships, leisure activities and so on.” Since my instincts are those of a biographer rather than an historian, the topic had sufficient appeal to make me overcome reluctantly my constitutional dislike of lecturing. Nonetheless, my title is intended to convey something of the difficulties involved in speaking about this man. The details of his public life are easily found, but trying to get behind the public figure to the individual is not easy.

When I was doing research on Liddon more than a decade ago, it was clear that his public writings and activities were what concerned him and his contemporaries; but more than this, he seems to have been a man with curiously little self-awareness, at least as we would understand that term today. He appears to have been uninterested in his inner workings, except for his bodily ones. (He had in full measure that very English fascination with the state of his digestive tract, along with a concern for his health generally.) Probing into his psychology was not important to him, which means that when we look at his sermons, for example, we find almost none of the psychological insight which can make Newman’s sermons of continuing interest.

The question arises, where do we look for information about Liddon the man? Three sources present themselves. To begin with there is his official biography by John Octavius Johnston, the Principal of Cuddesdon College. This remains indispensable as an account of Liddon’s public career, but Johnston makes no great attempt to probe beneath the surface of Liddon’s personality. Also, although the book did not appear until fourteen years after Liddon’s death, many of his contemporaries were still living, which made a degree of reticence necessary when reporting his opinions. The book’s supplementary chapter by Bishop Francis Paget gives something more of Liddon’s character, as does the small book on Liddon by G. W. E. Russell, published in 1929.

The second source available to us is personal letters. Like most eminent Victorians, Liddon wrote quantities of letters, sometimes between twenty to thirty a day. Many of these survive, and I was fortunate to discover his correspondence with Lord Halifax which had been mostly ignored by historians. But even here his concern is almost entirely with Church matters, and personal revelations are minimal, though he was willing to express his

views on individuals in a way which he would not do in more public writing. (For example, Johnston in his biography charitably omits some of Liddon's less than complimentary remarks about Archbishop Tait.) Only one collection of letters known to me, those to a former student, Reginald Porter, gives us something of the flavour of Liddon's relations with his friends. As a tiny example, in 1863 he wrote to Porter, describing Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford, "I never saw him in better spirits than last evening: he told stories about Hatchard the bookseller which would have killed you outright – if I may be guilty of the exaggeration. The laughing materially aided my digestion."

The third source for material is Liddon's diaries. These cover almost all his adult life, and he wrote in them pretty well daily. However, this is where the patience of a researcher wears very thin, because they must rank as some of the most uninformative diaries ever written. They are not quite of the depressing kind which simply note, "wet ... warm ... went out this morning", but all too often they are not much better. He mentions again and again that he has met notable people, but then he tells us nothing of their conversation. Only occasionally are we given glimpses of really interesting discussions or allowed to see something of his personal feelings.

There is one more source which is revealing about Liddon, but I am going to keep that until the end.

I mention all this to show the difficulty we have in recapturing something of Liddon the man, and to indicate how in trying to do so we have to build up a kind of mosaic of impressions.

Liddon's public career is not our concern today, so it is sufficient to say that he was born in North Stoneham in Hampshire in 1829. It is worth mentioning that his family background was an Evangelical one, and there is no question that the evangelistic instinct of his upbringing never left him. Certainly, it was a major impulse behind his powerful preaching.

He went to King's College School in London, and from there to Christ Church in Oxford, which was to be his Oxford home for much of his life and where he came strongly under the influence of Dr Pusey. After ordination he served a brief curacy at Wantage, under the notable vicar, William John Butler, and then became the Vice-Principal of Bishop Wilberforce's new theological college at Cuddesdon, where he first came to public notice. From there he went to be Vice-Principal of St Edmund Hall in Oxford and then took up residence at Christ

Church. It was there that he emerged as a power in the theological land when he delivered the 1866 Bampton Lectures. He had to produce them in a shorter time than was usually the case, and his diary records his daily anxiety about them.

In 1870 Gladstone offered him a Canonry at St Paul's Cathedral, which he accepted, and the same year he was appointed Dean Ireland Professor of biblical exegesis in Oxford. Thereafter he divided his time between Oxford in term time and London in the vacations, a lifestyle which would have wearied a stronger man than Liddon. This marked the summit of his career, though there will be those who maintain that to hold a St Paul's Canonry and an Oxford professorship gives you all the glory this world can offer. He died in 1890.

Enough of externals, what about the man? What, to begin with, about his family? He was one of ten children, three of whom died young. Of his remaining siblings, he maintained close contact with his brother Edward, who became a doctor, and his sister Anne. His sister Louisa married a Colonel Ambrose, who rather inconsiderately died after only five months of marriage, leaving behind a pregnant wife. Her daughter, Mary, was born in 1863, and they both subsequently took up residence with Liddon in his St Paul's Canonry house.

Liddon was clearly attached to his niece, though as she grew into a young woman he entertained worries about what he considered a certain frivolousness in her nature. He mentions in his diary talking in 1888 with one of his colleagues about Mary's love of society. He accepted the advice that "it would pass in time if it is not contradicted." It is not certain that her liking for a full life did pass. In 1889 he noted, "Louisa and Mary are going to the Paris exhibition. Mary seems to get her mother to devote more and more time and money to mere pleasure as distinct from health. Italy in the Spring: Ryde in July for the review: September in Paris. Amen Court [his house] only in the season." Both women outlived him.

Liddon never married. There is no indication in any of his papers which I have seen that he ever thought about such a step. I get the impression that he could be slightly ill at ease with women, unless they were well known to him and intelligent. There is no point in drawing any conclusions from this because there is simply no evidence. Once again, his inner life is hidden from us. He may well have felt that priestly celibacy was the path for him, though he expresses no regret when he hears of other priests marrying. All in all, he

comes across to us as a typical specimen of that species, the bachelor clerical don whose work was his life.

However, if he remained single his circle of friends and acquaintances was wide. At the centre of his life for many years was Dr Pusey, to the extent that a number of people expressed concern at what they saw as an undue influence of the older man on him. Owen Chadwick, for example, thinks that Pusey made Liddon old before his time, which I'm not sure is wholly true. Of Pusey's influence over him, especially in matters relating to the Church and doctrine, there is no question. Their correspondence is extensive, and when Liddon was in residence at Christ Church he would call at Pusey's house regularly. Indeed, toward the end of Pusey's life his son wrote to Liddon, asking him not to call too frequently or at great length because it tired his father too much.

After Pusey's death in 1880 Liddon was the obvious choice to write his biography, a task for which he resigned his professorship. Clearly, he found the enormous labour required for the job a daunting one. As early as 1883 he notes in his diary that he "felt miserable at the prospects of the 'Life' [of Dr Pusey] ... this gigantic work overshadowing everything." Certainly, his friends began to have serious worries about the effect which the biography was having on him. T. B. Strong, who later became Bishop of Oxford, remarked that "as [Liddon] became more fully steeped in the thought and writings of Dr Pusey ... he seemed to find it impossible even to discuss any point upon which Dr Pusey had expressed an opinion."

That is not entirely true. Liddon had been soaked in Pusey's thought long before he began work on the biography, but there was unquestionably cause for the unease felt by Strong and others at the effect the work was having on him. In 1888 his health broke down under the strain, and he had to take a period of recuperation abroad. At that point his old friend Bishop Edward King wrote, begging him to stop work on Pusey's life, a thought which it appears Liddon simply could not entertain. The task had become a responsibility he could not relinquish, and Johnston, in his biography makes no bones about stating that the work shortened Liddon's life.

It is worth stating, though, that the immense amount of work required by the biography had one unforeseen and lasting benefit. Liddon requested people who had corresponded with Pusey to lend him the letters they had received. They arrived in vast numbers, which presented him with a problem. Pusey's handwriting was miniscule. In order to save his eyesight, Liddon paid two

ladies to ruin theirs by making transcriptions of the letters. These legible copies were subsequently bound together and are now to be found at Pusey House in Oxford, and every researcher has blessed Liddon, not to mention his two scribes, Miss Milner and Miss Kebble, for the legacy of such clear copies, especially since the originals of some of the letters have since disappeared.

To return to the question of Liddon's unwillingness to depart from Pusey's opinions, it needs to be added that he was not quite such a Pusey clone as has sometimes been suggested. In earlier years he was certainly capable of differing from the older man, for example in 1861 over the matter of the endowment of the Greek professorship held by Benjamin Jowett, where Pusey had proposed a wise solution to a difficult situation which was boiling up in the University but found himself without support from younger High Churchmen like Liddon. He gave Liddon a stern rebuke over this, as did (most unusually) John Keble. In later life, Liddon conceded that he had been wrong.

More marked were Liddon's differences with Pusey over the Bonn Reunion Conferences in 1874 and 1875. Briefly, these conferences brought together representatives of the Old Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran Churches to discuss questions of unity, not least relations between the Old Catholics and Anglicans. Liddon attended both conferences, much to the displeasure of Pusey, who believed that the place of the *Filioque* clause in the Creed was in danger. On this occasion Liddon stuck to his guns in defence of the Conferences.

There is no question that in some respects Liddon and Pusey were natural allies, since they both had a conservative and cautious approach to matters of doctrine and tradition. This did not always work to their advantage, because it made them inclined to see the smallest questioning in these areas as potential major challenges, and as a result they could rush to man the barricades when wiser counsels would have suggested hesitating. It is impossible not to regret the time and energy which Liddon devoted to what proved mostly unimportant matters.

But if Liddon and Pusey shared common features in their outlook, that very fact may have concealed from both men that they were in a number of respects very different in temperament. To give the most obvious example, Pusey, after his wife's early death, lived more and more a retired and austere life in Christ Church. He did not dine out or maintain a wide circle of acquaintances. He was devoted to scholarship and Church matters. Liddon, was not so utterly absorbed in academic *minutiae*, though he kept up to date

with theological writing. It must be admitted, though, that one contemporary remarked that all Liddon's reading seemed to have little influence over his formed opinions.

We know that Liddon was even so venturesome as occasionally to read novels, though it helped if the novels had religious content or implications. We know that he enjoyed reading Sir Walter Scott and Jane Austen. In 1881, he read J. H. Shorthouse's recently published novel, *John Inglesant*, probably because it contained some fascinating writing about the community at Little Gidding, and his diary records that he met Shorthouse at Keble College the following year. On the other hand, it was probably sense of duty which in 1888 made him read what he called, "poor Mrs Humphry Ward's infidel novel [*Robert Elsmere*]." Let us note, though, that Liddon left a permanent mark on English literature when his Christ Church neighbour and friend Lewis Carroll was seeking a name for his new children's story. Liddon suggested *Through the Looking Glass*, which was what it became. Also, we know from Liddon's diary that in 1876 Carroll presented him with a copy of his verse fantasy, *The Hunting of the Snark*.

While we're on the subject of books, it should be said that Liddon was a discerning bibliophile who invested in some rare volumes, including liturgical ones. The library of Pusey House has benefitted from this interest because after Liddon's death he bequeathed to the House "the largest collection of printed Sarum liturgies outside the Bodleian and the British Museum." Pusey House also profited by a copy of the early Sixteenth Century Complutensian Polyglot edition of the Bible in six volumes, and by the Morton Missal printed in 1500, one of only five substantially complete copies of the book known to exist. Both works are inscribed by Liddon. For example, he tells us that he bought the Morton Missal in November 1886 and had it cleaned and bound. From this it will be evident that he was not short of money. Presumably he benefited from the stipends for his professorship and his canonry, but notes found in his diaries suggest that he was a careful financial investor.

He appears to have had a sound appreciation of painting and also of music, though I suspect it was chiefly Church music. He does not appear to have been a great concert goer. He records in his diary his enjoyment of Louis Spohr's oratorio *The Last Judgement*, which was performed in St Paul's Cathedral annually. Also, Liddon had a decisive influence on the music of the Cathedral following the retirement of Sir John Goss as organist in 1871. While he was Vice-Principal of St Edmund Hall, Liddon had come to know an extremely able

young musician, John Stainer, and he helped to form Stainer's firm Tractarian outlook. It was almost certainly Liddon who brought Stainer's name to the attention of the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's, who were anxious to see major reforms to the music. Stainer was duly appointed, and the result was a musical transformation which was to have an influence beyond the cathedral.

There was one form of entertainment, however, which Liddon could not embrace, and that was the theatre. He stated his reason in a letter of 1881. "I am convinced that the influence of the theatre, in the case of *average* human nature and character, lies in the *direction* of sin. No doubt there are actors and actresses who lead even saintly lives – saintly because victorious over temptation – and certainly higher than that, *e.g.*, of a Clergyman who is never tried as they have been. And there are also, I do not doubt, many people in each generation who attend the theatre regularly, and only derive from it a pleasure which is elevating and pure. But the real question is as to average human beings ... and it is surely much better that young people should not go even to Mr [Henry] Irving than that they should gradually learn a taste for performances which would be as unwelcome to Mr Irving as they are to ourselves."

Was this part of his Evangelical heritage? A letter to Lord Halifax in 1879 about the proposal to form a Church and Stage Guild suggests that this was the case. The early Evangelicals, he says, took a Johannine view of "the world", and aimed at a life of strict standards, whereas those clergy who wish to support the work of the theatre fail to realize that "they will never raise the tone of the stage." Yet he did not always think this. The diaries of Lewis Carroll mention the two men going to the theatre as late as 1863. It is not clear what brought about the change in Liddon's outlook. At any rate this abstinence was not an easy discipline for him, because he admitted that "there is no form of entertainment which I should so entirely enjoy, as good acting." He did at least permit himself to go to the less threatening environment of public readings of plays. At that time there was a notable reciter, a former barrister named Samuel Brandram. On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1880, Liddon records that he "went to the middle Temple Hall to hear Mr Brandram read *Twelfth Night*," and he adds, "the company a very brilliant one: [I had] a few words with Lord Bath[?], who was there with his wife." (As we might expect, he does not tell us what those words were.)

Liddon was very different from Pusey in being a markedly sociable man. His diaries are crammed with invitations to dine out, which confirms what was said by his contemporaries, that he was good company at the dinner table. He and his sister, Mrs Ambrose, also hosted dinners at his St Paul's canonry, though that could occasionally prove perilous to the guests. One account tells how those invited were assembled at the table and the joint placed before Liddon for carving, when some foolish individual raised a theological question. Liddon paused, with the carving knife in mid-air, and held forth on the matter while the hungry company watched with increasing desperation as the meat went cold and the gravy congealed.

Among his dinner hosts was Benjamin Jowett at Balliol, and twice Liddon met George Eliot there. Clearly, in conversation she gave no indication of her steady loss of faith, because when Liddon read her biography he lamented her "abuse of so rich a genius," referring to "the easy way in which she throws off her Christianity, as if it were an old bonnet, without any trace of moral or intellectual anguish." Similarly, dining with Mr Murray (who may well be James Murray, the first editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*) he notes, "Mr Browning the poet there, with whom [I had] some very agreeable conversation. He full of the charms of out of the way places in Italy." Among other literary figures known to Liddon were Walter Pater and Matthew Arnold. He even proposed Arnold's health at the Oxford Union Banquet in 1873.

The mention of Jowett's name is a reminder that Liddon, in common with many eminent Victorians, had a commendable gift for remaining on good personal terms with those who he disagreed with profoundly on matters of theology and Churchmanship. For example, Dean Stanley at Westminster Abbey was the kind of Broad Churchman who represented everything Liddon detested in that school, but after Stanley's death Liddon stepped in to defend his memory against unfair assessment of his character. He was clear about what he saw as Stanley's deficiencies, stating that "[Stanley] was hopelessly inaccurate, and he was more entirely destitute of the logical faculty than any highly educated man whom I have ever known." But he added, "I have had many dealings with Stanley – most of them hostile; but it never occurred to me that he was or could be capable of writing or saying that which he knew to be untrue." His summing up was, "Stanley was two men. Personally he was one of the most attractive and unselfish people whom one could ever meet; but theologically he was almost everything that a theologian ought not to be."



As we see, Liddon's acquaintances were not limited to the clergy, and there was one friendship which might have appeared particularly unexpected, and that was with the journalist, W. T. Stead, famous as the editor of the *Review of Reviews*, and who eventually died on the *Titanic*. It was Stead who caused a national sensation in 1885 by revealing, in one of the earliest examples of "investigative journalism" that girls as young as thirteen could be bought for prostitution (thirteen being the age of consent for girls at the time). He also earned himself a few months in prison for being technically a procurer by paying a sum of money for a girl as a demonstration that this could be done.

How Liddon and Stead came into contact I do not know, but frequently they would meet on Monday afternoons when Liddon was in London and walk along the Thames Embankment for conversation. Stead greatly respected Liddon, though he thought him "in the Church so much as hardly to be anything out of it." However, their friendship led to one of the more unexpected incidents in Liddon's life, and one where his diary actually gives some details.

Stead had worked closely with Bramwell Booth of the Salvation Army, and he persuaded Liddon to come and see what the Army was doing. The diary for December 30, 1881, reads, "At 7.30 went with Mr Stead to the Salvation Army in Whitechapel. The proceedings were conducted by young Mr [Bramwell] Booth: there was a great deal of fervour and evident earnestness. The women speaking their experiences were to me the least grateful feature in the proceedings. It was curious to observe how entirely the Ritualistic Element was recognised in 'holding up the hands'. Numbers of young men who might have been won by a warmhearted, living Church system."

This is revealing. Liddon's evangelical roots respond to what the Army is doing, and he acknowledges the failure of his own Church to meet the needs of the young men present. He is also shrewd in recognizing how an element of ritual will almost always creep into worship, even that of the Salvation Army. And we have to smile at his grim shrinking from the testimonies of what were undoubtedly reclaimed "fallen women". Also, it was an expedition which required from him a certain courage, because Whitechapel was considered a particularly depraved area of London at that time. At any rate, he was willing to have his horizons broadened.

It is time now to deal with one of the characteristics of Liddon which most struck his contemporaries, namely, his pronounced sense of humour. It would

be wrong to say that Dr Pusey had no sense of humour (contrary to the myth which is still peddled that he refused to smile), but it was not so obvious to the world as Liddon's. Liddon's enjoyment of humour was so marked that some of his contemporaries even found it a trial – but people like that are quite a trial themselves.

It is a risky business attempting to revive humour from the past. Jokes which had our ancestors doubled up with mirth all too frequently cause us an embarrassed silence. Liddon's humour, so far as we can tell, was not of that type. It had, not surprisingly, that quality we call "donnish". There is a splendid example of this in a story which involved the first Warden of Keble College, Edward Stuart Talbot. Talbot was accustomed to drive round Oxford in a horse and carriage, and his driving was said to resemble that of Jehu. On one occasion he had as his passenger in the carriage a son of the Khedive of Egypt. Talbot went at his accustomed pace and came to a sharp bend in the road with such a swerve that the young man was thrown from the carriage, fortunately without injury. The following day, Talbot was again out driving and overtook Liddon. When he offered him a lift, Liddon looked at him solemnly and intoned, "meanest thou to slay me as thou didst slay the Egyptian yesterday?"

Liddon could also derive dry amusement from events in his own life. Writing to Lord Halifax in 1885 he said, "I have been quite laid up with trouble with my few remaining teeth of which I had five taken out the day before yesterday. As only four now remain, this particular experience cannot be repeated in this present life. Meanwhile Art is slowly endeavouring to repair the failure of nature."

I've already mentioned Liddon's friendship with Lewis Carroll (or Dodgson, as I suppose we should call him away from his writing), and one thing which drew them together was a shared enjoyment of the kind of humour which rests on the use or misuse of logic. This might be expected in Lewis Carroll, who was a mathematician, and Liddon possessed a profoundly logical mind. Sometimes this was to his disadvantage, especially in theology, because while he exhibited the strengths of the logical mentality he also displayed its weakness by not appreciating where its use was less appropriate. It must have made for entertaining evenings in the Christ Church Senior Common Room when Liddon and Dodgson were both present.

Someone who knew Liddon recalled that he was an excellent story teller. He says, "he had a special gift in that direction, and would dramatize in a most

effective way ... he was sarcastic, but most of all humorous. His humour was a most refreshing, sparkling, surprising thing ... he had an exceptionally keen sense of comic situations and a happy knack of coining epithets that made you jump with laughter. This humour so flooded his talk that you could not imagine how he kept it out of his sermons."

One of those comic situations which Liddon liked has come down to us. Among the victims of the prosecutions of clergy for ritual offences which were a consequence of the 1874 Public Worship Regulation Act was the Revd Thomas Pelham Dale from St Vedast's Church in London. He was prosecuted by the fanatical Church Association and in 1880 he was taken to Holloway Prison. Because people were becoming increasingly disgusted at this treatment of dedicated priests, Dale became something of a popular hero, and Mrs Pelham Dale visited Liddon to talk about what might be done for her husband. They had begun their talk when they were disturbed by the voice of a servant outside the door proclaiming loudly, "Pelham, you beast!" It transpired that Liddon bestowed the names of ritualist victims upon his pet cats.

Since I'm dealing with Liddon the man I cannot omit his devotion to cats. This was something remembered by one of his Christ Church colleagues, who tells us that, "[Liddon] had a great affection for cats; consequently the Common Room cat came in for a large share of his attention. He was in the habit of nursing it upside down, *i.e.* like a baby; when the cat, not unnaturally, grumbled at this proceeding, he used to assure us that it was a complaint got up on purely fictitious grounds, with a view to enlisting our sympathy: cats, he declared, always desired to be the object of special and peculiar attention from every one near them; and therefore, while the tail (called the 'catometer') waved furiously, we were expected to believe that 'Tommy' was thoroughly enjoying himself." It is interesting that one of Lewis Carroll's biographers has speculated that this may have been in Dodgson's mind when he describes Alice nursing the baby which becomes a pig.

Perhaps cats reflected something in Liddon's temperament. We have heard how he could be sarcastic, and the late Bishop Geoffrey Rowell told me that in the Diaries of Mrs Talbot, the wife of the Warden of Keble, there is an entry which reads, "Dr Liddon to dinner, elegantly displaying his velvet claws." There is no question that Liddon could give some feline scratches when he wanted. Witness a reference he made to Brooke Foss Westcott, another Churchman whose views he thought disturbingly liberal and imprecise. In a letter he

mentions a thick fog engulfing London. This, he says, “is commonly attributed to Dr Westcott having opened his study-window in Westminster.” (In fairness, I should say that he came to have a personal regard for Westcott, if not for his views.) Then there was the person who “has set his face not like a flint but like a pudding.”

Bishops were a favourite target. Looking at a portrait of a former Bishop of Oxford, Liddon said, “how singular to reflect that *that person* was chosen in the Providential order to connect Mr Keble with the Apostles!” He relished the story from an American bishop describing how one of his episcopal colleagues, floating in the sea after a shipwreck, confessed that his thoughts were not on the next life but on his successor.

However, in his private correspondence he could be decidedly sharp about the bishops. He was well disposed to Samuel Wilberforce, even though he thought he sometimes trimmed his sails too much. Walter Kerr Hamilton of Salisbury was highly regarded, and on the whole Liddon approved of Bishops Moberly, also of Salisbury, and Mackarness of Oxford. But William Thomson, the Archbishop of York, could do little that was right, and Archbishop Tait at Canterbury was given no quarter.

Tait was not a favourite with Tractarians generally. They considered him, not altogether without reason, to be actively opposed to their principles and aims. Liddon could find barely a good word for him. He called him “a mitred Presbyterian”. When there was a plan to adapt the use of the Athanasian Creed in public worship, which had Tait’s support, Liddon described him to Lady Salisbury as “in this as in most other matters ... the creature and tool of the Dean of Westminster.” When Tait steered the Public Worship Regulation Bill through Parliament (rather ineptly, it must be said) Liddon’s view of him was damning. (Nor, I should say, was his opinion warmed toward the Prime Minister, Disraeli.) Liddon was no Ritualist, and was worried that the behaviour of some of those who *were* was causing needless trouble, but the unfairness of the Bill as finally presented made him wholly hostile to Tait. Writing to Lord Salisbury, he said, “the Archbishop of Canterbury, I see, thinks that when this measure has become law, the clergy will trust himself and his brethren. His Grace no doubt has formed a somewhat cynical estimate of the intellect of the profession to which he belongs; but his recent achievements in Parliament are of a character to discourage even the most Quixotic of High Churchmen from expecting consideration, or even justice at his hands.”

Liddon's unrelenting criticism of Tait was undeniably unjust, so much so that it was Pusey who showed humour by teasing him, "[Lord Beaconsfield] and the Archbishop seem like two bogies to you. I hope they do not come like a nightmare and disturb your sleep."

But I must come to a conclusion, and as I said at the beginning there remains one other area where something of Liddon the man emerges, and that is in his travel journals. All his adult life he was a keen traveller, and he often kept a detailed daily record of his journeys. He had a real gift in this area, because he had a keen eye for detail and the skill to record clearly what he saw. In July, 1851, for example, we find him in Scotland, and then on the continent the following month. We're not surprised to find him recording an argument with a Calvinistic verger in Geneva Cathedral where Liddon defends the memory of Francis de Sales.

In 1852 he is in Scotland again, and then heads to Italy. This was a significant visit for him, because in Rome he met the convert priest, Monsignor Talbot, the man who we know greatly disliked Newman's approach to religious questions. Talbot quickly saw that someone of Liddon's ability would be a notable acquisition for Roman Catholicism, and he set about trying to persuade him to convert. Here, Liddon's liking for logic and fact, as well as his detailed historical learning, came to his assistance. He was not someone to be swayed by an appeal to imagination and feeling. He was not persuaded by the Roman claims, and even a private audience with the Pope could not shift him. For the rest of his life there is no evidence that he ever considered converting to Rome, though at a very difficult time in Church of England affairs he did admit the attraction of the Old Catholics.

I have mentioned that by the end of 1885 Liddon's health was breaking down under the stress of writing Pusey's life, and that he was ordered by his doctor to take a long holiday. He decided to travel to Egypt and Palestine, accompanied by his sister, Mrs King, and one of her daughters. They set off on December 8<sup>th</sup>, and Liddon took with him two thick black notebooks. His opening entry records that the Old Testament lesson at Morning Prayer contained the words, "woe to those who go down to Egypt." His account of his journey is vivid, entertaining and often amusing, accompanied by some deft pen and ink sketches of interesting sights. I was very pleased to learn recently that someone is planning serious work on these journals, because a full critical edition of them would be a welcome addition to Nineteenth Century studies.

This is the place to end our journey. Whether Henry Parry Liddon has emerged a little more as a person from what I have said, I do not know. Without question, much of his inner life will always be lost to us. It is impossible to say anything significant about his prayer life, for example. I have said nothing about the despondency which appears to have darkened his final years as he surveyed Church matters in this country. It is well known that the publication of Charles Gore's essay on scriptural inspiration in *Lux Mundi* in 1889 came as a body blow to him, partly because it was so clear a departure from Pusey's very conservative approach to biblical interpretation, and partly because Liddon had a deep admiration and affection for Gore. Looking at the issue now, it is possible to say that Liddon had a clearer sense of where acceptance of historical-critical methods of biblical study might lead than is usually allowed. It was one of his sayings that if you are sliding down an inclined plane you cannot stop yourself simply by wishing to do so.

Other questions remain. Why was he so reluctant to consider advancement in the Church beyond what he achieved? We know that he refused the Deanery of Worcester and the Bishopric of St Albans. Part of the answer is his very Tractarian dislike of self-seeking among the clergy. He said, "the craving for preferment which prevails so largely among the English clergy, is one of the secrets of our moral weakness as an Order."

But enough. After a short but painful illness, Liddon died suddenly and unexpectedly at the early age of sixty-one. His funeral in St Paul's on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1890, was attended by nearly four thousand people, most of whom would have known him only as the preacher who held their attention powerfully in that building. Many present must have sensed the end of an era. They sang a favourite hymn of Liddon's, *When morning gilds the skies*, and they cannot have failed to note how the refrain, echoing round the great dome, summed up the aim of his entire life – *May Jesus Christ be praised*.

Barry A. Orford

(c) Barry Orford 2018