

Hermann Lotze.

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RUDOLPH HERMANN LOTZE was born at Bautzen in 1817; began student life in 1834; and, after studying medicine for four years, qualified as *Docent* in philosophy as well as medicine. He was for a short time a professor in Leipsic, then for forty years in Göttingen; and only a few months before his death (1st July 1881) was called to Berlin. While his outward life was uneventful, his inner was marked by wide interests and varied pursuits. He united in his own person, and attempted to harmonise in his philosophy, two tendencies which are found commonly widely apart, and often thoroughly opposed—scientific culture and moral and religious impulse. In some of his works¹ he expounded and enforced the mechanical theory of the world that commends itself to modern science; in others he attempted to do justice to the claims of man's ethical and spiritual nature, to which morality and religion bear witness.

Acknowledging that "between spiritual needs and the results of human science there is an unsettled dispute of long standing," he avoids, on the one hand, the compromise that ignores without reconciling contradictions, and on the other, the mutual antagonism of men interested in science, and men earnest in morality or devoted to religion. There need not be either a hollow truce or a bitter struggle, for there may be an abiding peace, if both parties will but recognise the contrasted aspects of reality which it is his aim to prove complementary.

¹ Lotze's works, with dates of publication, were the following:—*Metaphysics* (1841); *General Pathology and Therapeutics as Mechanical Sciences* (1842); *Logic* (1843); *General Physiology of the Bodily Life* (1851); *Medical Psychology, or Physiology of the Soul* (1852); *Microcosmus, Ideas for a History of Nature and a History of Humanity* (1856-64, 1869); *Controversial Writings*, one part (1857); *History of Æsthetics in Germany* (1868); *System of Philosophy: Logic* (1874); *Metaphysics* (1878); "Principles of Ethics" (in *Nord und Süd*, June 1882).

Translated into English were the following:—*Logic and Metaphysics*, by B. Bosanquet (Clarendon Press, 1884); 2nd editions of *Metaphysics* (1887), *Logic* (1888); *Outlines of Philosophy*, in six parts, edited by Ladd (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1884-87); *Microcosmus*, translated by Miss Hamilton and Miss Jones (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1888).

Such being his aim, he does not care what function and position may be assigned to him in the history of thought, but desires only that his writings should prove a help to all those who are endeavouring to reconcile the conclusions of science with the aspirations of man's higher nature.

His method accordingly is suggestive rather than systematic, popular rather than academical. He denies the worth and derides the ambition of the philosophy that attempts to give a complete and a consistent account of reality by means of deduction from a first principle. He does not take as his starting-point the results of the previous development of philosophy, but by a process of reflexion, comparison, and criticism of our common ideas, he tries to show that the assumption of the unity of the world of facts, laws, and ideals is not devoid of justification, although incapable of demonstration.

These remarks on his aim, spirit, and method prepare us for a brief examination of the truths which he endeavours to teach.

In his philosophical writings there is an insistence on mechanism, yet a recognition of freedom; there is an opposition to idealism, yet a rejection of materialism; the reality of the individual is asserted, yet the unity of all in the universal spirit is maintained. The attempt to reconcile differences, to combine as complementary apparently contradictory aspects of reality, has not been uniformly successful; and yet, while we must acknowledge that Lotze's views have not that consistency which is necessary for a system, and can alone give rise to a school with a fixed tradition and a definite task, his comprehensiveness adds to the interest of his writings for us. It is impossible, however, to criticise and to estimate the value of a large number of suggestions as of a single principle explicated in a system, and, accordingly, only a few outstanding features of his thought can now be noted.

Men interested in science very often display a contempt for the conclusions of philosophy; the tendency of modern science is materialistic; but Lotze, who most rigorously applied the principles of physical organisation to life and mind alike,

that must be denied. There is growing among many Christian thinkers a sympathy with Lotze's position, which may be valuable as a passing phase of feeling which will allow a detachment of the contents of the Christian faith from a metaphysic that is no longer adequate to an enlarged knowledge of nature and man; but will be fatal as a permanent attitude resisting the development of a metaphysic that will again bring the content

of the Christian faith into relation with a more adequate view of the universe, a more satisfying solution of the problem of existence. Lotze's philosophy gives no promise, offers no prophecy of such a metaphysic; but it is of interest and importance because it refuses to sacrifice, and attempts to do justice to the factors of our experience, which it will be the task of the future to reconcile.

Samson: was he Man or Myth?

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THERE are many things that might tempt one strongly to assign the story of Samson to the region of myth and legend; but so far from the attempt bringing any satisfaction, it would only involve us in inextricable difficulties.

When in any narrative we have recourse to the notion of myth, our justification must be that it makes the narrative more reasonable, more harmonious, more natural. If instead of having this effect, the myth makes the narrative more inconsistent, more purposeless,—nay, actually absurd,—it must be bowed out of court as having no business there. This, as it seems to us, would be the effect on the sacred narrative of ascribing the exploits of Samson to myth and legend.

The myth, to the careful historian, is very far from a vague, convenient agent, whose aid may be summoned at any time and under any circumstances to explain a wonder or reduce a miracle. Myths are subject to definite laws and conditions, and have marked features that differentiate them from history. Bred in a country's prehistoric age, they have a vague, weird character, as if belonging in part to earth and in part to heaven; they have very slight connexion with time and place, and they are usually directed to glorify their hero, whom at last they place virtually, if not formally, in the ranks of the gods.

If the story of Samson really is the product of the mythical spirit, it is the strangest, the most inconsistent, and the most uncouth that that spirit ever bred.

1. First let us mark the very remarkable announcement of his birth. It was very rarely in the Old Testament that coming births were

announced by angels from heaven, and in the New Testament only in the case of John the Baptist and of our blessed Lord. But twice an angel from heaven is represented as announcing the coming birth of Samson, once to his mother, and a second time to his father and mother together. And the emotions raised by the visit and the annunciation alike belong to the highest region of gratitude and wonder. Should we not have had a right to expect (if it was a mythical story) that the life and character of the man would bear a visible relation to this solemn and remarkable transaction? Might not something holy and angelic have been looked for in one whose entrance into the world a messenger of heaven was sent to make known? Such a child might surely have been portrayed of the type of John the Baptist and Jesus, or, not to go so far afield, of the type of Samuel, whose birth also was in a manner foretold, a prophet of the Lord, lofty in character and devoted in service.

But so far from our finding in Samson any such type of character, we are surprised, if not shocked, at his wild, rollicking, jovial life, his grotesque and uncouth methods even of delivering his people, and the combination of savagery and recklessness which marks his exploits. So far from his showing anything of the solemn dignity of the prophet, he wants even the decency and gravity of a responsible citizen. He is a gay, frisky youth, fond of puns and jokes, "quips and cranks and wanton wiles," taking life right easily, and bent on enjoying it as much as he can. Several of his services to his country have the look of practical jokes—grim mixtures of comedy and

of the necessity of evil, his refusal to minimise the extent of evil,—yet when he rejects, as he does, the disciplinary function of evil and its punitive nature, we feel that this is due to a lack of moral insight and intensity.

Lotze attempts to do justice to the demand of the religious consciousness for personality in God. He attempts to show that, on the one hand, perfect personality belongs to God alone; and on the other, the absolute predicates of deity can belong only to a personal being. It may indeed be doubted whether the transition from the conception of God as the absolute substance which is the unity of all things, to the conception of God as the personal Spirit who is the Highest Good, is satisfactorily accomplished; but there can be no question that there is much of truth and worth in Lotze's view of God's personality. It seemed inevitable that a thinker who can conceive *thinghood* only as *selfhood* should assert that the predicates of the Absolute—infinity, eternity, movement with permanence—can be intelligibly united only in personality; yet it is evident that the conception of personality must itself undergo modification if it is to be adequate to the task of unifying these predicates of the Absolute. Personality is commonly regarded as inconceivable apart from finitude. The opposition of self and not-self is regarded as a necessary condition of self-consciousness. If this is so, it is evident that we cannot regard God as self-conscious, and accordingly as personal. But Lotze denies this. Although some of the details of his analysis are very doubtful, yet his main conclusion must commend itself as reasonable. "Perfect Personality is in God only, to all finite minds there is allotted but a pale copy thereof; the finiteness of the finite is not a producing condition of this Personality, but a limit and a hindrance to its development" (*Microcosmus*, ii. 688). Less satisfactory, however, is Lotze's treatment of the relation of finite and infinite Personality. If idealist systems of philosophy have gone too far in asserting the essential identity, Lotze falls short in emphasising the difference. In the religious conviction that men are the children of God, Lotze finds two thoughts—(1) "The recognition of the finiteness of the personal spirit, and of its subjection to the power and wisdom of God" (*Philosophy of Religion*, 140); (2) "the assertion that there exists between man and God a relation of piety; that

this relation is always a vital one; and that by means of it—but also only by means of it—the finite spirit ceases to be such absolutely dependent product of the course of nature" (141). Owing to his individualistic view of man's knowledge and action, and his hedonistic view of the world-aim, the affinity of nature of God and man and the community of life are neglected by him. Man's thought is not conceived as a progressive realisation of the truth, and his life of the holiness of God; hence the religious life of man is limited to emotion, and religious thought is denied speculative validity, and is regarded only as a more or less adequate symbolic representation of the content of religious experience. "In the case of religion it is not required that there be found a speculatively unobjectionable expression for that which is essentially transcendent, but that we have figurative expressions to which the mind may attach the same feelings that are appropriate to the proper content of religion" (*Ibid.* 147). At this point Lotze comes in contact with a dominant school of theologians in Germany—the Ritschlian; and that not only in the way of coincidence, but of direct influence. When Lotze is appealed to, in opposition to the Hegelian school, as an exponent of fundamental Christian ideas, it is well to remember what are the theological consequences of his position—the denial of the objective validity of Christian theology, and the admission only of its subjective value. According to Lotze, with regard to any Christian doctrine there can be no assertion made of its validity for speculative thought, only of its value for religious experience. By reason of the unique value of Christ in religious experience, He may be regarded as standing in a relation to God "absolutely unique, not only as to degree but also as to its essential quality" (150); religious experience, too, may warrant the conviction that in His teaching and life "an infinitely valuable and unique act has occurred here on earth for the salvation of humanity" (151). But no doctrine of the Divinity or the Atonement can be accepted as speculatively valid. Thus religion is divorced from speculation, and its actuality is secured at the expense of its intelligibility. The religious and the moral aspirations are not after all brought into organic relations with the results of science. It is not only that the difficulty of reconciliation is asserted—that may be admitted,—but also that the impossibility is maintained—

reached by reflexion many of the philosophical conclusions so much derided, and absolutely rejected materialism. That materiality is a sensible manifestation of supersensible elements of reality; that only *soul-like beings* can claim *thinghood*, which reflexion shows cannot be conceived otherwise than as *selfhood*; that all else is but the immediate action of the absolute substance; that all things have their unity only in that substance, and their apparent interaction is the self-modification of that substance; that individuality is not existence distinct from that substance, but a mode of that substance which enjoys its own states; that time, space, and motion are but symbolical representations of the intellectual relations of things; that the world is completed by the spirits, by whom it is subjectively apprehended, and for whose self-realisation—beatitude—it exists as a means,—all these conclusions are very far removed from materialism or monism, and belong to a thoroughly spiritual view of the world. Indeed, Lotze has been by some of his critics charged with pantheism. But every philosophy that is in earnest with the problem of existence, and recognises that only in the unity of existence lies the solution of the problem, is open to the same charge. Lotze's assertions that finite existences do not exist separated from the absolute, but are distinguishable from it only by self-existence, or enjoyment of their own states, and that all action of finite existences on each other is conceivable only through their inherence in the absolute, and the action of the absolute in them, may be, by those who are fond of verbal discussions and logical triumphs, brought forward as proofs of pantheism; yet how otherwise are we to conceive finite existences and their mutual relations? At least, Lotze's view is a striking witness that the sensible cannot be accounted for or explained by the sensible, but must be referred more or less immediately to the supersensible; or the finite by itself is incomprehensible, and is conceivable only as related to and in the infinite. It were altogether unprofitable to examine in detail the exact form in which this relation is presented by Lotze; his insistence on that relation is for us valuable.

Lotze's pantheism, if pantheism it can be called, is not consistent. To very many he will seem rather to emphasise individuality at the expense of unity. He does not care at all for the immanent development of the Absolute Idea; his

enthusiasm he reserves for the beatitude of finite spirits. To him the world-aim is not the progressive realisation of an ideal rational or ethical, but the self-satisfaction of personal existences. For him thought as developed in man is not the essence of reality, but a subjective activity of a mind that stands in this as one of its relations to an outward world. It would need a fuller discussion than is here possible of the whole problem of knowledge to show how unsatisfactory Lotze's view of the subjectivity of cognition is, and how inadequately he understood the assured results of the idealist movement of thought in Germany; but this merit may be allowed to his position, that his exaggerated individualism affords a counterpoise to an exaggerated universalism, that his humility of thought, which is self-effacing, utters a protest against "a vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself."

But there is one feature of this individualism that claims fuller treatment. It is his emphasis on beatitude as the Good. "What is good in itself is some felt bliss; what we call good things are means to this good, but are not themselves this good until they have been transformed into enjoyment; the only thing that is really good is that living love that wills the blessedness of others" (*Microcosmus*, ii. 721). In spite of his moral earnestness, we feel that Lotze here touches a lower note than is in harmony with man's higher nature. Truth and goodness are subordinated to happiness. Perfection, rational and moral, is but a means of beatitude. He rejects the vulgar hedonism that would make each person set his own happiness as his being's end and aim; and yet he cannot see any other aim in the whole order of nature, the whole course of history, than a means for enjoyment. Doubtless perfection will be accompanied by beatitude, but perfection is not subordinated to beatitude as the means to the end. It is just because Lotze makes happiness the final purpose of reality that he cannot recognise the rational and moral necessities of existence. The same final purpose might conceivably have been realised by quite another order of nature, quite another course of history. We cannot, according to Lotze, affirm that what is *truth*, what is *duty*, must be, only that it is for us. The rational or the moral is *actual*, not *necessary*. To the same defect is due Lotze's failure in his treatment of the problem of evil. While here we meet with much that wins ready assent,—his denial, for instance,