

AN ANGLO-CATHOLIC'S VIEW OF HISTORY.¹

BY THE REV. W. H. RIGG, D.D., Vicar of Beverley Minster.

DR. PULLAN set himself a most formidable task when he resolved to lecture before the University of Oxford on religion since the Reformation. Even allowing for his own proviso that "the lectures make no pretence of being a history of the Church during the last four centuries,"² the ground he has to cover is enormous, and the reader is left in doubt whether to admire most, on the one hand, the immense range of the author's knowledge, and the mass of information which he has been able to compress within less than three hundred pages, or, on the other, the skill with which he has selected his materials, the very omissions proving his mastery of the subject. Certainly Dr. Pullan has projected his own shadow over the work. He does not leave us long in doubt as to his own position, and the particular lessons which his own reading of history is meant to enforce. Towards the end of his first lecture, he indicates to us the direction which Christian thought and life should follow—"a middle path between those two extremes"³ of Lutheranism and Ultramontaniam. With regard to Protestantism Dr. Pullan would endorse Schiller's well-known words, "The history of the world is the judgment of the world," and when weighed in the balances, he finds it wanting in every respect. Tracing its development from its very beginning Dr. Pullan's aim is to show that not only is it the fruitful parent of division, but also how it has led to an undermining of the Christian faith. With approval he quotes the saying of Troeltsch as illustrating his main point: "The old Christological dogma and myth are set aside, the doctrine of the Trinity and vicarious satisfaction are destroyed or rendered uncertain, the roots of the idea of the Sacraments and the Church are plucked up, and direct communion with the Bible rendered difficult," and quite rightly he characterizes these opinions "as neither being a

¹ *Religion Since the Reformation*: Eight Lectures. By Leighton Pullan, D.D., Fellow and Tutor of St. John Baptist's College, Oxford. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 12s. 6d.)

² Cf. Preface.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 32, cf. pp. 100, 101.

restatement nor a readjustment in theology, for such a religion is after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." ¹ He finds some of the tendencies in Liberal and German theology destructive of Christianity. Were certain teachers to be followed, we should discover that "the Gospels were shrouded in a winding sheet of sceptical scholasticism and the grandest features of the Redeemer erased." ² Here we are at one with him, also in his complaint that "since the days of Reimarus they have manufactured Christs which threaten to become as numerous as the idols of a Tibetan temple, and so different that it is hard to suppose that all are intended as representatives of the same Being." ³

In the controversy which has agitated many thinkers as to who was the Founder of Christianity, our Lord or St. Paul, his epigrammatic summing up of the whole question, with one important qualification, is severe but true. "Modern Protestantism is," or as we should prefer to say, "*certain forms* of modern Protestantism are betraying St. Paul with a kiss. Modern Roman Catholicism is wont to pass him by." ⁴ But much as we commend the outspokenness of the lecturer—and this is all the more courageous when the critical spirit of his audience is taken into account, for this has caused preachers of all types to deliver University sermons which were little more than moral essays—yet we are left wondering as to whether the author is not almost blind to the immense services which Protestantism has rendered to the cause of true religion, and therefore lays himself open to the charge of lacking in a sense of proportion. To begin with, the narrowness of his definition of "Modern Protestantism" as meaning "a form of Theism which represents Jesus Christ but denies His essential Deity" ⁵ is misleading. Is it quite true that this is the technical sense in which the words Modern Protestantism are employed in Germany and Holland? ⁶ Possibly this may have been applic-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

² *Ibid.*, p. 188. Dr. Pullan's words are slightly altered.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Preface.

⁶ Cf. Herzog, *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* (J. C. Hinrichs, Leipzig, 1905), 3rd Ed., vol. xvi, art. "Protestantismus," p. 136. It may not be out of place here to quote the words of the late Bishop Stubbs: "I should unhesitatingly reject the theory that regards Protestantism by itself, either at home or abroad, as a religious system devoid of spiritual constructive energy."—Cf. Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. xi, art. "Protestantism," p. 412.

able in the nineteenth century for certain Liberal and theological writers did arrogate to themselves the title of Protestant, but according to Dr. Kattenbusch such is not the case to-day, as it is quite common amongst evangelical circles to call themselves Protestant. A still more serious matter is, that the reader, deriving all his knowledge of German Protestantism from Dr. Pullan, might gain the impression that it had entirely lapsed into Unitarianism. This is very far from being the case. Von Harnack and Troeltsch do not represent the whole of the religious life of present-day Germany. There is the modern positive school as represented by Seeberg, Feine, Barth, Lütgert, not to speak of such veterans as Zahn and Schlatter, who have not only produced large works which are permanent additions to Biblical scholarship and theology, but have appealed to a much wider public in the "Biblische Zeit- und Streitfragen," a series of pamphlets or tracts upholding the truth of the Christian Revelation, and proclaiming in unhesitating terms their adherence to the Deity of our Lord, and belief in the general reliability of the New Testament records.

Dr. Pullan will, we hope, forgive our drawing his attention to a book written by R. Seeberg, *Die Kirche Deutschlands in Neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, the Church of Germany in the nineteenth century. In it he will find a description of the work done before the war, both at home and abroad, of a distinctly evangelistic type, and which assumed fairly large dimensions.¹ Not that we ignore the great spiritual loss Lutheranism has sustained by its ready subservience to Prussian militarism and its idolatry of the State. But if Protestant Prussia stands condemned before the world, we do not think that Catholic Bavaria ought to be entirely passed over in silence. But German Lutheranism is only one side

¹ *Die Kirche Deutschlands* is published by A. Deichert of Leipzig (3rd ed., 1910). Dr. Pullan does recognize the existence of a "High Church" movement in Germany; cf. also the article on the present state of religious life in Germany, and its most important tendencies, by Prof. H. Weinel in the January number of this year's *Hibbert Journal*, pp. 277-8. Weinel also says of the Modern Positive School: "This positive tendency still dominates the Churches of the German States except in Thüringen, and perhaps in Baden and Hessen. The most recent events have decidedly increased its power. The more all mediating and subtler tendencies are crushed under the present pressure, and our people are driven apart psychologically into two extremes, the more emphatically do our middle classes turn to Conservatism in religion also, and the mass of Socialists are not to be won as yet for a free idealist Germany" (p. 274). Weinel belongs to the Liberal School of Theology. Troeltsch died last year.

of Protestantism, and we maintain the movement initiated by the Reformation has developed on much stronger and more deeply spiritual lines in Great Britain and America. Furthermore, Dr. Pullan is entirely silent as to the undoubted fact that Roman Catholicism flourishes most in those countries which are least intellectually wide awake, such as Spain, Ireland, South America, and certain parts of Italy. Indeed, Protestantism occupies most of the front-line trenches in the Christian warfare of unbelief. By her very principles she is committed to the hard and exacting task of assimilating the best knowledge of the day, and showing that Christianity is a religion for modern times. It is true that some of the divisions under her command have yielded too much ground, but we should like to ask where would Roman Catholicism be to-day had not Protestantism fought certain battles, the results of which are vital to the cause of Christianity and Religion as a whole? Allowing the truth of much that Dr. Pullan has advanced regarding the undermining of essential Christian truths, his presentation of it is, we fearlessly assert, a one-sided presentation, and the debt to believing Protestant scholarship is immense.

There is another serious omission which we should like to see more carefully considered and rectified by Dr. Pullan. In any attempt to draw comparisons between different forms of Christianity, a thorough examination should be undertaken of the effects which they have had on the life and character of the peoples who acknowledge their sway. Allowance must be made for climate and national temperament, and therefore we admit that it is an exceedingly difficult problem, and will require the most delicate handling and sympathetic treatment, but we cannot but think that, were it to be undertaken, it might profoundly modify some of Dr. Pullan's conclusions. It is a criterion which has the highest authority behind it. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

Some time ago the late Dr. Sanday quoted the famous Roman Catholic Patrologist, Funk, as follows: "In the countries invaded by it (i.e. the Reformation), the religious life at least pulsates at the present time more vigorously than in the rest. The fact is indisputable, and its explanation lies near at hand. The opposition of the confessions incites to greater care and to stronger

efforts." ¹ Could a more striking testimony to the value of the Reformation be wished for than this?

We would fain linger for some time on the criticisms to which Dr. Pullan subjects Ultramontaniam. The severe animadversions which he passes on some of its forms will, we hope, be taken to heart in those quarters where the strongest possible distaste for everything made in Germany is equalled only by a readiness to receive anything and everything imported from Italy. Dr. Pullan is very outspoken in his denunciation of Probabilism, "the doctrine that a man when in doubt may legitimately follow a course which is probably right even when the stricter course seems to him to be more probable." He states that by canonizing Alphonsus Liguori, the Church of Rome has indirectly sanctioned Probabilism. He quotes from the *Catholic Encyclopædia* in support of his contention,² but even better still would it have served his purpose had he consulted the article on Probabilism in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, written by the Jesuit Father Joyce, who writes: "From the beginning of the nineteenth century, nearly every name of real note may be reckoned among the Probabilists—e.g., Génicot, Ballerini, Lehmkuhl, Ojetti, and Slater."³ Place side by side with this what Dr. Pullan says as to the standard of truth upheld by Liguori, and the extraordinary instance of "Anna" brought forward by the French Jesuit, J. P. Gury,⁴ when such statements are exposed to the light of day they cannot but fail to leave a most painful impression upon those who value truth and honesty beyond all price.

This feeling of distress will not be lessened when the reader once more refreshes (!) his memory with the picturesque account given by Dr. Pullan of the proceedings leading up to the famous Vatican Council of 1870, and the intrigues which attended the promulgation of the dogma of Papal Infallibility.⁵

Although it is a familiar story, we can never quite get over our surprise on learning how the Bishops Strossmayer, Hefele,

¹ Dr. Sanday, *The Conception of Priesthood* (Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1898), p. 102.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 125, 126.

³ Dr. Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. x, art. "Probabilism," p. 350.

⁴ For "Anna," cf. W. Hermann, *Faith and Morals*, E.T. (Williams & Norgate, London, 1904), pp. 137-52, 246 ff.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 243-8.

"Dupanloup, the zealous pastor of souls, and even Archbishop Kenrick, who marshalled the strongest arguments to prove the doctrine to be untenable," gave way and submitted to the decree. Before classing Cardinal Newman entirely with these, it is only fair to his memory to recall the words he wrote to Mrs. Froude in 1871: "As little as possible was passed at the Council—nothing about the Pope which I have not myself always held." ¹

More might be said respecting the evils of Ultramontaniam, but let us hasten on to the conclusion which Dr. Pullan would have us draw from his lectures. Waving to one side the truth or otherwise of his conception of Catholic Christianity, the question arises, keeping strictly to the plane of history, Have the events of the last three or four centuries justified the lecturer's point of view? He bids us "to follow in the steps of Robertson and Lightfoot, of Liddon, and of Sanday also when he was still unconquered by the Germans, and let ourselves be guided by St. Paul to the life of the Risen and Ascended Christ and the life in Christ" ²; of this list we may say that it would have been more complete by the addition of the names of Hort and Westcott, and also that with one exception none of them would have felt at home with Dr. Pullan's presentation of their case! Dr. Pullan would appeal, we gather, to the witness of the Eastern Orthodox Church, to the strain of Gallicanism which acted as the good genius of the French Church from the days of the Counter-Reformation down to beyond the middle of the nineteenth century, as well as to the various movements which have taken place within our own Church. His basis is far too narrow. Our sympathies go out to the Eastern Church in her hour of agony and martyrdom. We are therefore

¹ Cf. *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, by Wilfred Ward (Longmans & Co., London, 1912), 2nd Impression, vol. ii, p. 380. The whole letter should be read. Newman continues: "But it was impossible to deny that it was done with an imperiousness and overbearing wilfulness which has been a great scandal—and I cannot think thunder and lightning, a mark of approbation as some persons wish to make out, and the sudden destruction of the Pope's temporal power does not seem a sign of approval either." What Newman felt about the dogma of Papal Infallibility is also stated in a letter written to Mr. O'Neill Daunt on August 7, 1870. "It expresses what, as an opinion, I have ever held myself with a host of other Catholics. But that does not reconcile me to imposing it upon others, and I do not see why a man who denied it might not be as good a Catholic as the man who held it. And it is a new and most serious precedent in the Church that a dogma *de fide* should be passed *without definite and urgent cause*" (p. 310).

² *Op. cit.*, p. 243.

most grateful to Dr. Pullan that he should have devoted one of his lectures to a survey of the religion and history of the Holy Orthodox Church. But the very warning which he gives us Englishmen against the sin of boasting—"self-examination is better than self-congratulation,"¹—reminds us that the standard of right and wrong which we should apply to the Eastern nations of Europe must be of a lower kind than that adopted in the case of the more progressive nations of the West. If this is once conceded, then we must adopt an attitude of considerable reserve towards the testimony of the Eastern Church. Anyhow, before her witness can be entirely accepted, it will have to undergo a much more searching and critical examination than has hitherto been the case.

Gallicanism has produced a fine rôle of saintly men and women, but Dr. Pullan leaves us rather in the dark as to its general effect on the religious life of the French nation, beyond that in one place he mentions that "gradually Gallican priests began to reduce the speed at which Mass was read. Invocations of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints became more strictly requests for their prayers and not for such help as is given by God. Diocesan service books were revised, and in the revised versions there was more of the Bible and less of the legend."² For these and for all other mercies we are devoutly thankful, but on Dr. Pullan's own showing Gallicanism was worsted by Ultramontanism, and though he does not assert this, it would appear that it was powerless to prevent the decadence into which religion as a whole fell during the greater part of the eighteenth century.

As for our own Church, even if it is granted that the Anglo-Catholic party has always numbered some adherents amongst the sons and daughters of the Anglican Communion since the days of Queen Elizabeth, they form a somewhat pathetic streamlet until they empty themselves into the broader river of the Oxford movement. And to-day, whilst we do not deny the devotion and activity of the Anglo-Catholic party, yet their members must allow that by far the larger portion of British Christianity lies outside their fold.

We submit therefore that history does not in the least compel us to accept the view that a modified form of Gallicanism would gather round it all the best elements of Christianity. Perhaps

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

² *Ibid.*, p. 103.

stronger words might be used, but we prefer to leave the matter thus.

Dr. Pullan is at his best in his delineation of character. We should like to single out as special instances his sympathetic sketches of such men as St. Philip Neri, St. Francis de Sales, Calvin, and Bishop Andrewes. His treatment, however, of Goethe deserves a passing reference. We are given one quotation on the Sacraments from Goethe, who with Homer, Dante and Shakespeare may be reckoned as one of the great poets of mankind. The lecturer missed a grand opportunity of reminding his hearers of those great sayings of Goethe about the creative value of faith and the truth of the Gospel. The poet's views about religion varied from time to time, but within eleven days of his death Eckermann quotes him as saying: "Nevertheless, although they are founded on oral tradition, I hold all the four Gospels to be thoroughly genuine, for in them is operative the reflected splendour that proceeded from the Person of Christ, and is as Divine in its nature as aught of Divine ever manifested on earth." ¹

But we are most concerned with Dr. Pullan's judgment on Luther. He never discusses the question as to whether the Reformation could have taken place at all without a serious breach with the great Mediæval Church of the West, or that of the Roman Curia's treatment of the Wittenberg Friar having made it impossible or otherwise for him to remain within the Church of his fathers. Space prevents any lengthy treatment of the subject, but let Canon Ottley, a former Principal of the Pusay House, be our spokesman. "He recalled men's minds from a false to a true conception of faith; from blind and mechanical reliance on a complex system to simple trust in a living person, the Divine Christ. . . . He revived in men's hearts the consciousness of their personal relation to Christ, not only as Judge, but as Saviour," ² and yet Dr. Pullan can ascribe to Luther's influence little else but evil!

We have criticized these Bampton Lectures at some length, but should not like it to be thought that we are blind to their

¹ *Gespräche mit Goethe*, 3. Band. 1822-32 (Philipp Reclam, junr., Leipzig), p. 263.

² *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, vol. ii (Methuen & Co., London, 1896), pp. 218-19.

merits. From beginning to end, there is not a dull page in the book, and the style in which it is written must please the most fastidious taste.¹ Would that more works of theology could be written in the same way! but more important than excellency of diction is the moral earnestness of the lecturer, and above all his devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ. The problem which concerns him concerns us. What think ye of Christ? The answer he gives is ours as well. In proportion as the sheep learn to keep their eyes more and more fixed upon the Shepherd, will He draw them closer together, not of necessity into one fold, but into one flock. We conclude with the words of an ancient prayer: "We give Thee thanks, O Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou didst make known unto us through Thy Son Jesus: Thine is the glory for ever and ever. As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, and being gathered together became one, so may Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom; For Thine is the glory and the power, through Jesus Christ for ever and ever."²

¹ When Dr. Pullan is bringing out a second edition of his lectures, we would suggest to him that the long German quotation which he gives from Jülicher on pp. 282, 283, should be given in English. He will find it given in *An Introduction to the New Testament*, by A. Jülicher, E.T. (Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1904), pp. 19-21.

² *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, Chap. IX.

From the S.P.C.K. we have received an important pamphlet, *Reunion: The Lambeth Conference Report and the Free Churches* (4d. net). Its importance consists in this, that it gives within one cover the "Report of the Joint Conference at Lambeth Palace" (with preliminary statement), the "Memorandum on the Status of the Existing Free Church Ministry," and the Resolution on the Report passed by the Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England. For purposes of reference this little pamphlet is indispensable. At the close of the Explanatory Note (signed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and Dr. Scott Lidgett) it is stated: "We submit the document as a whole for the consideration of Christian people in the belief that we are being guided step by step on the pathway of peace. The power of effective action must depend on the sympathy, the co-operation, and the prayers of those to whom is given the trust of membership in the Church of God."
