

truth hereafter: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

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ART. VI.—SOME THOUGHTS FROM "THE LIFE OF DEAN BUTLER."

WE have no intention of examining this work in detail. All we purpose doing is to state a few reflections which a careful study of its contents has suggested to us. In many respects the book is exceedingly interesting; we think it may also prove to be instructive, for it seems to give a rather remarkable insight into certain effects of the Oxford or Tractarian Movement, effects which are very visible and palpable to-day. It helps us to trace the development of those effects: it bridges over for us, if we may use the expression, the interval between the position of the first leaders of the movement and that of the extreme High Churchmen at the present time. By its assistance we get a clearer insight into the reasons for the remarkable influence of the movement in some directions, and for its even greater want of influence in others.

The compiler of the Life has been very candid. The story is a plain tale, and plainly told. We can even imagine some of Dean Butler's friends wishing there had been exercised a more judicious reticence. To take a single instance. In a letter written from Bayeux in August, 1885, we read:

"I was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of the curé of S. Ouen. . . . He is a most agreeable and intelligent man, one of the few who really understand and enter into the Anglican position. 'Il n'y a qu'un cheveu entre nous.' And when we parted, he loaded us with photographs" (p. 336).

We have given the whole of the letter as printed in the Life. Such words from the Dean of an English Cathedral are certainly startling. It is just possible they may be more suggestive than their writer ever intended them to be. But we cannot help asking ourselves, What was Butler's conception of "the Anglican position"?

Butler was ordained as curate to Charles Dyson, an intimate friend of Keble, Manning, and Henry Wilberforce. He came at once under the influence of these men, and especially under that of Keble. From the position he then accepted he never afterwards swerved. Possibly the strangest feature in the Life is the apparent absence of any *intellectual* development. Of any books that he read, other than a few Catholic devotional works, or of any study into which he entered, there is singularly

little mention. That Butler was capable of intellectual development we feel sure. Before he left Cambridge, though he only took an ordinary degree, he had at least laid the foundations upon which such a development might have been built. His knowledge at the time of his ordination must, indeed, have been far above the average ; but of his studies in later life, as we have already said, we hear remarkably little. This is no doubt one key to a note of "narrowness," which, we cannot help feeling, pervades the book. It is surely unnecessary to speak of the advantages of strenuous study in combination with even the hardest and most exacting parochial work, and that for the sake of one's people as well as for one's self. We do not attribute any blame in this matter to the school to which Butler belonged, and most certainly not to its earlier leaders. If their intellectual sympathies were generally narrow, the "scholarship" of many of them was of no mean order.

The real strength of the school has, we believe, lain in its devotion. Were we asked to name one chief reason of its influence, we should point to the devoted lives lived by so many of its members. And this was eminently true of Butler. However much we may dissent from the particular directions in which it was manifested and expended, we cannot but admire its intense thoroughness, its deep reality.

Si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi.

We are sometimes told that the most popular form of clerical devotedness to-day is witnessed in the creation and maintenance of an elaborate parochial organization ; in other words, of a multifarious and complex machinery, the clergyman himself becoming very largely "the power" (we use the technical term) by which the various parts are kept in motion. From Monday morning till Saturday night he is devising schemes, seeking workers, collecting subscriptions, "taking" services, and attending meetings. Though Butler's own parochial organization at Wantage was wonderfully complete, he saw the danger lying beneath the ideal so popular at the present time, and he spoke strongly against "a fussy beating up of recruits and subscriptions, writing reports, and rushing from meeting to meeting." Butler's own devotedness, so we gather from his life, manifested itself chiefly in two directions : (1) In a constant and intense effort to maintain and diffuse in the English Church what he conceived to be "Catholic" truth and practice ; (2) in unwearying energy, ever being expended in bringing individuals under their influence. In the accomplishment of this purpose he does not seem to have laid much stress upon preaching ; at any rate, compared with the atten-

tion drawn to it in many other ecclesiastical biographies, the importance or power of preaching receives but little notice in Butler's Life. On the other hand, the greatest stress is again and again laid upon the value of "confession."

Of the various chapters in the book, perhaps the most interesting is that contributed by the Rev. F. S. S. Coles, the present head of the Pusey House. It is in this chapter that we find the clearest evidence of Butler's influence forming a connecting link between the earlier phases of the Oxford Movement and the present teaching of those who hold the "Anglican position." It is into this same chapter that the subject of confession most fully enters. The following extracts will suffice to explain Dean Butler's practice and Mr. Coles' views.

"... The pauses between the departure of one penitent and the entrance of another, when he was hearing confessions, were ... utilized ..." (p. 179).

"Every priest who has found himself responsible for a genuine parochial charge, after having formed his convictions on the principles of the Anglo-Catholic Revival, has been compelled to consider what place the doctrine and practice of confession ought to hold in his work. To such a man the value of it will probably be, as it was to the Vicar of Wantage, a matter of happy experience, and the desire to offer to others what has been a great blessing to himself must be very strong" (p. 181).

"... To hold back a means of grace from his flock, and to relieve his own responsibility by a profitless and harmful defiance of popular opinion, were alike alien to the Vicar's mind" (p. 182).

"He abstained from speaking of confession in his Sunday sermons, or hearing confessions in church. Those most closely connected with his work, Sisters and clergy, he drew to his own practice, and upheld them in it" (p. 182).

"... When he did use it, his mode of ministration was most thorough and definite. ..." (p. 182).

"... He felt that the really pastoral relation, which, as distinct from the forgiveness of deadly sin, is one of the chief advantages of systematic confession. ..." (p. 183).

"Something has been already said about his views as to confession. Roughly, they came to this: that it was desirable for all who could believe in it, almost indispensable for the perfection of the clerical and the religious life, so desirable for some who had fallen deeply, as to make it necessary to be bold in propounding it. It was only his intensely practical habit of mind which hindered the Vicar from pressing it where he knew it was impossible to carry it, and where he trusted that

the fact of such impossibility pointed to the guidance of the Divine will" (p. 192).

The only comment we would make here upon these extracts is to draw attention to the final words of the last. We fear the phrase "a practical habit of mind" may suggest another description of such a mental state; and we most fully endorse the "trusting," etc. We should go much further, and speak of our "conviction" as to the guidance of the Divine will making anything like a universal use of the practice of private confession impossible.

Another subject dealt with at some length in the same chapter is that of Butler's views upon the "Real Presence."

In the first extract we give, Mr. Coles links this subject with the preceding as follows:

"The two things for the sake of which High Churchmen have been forced to sacrifice opportunities of reaching their fellow-countrymen are the claim of an integral place in the pastoral system for voluntary confession, and the belief in the reality of the inward part of the Holy Sacrament apart from reception. On both these points it was the advantage as regards success, the weakness as regards consistency, of Bishop Wilberforce to be, perhaps, at the verge of it, but still undoubtedly on the popular side . . ." (p. 192).

After contrasting the views of the Vicar of Wantage with his Bishop on confession, Mr. Coles proceeds:

"Far more did his [the Bishop's] position fall short of that to which the Vicar's deliberate conviction had led him on the matter of the Real Presence. The Bishop was, no doubt, in this matter a genuine follower of . . . Hooker's teaching in the fifth book of his 'Ecclesiastical Polity.' Hooker's method was . . . to consider what is the true purpose of the Sacrament, and then to inquire what manner of Presence is necessary to that end. This method would commend itself to a mind like that of the great organizing prelate, who may be pardoned if in so busy and hard pressed a life he sacrificed something of the abstract completeness of truth to the concrete necessities of his flock. But it was a sacrifice which, in this matter, at any rate, the Vicar could never have endured, because the complete truth of the Real Presence had made good an appeal to the needs and instincts of his own heart, and he had been led to see its astonishing power for good in the spiritual life of foreign Churches, and especially of their religious communities. I think it was about the year 1867 that he made a study during his holiday of some of the Jesuit houses in France. . . . He had done the thing thoroughly like everything else. He had gone prepared for controversy, humbly secure that he was doing God's work at home, and that it

was impossible that he could be called to sever his connection with those whom God had taught with and through him, but at the same time with an open mind, *ready to learn all that the sight of principles just reviving at home, but here in France habitually accepted, could teach him*" (p. 194). (The italics are our own.)

We wish to draw particular attention to the words which immediately follow. Mr. Coles proceeds:

"Thus, when his hosts, stimulated to their most eager and demonstrative efforts by the value of one who seemed a possible convert of the first rank, pressed him with *a priori* arguments for the Papal monarchy, he felt an almost amused pleasure in reminding them that the English were never logical, and, strong in his conviction that their theoretical structures would not bear the test of historical fact, bade them grateful farewell, while they stretched after him eager hands, and kept repeating, 'Soyez conséquent, monsieur'" (p. 194).

Here follow some letters written by Butler to his wife during the above-mentioned tour. After these, Mr. Coles continues:

". . . All the while he felt a power among these disappointed Fathers, to the attraction of which his conscience offered no opposition. He saw no reason why he should join them in making the Pope the centre of their system, but he felt that principles he had long accepted would justify him in seeking to imitate the devotion which made the Blessed Sacrament the centre of their life. On his return to England, this thought, if I am not mistaken, was very prominent in his mind and conversation. He did not hesitate to regret the law of the English Church which made reservation impossible, except by what seemed to him a sophistical disobedience. It was, however, at this time that he taught the Sisters to value a pause of some minutes after the Consecration and before Communion, during which special adoration might be offered to our Lord present in His glorified humanity under the sacramental veils" (p. 202).

As we read the above, we would ask, Are we not justified in concluding that there must have been something more than even *similarity* between Dean Butler's views and those of the Jesuit Fathers upon the doctrine of the Real Presence? The conclusion is, no doubt, a startling one, but do the words "Soyez conséquent, monsieur" (which, we presume, refer to the Papal supremacy), point to any other possible interpretation than the following: "You accept so much of our teaching that you must, if logical, accept this also, and become one with us"?

That Mr. Coles is himself in sympathy with Butler's views we conclude from the following sentences:

"[Butler] regretted the introduction of the mid-day choral Eucharist. To him, as to Mr. Bennett, of Frome, it seemed fitting that the Divine Mysteries should not be exposed to the possible irreverence and almost certain unpreparedness of an eleven o'clock congregation. . . . It may be questioned whether the missionary power of the mid-day High Service, the experience of which is, perhaps, the best argument in its favour, ever came under the notice of the Vicar" (p. 206).

"It occurred to my mind during a retreat for the Sisters that, as the number of those who are departed increases, it would be well to commemorate them at one Eucharist during the retreat. . . he [Butler] wrote back very warmly, thanking me for consulting him, agreeing with the appropriate opportunity for such a commemoration, saying that he had intended to have provided for the inscription of the names of the departed on diptychs. Thus my last communication with him referred to that interchange of good offices between the living and departed which satisfies one of our holiest instincts" (pp. 221, 222).

Had space permitted, we should have liked to draw attention at length to the chapter which describes the origin and development of the celebrated Wantage Sisterhood, the institution to which Butler's best energies were devoted for many years, in which he took the deepest interest to the very last, and which will always be regarded as the work most inseparably connected with his name. We must, however, content ourselves with noticing the following points in connection with it:

(1) Butler's original idea in the institution of the Sisterhood, that it should be educational—a means of training teachers for work in the elementary schools (an altogether admirable intention)—was overruled chiefly, it appears, through the influence of Manning, who had not then seceded from the English Church.

(2) The "direction" of the Sisterhood, though it was situated in Butler's parish, seems at first to have been undertaken by Manning.

(3) During the first few years of its existence, two Superiors, besides other Sisters, seceded to the Roman Church.

(4) During more recent years we hear of no more secessions. We would now ask our readers to bear in mind the following:

(1) Dean Butler's own words respecting his interview with the Roman Catholic curé of S. Ouen: "Il n'y a qu'un cheveu entre nous."

(2) His views upon confession.

(3) The apparent similarity of his views respecting the doctrine of the Real Presence with those of the Jesuit Fathers.

(4) The number of secessions to Rome from Wantage and other High Church parishes in the forties and fifties.

(5) As far as we can discover (though the Roman Catholics deny this), the almost total cessation of such secessions now.

Putting these various deductions from the work side by side, we wish to ask the following questions:

(i.) Have these secessions from the English to the Roman Church been stayed because the teaching and practices which the early seceders desired, and could not obtain there, are now to be found *within* the English Church?

(ii.) If this is so, is it well or ill for either the English Church herself, or for the English nation (of which that Church is the accredited representative in regard to religion), that it should be so?

(iii.) Will the Church of England on this account be more or less acceptable to the majority of English people?

The following sentences from Mr. Coles' reminiscences may well be remembered here: "It has often been remarked that he [Butler] succeeded with girls, perhaps with women, better than with men, though this latter statement can only be made with very real qualifications. . . he succeeded pre-eminently with educated women: he did more with working men than with rich men. . . it was on women that his best strength and most constant pains were spent. . ."

(iv.) While it is well that the limits of doctrine and practice in the National Church be comprehensive, can the teaching advocated in Dean Butler's Life be regarded as naturally *within* those limits?

During the last few months we have heard much of certain inquiries (that there have been any "overtures" we believe has been denied) into the conditions of a possible union between the English and the Romish Churches; we have heard, too, of the somewhat peremptory rejection, on the part of the Romish Church, of all conditions which did not include the full acceptance of the Papal Supremacy.

That many of those holding the so-called "Anglican Position" have desired (if they have not exactly looked forward with much hope to) a union between these Churches will not, we think, be denied by anyone conversant with recent ecclesiastical movements.

In the face of the rejection of all terms of reunion on the part of the Romanists—except at the price of the acceptance of the Papal Supremacy, to say nothing of their rejection of the validity of English orders—what can those who are in the doctrinal position of Dean Butler and Mr. Coles do?

They desire an opportunity to teach what they term

"Catholic Truth," and to enjoy what they call "Catholic Practice." They wish to do all this openly if possible. If not—no doubt many of them are, to use Mr. Coles' definition of Dean Butler, men of "a practical habit of mind"! That what such phrases as "Catholic Truth and Practice" mean to them has been made wonderfully clear is, we believe, the chief service rendered to English Christianity by the publication of Dean Butler's Life. Of course, had union with Rome been proved possible on terms they would have accepted, the opportunity they desire would have been theirs in all its fulness. But since such union is impossible, what then? Will they secede to Rome? Have they or their followers been seceding in recent years? On the contrary, they have apparently determined to remain, externally at least, in full communion with the English Church, and in such a position to teach this "Catholic Truth," to carry out this "Catholic Practice."

It is unnecessary to define either this "Truth" or this "Practice." As we have already said, Dean Butler's Life sheds a flood of light upon the meaning of both.

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REASON, A HEAVEN-SENT GUIDE TO TRUTH.

OUR adaptation of means to an end is proof that we have reason, and can use it aright. The fact and use are miniatures of that grandest use and largest application of intelligence which we discern in the universe and intimate relation of every part. The smallest and largest organic or inorganic structures are so fitted to, and work with, the innumerable universal combinations that they become the master argument as to the existence, throughout time and space, of an intelligent, all-ordering Providence. Not to accept this truth pours contempt on our faculties, and deprives existence of reason.

Our power to apprehend the connection of processes working out a purpose; the linking of nature and art, of light and the eye, of sound to the ear, of invisible fashionings toward outward form; witness that we can and do greatly know the relations of the universe to God and man. We are not in darkness; and, though an atheist goes one point beyond the devil, God-given reason is that heaven-sent light and power by which we may all see, desire, and attain the elements of future perfection.