

Editorial

BISHOP CHARLES GORE was described by Bishop Hensley Henson in 1910 as "perhaps the most influential and in some ways the most attractive clergyman in the English Church". It was Gore, more than any other, who at a time of transition gave a stability to the Anglo-Catholic party in the Church of England by the moderating and modernizing influence of his writings. Two important books which have been published recently remind us effectively of the content and significance of Gore's thought. They are: GORE: *A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought* by James Carpenter (Faith Press, 307 pp., 30s.) and FROM GORE TO TEMPLE: *The Development of Anglican Theology between Lux Mundi and the Second World War, 1889-1939* by the Archbishop of York, Dr. A. M. Ramsey (Longmans, 192 pp., 18s. 6d.). The appearance in 1889 of *Lux Mundi* certainly marked the commencement of a new era in Anglican theology—not that its doctrines were entirely novel, any more than were the theories propounded by Charles Darwin in his *Origin of Species* when it appeared thirty years earlier: it is possible to point to an ancestry in both cases. It is impact, not necessarily originality, that initiates a new era. The service which the *Lux Mundi* symposiasts performed for Anglo-Catholicism (though how far it was a service for Christianity as a whole is no less open to debate now than it was in Gore's day) was to accommodate it to modern modes of philosophical and scientific thought, thus clothing it with an air of contemporaneous respectability. In their own words, their aim was "to put the Catholic faith in its right relation to modern intellectual and moral problems". They were, as Archbishop Ramsey describes them, "men of synthesis", who "united the piety and churchmanship of the Tractarians and the critical spirit which had found clumsy expression a few decades earlier in *Essays and Reviews*".

In the same year that *Lux Mundi* appeared Gore wrote: "I believe with a conviction the intensity of which I can hardly express that it is . . . the God-given vocation of the Church of England to realize and offer men a Catholicism which goes behind the Reformation in real and unimpaired connection with the Catholicism of the past . . . which is Scriptural . . . which is rational . . . which is free to deal with the new problems and wants of a new time". Insofar as this is compatible with what Dr. Ramsey calls "the Anglican appeal to Scripture, antiquity, and reason", we have no quarrel; but insofar as it implies that the Reformation had the effect of severing the roots that held the Church to the Catholicism of the past, we must protest. The Reformation was essentially, of course, a return to the pure Catholicism of the New Testament, but not in such a way that the intervening centuries of the Church's existence were ignored, nor in a way that did despite to the faculty of reason with which man has been endowed. None studied the Church Fathers and their traditions more avidly than did the leaders of the Reformation. They valued

highly and were careful to preserve the continuity with the past. It was in the light of reason that many of the extravagances and crudities of papalism were exposed. Indeed, it was precisely on the appeal to Scripture, antiquity, and reason that the Reformers' case rested, as their writings make abundantly plain. And it is precisely when Anglo-Catholicism seeks to introduce into the Church of England doctrines and practices which were repudiated by the Reformers on the grounds of Scripture, tradition, and reason that the issue of the Reformation is opened once again.

Gore was convinced that Tractarianism, if it was to survive as a force in the Church, needed a measure of liberalization, in particular with respect to the injection into its blood-stream of biblical criticism, the evolutionary hypothesis, and socialistic thought and action. As Mr. Carpenter observes, "in this matter of Gore's Liberal Catholicism it is not easy to separate with any degree of precision his liberalism from his Catholicism. In some cases his liberalism controlled his conception of Catholicism, and in others the reverse seems to be true." The old "high-churchmen" had maintained a high doctrine of the infallibility of Scripture. Gore's coming to terms with biblical criticism was enough to break Liddon's heart and to cause him to charge Gore with having capitulated to German rationalism, and his kenotic views were violently attacked by Bishop Stubbs of Oxford. Gore's evolutionism, though not so extreme as that propounded by some of his fellow-Anglo-Catholic theologians—J. R. Illingworth, for example, spoke of the Incarnation as having introduced a new species into the world!—is well summed up in his view of the Incarnation as "the crown of natural development". It has, in fact, become typical of Anglo-Catholic thought to conceive the Incarnation in evolutionistic terms, the significance of which had early on been indicated by the expression *Christus Consummator* which Westcott gave to one of his books. The exact manner in which evolution has been incorporated into the theology of the Incarnation has varied with different writers, though the over-all pattern has been of a kind. Thus, for example, William Temple adapted it to his philosophy of value and expounded it as the keystone of the universal order which has ascended through the successive stages of matter, life, mind, and spirit; and L. S. Thornton, following the lead given by the philosophy of A. N. Whitehead, propounded the theory of an "organic" progression whereby every higher stage of development not only supersedes but also includes every lower stage, and the whole universal system is embraced and exalted by the culminating stage which is the Incarnation. This concept of the Incarnation as the crown of natural development is, in our judgment, incompatible with the true nature and purpose of the Incarnation, and has, more than anything else in the theology of the last hundred years, had the effect of shifting the centre of gravity of Christian soteriology from Calvary to Bethlehem, from the Cross to the Cradle.

The socialism which Gore advocated was in the main exceptionally sane and perceptive. He foresaw the very real dangers of the Welfare State and even of democracy, precisely because of the selfish impulses of unregenerate men and women. He realized that "the popular

cry for social regeneration is accompanied in such . . . slender measure with the sense of the need of personal regeneration", and that it is Christ who "is the true liberator, the true emancipator of man, because He laid the foundation of human liberty so deep in the redemption of the individual from personal sin and selfishness".

The writings of Bishop Gore are a thing of the past and they will be disinterred only or at any rate mainly by those who are pursuing some line theological research; but Gore's influence continues in the Anglo-Catholic thought of our day, and may indeed be said to have been in large measure formative of it—though he would have dissociated himself from the "typological eccentricity" (as Archbishop Ramsey calls it) which has characterized the biblical interpretation of some more recent Anglo-Catholic scholars.

Mr. Carpenter's book may be commended as an admirable study of Gore's thought—thorough, intelligent, well articulated, and amply documented. It does not need predictive ability to say that it will become authoritative within its particular field. We would suggest that many of the longer footnotes might with advantage be moved up into the main body of the text since they, and the quotations they frequently contain, are so germane to the substance of the work. The Archbishop's book is, as we expect it to be, clearly written and ably executed, and is marked throughout by a spirit of charity. He, if anyone, may be described as standing within the tradition of Gore today, in respect both of theological sympathy and intellectual ability. The period he reviews was on the whole a lean one for Evangelical scholarship; yet it was not entirely barren, and one would have liked to see some reference to the work of men like Wace, Litton, Griffith-Thomas, Dimock, and Tomlinson. Bishop Handley Moule receives one mention, and some appreciation is shown of the writings of the non-Anglican scholars, Denney, Dale, and Forsyth. One might judge from this work that Anglo-Catholics are "typical" Anglicans, and there might be some question concerning the interpretation of the statement that during the half-century under survey "there was for all typical Anglicans, not least those of the Anglo-Catholic school, no hesitancy on the cardinal convictions of the Reformation: that works cannot earn salvation, that salvation is by grace alone received through faith, that nothing can add to the sole mediatorship of the Cross of Christ, that Holy Scripture is the supreme authority in doctrine"; but we earnestly hope that this may become increasingly true of our Church of England during the decades that lie ahead.

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The articles in this issue are devoted to the consideration of certain aspects of the subject of Christianity and the Jew—a subject that is not without its perplexities, but the importance of which should never be minimized. There is a tendency for the Christian to feel that he ought not to "interfere" with the Jew and his religion. But we have a special responsibility to bring the evangel to the Jew, reasoning with him out of the Scriptures, as was the Apostle's custom of old, and opening and alleging that the Messiah must needs have

suffered and risen again from the dead, and that the Jesus whom we proclaim is the Messiah of Old Testament prophecy and promise (Acts xvii. 2f.). Too many Christians today are inexcusably unfamiliar with the Old Testament Scriptures and have little appreciation of their significance. The recovery of the sense of their significance will mean the recovery of the sense of responsibility to the Jew, because it will give substance to our appreciation of the significance of Jesus Christ to the Jew as well as to the nations of the world. "What does the Lord do after He has come back to His disciples from the land of death?" asks Helmut Gollwitzer in that most remarkable series of sermons published earlier this year under the title *The Dying and Living Lord*. "What is it that *He* regards as the most important thing to do? He gives them a Bible lesson. . . . 'Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures'. . . . How could anyone possibly hit upon the wrong idea that the Church could do without the Old Testament, even for a day, when Jesus Christ, after His Resurrection, had nothing more important to do than to open the Old Testament and to expound its meaning? How could anyone even think that it is still the Church of Christ if it closes the Old Testament instead of opening it? How is it possible for people to think that we become more Christian, that we can witness to Christ better, if we break with the Old Testament?"

P.E.H.