

ARTICLE XI.

CRITICAL NOTE.

WALSH'S "SECRET HISTORY OF THE OXFORD MOVEMENT."¹

THE GENERAL IMPRESSION.

THAT Mr. Walsh has contributed an interesting, and indeed a somewhat important, addition to the already existing numerous histories of the greatest ecclesiastical movement of our century, we are glad to bear testimony, especially as his entire volume is characterized by a general fairness quite unusual on the part of such a distinctly party writer. At the same time, this latest contribution to the elucidation of Tractarianism is by no means the formidable exposure which its somewhat startling title was evidently chosen to signify, since, in the present writer's opinion, Mr. Walsh has entirely failed to substantiate the main purport of his volume,—a purport partly inferred and partly expressed,—viz., to show that the founders of the Oxford Movement were from the first consciously disloyal to the church in which they had been born, and in which most of them were ministering.

But Mr. Walsh's failure, however, springs not from any lack of that general intelligence indispensable on the part of a writer who would venture to gauge the history of the Oxford Movement, since his volume shows considerable skill in collecting and summarizing details, but rather from his apparent lack of the specialist's knowledge without which it becomes impossible to write intelligently upon the theme chosen by Mr. Walsh. Tractarianism was *not* a movement to introduce into the Church of England novel doctrines and practices, but, on the contrary, to awaken a nation which had well-nigh forgotten both her theology and ecclesiastical history, to the actual catholicity of her formularies of faith. That there was urgent need for such a movement within the Church of England at that time is further proved to the student of ecclesiastical history by the present call for such a movement in both the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, especially the latter. Startling as it may appear to some, yet I have not the slightest hesitation in affirming that the bulk of the laity of both these ecclesiastical bodies are absolutely unacquainted with the doctrines contained in the Methodist Disci-

¹The Secret History of the Oxford Movement. By Walter Walsh. Third edition. Twelfth thousand. Pp. xv, 424. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd.

pline on the one hand, and the Westminster Confession of Faith on the other. Nay, I can go further, and say, that having repeatedly during many years referred members of both of these bodies to the teaching of their formularies of faith, in most cases they have expressed their ignorance to me as to the teaching of these formularies, and in almost all cases they have scouted their respective doctrines and disciplines to which I have called their attention. Let me explain.

In the Methodist Discipline general and particular fasting on the part of the laity is required, with the regular weekly fast for ministers. In their order of baptism for infants it is intimated that the child then baptized enters the kingdom of God by being then made a member of the church of Christ. The rank and file of Methodism repudiates both of these teachings.

In the Westminster Confession of Faith fasting is enjoined; while outside of the visible church there is, so it represents, no ordinary possibility of salvation. Of its language with reference to the Lord's Supper, the Duke of Argyll has recently written, it is couched in phrases "which are not easily distinguishable from Transubstantiation"; while Professor Binnie says of a duly appointed minister, "Whoever rejects his scriptural teachings and admonitions, rejects the teachings and admonitions of Christ," and referring to the church he says, "To church rulers the keys of the kingdom of heaven have been given."¹ Now the ordinary Presbyterian scouts all this as *Romish*, and will have none of it.

I might quote further, but this is enough for my purpose, which is to produce evidence that the great Methodist and Presbyterian bodies are to-day largely in the same position which the Church of England found herself in at the period we are considering, and out of which she has even yet but partially emerged, viz., possessing doctrines and discipline utterly ignored by the bulk of her members. Indeed, the laity, as a whole, of all the separate churches of the English-speaking people, including the Anglican Church, and only excepting the English-speaking Romanists, are either entirely ignorant of, or indifferent to, the doctrines taught by their separate ecclesiastical bodies. So universal is this ignorance of the religious tenets of the bodies referred to on the part of the members thereof, that it would seem that the masses have already reached that stage of religious opinion, recently indicated by the Bishop of Ripon, when "the separating dogmas of the churches will fall away before the fresh winds of God." Of course it *may* be the winds of God which have produced the present complete indifference to all doctrine taught by whatever so-called orthodox church; but we are far more inclined to attribute it to absolute indifference to religion itself on the part of the masses which has produced the lamentable desertion of God's house, so conspicuous on all hands, and bewailed by all churches alike. Now it is just here that we conceive that Mr. Walsh's incompetency to

¹ The Church (*Hand-books for Bible Classes*), pp. 23, 30.

deal with the question he has chosen to write on shows itself. He evidently is *not* a student of religion, but only an intelligent follower of a religious party. Had he been a student of religion, he would have been aware that, if there is any value at all in theological doctrine and discipline, an awakening to the existence of these tenets is loudly called for, or at least, that there is a crying necessity for such a call on the part of every great Christian church in so-called Protestant Christendom. Now it was this awakening within the Church of England which the Tractarians commenced in 1833. They commenced it, but they did not lead it; for, as the late Dr. Ewer so truly wrote to Bishop Huntington, "it has had absolutely no leaders," and, in spite of certain regrettable conversions to Rome, "it has developed the strongest, firmest, and most pugnacious and damaging opponents of popery that to-day has seen,"—a statement of Dr. Ewer confirmed by Newman himself, who declared of Anglican principles, based solely on antiquity, "they are far more difficult to refute in the Roman controversy than those of any other religious body."¹

Mr. Walsh, then, in our opinion, has failed to make good the purport of his volume on the Oxford Movement. Lacking the wide reading and breadth of view of a student of religion, he has failed to note that widespread disregard of doctrine and discipline pervading *all* religious bodies to-day, a state of indifference to which the Oxford Movement owed its origin as a protest against the particular indifference of the vast majority of the Church of England in this matter in 1833. Thus neglecting the wider problem, which includes *all* churches, Mr. Walsh has not only narrowed his view to one church, but, further, to one particular party within that church; and, taking his stand upon their own view of matters, he stigmatizes every other conception as evidencing disloyalty, Jesuitism, and falsity. Nay, even here, as Dr. Sanday in his recent work on "The Priesthood," has well said, he "has mixed up a number of practices which stand upon a very different footing, and he embraces in one sweeping condemnation many societies and classes of persons in regard to which others of us would feel the necessity for careful discrimination." For these reasons, consequently, despite certain merits which his book possesses, Mr. Walsh's "Secret History of the Oxford Movement" is not at all likely to go down to posterity as an indispensable treatise on the subject with which it deals.

MR. WALSH'S SPECIAL POINTS.

1. *The Secret Methods of Tractarians.*—That the methods of the promoters of the Oxford Movement were secret was well known to all students of Tractarianism long before the appearance of Mr. Walsh's volume, and his basing much of his objections to their doings on that ground, is but another proof of his inability to write intelligently on

¹Apologia (1893), p. 156.

their efforts. The question touching the advisability of the secret teaching of truth is a matter, evidently, that Mr. Walsh has never deeply considered. The systematic persecution, however, which history shows has ever followed its proclaimer, be he a teacher either of science, morals, or religion, should have prevented Mr. Walsh from viewing the secret teaching of the Tractarians as in itself suspicious, and unworthy of a good cause. The great fault of the age is the lack of schools of disciples bent on hearing from their respective masters' lips the divine truths entrusted to them respectively to proclaim, be it on science, morals, or religion. Did we possess these, however, it is exceedingly questionable whether it would be wise in an age in which the inner things of man, and the deeper things of God, are well-nigh lost in material complacency, to proclaim on the housetop the precious things of the Almighty. History would seem to teach us rather, that, until the mass of mankind is stirred to inquire of these things, it must be to chosen disciples only that the full message is delivered, every disciple winning others with whom the trust may be privately shared. But this more philosophic aspect of the problem, however, Mr. Walsh fails to note, and in the secret methods of "The Association of the Friends of the Church," he can see nothing but a disloyal attempt to foist in a Jesuitical manner Romish doctrines upon the Church of England by men who, while pretending to be Anglicans, were actually Romanists.

2. *The Characters of Certain Tractarians.*—Now here is undoubtedly a good point, which, however, Mr. Walsh almost destroys by apparently insinuating that the entire founders of the Oxford Movement were alike in their mental attitude. Newman, Pusey, Faber, and Ward are shown to have been men of such extraordinary casuistical temperaments that the *ordinary* reader can come to no other possible conclusion than that given to Gladstone by Manning before he had seceded to Rome, viz., that in these men there was a "want of truth." At the same time, with all his apparent double shuffling, Dr. Salmon of Dublin, in his "Infallibility of the Church," acquits Newman, and with him others who at the same time seceded to Rome, of insincerity, so that this brief one-sided reference to the actions of these men by Mr. Walsh is that of a partisan, and not of a true historian. Now when we add this to the fact that it was, after all, but *some* of the founders of Tractarianism who behaved in this way, and that Palmer, Keble, Williams, and Mozley evinced a very different attitude, the gross injustice of Mr. Walsh's representing the leaders of the Oxford Movement as though they were all casuists, becomes apparent. Nor is Mr. Walsh quite fair in his remarks about the rapture experienced by certain young Tractarians who attended the worship of Romanists when on the Continent. Speaking of his visit to the Mosque of Mohammed Ali in Cairo, Bishop Potter, a by no means emotional personage, finds full excuse for an English lady's prostrating herself in Oriental posture in that splendid house of worship.¹ If this

¹H. C. Potter, *The Gates of the East*, p. 47.

distinctly Protestant bishop can thus pardon action of this character by a Christian lady in a Mohammedan Mosque, Mr. Walsh doubtless, had he not been quite such a partisan, might have found more excuse than condemnation for the enthusiasm displayed by his "young gentlemen," when visiting Christian though yet Roman houses of prayer while on the Continent.

3. *The Sacrament of Penance, Confession, and Absolution.*—We now come to a point on which we are much more at one with Mr. Walsh. The sacrament of Penance is entirely foreign to the teaching of the Church of England, and it cannot be too strongly condemned. But when we come to Confession and Absolution, it is evident that Mr. Walsh speaks without much grasp of the subject at issue. Without entering into the question as to whether the Church of England is authorized to teach Confession and Absolution, she *does* teach it distinctly, which any candid person would well understand by studying the service for the ordination of priests, and the exhortation in the Communion office. In the very act of being ordained priest the candidate is bidden to receive the Holy Ghost and power to remit and retain sins. In the said exhortation the person with an unquieted conscience is bidden to present himself to some priest, to whom he can confess, and by whom he can be absolved, confessing to receive the benefit of absolution; while in the service for the visitation of the sick, the priest, when absolving, claims to have received from Christ, through the church, his power so to do. Now while it is evident that the Church of England does not intend to teach the desirability of *frequent* private confession, it is also evident that she could not have intended such an emphasized power to remit and retain sins conferred upon her priests to be of a mere exceptional use. Her real teaching seems to be that, while she objects to *enforced* confession, she supplies a means for voluntary confession, which she deems to be of great benefit. Personally, we ourselves object to any other than the general confession and public absolution provided for in the morning and evening services, but candor compels us to admit that Dean Luckcock is correct in his statement, that "the principle of private Confession has undoubtedly been preserved to us."¹

With "Discipline," however, we have not the smallest sympathy, but, on the contrary, extreme disgust, and Mr. Walsh's reference to Pusey's hair shirt is calculated to open the eyes of practical persons to the extravagance to which good, but to our minds decidedly weak, persons may be brought by depending upon other than the guidance of that Saviour to whom we all may go without the intervention of man. As for children confessing, we have no language strong enough to condemn the practice. Indeed, it would even seem better that children should be taught to confess direct to God, rather than to their parents, let alone to religious instructor or priest.

¹The Divine Liturgy, p. 192.

4. *Purgatory, and Prayers for the Dead.*—No further proof of Mr. Walsh's inability to write the history of the Oxford Movement is wanting than his remarks on the attempt of certain English clergymen to teach the existence of Purgatory, and the desirability of prayer for the departed. Indeed, his statement that the Rev. E. de S. Wood "used the word Purgatory without a blush of shame," is intensely amusing; while it tends to show how zealous though ill-informed is his partisanship. Surely Mr. Walsh, when penning his displeasure at the Ritualists for their teaching of the existence of Purgatory, must have forgotten entirely the statement by Dean Farrar, that "there is, in fact, a distinct feeling among some of the ablest Protestant divines of Germany and of England, that the bare negation of Purgatory by the Reformers left a void of doctrine which is perilous to all faith." Surely Mr. Walsh must have forgotten that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council refused to condemn the expression of hope by clergymen, "that even the ultimate pardon of the wicked, who are condemned in the day of judgment, may be consistent with the will of God," an opinion shared and expressed by the late Archbishop of Canterbury.¹

Mr. Walsh refers to the statement of the Homilies that "the souls of the dead are not holpen by our prayers," but he is evidently ignorant of the fact that Harold Browne wrote of the Homilies, "All writers on the subject have agreed, that the kind of assent which we are here called on to give them is general, not specific. We are not expected to express full concurrence with every statement," etc.²

Respecting the Scripture evidence for Prayer for the Dead, commentators are divided; some, as Dean Luckock,³ see in 2 Tim. i. 16 a prayer for the soul of Onesiphorus, now dead; ⁴ while others agree with Hammond, that here there is no reference to one dead. Prayer for the dead, however, was universally practiced by the primitive church as early as the second century, was favored by Luther, approved of by Thorndike, Barrow, and Ussher, and lately by many eminent Protestant and Anglican divines as very natural.⁵

5. "*The Real Presence*," and "*The Eucharistic Sacrifice*."—Again, under these headings, Mr. Walsh betrays his ignorance of Anglican theology, and, consequently, his inability to write thereon. It is quite true that the Prayer-book definitely teaches Hooker's opinion that the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is to be looked for in the worthy receiver of the Sacraments, which is the teaching also of Archbishops Laud and Wake. But that Anglicans are not debarred by anything in their formularies from believing in the existence of an objective Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, not only has the present Archbishop of Canterbury recently conceded, but both Ridley and Latimer may be appealed to in support

¹ Farrar, *Eternal Hope*, pp. 174 ff. ² Thirty-nine Articles.

³ *The Divine Liturgy*. ⁴ See also Timothy (Cambridge Bible).

⁵ See *Expository Times*, Jan. 1897, p. 148.

of such an opinion. Now in Ridley's examination as given in Fox, he acknowledged that in the consecrated cup is the *same* blood as that which flowed from Christ, but by way of a *sacrament*. Further, he acknowledged that the priest offered an unbloody sacrifice in the Eucharist after the manner of a sacrament, declaring that we behold with the eyes of faith him present after grace, and spiritually set upon the table. Latimer declared, "to the right celebration of the Lord's Supper there is no other presence of Christ required than a spiritual presence. . . . And the same presence may be called most fitly a *real presence*, that is a presence not feigned, but a true and faithful presence." Again he said, "I never denied it, nor ever will I go from it, but that we drink the *very* blood of Christ indeed, but spiritually." And further, he maintained that we worship Christ not only in the heavens, but also in the sacrament.

At this point we may fittingly call attention to the reply of the Bishop of Norwich to recent memorialists. He told them that the Prayer-book was *not* an exhaustive treatise upon the whole science of theology, and that great divines of the church have held and taught doctrines which, though not explicitly taught in the Prayer-book, are not contrary to anything therein.¹

6. *Sisterhoods, Ritual, and Ritualistic Societies.*—What Mr. Walsh objects to under these heads is merely what the rank and file of High-churchmen equally object to, viz., extravagance, and, in some cases, even folly. Mr. Wakeman, a typical High-churchman, in the Church Conference of 1897, himself candidly acknowledged that "High-churchmen have not always been preserved from the guilt of folly." These extravagances, however, are by no means essential adjuncts to the High-church movement, and are soon likely to bring their own cure, as we can see already in the new society of typical High-churchmen which has recently been formed for the express purpose of checking some of their unwise and extravagant brethren. Regarding Sisterhoods, it would be absurd for any one to see in the few cases cited by Mr. Walsh a general tendency to arrogance and an unlawful enforcement of discipline. The enormous good these institutions have already accomplished is their full warrant for continuance. And surely it is much better to consecrate bishops, croziers, processional crosses, and banners, etc., than to bless battleships and military regimental standards.

7. *Tractarians Refuse to Regard Rome with Abhorrence.*—At last we arrive at the real cause which has prompted Mr. Walsh to produce a volume which attempts to discredit one large section of the Anglican Church; he believes that the Papacy is the Babylon of the Apocalypse, and that we should listen to God rather than man, since, "His cry to one and all is not to join the Church of Rome, but to separate ourselves as far as possible from her" (p. 373). Now if Mr. Walsh really believes,

¹ The Guardian, Jan. 18, 1899.

and he so represents himself, that God has actually commanded us to separate ourselves as far as possible from the Church of Rome, we have here the key to his regarding, as Dr. Sanday points out, "everything that has any resemblance to the practice of the Church of Rome as wrong." Putting ourselves for the moment, therefore, in Mr. Walsh's place, we can readily sympathize with him in the view he takes of the Oxford Movement, and, looking at the present crisis in the Church of England through *his* spectacles, we should be inclined to join him in opposing what he evidently imagines to be almost a *National* apostasy. But then we cannot but momentarily put ourselves in Mr. Walsh's place, neither can we look at the present situation through his spectacles, except he were to concede that what we see through them is a mere matter of imagination. He evidently is so much in earnest, however, that he is not likely to concede this latter; therefore, we cannot do the former, since we unhesitatingly assert that no modern scholar of repute can be found to see in modern Rome the Babylon of the Apocalypse. That the Babylon of the Apocalypse means Rome, is very likely,—not Christian, but rather heathen Rome, however, as Haydn's Bible Dictionary, Hammond, and other commentators point out.

To this recognition of the position from which Mr. Walsh has written his protest against the Oxford Movement, we would call the attention of the reader, as well as to the lack of knowledge of Anglican theology so conspicuous throughout his volume. Nor must we neglect to point out the extravagant statements of Mr. Walsh as to the *thousands* of Ritualistic clergymen who at the present time are following Mr. Faber's example; the *thousands* of nominally English clergymen who are teaching the Romish form of Confession; and the *thousands* of parishes said to be in the hands of the Ritualists. There are but fourteen thousand parishes in England and Wales, and we are quite safe in saying that the greater proportion of these are quite untouched by Ritualistic novelties; there are but some twenty-three thousand clergy, and the majority of these are well-known to be loyal ministers of the Anglican Church.

A book, therefore, so strongly characterized by the weaknesses to which we have called attention, is not a volume which is calculated to have much weight with the thinking public after the first flush of excitement caused by the reading of another work on the Oxford Movement has passed away; and we therefore repeat at the close of our more detailed observations what we stated at the end of our general summary, viz., that Mr. Walsh's "Secret History of the Oxford Movement" is not likely to go down to posterity as an indispensable treatise on the subject with which it deals.

In closing this review, we think it well to refer once more to the hint given to the Norwich memorialists by their diocesan. He reminded them that there had ever been two tendencies of mind in the church, and that "the vast mass of churchmen are firmly resolved that neither

party shall be permitted to extrude the other." Now in these true and wise words of Dr. Sheepshanks, we have a just condemnation of Mr. Walsh's entire volume. Written exclusively from the point of view of a partisan, he appears to ignore the fact that there exists by right another tendency of mind in the Church of England besides his own, and that of the party to which he belongs. Indeed, we are safe in saying that his party views as contrary to the spirit of the Church of England the existence of this other tendency of mind. Canon Garratt, a typical Low-churchman, is reported in the *Guardian*¹ as again advocating the repeal of the Acts of Uniformity. He candidly concedes that this would cause a disruption of the church on the part of those who regard episcopacy as essential to a valid, or at least a regular, ordination; but, recognizing that this repeal would bring us in this matter "into line with all other Protestant churches," he calmly asserts that "we might weigh the gain against the loss without dismay." Now this is not the place to discuss the merits of episcopacy. It is sufficient for us to remind our readers that the combined Anglican episcopate has publicly recorded their opinion that, from their standpoint, episcopacy is essential to Christian unity. The repeal, therefore, advocated by Canon Garratt, and evidently fully indorsed by his party, is opposed to the view of the entire Anglican hierarchy. The Low-church school apparently cares nothing for this. They seem to think that their own view of matters alone represents the teaching of the Church of England. It is this opinion which characterizes Mr. Walsh's entire volume. In the hands of the thoughtful reader this will prove its chief weakness; while in the hands of the ill informed its chief strength. All true churchmen, however, may rest confidently in the assurance of the Bishop of Norwich, that the mass of churchmen are firmly resolved that neither party shall extrude the other. We candidly admit that the Church of England is at present passing through a severe crisis; but we may see, in the words of the Bishop of Norwich, a prophecy that God will bring good out of the trouble which is at present besetting an institution which has done such signal service in the cause of Christ as the Church of England.

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¹Jan. 25, 1899, p. 115.