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## Book Review of *Charles Gore: Radical Anglican*, by P. M. Waddell

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This very helpful volume presents selected writings of Charles Gore (1853-1932), the leading proponent of Anglican liberal Catholicism in his era. These excerpts are arranged by chapters on God, Jesus Christ, the Church and the sacraments, 'Being Anglican', the Bible, ethics and politics, and spirituality. Peter Waddell opens the collection of readings from Gore with six 'vignettes' or stories of Gore as seen or recalled by others, providing helpful perspectives into Gore's life and character.

Waddell's introduction acknowledges that 'this book is a celebration of Gore' (p. xxix). Waddell notes that Gore offered 'a seamless vision of how theology, Christology, ecclesiology, sacraments, Scripture, ethics and politics all flowed into each other' (p. xxxv). Waddell clearly acknowledges the 'reasons to be cautious' concerning Gore's thought, so the celebration is not uncritical (p. xxix). In this regard, for example, Waddell challenges Gore's belief in the historicity of the New Testament, and notes that Gore's doctrine of apostolic succession is not required by scripture.

Waddell identifies Gore as a prophet who sought to bring catholic faith into right relation with modern thought, especially biblical criticism. He denied that biblical criticism undermined Christianity. Gore was editor and a contributor for the *Lux Mundi* collection of essays (1889), and the ensuing controversy over *Lux Mundi*

may well have 'scarred' Gore for life. However, Waddell states that it is unfair to blame Gore's 'unbending conservatism with regard to New Testament criticism and his later episcopal stance as the jealous guardian of orthodoxy' on his bitter experience in the Lux Mundi controversy. Instead, Waddell notes that Gore 'indicated the limits of acceptable doctrinal diversity' as early as his 1887 booklet *The Clergy and the Creeds*, and Gore 'never wavered in that judgement thereafter' (p. xxi).

The point with which Waddell does not fully engage is that Gore did not allow the same freedom of theological exploration by others that he claimed for himself. As a diocesan bishop, Gore was in a position to respond to theological challenges in his jurisdiction with episcopal authority instead of reason and persuasion. His liberal Catholicism was not liberal to those who disagreed with him. B. H. Streeter complained that Gore attempted to stop him and his generation from doing for their time what Gore did for his era. This irony in Gore's life and work should be addressed.

Waddell includes a quotation from Streeter concerning Gore's 'turning out of the church those people whose attitude towards theological thought or towards the recognition of non-conformists went an inch further than his sectarian conception of Anglo-Catholicism would allow' (p. xxxiii). This was in the context of Streeter's discussion of how Gore would have made the Church of England a 'sect'. Waddell acknowledges that Gore would have made 'a tighter, purer, smaller Church of England' (p. xxxiii), but he does not address the irony of Gore as a liberal Catholic bishop and theologian who was at times not liberal with others.

Waddell concludes his introduction with a section devoted to the question 'so why read Gore today?' Along with several other convincing reasons, Waddell notes that Gore was truly a prophet who warned his nation and his Church that they were inviting God's judgment:

A nation that ran on greed and competition, that trampled on the dignity of the worker and neglected the poor, was headed for degradation. A church complicit in national sin, uncertain of its faith, adrift from its deep roots in the ancient Catholic pattern of Scripture, sacraments, creed, and ministry, lacking the clarity and vigour to say a clear 'no' when required, would also fall under judgment. (p. xxxvii)

Waddell's volume is a helpful work that may introduce another generation to Gore's liberal Catholic contribution to theology. This reviewer hopes that Waddell will soon write his own monograph on Gore and consider more deeply the questions that he has raised. St Catharine College, KY Robert B. Slocum