

Introduction

Anglican theology credits itself with two features that most of the Western theological tradition might as easily term defects. First, it possesses no tradition of defined, conciliar dogmatic formulations against which the writings of any individual or school may be judged. Second, it possesses no individual who is regarded as the founder of a unique Christian theological tradition held in common by all members of the community. It does not have Trent or Vatican I, nor does it have Calvin or Luther.

Anglicanism has as its common heritage two distinctive documents, the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*. Both were originally open to alteration, though only the *Prayer Book* can rightly be said to have developed. The *Thirty-nine Articles* never developed much, but they ground Anglican doctrinal developments in the specific heritage of the English Reformation. On the whole, it is possible to argue that the *Thirty-nine Articles* are decidedly Protestant, while it is equally possible to argue that the *Prayer Book* is rather Catholic; but what is of much greater importance than that age-old debate is that until at least the end of the nineteenth century every English Anglican theologian was bound to take those two documents into account, and to defend his theology in terms of its acceptability within their framework. Since the *Prayer Book* and the *Thirty-nine Articles* are, in many ways, opposed documents, the task of doing Anglican theology was never uncontroversial.

It is superficial to argue that Anglicanism has always contained just two parties, one Catholic, the other Protestant. The history of Anglicanism will not bear such an interpretation. From the beginning of the English Reformation every strain of Christian theology has been present. The English Reformation was built upon the Lutheran and Calvinist traditions (though

there was some early Zwinglian influence); and the reforming party itself was split from the beginning. Both factions were solifidian, both believed in the unique primacy of scripture, but on the questions of individual predestination and the efficacy of sacraments there was little unanimity.

Within a generation the Catholic influence reappeared in the person of Richard Hooker. Hooker was deeply sensible of the medieval tradition, as well as the traditions of the patristic age and the Reformers. Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Anglicanism's first great theological work, brought all three traditions to bear on the emerging Anglican theology. The Catholic mindedness apparent in Hooker came to the fore in the episcopate of William Laud. Laudian High Churchmen revived interest in Anglicanism's Catholic heritage and were, in many ways, the founders of the High Church party.

The seventeenth century produced not only Laudian churchmanship and the Caroline divines, but the English Puritans, the Cambridge Platonists, the Latitudinarians, and the Non-Jurors. By the end of that century English churchmen were bitterly divided. The accession of William and Mary brought the Latitudinarians to power in the person of John Tillotson, but the Catholic tradition did not completely disappear.

William and Mary brought not only greater political stability, but greater latitude and stability in religion. The Church, so often in conflict with the crown, became more of an arm of government. The result, in terms of Church life, was that peculiar eighteenth-century settlement that few find interesting and even fewer find laudable. Doctrinal disputes gave way to settled, refined living. Richard Church provided a picture of that period which was hardly enthusiastic:

The idea of clerical life had certainly sunk, both in fact and in the popular estimate of it. The disproportion between the purposes for which the Church with its ministry was founded and the actual tone of feeling among those responsible for its service had become too great. Men were afraid of principles; the one thing they most shrank from was the suspicion of enthusiasm. Bishop Lavington wrote a book to hold up to scorn the enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists; and what would have seemed reasonable and natural in matters of religion and worship in the age of Cranmer, in the age of Hooker, in the age of Andrews, or in the age of Ken, seemed extravagant in the age which reflected the spirit of Tillotson and Secker, and even Porteus . . . But the fortunes of the Church are not safe in the hands of a clergy, of which a great part take their obligations easily. It was

slumbering and sleeping when the visitation of days of change and trouble came upon it.¹

Out of that context came the fiery zeal of Evangelicalism, first in the Methodists, then in those who became the Evangelical party in the Church of England. Selena, Countess of Huntingdon, gathered around her salon the likes of Watts, Doddridge, Whitefield, Newton,² and the Venns. As this

1. Church, *The Oxford Movement*, 10f. Cf. J. C. D. Clark's compelling chapter "Church, Parties, and Politics." Clark gives a more nuanced perspective on the rationalism of the eighteenth century than Church offers here, suggesting Church's account may contain some of the classic tropes and assumptions the Tractarians held about the eighteenth-century Church. As we introduce R. W. Church into this narrative, we should pause to note that Church remained a devoted friend of Newman's (and vice versa) until death, and their deaths came within months of one another in 1890. Church therefore serves as more of a primary text eyewitness to movement than a secondary historical analysis of it. Indeed, Church did not seem to intend to write a history of the Oxford Movement so much as a memoir of what he and many saw as the most significant constitutive time in what was a history that began at least ten years before 1833. Peter Nockles would, we think, argue for a much earlier date (see Nockles masterful introduction to the historiographical issues in his *The Oxford Movement in Context*), as the authors here have done by going back at least half the way to 1760 and carrying the line until at least the 1880s. It is fair to say that Church kept Newman at the very center of the narrative and, of course, figured heavily in Newman's censure being suppressed. Church was on his way out of Oxford just after R. I. Wilberforce delivered his work on the incarnation and preached his university sermon "The Sacramental System" [published in *Sermons on the New Birth of Man's Nature*], all this a few years after 1845. He would not set to work on assembling his Oxford Movement papers until the 1880s, while in Oxford Gore was looking forward to a new birth of modern scholarship. All this is to say that in our work we have chosen not to dig deeply into the historiographical questions and scholarship surrounding Church's memory of the sequence and importance of people and events, let alone institutions and cultures; rather we accept Church for who and what he was, a man of his time for whom the later questions might not have been so pressing. True, he would always choose for friend and moment. These qualities, we think, along with his undoubted abilities, was what led Gladstone to hold him in Whatley until St. Paul's Deanery was vacant. Church was not only a part of the Oxford Movement, and even though he wrote no tracts or serious studies during that time (save for his translation of Cyril of Jerusalem's *Catechetical Lectures* in the Library of the Fathers), he held to its principles and beliefs, remained in contact with its core leaders, and lived its piety. His daughter Mary edited a volume of his *Life and Letters* which provides an admittedly affectionate view of the course of his life and the depth of his integrity. The importance of this volume lies not only in its record of events, but also in its preservation of his correspondence which is the proof of the consistency of his faith, friendship, and devotion to the principles and players in the movement of 1833.

2. Present-day sensitivities require noting that John Newton, best remembered as the writer of the text "Amazing Grace," as a result of his conversion gave up the slave trade and took up the ministry (thus his association with Wilberforce). However, Adam Hochschild reminds us in *Bury the Chains* that Newton continued to own the ship that he had previously captained. We have avoided Simeon because he is rather *sui generis*. Yes, he is influenced by and associated with the elder Venn of Yelling, but he remains a

Evangelical Party splintered, the Clapham Sect emerged as the dominant force in religio-political terms, including as it did the great statesman, William Wilberforce, Henry and John Venn, and abolitionist Henry Thornton. Best remembered for the abolition of the slave trade, the religious outlook of the “sect” reached great numbers of the clergy. Its main theological opposition came from the lesser known Hackney Phalanx, which did include a significant number of the orthodox Anglican establishment and holders of important ecclesiastical appointments. Joshua and John Watson. H. H. Norris and others made an important contribution to the Tractarians of the next generation by founding the *British Critic*, which would become a major organ of the Oxford Movement.

Party designations in the Church of England present an ongoing problem for any reader of Anglican theology. Low Church, High Church, Evangelical, Broad Church, and Liberal are among the designations commonly applied to the various parties. Such labels are as dangerous as they are helpful. They aid the reader in determining some broad categories in which various writers may be placed, but they are dangerous in that from one period to the next certain doctrinal opinions may shift from one party to another. For instance, the Latitudinarians of the late seventeenth century were undoubtedly Low Churchmen regarding the doctrines of the church and sacraments. By the early nineteenth century, the Latitudinarian doctrine of the church would be categorized as Liberal, while their doctrine of the sacraments (such as it was) would be thought more Evangelical than Low. Likewise, as will be seen in the body of this volume, both Bishop Bull and Archbishop Laurence were considered High Churchmen of their respective times, but their opinions on justification and sanctification were hardly similar.

In the last and current centuries it has been common to speak of Low, Middle, and High, or Evangelical, Broad, and Anglo-Catholic, but in the era with which this work is concerned Low does not equal Evangelical, there is no Middle in the sense of Broad (Liberal is not the equivalent of Broad), and High is certainly a more comprehensive designation than Anglo-Catholic. Indeed, the period from 1800 to 1885 is the time in which many of the old designations found new definitions. Dean Church preferred the two-fold distinction of “orthodox Churchmen” and the “religious party”—everyone else and the Evangelicals. He then divided the “orthodox Churchmen” into High Churchmen and everyone else (presumably Low Churchmen and the few Liberals). This last group of everyone else was commonly thought of as the Calvinists, though they held only a very mild doctrine of individual predestination, if

rather interior character and he is more difficult to categorize. He was quite persecuted in his College at Cambridge.

they held that doctrine at all. The use of “Calvinist” as a designation presents another problem, however, since the High Churchmen often referred to everyone other than themselves as Calvinists.

Some effort is required, therefore, to make a little sense out of the parties which existed in the Church of England at about 1800 lest what follows be incomprehensible. The Evangelicals—Church’s “religious party”—placed their greatest emphasis on the doctrine of conversion, which yielded a sense of being justified. The first Anglican Evangelicals were Calvinists. They held strong doctrines of election and reprobation. Later Evangelicals, however, were almost uniformly anti-Calvinist. The Evangelicals were constantly accused of antinomianism, and were derided as zealots.

The “orthodox Churchmen” who were not High Churchmen held that the church was a body composed of believers in Christ, governed in a number of possible ways, one of which was through the ministry of bishops. They tended to place their greatest emphasis on the instrumentality of faith in justification and sanctification. They did not demean the sacraments, but they were generally sacramentally unconcerned. They held that baptismal regeneration required accompanying faith and was therefore almost never possible in infants. Though often called Calvinists, they were mostly opponents of any notion of predestined eternal damnation, though most held some mild doctrine of individual election.

High Churchmen viewed the church as the divinely constituted body of Christ, the mystical body over which God had set bishops as the visible embodiment of the ministry of Christ and his apostles. Some, like Laurence, held to justification by faith alone, while others, like Alexander Knox, held to a doctrine of infused righteousness. Most held that infant baptism was regenerating in every case.

Throughout these brief descriptions of the parties of the Church of England many qualifications have been introduced. At times it appears that theology in the Church of England can be reduced to a series of cases of one. This is not true, but neither is it true that all members of a given party agreed on even fairly fundamental theological points. All this will become obvious in the first chapter, which deals with the doctrines of grace and its means in the period just prior to The Oxford Movement. Historically this period runs from about 1775 to 1832.³

3. A great advance in our appreciation and understanding of this era was made by Peter Nockles in his deep study *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760–1857*. His masterful historiography is complemented by the breadth of Lawrence Crumb’s 936-page *The Oxford Movement and Its Leaders: A Bibliography of Secondary and Lesser Primary Sources*.

The heart of this volume is in chapters 2, 3, and 4. These deal with E. B. Pusey, J. H. Newman, and R. I. Wilberforce. They represent the development of the Anglican theology of grace, its means, and its basis in the incarnation. It has been commonly held that Tractarian theology was a function of its piety, that the deep religiosity of the Tractarians led them to investigate the grounds of the religion that they practiced; nothing was further from the truth. The long noticed and often admired piety of the Tractarians came from their *theology*, as will become evident in the heart of this volume.

Chapter 5 deals with the critics and opponents of The Oxford Movement. Not all High Churchmen were enamored of the Tractarians. Others—Evangelicals, Liberals, Low Churchmen—became the active opponents of The Oxford Movement, seeing in it dangers both to theology and piety. Chapter 6 employs two related examples to demonstrate that The Oxford Movement expressed its theology in founding a new style of church life in England, which was much more than ritualistic; indeed, which helped to blaze the trail of concerned Christian social action.

Finally, before moving on to the substance of this work, three other points will aid the reader in understanding what follows. First, there are three terms that will be used to designate the main characters and the opinions that they expressed—Tractarian, Oxford Movement, and Anglo-Catholic. It would be tempting to restrict the use of Tractarian to those few who actually wrote the *Tracts for the Times*, but that sense would be too narrow.

Tractarian is employed here to designate those individuals who were a part of the early days of The Oxford Movement, and who tended to remain within the company of one another until at least the mid-1840s. The Oxford Movement is used to describe the slightly larger company of those who gathered around the Tractarians and supported them within the University. The Oxford Movement also denotes that body of ideas and actions that gave rise to the new style of church life emerging in the 1830s and '40s. Anglo-Catholic, on the other hand, is used to describe the movement as it left the precincts of the University and became a part of the wider life of the Church of England. Anglo-Catholics, as a group, are the second and succeeding generations who inherited the theology and piety of the Tractarians.

Secondly, so many histories of the events of The Oxford Movement exist that little material relating to the events themselves has been included in the text; however, a note of caution is in order. Until well into the last century it was a common opinion that The Oxford Movement ceased on that day in 1845 when Newman met Father Dominic, the Passionist, at Littlemore. Dean Church advanced this opinion so eloquently and forcefully that it found widespread acceptance. Among the effects of this was the almost total

neglect of the importance of R. I. Wilberforce, and the mistaken impression that many Tractarians went with Newman.

Another Tractarian, Isaac Williams, dealt with the issue of Newman's secession in this way:

It seems to be a popular notion that the original writers of the Tracts have generally joined the Church of Rome, and that therefore that movement of itself has been so far a failure; but this is very far from being the case, for it is a very remarkable circumstance, and one which I find very much strikes everyone to whom I have mentioned it, that out of all the writers in the "Tracts for the Times," one only has joined the Church of Rome.⁴

If we are to believe Williams, then Newman's real influence was with those who surrounded the Tractarians, those associated with the wider aspects of The Oxford Movement, and not with the original Tractarians themselves:

But what is most striking, there does not appear to have been any who associated with Newman on terms of equality, either from age, or position, or daily habitual intercourse, or the like, in unrestrained familiar knowledge, who have followed his example in seceding to the Roman Church, such I mean, as Fellows of Oriel, who lived with him (and some of them friends in the same staircase), as Rogers, Marriott, Church, the two Mozleys (his brothers-in-law), John Bowden, Copeland, J. F. Christie, Pusey, the Kebles.⁵

Williams' corrective is important, for it shows that The Oxford Movement did not end with Newman's departure, though it did change. Williams' point also leads to the final point of this introduction.

Newman looms so large in the history of English-speaking theological thought in the nineteenth century that his shadow has tended to obscure others and lead to the impression that he was the fulcrum of The Oxford Movement (again, the influence of Dean Church). The work before you strives to correct this impression by drawing attention to the ongoing importance of E. B. Pusey. The shy Regius Professor of Hebrew affected the religious consciences and lives of Oxford students and scholars for more than fifty years. Pusey endured great personal loss and persecution, but he continued to fight for the Tractarian cause with dogged determination.

4. Williams, *The Autobiography of Isaac Williams, B.D.*, 119f.

5. Williams, *The Autobiography of Isaac Williams, B.D.*, 121f.

His devotion to parochial and conventual life imbued his allies with the courage to practice Catholic piety amid scorn and derision. Pusey's personal piety framed the ideals of Anglo-Catholic church life, as his writings had suggested the topics for his colleagues to pursue. Pusey was The Oxford Movement's steady rock, Newman was its adventurer, Wilberforce was its philosopher. The three together brought a new life to Anglican theology.

SAMPLE