

Prologue

Anglicanism: Reformed and Catholic

As the former Orthodox Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, Methodios Fouyas, said: “Anglicanism is not a Protestant Church, but a reformed Catholic Church . . .”¹ Indeed, Anglicanism is hard to place in the world of “denominations.” It is neither simply Protestant nor is it simply Catholic. Since its “inception” (if we may use the term) by Henry VIII, the Church of England has embraced *both* the Reformation *and* the medieval tradition, avoiding the Tridentine and Protestant extremes.² Anglicanism preserved herself from the extreme Reformational solifidian focus on Galatians and Romans, etc., and the extreme counter-reformational strict doctrinal way of looking at tradition by (unlike many of the Protestant churches)³ never rejecting the biblical interpretations of the church fathers (Richard Hooker and Lancelot Andrewes come to mind as illustrative examples of an Anglican way of interpreting the Bible in light of the church fathers and medievals and ending up as a *via media*, avoiding Protestant and Roman extremes)⁴ and not completely setting aside

1. See Fouyas, *Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Anglicanism*, 88.

2. Although as it developed, Anglicanism also swayed to the extremes of Protestantism and Catholicism. See Hooft, *Anglo-Catholicism and Orthodoxy*, 21: “Protestantism was never more dominant in the Church of England than at the time when the Oxford Movement began” (Canon Lacey). It may be more accurately said that the Anglican *via media* of Hooker, Andrews, and the later Oxford Movement was forged because of these extreme poles.

3. This is the so-called *via media*.

4. See Diarmaid MacCulloch’s phenomenal “Richard Hooker’s Reputation” in *All Things Made New*, 279–320 for an account of Hooker as encapsulating the *via media*.

the understandings of the first 500 years of Christianity. In other words, the English Reformation is, rather uniquely for the time, not reactionary, partly attributable to the place of the two great universities of Oxford and Cambridge, which in many ways served as the heart of the English Church until the twentieth century. In short, the English church never forgot that it is in line with the patristic church and medieval church.⁵

The Oxford Movement emerges into the English church in this context. Their recovery of sacramental reality and efficacy, auricular confession, and union with Christ was indeed not anything novel for the English church, although it had indeed been forgotten for a while. Thus, The Oxford Movement recovered something very traditional for English Christianity: a medieval and patristic theology and practice. Yet, in recovering a very patristic and medieval way of being Christian into a church that went through the Reformation, The Oxford Movement, like the English Reformation itself, avoids the extreme solifidian and works-righteousness poles of the Reformation and Trent respectively and in some ways this shows how The Oxford Movement cuts behind the Semi-Pelagian/Augustinian controversy as it reappeared in the Protestant Reformation by arguing that God's grace undergirds justification and good works, rather than distinguishing the two in a polarized fashion.⁶ In so doing, The Oxford Movement recovers and, indeed, reconstructs⁷ medieval English Christian thought and practice in light of the reformational doctrine of incarnational grace, making it one of *the* great moments in the history of the Christian church and shaping the character and charting the path for modern

5. Alister McGrath aptly noted that more generally European Protestant Christians have a sense of their continuity with the medieval church (at least more so than Christians from other parts of the world); with ruins of medieval churches and monasteries all around (not to mention the many parish churches dating from the medieval period), it is not difficult to imagine why. See McGrath, "Trinitarian Theology," 52.

6. See further Michael Ramsey's exceptional chapter "The Gospel and Church Order" in *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, 47–57. Ramsey's *via media* approach of avoiding these two extremes poles is incredibly indebted to the Oxford Movement and illustrative of the maturation of that approach. Ramsey's statement on the Papacy is representative: "A Papacy that expresses the general mind of the Church in doctrine and that focuses the organic unity of all the Bishops and of the whole Church might well claim to be a legitimate development in and through the Gospel. But a Papacy that claims to be a source of truth over and above the general mind of the Church and that wields an authority such as depresses the due working of the other functions of the One Body fails to fulfil the main tests." See p. 55. See also Yelton's *Anglican Papalism* for a definitive account of an Anglican stream that embraced the Papacy.

7. See Thomas F. Torrance, *Theology in Reconstruction* for a similar argument about Karl Barth and "reconstruction" of theology and practice in light of the Reformation and early church fathers.

Anglicanism as well as providing a template for how to do the Reformation well, namely, working towards ecumenical rapprochement by retrieving and reconstructing the catholic faith.

The Oxford Movement: An Anglican Theology of Retrieval

Another way to think about The Oxford Movement is (to use a more modern definition) as a “theology of retrieval.” According to the introduction of the recent collection of essays published as *Theologies of Retrieval*, “theologies of retrieval unsettle present discussions by offering resources from beyond the current horizon with a view toward enriching ongoing theological debates.”⁸ The Oxford Movement did this precisely: beginning with the issue of church and state and the appointment of bishops during the so-called “National Apostasy,” The Oxford Movement quickly moved beyond this to the issue of retrieving the medievals and patristics for application in the Church of England during the nineteenth century in order to understand its catholic nature in such areas as the doctrines of justification and sanctification, the eucharist, baptism, and devotional practices such as liturgy and auricular confession.

As such, The Oxford Movement’s retrieval spanned both theological (e.g., the doctrines of justification and sanctification) and practical (e.g., the eucharist and auricular confession) and, as Eamon Duffy was apt to put it in his recent and remarkable book on Newman:

The Oxford Movement succeeded beyond its wildest expectations. In little over a generation it was to transform the theology, preaching, worship, and even the architectural style of the Anglican Church: over the next century even conventionally middle-of-the-road parish churches were transformed from the preaching boxes of the eighteenth century into numinous settings for the celebration of ceremonial liturgy: village orchestras in the gallery gave way to surpliced choirs in the chancel, coloured stoles replaces black scarves, and Holy communion, once an occasional service happening four or five times a year, became a monthly or weekly event. Tractarianism was to be the single most important influence in shaping the character of the modern Anglican communion.⁹

8. Sarinsky (ed.), *Theologies of Retrieval*, 2.

9. Duffy, *John Henry Newman*, 9.

Anglicanism in the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries became marked by weekly celebrations of the eucharist, private confession, anointing for healing, a recovery of episcopal authority, and neo-gothic architecture. The Oxford Movement drove and undergirded all of this, whether acknowledged or not. Indeed, Anglicanism in England and beyond—even of the lowest variety—was forever changed by The Oxford Movement.

The Oxford Movement: One of the Great Movements of the Church

However, the influence and indeed importance of The Oxford Movement's retrieval goes far beyond Anglicanism and deserves to be placed as one of *the* great movements in church history. In her book, *The Great Emergence*, Phyllis Tickle—a key figure in the so-called Emergent Church Movement of the early 2000s—argues that every 500 years or so the church goes through a great upheaval and reformation of sorts out of which a key moment or movement in church history occurs.¹⁰ Tickle's ultimate point is contemporary: she wants to argue that currently (i.e. in the early twenty-first century, with the emergence of The Emergent Church), the church has reached the most recent iteration of these once-every-500-year moments. Working backwards, therefore, she argues that the Reformation was another such moment, as was the rise of the high Middle Ages, and the period of the ecumenical councils in the East, 500 and 1,000 years respectively. Compelling as Tickle's argument is (and this is certainly not to disagree with her), it does reveal a notably Protestant emphasis on the Reformation of the sixteenth century.¹¹ Whilst, on the one hand, one cannot argue with Tickle about the significance of the Reformation for world history, on the other hand if her clearly Protestant lens is removed and replaced by a more ecumenical one, her 500 year cycle could look a bit different, for example: the fourth century and the First Council of Nicaea follows 500 years later with the eighth and ninth centuries and the iconoclastic controversy which then leads 500 years later

10. See the whole book, but Tickle introduces the concept, referring to the Anglican Mark Dryer, in Tickle, *The Great Emergence*, 9.

11. As the Edinburgh theologian Thomas F. Torrance says his *Memorandum A on Orthodox Reformed Relations* (an important document inaugurating The Orthodox-Reformed Theological Dialogue, an ecumenical movement of great importance of the late twentieth century), "The 'Reformed Church' does not set out to be a new or another Church but to be a movement of reform within the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church . . ." See Radcliff, *Thomas F. Torrance and the Orthodox-Reformed Theological Dialogue*, 129–43 for the text as well as the book more generally for an account of this ecumenical dialogue. In other words, the Reformation was not meant to be a big deal.

to the fourteenth century and high medieval scholasticism, ultimately fitting The Oxford Movement nicely into the most recent iteration of the 500 year cycle. Of course, one must not make too much of Tickle's 500 year cycle on the basis of chronology alone. Indeed, looking back at the key moments in church history (including Tickle's once-every-500-year-upheavals as well as the modified version discussed above), one could argue that the key moments in church history are the rediscoveries/emphases on God's grace in Jesus Christ, including the ecumenical councils, the Protestant Reformation, the Counter Reformation, as well as The Oxford Movement.

The Oxford Movement's Greatness: A Reconstruction of the Medieval Doctrine of Grace around the Incarnate Person of Jesus Christ

In 1948, Thomas F. Torrance, arguably one of the most important English-speaking theologians of the twentieth century,¹² published his dissertation entitled *The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers* at the suggestion and under the supervision of his beloved mentor Karl Barth, arguably the most important theologian of the twentieth century.¹³ Whereas Torrance would eventually depart from his early critique of the early fathers' doctrine of grace substantially,¹⁴ his argument that all the great movements of the church avoided "detach[ing] the thought of grace from the *person* of Christ"¹⁵ was an emphasis of his which he almost certainly learned from Barth. Torrance's forceful argument throughout his book is that for the New Testament authors—especially Paul—grace is "actualised in the person of Jesus Christ, with which grace is inseparably associated."¹⁶ Torrance argues that subse-

12. Torrance's importance ranges across the spectrum of theology and religion, ecumenical dialogue, dogmatic theology, Barthian theology, Scottish Theology, and, perhaps most important, the retrieval and reconstruction of the church tradition. See Radcliff, *Thomas F. Torrance and the Church Fathers* as well as Myk Habets' excellent intro to the recent republication of *Trinitarian Faith* and his excellent *Theology in Transposition* for recent appraisals of Torrance's importance in this regard. More generally, see the recently published *T. & T. Handbook of Thomas F. Torrance* edited by Paul Molnar and Myk Habets for an outline of Torrance's theology and relevance.

13. See Hunsinger, *Reading Barth with Charity* and von Balthasar, *Karl Barth* for appraisals from a Reformed and Catholic perspective, respectively. Pope Pius XII said Barth was "the greatest theologian since Thomas Aquinas." No small praise! See, e.g., Gorringe, *Karl Barth*, 316.

14. See, e.g., *Trinitarian Faith*.

15. Torrance, *The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers*, v.

16. See Torrance, *The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers*, 34 for the quote, but more generally 1–35 for this argument and indeed the entire book.

quent church history goes wrong whenever it forgets that grace is inextricably associated with the person of Christ (e.g., Arianism, scholastic theology, and Westminster Calvinism, all of which in Torrance's mind proffer some version of "created grace" or at least grace which is problematically disconnected from the person of Christ).¹⁷ For Torrance, the key movements of the church can be found in connecting the dots between the movements in church history that emphasized God's grace as inherent to the person of Jesus Christ as a sort of "golden thread" of church history.¹⁸

This is a point with which the best-selling Episcopalian author Robert Farrar Capon and one of the greatest champions of the doctrine of grace would wholeheartedly agree. Capon, in his book *Between Noon and Three*, says:

The Reformation was a time when men went blind, staggering drunk because they had discovered, in the dusty basement of late medievalism, a whole cellarful of 1500-year-old, 200-proof grace-of bottle after bottle of pure distillate of Scripture, one sip of which would convince anyone that God saves us single-handedly.¹⁹

For Capon, the rediscovery of grace by the Reformers is what makes the Protestant Reformation so unique and important.

Combining Capon and Torrance and modifying Tickle's chronological schema to a more thematic one, one could argue that the emphasis on unconditional grace inherent to the person of Jesus Christ is the hallmark of the key moments throughout church history. Athanasius and the Council of Nicaea emphasized God's grace as present in Christ himself via their emphasis on the doctrine of *homoousion*,²⁰ Anselm and later scholasticism applied this to the connection between faith and reason by saying the former undergirds the latter,²¹ the Reformation applied this to the grace of God by saying it is God himself who saves not human works or "created

17. See Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*, "Karl Barth and the Latin Heresy," and *Scottish Theology*, respectively. In short, by calling the Son created, by defining grace as created, and by rooting "election" in God's decrees, Arianism, Scholasticism, and Westminster Calvinism all dualistically separate grace from the person of Christ, according to Torrance.

18. See Radcliff, *Thomas F. Torrance and the Church Fathers*, 115ff.

19. Capon, *Between Noon and Three*, 114.

20. One could argue this point was the crux of all seven of the great ecumenical councils of the church, held in the east from the fourth through eighth centuries, especially the doctrine of the *hypostatic union*.

21. See e.g. Eugene Fairweather's introduction to *A Scholastic Miscellany*, 17–32, especially 31–32. Anselm's *Fides Quarens Intellectum* could certainly be read this way.

grace,”²² Karl Barth applied this to God’s Word and the doctrine of election in the mid-twentieth century with his multi-volume *Church Dogmatics*,²³ and Vatican II and such luminaries as von Balthasar, Ratzinger, and Rahner applied this to the life of the Roman Catholic Church, especially the doctrine of the Trinity and the departure from neo-scholasticism in the Roman Catholic seminaries in the 1960s.²⁴

To this list of movements centered on the doctrine of grace as inherent to the person of Jesus Christ, the authors of this book would add The Oxford Movement. In exploring Pusey, Newman, Wilberforce, and their doctrines of justification and sanctification and their application in church life, this book illustrates why The Oxford Movement deserves to be placed in this grace-based line as one of *the* key movements in church history, not least Anglicanism. *Grace and Incarnation* tells the story of Pusey, Newman, Wilberforce (and others) and their rediscovery of a doctrine of grace inherent to the incarnate person of Jesus Christ, a doctrine of grace that articulates grace as divine and personal rather than created and static, a doctrine of grace that says it is God alone who saves, God alone who justifies, and God alone who communicates God’s very self through the sacraments because it is Christ himself acting and communicating himself by the Holy Spirit in salvation and sanctification, and offering himself to us through the sacraments.

Grace and Incarnation

Grace and Incarnation explores the theological debates of this period in Anglican and wider church history as well as the practical applications in church ministry they undergirded, arguing that The Oxford Movement, particularly the doctrine of grace as inherent to the person of Christ they rediscovered and the medieval and patristic figures and ideas they retrieved on this basis, is among the great movements of church history, furthermore placing Anglicanism itself from early figures such as Hooker and Laud through to The Oxford Movement and beyond as an essential piece and moment in the story of the church and of Christianity.

22. As Torrance states: “the divine Giver and the divine Gift are one and the same. At the Reformation that Nicene principle was applied not only to the Word of God and to the Spirit of God but also to the grace of God.” See Torrance, *Preaching Christ Today*, 20. Calvin’s *Institutes* could be read as making this point above all else.

23. Barth’s *The Word of God and the Word of Man* as well as his very early *The Epistle to the Romans* also make this point.

24. See the *Documents of Vatican II* as well as Karl Rahner’s *The Trinity*. See also Fergus Kerr’s *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*.

Ultimately, the book therefore points to The Oxford Movement as an embodiment of ecumenical renewal: the Reformation's end was not to create a new church but rather a movement of reform by grace. The English Reformation has, at its best, embodied this impetus. This book shows how Pusey, Newman, Wilberforce, and The Oxford Movement embodied this impulse and therefore the best of the English Reformation in their applying the doctrine of grace and Christology to patristic and medieval doctrines of justification and sanctification, reforming them by the grace of God. The Oxford Movement's rediscovery of Anglicanism's catholic nature serves as an example to all churches stemming from the Protestant Reformation and indeed an encouragement for all churches to rediscover and retrieve their own catholic roots with an eye towards ecumenical renewal and reunion.

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