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The Oxford Movement a Hundred Years Ago

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The Oxford Movement a Hundred Years Ago.

The Anglican Church and its daughter, the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, are with much enthusiasm observing this year the centennial of what is known as the Oxford Movement, or Tractarianism. In many of their congregations undoubtedly the date selected for commemorative exercises is July 14;. for Cardinal Newman, one of the chief promoters of the movement, writes in his famous *Apologia pro Vita Sua:* "The following Sunday, July 14, Mr. Keble preached the assize sermon in the university pulpit. It was published under the title of 'National Apostasy.' I have ever considered and kept the day as the start of the religious movement of 1833." (Edition of Longmans, Green & Co., p. 35.) On a grand scale American Episcopalians will observe the anniversary this fall by holding what they term "The American Centenary Congress," which is to meet in Philadelphia October 22—26. The Bishop of Pennsylvania, the Right Reverend Francis M. Taitt, so a correspondent of the *Living Church* informs us, has been appointed honorary president by the Centenary Committee, the mayor of Philadelphia will serve as one of its members, and other prominent men are lending a hand. As a result we shall hear much of the old Oxford Movement this summer, and though there is no dearth of books and articles on this subject, a new review of its beginning, its salient features and lessons, will not be amiss. In passing I cannot suppress the remark that old Oxford, far-famed for its beauty and its great university, has a remarkable way of startling the world every hundred years with a special religious offering. Two hundred years ago Methodism was born there through the endeavors of the Wesleys and Whitefield; one hundred years ago the movement we are proposing to consider was launched there, and now, after the lapse of another century, we again have an Oxford Movement on our hands, usually referred to as Buchmanism.

I.

To understand the Tractarian Movement of 1833, one must be somewhat acquainted with religious conditions which at that time obtained in the Church of England. Perhaps no one has given a more brilliant description of them than Dean Church in his monograph *The Oxford Movement 1833—1845*, from which I shall quote some particularly illuminating sentences. This writer, I ought to add, not only was an Oxford man himself, but as an undergraduate when the movement set in was personally acquainted with most of its leaders and, generally speaking, in sympathy with the views they advocated. "At the end of the first quarter of the century, say about 1825—30, two characteristic forms of Church of England Christianity were popularly recognized. One inherited the traditions of a learned and sober Anglicanism, claiming as the authorities for its theology the great line of English divines from Hooker to Waterland, . . . preaching, without passion or excitement, scholarlike, careful, wise, often vigorously reasoned discourses on the capital points of faith and morals and exhibiting in its adherents, who were many and important, all the varieties of a great and far-descended school, which claimed for its rightful possession all the ground which it held. . . . The divinity which it propounded, though it rested on learning, was rather that of a strong common sense than of the schools of erudition. Its better members were highly cultivated, benevolent men, intolerant both of doctrine and life, whose lives were governed by an unostentatious, but solid and unfaltering piety, ready to burst forth on occasion into fervid devotion. Its worst members were jobbers and hunters after preferment, pluralists (*i. e.*, incumbents of more than one parish), who built fortunes and endowed families out of the Church, or country gentlemen in orders, who rode to hounds and shot and danced and farmed and often did worse things. Its average was what naturally in England would be the average, in a state of things in which great religious institutions have been for a long time settled and unmolested — kindly, helpful, respectable, sociable persons of good sense and character, workers rather in a fashion of routine which no one thought of breaking, sometimes keeping up their university learning and apt to employ it in odd and not very profitable inquiries; apt, too, to value themselves on their cheerfulness and quick wit, but often dull and dogmatic and quarrelsome, often insufferably pompous. The custom of daily service and even of fasting was kept up more widely than is commonly supposed." There were some great scholars in this branch of the Church whom our writer enumerates; but "there was as yet no atmosphere in the public mind in which the voice of this theology could be heard." It was this class of orthodox churchmen who were criticized "as dry, unspiritual, formal, unevangelical, self-righteous." (Page 9 ff.)

Quite different was the party which bore the engaging name "Evangelical" and of the members of which Dean Church says that they were "abused as Calvinists or laughed at as saints." Charaterizing this party, he says: "The one thing by which its preachers carried disciples with them was their undoubted and serious piety and their brave, though often fantastic and inconsistent, protest against the world. They won consideration and belief by the mild persecution which this protest brought on them — by being proscribed as enthusiasts by comfortable dignitaries and mocked as 'Methodists' and 'Saints' by wits and worldlings. . . . It had led Howard and Elizabeth Fry to assail the brutalities of the prisons. It had led Clarkson and Wilberforce to overthrow the slave-trade and ultimately slavery itself. It had created great missionary societies. It had given motive and impetus to countless philanthropic schemes. . . . It too often found its guarantee for faithfulness in jealous suspicions and in fierce bigotries, and at length it presented all the characteristics of an exhausted teaching and a spent enthusiasm. Claiming to be exclusively spiritual, fervent, unworldly, the sole announcer of the free grace of God amid self-righteousness and sin, it had come, in fact, to be on very easy terms with the world. Yet it kept its hold on numbers of spiritual-minded persons; for in truth there seemed to be nothing better for those who saw in the affections the main field of religion. But even of these good men the monotonous language sounded to all but themselves inconceivably hollow and wearisome, and in the hands of the average teachers of the school the idea of religion was becoming poor and thin and unreal." (Page 13 ff.)

A third party was in the making, as Dean Church points out, one "strongly influenced by German speculation both in history and religion," represented, for instance, by Whately, Hare, Maurice, and Thomas Arnold, forming the so-called "liberal school of theology," the precursor of the present Broad Church party. Whately had stated views on the nature of the Church which sounded altogether pernicious to a High Churchman. Fisher (*History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 450), says of him: "He approximates to a congregational idea of the nature of the Church. He denies apostolic succession as not capable of proof and as not necessary to the valid exercise of the ministry." Thomas Arnold, the famous head of the School of Rugby, was still more definite in his rejection of the teaching on which the advocates of Romanizing views based their high pretensions. Both these men were leaders who commanded a large following. Meanwhile in the country at large the utilitarianism of Bentham was winning wide acceptance, as it was making "desperate attempts to take possession of the whole field of morals" (Church), joining itself to science, which was now coming into prominence. In a word, Liberalism, both of the right and of the wrong kind, was invading

the Established Church, and the hierarchically inclined could not but feel that their cause was greatly imperiled.

Accompanying these spiritual conditions was a political situation which had to be disquieting to Anglicans of the extreme right. In 1828 the Test Act was repealed by Parliament, and Dissenters, Protestants not belonging to the Established Church, were granted the right to hold public offices, an innovation which was considered a terrible blow by the champions of semi-Roman views. The next year, through the famous Catholic Emancipation Act, this law was extended to include even Roman Catholics, who in addition now were given the permission to become members of Parliament, which privilege in the past had been withheld from them, though not from Dissenters. Here again people thought one of the bulwarks of the Anglican Church had been demolished. When in 1832 the Reform Bill was passed, which enfranchized large numbers of Englishmen that before had been denied the right of voting, the ideals of the ultarconservative Churchmen received another severe jolt, inasmuch as every increase of power given the people involved an increase in the authority which it wielded over the Church, because the latter was subject to the will of Parliament. A similar blow was dealt when in the summer of 1833 Parliament reduced the number of Anglican bishops in Ireland from 22 to 12 by uniting the dioceses here and there, whereby incidentally the neat sum of sixty thousand pounds annually was saved. Earnest defenders of the political power of the Anglican Church called this measure the manifestation of Erastianism, the tendency to permit the State to dictate to the Church. Liberalism seemed to be growing and to be intruding everywhere. Newman says on this point: "The great Reform agitation was going on. . . . The Whigs had come into power; Lord Grey had told the bishops to set their house in order, and some of the prelates had been insulted and threatened in the streets of London. The vital question was how they were to keep the Church from being liberalized. There was such apathy on the subject in some quarters, such imbecile alarm in others; the true principles of Churchmanship seemed so radical, decayed, and there was such distraction in the councils of the clergy." (*Apologia*, p. 30.)

In the world of literature an impulse favorable to the Oxford Movement had quite unwittingly been furnished by the prince of novelists, Sir Walter Scott, who, as Newman says, "turned men's minds to the direction of the Middle Ages," and furthermore by Coleridge, "who instilled a higher philosophy into inquiring minds than they had hitherto been accustomed to accept; and by Southey and Wordsworth, who addressed themselves to the same high principles and feelings." (*Apol.*, p. 96 f.) One can indeed understand that the stimulating influences proceeding from these men would help to incline minds to the study of ritual and medieval history.

II.

It was in the midst of such conditions, while the bill concerning Irish bishoprics was pending in Parliament, that John Keble (1792—1866) preached the fiery sermon alluded to above. He was serving a church in Gloucestershire, but was connected with the University of Oxford by a lectureship in poetry. A modest, unassuming man he seems to have been, a poet of no mean parts, the author of the *Christian Year*, meant as a companion of the *Book of Common Prayer*, not at all a polemical work and yet breathing in its poetry a deep protest against Liberalism. His contemporaries and acquaintances speak of him as a person of sincere piety and great earnestness. The assize, or judgment, sermon of his, according to Dean Church, "was a call to face in the earnest the changed state of things, full of immediate and pressing danger; to consider how it was to be met by Christians and churchmen and to watch motives and tempers." In view of what Parliament was contemplating doing in Ireland, he pleaded with all whom his voice could reach to come to the rescue of the "Apostolic" Church. I shall transcribe a few of his words: "Surely it will be no unworthy principle if any man is more circumspect in his behavior, more watchful and fearful of himself, more earnest in his petitions for spiritual aid, from a dread of disparaging the holy name of the English Church in her hour of peril by his own personal fault and negligence. . . . These cautions [against neglect of ordinary duties] being duly observed, I do not see how any person can devote himself too entirely to the cause of the Apostolic Church in these realms. There may be, as far as he knows, but a very few to sympathize with him. . . . But if he be consistent, . . . he is calmly, soberly, demonstrably, sure that sooner or later his will be the winning side and that the victory will be complete, universal, eternal." When the sermon was printed and the foreword had to be drafted, the expected had come to pass — through amalgamation ten bishoprics had been eliminated in Ireland, and Keble, filled with indignation, entitled his sermon, as he now published it, "National Apostasy" and accused Parliament of having usurped the authority of the bishops and of having degraded the "Apostolic" Church to the status of "one sect among many," while he at the same time upbraided the whole nation with calm connivance at what had been perpetrated.

His strong language received particularly hearty endorsement from two friends, who, like him, were Oriel men of Oxford, J. H. Newman and R. H. Froude. The latter died in 1836, and though his influence at the beginning of the movement was very considerable, his ill health and early death kept him from attaining the prominence to which he seemed destined. John Henry Newman (1801—90) is by far the best-known of all the actors in this drama, and in his

Apologia, written when in 1864 Charles Kingsley had attacked his veracity, gave the world a much-admired account of the origin and progress of the Tractarian Movement. That he was a man of great learning and of splendid ability is conceded even by his opponents. When he in 1845 joined the Roman Catholic Church, a step which was not unexpected by his friends, England was shocked. His case will always stand in history as a warning to all who think that error can be guarded against, or vanquished, simply by erudition and intellectual greatness. "His silence and his speech, his plain words and dark sayings, his irony and sarcasm, his pride and his humility, his fierceness and his gentleness, his friendships and his antipathies, his isolation in the midst of devoted friends, his power to attract and to repel, made him always and to all an enigma of the greatest interest." (Cornish, *History of the Church of England*, p. 219 f.)

Since the movement is likewise known as Puseyism, it will strike the uninformed as strange that Pusey has not as yet been mentioned. The explanation is that he did not participate in the work of Keble, Froude, and Newman till the end of 1833. When he did join hands with them, they felt their cause had gained immensely. "It has been said that to the Oxford Movement Newman gave genius, Pusey learning, and Keble character." (Cornish, *op. cit.*, p. 216.) He was professor of Oriental languages at Oxford and was universally respected not only for the vast stores of knowledge which he, by dint of indefatigable industry, had acquired, but for his benefactions and Christian sincerity. To conservative scholars all over the world he has permanently endeared himself by his commentaries on Old Testament books, especially the one on Daniel, in which he, the attacks of renowned scholars notwithstanding, firmly adheres to the inspired character of these writings and brilliantly defends their divine origin. Newman pays him this remarkable tribute: "There was henceforth a man who could be the head and center of the zealous people in every part of the country who were adopting the new opinions; and not only so, but there was one who furnished the movement with a front to the world and gained for it a recognition from other parties in the university. . . . He was a man of large designs; he had a hopeful, sanguine mind; he had no fear of others; he was haunted by no intellectual perplexities." (*Apol.*, p. 61.)

At the next step in the development a few more eminent men identified with the movement come before us, three clergymen, Hugh Rose, William Palmer, and Arthur Perceval. Rose occupied a prominent position on account of his editorship of the *British Magazine* and his close connections with Cambridge University. Dean Church says of him: "As far as could be seen at the time, he was the most accomplished divine and teacher in the English Church." (*Op. cit.*, p. 96.) In his case, too, failing health and an early death (January,

1839) operated somewhat to make his share in the Oxford Movement less prominent than that of others. Palmer was an Oxford scholar, while Perceval was an energetic pastor, who subsequently got out a catechism called *Churchman's Manual*, which at the time created not a little stir. These three men were entirely in sympathy with Keble's position and, joined by Froude, met July 25—29, 1833, at the home of Rose at Hadleigh to decide on some course of action. Newman and Keble, though of course invited, were not present, having "no confidence in meetings or committees," as Palmer some years later put it. It was agreed at the conference "that combined action was desirable as well as the circulation of publications on ecclesiastical subjects. They did not, however, formulate any specific plan of action or come to a clear understanding among themselves." (Cornish, *op. cit.*, p. 232.) It was proposed to start an association of "friends of the Church." The plan soon was tried; but when it was brought to the attention of larger circles, it did not meet with general favor, and the results were negligible. A more effective measure, which indirectly likewise can be traced back to the Hadleigh meeting, was an address to the Archbishop of Canterbury drawn up by Palmer, which was presented early in 1834 and bore the signatures of seven thousand clergymen — certainly not a manifestation to be made light of by anybody. One of the advocates of the address enthusiastically described it as "the greatest victory that has been achieved since the Battle of Waterloo." (Cornish, *op. cit.*, p. 236.) The address was an expression of firm belief in the divine right of bishops and a pledge to support the episcopate in whatever efforts it might put forth to strengthen the Church. A similar address was presented to the archbishop a few months later in the name of the laity, displaying the signatures of 230,000 heads of families. We are told that these two documents, providing a means of self-assertion to the conservative spirit still alive in large sections of the Anglican communion, marked the turning-point in the outward situation of the Church. "There can be little doubt that as regards the external position of the Church in the country, this agitation was a success. It rallied the courage of churchmen and showed that they were stronger and more resolute than their enemies thought." (Church, *op. cit.*, p. 107.)

III.

But a still more far-reaching result of the Hadleigh conference was the publication of tracts in which the views of the originators of the Oxford Movement were set forth. Here we are face to face with what constitutes one of the most noteworthy phenomena in the Anglican Church during the nineteenth century, the publication of the so-called *Tracts for the Times*. The conference, it is true, had not specifically resolved on the issuing of such tracts; it had contented itself, as we have seen, with emphasizing the desirability of

circulating publications on ecclesiastical subjects. It remained for Newman to conceive the idea of printing and spreading brief, striking manifestoes, each one with a distinct message of its own, to arouse the consciences of the members of the Established Church. "I had out of my own head begun the tracts," he says. (*Apol.*, p. 40.) When, soon after the start had been made, Palmer and Perceval expressed some doubt as to the advisability of continuing this method of warfare, Newman replied, writing to the latter: "As to the tracts, every one has his own taste. You object to some things and others to others. If we altered to please every one, the effect would be spoiled. They were not intended as symbols *e cathedra*, but as the expression of individual minds; and individuals feeling strongly, while, on the one hand, they are incidentally faulty in mode or language, are still peculiarly effective. No great work was done by a system, whereas systems rise out of individual exertions. Luther was an individual. The very faults of an individual excite attention; he loses, but his cause (if good and he powerful-minded) gains. This is the way of things; we promote truth by self-sacrifice." (*Apol.*, p. 41 f.) The reader will have surmised that I have quoted the letter so extensively on account of the author's reference to Luther, whose method Newman was willing to imitate, but from whose theology he was removed almost *toto coelo*.

It was Newman who was not only the promoter and editor, but the chief author of the early tracts. He was assisted by Palmer, Perceval, Keble, and after some time by others, but the main burden of authorship rested on his own shoulders. The names of the writers at first were not appended. Dean Church characterizes these pamphlets thus: "The writing of these early tracts was something very different from anything of the kind yet known in England. They were clear, brief, stern appeals to conscience and reason, sparing of words, utterly without rhetoric, intense in purpose. They were like short, sharp, rapid utterances of men in pain and danger and pressing emergency." (*Op. cit.*, p. 110.) The immense notoriety achieved by them justifies my quoting somewhat copiously from the first tract, which was superscribed *"To My Brethren in the Sacred Ministry, the Presbyters and Deacons of the Church of Christ in England, Ordained Thereunto by the Holy Ghost and the Imposition of Hands."* Newman here writes: "Fellow-laborers, I am but one of yourselves, a presbyter, and therefore I conceal my name lest I take too much on myself by speaking in my own person. Yet speak I must, for the times are very evil; yet no one speaks against them. Therefore suffer me, while I try to draw you forth from those pleasant retreats which it has been our blessedness hitherto to enjoy, to contemplate the condition and prospects of our Holy Mother in a peculiar way, so that one and all may unlearn that idle habit, which has grown

upon us, of owning the state of things to be bad, yet doing nothing to remedy it."

Speaking next of the duty of all pastors to assist the bishops, he has a strange wish for the latter, sounding much like irony, though it undoubtedly was not meant as such: "Black event as it would be for the country, yet (as far as they are concerned) we could not wish them a more blessed termination of their course than the spoiling of their goods and martyrdom." The Church and its pastors, he goes on to say, must remain independent of the whims of the multitude though continuing to possess the secular advantage of being state-supported. If this ceases, the ministers simply become the creatures of the people. Above everything else the real claim of the Church on the attention of men must not be neglected. That is the apostolic descent, the apostolic succession. "The Lord Jesus Christ gave His Spirit to His apostles; they, in turn, laid their hands on those who would succeed them; and these again on others; and so the sacred gift has been handed down to our present bishops, who have appointed us as their assistants and, in some sense, representatives. . . . For the same reason we must necessarily consider none to be really ordained who has not thus been ordained." Then he falls into some strange reasoning: "If ordination is a divine power, it must be necessary; and if it is not a divine ordinance, how dare we use it? Therefore all who use it, all of us, must consider it necessary. . . . Therefore, my dear brethren, act up to your professions. . . . But if you will not adopt my view of the subject, which I offer to you, not doubtingly, and yet, I hope, respectfully, at all events choose your side. To remain neuter much longer will be itself to take a part. Choose your side, since side you shortly must with one or the other party, even though you do nothing. . . . 'He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad.'"

IV.

The tracts at first followed each other in bewildering haste, tumbling, as it were, almost pell-mell out of the Newman ink-well. The first one bore the date of September 9, 1833, and so did No. 2 and No. 3. The next dates are September 21, October 18, October 29 (two), October 31 (two), etc. When a little more than a year had elapsed, the pamphlets which up to that time had appeared were gathered and published in a volume. Their number was 46. Many of them were brief, "mere short notes" (Church). While some were addressed to the clergy and others to the people, all dealt with the specific doctrines and high claims of the Church, treating "the true and essential nature of the Christian Church, its relation to the primitive ages, its authority and its polity and government, the current objections to its claims in England, to its doctrines and its services, the length of the prayers, the burial service, the proposed

alterations in the liturgy, the neglect of discipline, the sins and corruptions of each branch of Christendom. The same topics were enforced and illustrated again and again as the series went on." (Church, *op. cit.*, p. 118.) While Tract No. 1 had treated of the *Apostolic Succession*, Tract No. 2 discussed *The Catholic Church*. The visible Church, with its bishops, priests, and deacons, was here extolled as the only-saving Church for all who are in a position to establish communion with it. Tract No. 3, written like No. 2 by Newman himself, was a bugle blast against attempts to change the venerable liturgy of the Church, alleging that innovators would soon from non-essentials pass to essentials and that to these people not merely the form of service, but the doctrine was obnoxious. (Cornish, *op. cit.*, p. 242.) In the advertisement, or prospectus, announcing the publication of the first forty-six tracts in one volume, which, as mentioned above, appeared toward the end of 1834, we find this statement, quite illuminating as to the intentions and the doctrines of the authors: "The following tracts were published with the object of contributing something toward the practical revival of doctrines, which, although held by the great divines of our Church, at present have become obsolete with the majority of her members and are withdrawn from public view even by the more learned and orthodox few who still adhere to them. The apostolic succession, the Holy Catholic Church, were principles of action in the minds of our predecessors of the seventeenth century; but in proportion as the maintenance of the Church has been secured by law, her ministers have been under the temptation of leaning on an arm of flesh instead of her own divinely provided discipline. . . . Had he [the awakened and anxious sinner] been taught as a child that the Sacraments, not preaching, are the sources of divine grace; that the apostolical ministry had a virtue in it which went out from the whole Church when sought by the prayer of faith; that fellowship with it was a gift and privilege as well as a duty, we could not have had so many wanderers from our fold, nor so many cold hearts within it."

The publication of the tracts continued till 1841, when Newman wrote the last one, No. 90, which caused an explosion, it now becoming evident that he was no longer far from Rome. The tract had the aim of showing that the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England did not condemn Roman Catholic doctrine, but merely the abuses which in the course of time had crept into the Church. The Bishop of Oxford forbade the continuation of the series, and Newman and his friends obeyed. The first volume of tracts was followed by five more, which appeared at intervals when the number of new pamphlets warranted the issuance of another collection.

Of greater interest it is to observe that the nature of the tracts changed as time went on, especially after Dr. Pusey had begun to

assert himself in the circle of the promoters. Instead of being short, fervent, vehement appeals, they took on the character of learned essays, filled with erudite arguments and lengthy quotations. Pusey's treatise on Baptism furnished the text of Tracts Nos. 67, 68, and 69, which together comprised more than 300 pages. But this is a phase of the movement into which it is not my purpose to enter.

V.

The effect of this steady stream of tracts, likened by Dr. A. L. Graebner ("The Romeward Movement in England," *Theol. Quarterly*, July, 1900) to "discharges of rapid-firing guns," was probably greater than their authors had anticipated. The shots hit the mark. The apathy and lethargy of the clergy, and largely of the laity, was effectually punctured. "The early tracts were intended to startle the world, and they succeeded in doing so. Their very form, as short, earnest leaflets, was perplexing; for they came, not from the class of religionists who ususally deal in such productions, but from distinguished university scholars, picked men of a picked college, and from men, too, who as a school were the representatives of soberness and self-control in religious feeling and language and whose usual style of writing was especially marked by its severe avoidance of excitement and novelty. . . . Their matter was equally unusual. Undoubtedly they 'brought strange things to the ears' of their generation. . . . They were novelties, partly audacious, partly unintelligible, then. The cry of "Romanism" was inevitable and was soon raised. . . . It cannot be thought surprising that the new tracts were received with surprise, dismay, ridicule, and indignation. But they also at once called forth a response of eager sympathy from numbers to whom they brought unhoped-for relief and light in a day of gloom, of rebuke, and blasphemy." (Church, *op. cit.*, p. 119 ff.) At any rate, England was agog. From Oxford the fire had spread to London and to all other parts of the kingdom, and soon nothing was discussed so much as the tracts and the High Church views which they with such masterful insistence propounded.

VI.

Naturally the tracts were not left to do their work alone. The most potent influence aiding them, so contemporaries assure us, was the preaching of Newman at St. Mary's, one of the famous old churches of Oxford, of which an American visitor, William Mathews, more than half a century ago, wrote that "its 'symmetric pride' dazzles the beholder when the pale moonlight falls on spire, buttresses, statues, and pinnacles." Strange to say, these sermons were preached Sunday afternoons. An admirer who regularly attended refers to them as those "wonderful afternoon sermons" and continues: "Sunday after Sunday, year by year, they went on, each continuing

and deepening the impression produced by the last. As the hour interfered with the dinner hour of the colleges, most men preferred a warm dinner without Newman's sermon to a cold one with it; so the audience was not crowded, and the large church was little more than half filled. The service was very simple, no pomp, no ritualism; for it was characteristic of the leading men of the movement that they left these things to the weaker brethren." (Cf. Church, *op. cit.*, p. 141.) Characterizing the sermons, this observer finds their power in their searching quality, reaching deep into the human heart, and in their great moral earnestness. While they were not heard by many, they exerted a wide influence in printed form, because they were not only published, but eagerly read. On the power wielded by Newman at this time Fisher says (*op. cit.*, p. 457): "The preaching of Newman and his personal fascination were the most potent agencies in exciting attention and winning adherents. His influence for a time at Oxford was something almost unprecedented. It was in truth a powerful influence, which cast a spell over so many persons of high promise. It was felt by some, as Mark Pattison and James Anthony Froude, who in the reaction from it lapsed into skepticism. It entered as a disturbing force for a while into the minds of devoted admirers of Arnold, such as Arthur Clough, and even in a perceptible degree impressed Arthur Stanley." The newspapers soon opened their columns to men who wrote for or against the tracts, and the publicity which the Tractarian leaders craved for their views was not slow in coming, not only their friends, but their foes assisting in spreading their ideas. "The *British Critic* was the chief organ of the school, to which in 1844 the *Christian Remembrancer* succeeded. There was no fear the Anglo-Catholic candle should be put under a bushel, whether or not Keble desired so much publicity." (Cornish, *op. cit.*, p. 250.)

VII.

After this review of the chief events that had to do with the beginning of the movement, the question must be considered, What precisely were the doctrinal views which these men attempted to propagate? The foregoing indeed has to some extent thrown light on this question, but several things remain to be said. If we wish to summarize briefly what the Oxford Movement stood for, we might use these terms: apostolic succession, sacramentalism, traditionalism, ecclesiasticism, and ritualism. As to the first two, nothing will better convey to us what was in the mind of the promoters than these words of R. H. Froude, communicating to a friend what points had been agreed on at a meeting in Oxford in August, 1833: "The doctrine of apostolic succession as a rule of practise, *i. e.*, 1) that the participation of the body and blood of Christ is essential to the maintenance of Christian life and hope in each individual; 2) that it is conveyed to individual Christians only by the hands of the successors of the

apostles and their delegates; 3) that the successors of the apostles are those who are descended in a direct line from them by the imposition of hands and that the delegates of these are the respective presbyters whom each has commissioned." (Cornish, *op. cit.*, p. 233.) That the Scriptures do not teach such a thing as an apostolic succession and that, when the attempt is made to prove from history the existence of a chain of bishops reaching without break from the apostles to our times, no certainty can be attained, was either disregarded by these men, or it was thought to be offset by the testimony and the teaching of the Church. Cornish summarizes the view opposed to that of the Tractarians and the defense of the latter in these words (*op. cit.*, p. 234): "No one would deduce from the Bible alone the doctrine of an exclusive episcopal succession. Granted that our Lord's commission to the apostles included the perpetual ministry and that this was conferred by imposition of hands, there is nothing in the Bible which limits the rights and duties of particular churches to an episcopal succession. There must be an inward call and an outward commission from the rulers or leaders of the Church or congregation; but it cannot be certainly proved from Scripture that these leaders were a separate class, a clergy as opposed to the laity, nor that there was an essential difference between elders and overseers, as between priests and bishops, nor that there was any universal and indispensable manner of appointment. The rejoinder is by an appeal to tradition. If Scripture is infallible, the canon of Scripture was settled by tradition, and its infallibility depends upon the infallibility of the authority which created the tradition in virtue of which it is received; the only escape from this argument is by supposing the apostles and evangelists alone to be inspired; and this is an assumption not upheld by the history of the Church. All parties agree in giving value to tradition; but Rome finds in church tradition an infallible guide, Protestants a guide to interpretation both of doctrine and history, but not an infallible guide. The argument for church authority as against Biblical authority or Latitudinarianism was clearly and forcibly drawn out by Newman in Tract 85 (five lectures), one of the most powerful and closely written of the series. The writer's conclusion is that there is no escape from the intellectual difficulties of the Bible, but in acceptance of the church system." We Lutherans will certainly oppose the Liberals if their words are intended to make the claim that our Lord has not instituted the office of the ministry; but we are here in particular concerned with the contentions of the Oxford party. The Christian who takes his stand on the Scripture cannot for a minute grant that these people were right. The canon of the Holy Scriptures was not settled by tradition; the Church merely recognized as apostolic the gospels and epistles which had a right to be given this stamp. And as for inspiration,

a Bible Christian certainly is not willing to concede that later writers like Ambrose or Augustine or Luther must be thought of as possessing this heavenly endowment. But what I desire to stress here is the complete admission of the Tractarians themselves that from the Scriptures alone the doctrine of apostolic succession cannot be proved. That they by an appeal to the authority of the Church built their system on the shifting sands of human opinion unhappily was not realized by them.

With respect to their emphasis on the use of the Sacraments we must grant that the testimony of these men was timely, because in large portions of the Anglican Church the Sacraments had come to be neglected after the fashion prevailing in the Reformed denominations generally. But what lack of Scriptural sobriety! The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper must be partaken of if one wishes to be saved! Plainly there is here a confusion of the means (the Sacrament) and the end (faith in the Savior). That the doctrine of the Eucharist as held by the Tractarians, even though they taught the real presence, was not that of the Lutheran Church is at once evident from their reference to the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice. (Cf. A. L. Graebner, *op. cit.*, p. 294.) The outward act is overemphasized; it is separated from the Gospel-message, with which it is in its true nature intimately connected and which it is intended to confirm and make all the more precious. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration was indeed taught. But here, too, a gross error entered in, inasmuch as it was held that Baptism was not efficacious ever after, but that forgiveness for sins committed afterwards would have to be obtained in some other way. This was all due to blindness as to the very heart of Christian doctrine, the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. How little Newman with all his acumen understood this cardinal teaching of the Bible is shown by what he wrote eight years before he left the Anglican Church, a discussion of which he himself says in the *Apologia* (p. 72): "I wrote my essay on justification in 1837; it was aimed at the Lutheran dictum that justification by faith only was the cardinal doctrine of Christianity. I considered that this doctrine was either a paradox or a truism — a paradox in Luther's mouth, a truism in Melanchthon's. I thought that the Anglican Church followed Melanchthon and that in consequence between Rome and Anglicanism, between High Church and Low Church, there was no real intellectual difference on the point." The doctrine of justification, a paradox in Luther's mouth — merely a strong, startling, somewhat exaggerating way of stating a truth! Here appears the poisonous spring vitiating all of Newman's theology — a lack of appreciation of what was central in St. Paul's message.

That this party was deeply entangled in traditionalism has been brought out above. Newman does not hesitate in the *Apologia* to

relate of his friend R. H. Froude: "He felt scorn of the maxim 'The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants,' and he gloried in accepting tradition as a main instrument of religious teaching." (P. 24.)

Closely allied to this position was the high notion which Tractarians entertained of the authority of the visible Church, the attitude which we call ecclesiasticism. The magnificent terms which the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions employ to depict the invisible Church, the communion of saints, they referred to the external, visible Church with its archbishops, bishops, presbyters, and deacons. "To exhibit the Church of England as one branch of the Church Catholic, the Church of Rome being a coordinate branch, to maintain that for Anglicans there is a seat of authority in the Church visible, the Church of the first centuries, . . . such was the task undertaken." (Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 455.) It was held of course that Rome had become corrupt. In one of the early tracts (No. 20) Newman spoke some hard words of the Romanists. "Truly, when one surveys the grandeur of their system, a sigh arises in the thoughtful mind to think that we should be separated from them; *cum talis sis, utinam noster esses!* But, alas, communion is impossible. Their communion is infected with heterodoxy; we are bound to flee it as a pestilence. They have established a lie in the place of God's truth and by their claim of immutability in doctrine cannot undo the sin they have committed. They cannot repent. Popery must be destroyed; it cannot be reformed." Even in 1837 he spoke of Rome as "a Church beside herself, . . . crafty, obstinate, wilful, malicious, cruel, unnatural as madmen are, — or rather she may be said to resemble a demoniac, obsessed with principles, thoughts, and tendencies not her own; in outward form and in natural powers what God made her, but ruled by an inexorable spirit, who is sovereign in his management over her and most subtle and most successful in the use of her gifts. Thus she is her real self only in name, and till God vouchsafes to restore her, we must treat her as if she were that Evil One who governs her." (*Prophetical Office of the Church Viewed Relatively to Romanism and Popular Protestantism.*) But through the constant emphasis on the authority of the Church and the importance of tradition this opposition to Rome gradually became weaker and in some of the minds supporting the movement died away entirely. Considering the exaggerated importance which Newman attached to the authority of the Church, one need not wonder that he joined the Roman Catholics. We may rather be surprised that he was not followed by all who held the same premises as he. To a Lutheran of course who is firmly convinced that God speaks to us in the Scriptures and that the Church, be it ever so strong, firm, rich in good works, and faithfully testifying to divine truth, has no right to

originate articles of faith, the language of the Tractarians sounds strange. The rule defended by these men "Accept what the universal Church believed before it was divided into an Eastern and a Western section, and then you have the truth" has an attractive ring; but a brief examination will suffice to show that it not only violates the Scripture-teaching as to the foundation of the Church, Eph. 2, 20 ff., but takes the inquirer on a stormy sea of conflicting views, with no haven of refuge in sight except the infallibility of the Pope. Newman was fond of calling his brand of Anglicanism the *via media* between Catholicism and Protestantism. He after some time discovered that the path was too narrow, merely an imaginary line, so to speak.

It was quite natural for people who had such a high regard for antiquity to lay much stress on strict adherence to the time-honored ritual of the Anglican Church. That they rendered their communion a service by drawing attention to much that was beautiful and edifying in its liturgy we may freely grant. "The humdrum age of weekly services and occasional communions was passing away; daily services and weekly celebrations became common; the cross was no longer looked upon as a popish symbol." (Cornish, *op. cit.*, p. 248.) The pity was that these men, while giving a strong impetus to the study and observance of churchly forms of service, did not value more highly what must be the center of all our divine services, the proclamation of the free grace of God in Christ Jesus. Lutherans should not fail to see the finger of warning lifted up undeniably in this phase of the movement. *Initiis obsta.* Many of the converts to Romanism that came from the Anglican Church were weaned away from the mother church only gradually. Imitate Rome in what is non-essential, and by and by one or the other of your brethren and perhaps you yourself will accept the Roman system in what is essential and fundamental. Emphasize ritual, and you are for the undiscerning smoothing the paths leading to Rome.

VIII.

In viewing the results of the Tractarian Movement, some good, some ill, we may quote R. H. Nichols (*Growth of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, p. 146 f.): "The great majority of the Tractarians stayed in the Church of England. From the middle of the nineteenth century their ideas were more and more adopted among the Anglican clergy and laity. Religion became more churchly and more priestly. Many clergymen called themselves priests and shaped their ministry accordingly, for example, hearing confessions from their people. The authority of the Church as a teacher of the truth was exalted, scrupulous attention to its rites insisted on, and a high doctrine of the Sacraments taught. Worship underwent great changes, becoming much more ritualistic and elaborate. Great attention was paid to

the element of beauty in services and churches, and important improvements in church architecture, decoration, and music resulted. In late years the ritualistic tendency has gone so far that in some churches the service can hardly be told from that of the Roman Catholic Church."

One cannot help speaking of the leaders of the movement with a degree of admiration, considering the manliness and courage which they showed in promulgating and defending their views, which at first by no means were popular in England. In the point of true, unwavering devotion to the cause which they considered right they may be pointed to as illustrious examples for our generation, which is but little inclined to bear vituperation and shame for the religious convictions it professes. The movement, however, from the very start was Romanizing, not in intention, but in actual tendency, and in this direction was a very mischievous influence, doing a world of harm. But it seems certain, too, that through its conservative character it helped somewhat to stem the tide of unbelief which was rushing through the world and threatening to engulf Christianity in England as well as in other countries. That the clergy of England through the controversies called forth by this movement became more seriously minded, studious, anxious to explore the riches of its doctrinal heritage, seems certain. In the wonderful economy of God, Tractarianism had to serve both as a punishment, inasmuch as it championed strong errors, obscuring and perverting revealed truth in several important respects, and as a blessing, checking other evil tendencies which were attacking especially the authority of the Scriptures and, besides, were favoring a *laissez-faire* type of Christianity, which is the sister of heterodoxy, worldliness. W. Arndt.

Wie ist denen zu begegnen, die Wundergaben, besonders neue Offenbarungen, vorgeben?

Das ist ein Thema, das in der Lehre von der Inspiration der Heiligen Schrift den Grund des Glaubens berührt. Es ist auch nicht eine müßige Frage, sondern sie ist recht praktisch. Sie ist zeitgemäß; denn nicht nur in alter Zeit hat es Leute gegeben, die auf diese Gaben Anspruch machten, sondern diesen Anspruch erheben gerade jetzt viele verschiedene Sekten. Es ist eine Sache, die auch die Schrift behandelt. Wir Christen, namentlich wir Pastoren, sollten darüber Bescheid wissen. Es ist auch nicht zu leugnen, daß rechtgläubige lutherische Theologen in dieser Frage nicht immer gleiche Rede geführt haben, und das ist noch heute der Fall. Jeder von uns kann zu irgendeiner Zeit vor diese Frage gestellt werden; denn es ist eine zu unserer Zeit vielbesprochene Sache.