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Anglo-Catholicism in Victorian England

DESMOND BOWEN

NO MOVEMENT is more in need of reinterpretation than that which began in the Church of England in the nineteenth century, and is usually referred to as Anglo-Catholicism. In our day when the ecumenical movement is so important, the veneration of the episcopal office and the clericalism and medievalism associated with Anglo-Catholicism tend to make it an object of great suspicion in the minds of churchmen. In the Church of England, for example, the conservative Evangelical party, and Lord Fisher of Lambeth, until recently Archbishop of Canterbury, have both expressed fear of the clericalism and medievalism of Anglo-Catholicism, and the influence these may have on the possibility of Anglican-Methodist reunion.

Most interpretations of the Anglo-Catholic movement are based on the classic studies of Dean Church in his *Oxford Movement, 1833-1845*, and of S. L. Ollard in his *Short History of the Oxford Movement*. Because of this circumstance, the movement is generally viewed as a clerical and romantic reaction against the Erastianism and latitudinarianism in the Church of England in the eighteenth century. Aberrations such as the passionate concern for apostolic succession, which characterized the early or Tractarian stage of Anglo-Catholicism, are attributed to all adherents of the movement throughout the century.¹ This paper contends that the Tractarian phase of Anglo-Catholicism is by no means characteristic of the movement as a whole.

I. THE BEGINNING OF THE MOVEMENT

Few scholars would quarrel with Church or Ollard about the genesis of the movement. It did arise because of the apprehensions of churchmen, particularly those of the clergy. This is quite evident from the legion of pamphlets that poured out of even the remotest vicarages in the period just before and after the Reform Bill of 1832.² One method of attracting official attention, and possibly preferment, exercised by rural clergy was the publication of a tract on some ecclesiastical issue of the day. A sampling of the pamphlets of this time reveals clearly the clerical concern aroused by the reforming zeal of the secular legislature.

This concern was justified. The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in

1. S. C. Carpenter, *Church and People, 1789-1889* (London: S.P.C.K., 1933), p. 176, for this interpretation of Pusey.

2. An excellent collection of pamphlets is to be found at Pusey House, Oxford. Cf. Father Hugh, S.S.F., *Nineteenth Century Pamphlets at Pusey House* (London: Faith Press, 1961).

1828, Catholic Emancipation in 1829, and the Whig victory of 1832 admitted avowed enemies of the Established Church to the legislature of the nation. Now at last the Whig Dissenters would have their opportunity of hitting back at the institution that supported the black recruiting sergeants, who for so long had fought elections against them throughout the land. J. C. Hobhouse, the liberal pamphleteer, said that the Church was the offspring and child of the law, and that the parent had the right to deal with the child as he saw fit.³ Sir Robert Peel said that his defence of the Church was to be no different from his defence of any other corporation in the nation.⁴

If Peel was speaking the truth, then churchmen had cause for concern. In 1832 the days of "rotten boroughs" were numbered—and the Church was filled with corruption. As the anonymous writer of the *Black Book or Corruption Unmasked* indicated, the Church of England still tolerated nepotism, sinecures, pluralities, non-resident clergy, ecclesiastical courts which were complex and inequitable, and Church rates which were still imposed upon Nonconformists.⁵

The abuses in the Church were glaring. While the average pay of a curate in the Church was £81 a year, in the diocese of Ely there was the famous rectory of Doddington, with March and Benwick, with a gross income of £7781. The absentee rector, Algernon Peyton, had been appointed by the patron, Sir H. Peyton. Necessary clerical duties in the parish were performed by two curates, who were paid a total of £385 a year.⁶ Even without the exposures of the *Black Book* and other scurrilous writings of the time,⁷ a reformer would hardly overlook the scandalous abuses connected with livings like Doddington rectory.

It was not only the Algernon Peytons of the Church who were filled with anxiety. Sydney Smith said that with the Dissenters and Papists in the legislature no clergyman could now sleep with his accustomed soundness.⁸ Reform was in the air, and with reform the possibility of spoliation. Tales of the "golden stalls" of Durham Cathedral stirred lay cupidity. Men questioned the division of the huge income from northern coal fields only among the canons of the cathedral, who included the bishops of St. David's, Bristol, Chester, and Exeter in their number.⁹

Church and Ollard are correct when they say that alarm reigned in the Church of England at this time. Lord Grey suggested that the bishops

3. Cf. *Hansard*, 3rd ser., Vol. XXVII, p. 523 (31 March, 1835).

4. Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. XVII, p. 1001 (16 April, 1833).

5. *The Black Book or Corruption Unmasked* (London, 1820) was followed by the *Extraordinary Black Book. . . . A Complete View of the Government in Church, State, Law and Representation* (London, 1831).

6. *First Report of Commissioners on the State of the Established Church*, 1835 (54), XXII, pp. 346-7.

7. Cf. William Benbow, *Crimes of the Clergy or the Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken* (London, 1823).

8. Peter Plymley, *Letters on the Subject of Catholics to my Brother Abraham Who Lives in the Country* (London, 1808), p. 67.

9. C. E. Whiting, *University of Durham, 1832-1932* (London: Sheldon Press, 1932), pp. 31-32.

put their house in order, and Richard Whately, who later became Archbishop of Dublin, said "there was not a single stone of the sacred edifice of the Church which was not examined, shaken, undermined by meddling and ignorant curiosity."¹⁰ The alarm became panic when the legislature decided to suppress ten redundant sees of the Irish Church for economic reasons. Enlightened churchmen, like the Irish lay theologian, Alexander Knox, saw that some reform of the temporalities of the Irish Church was inevitable, but in clerical centres like Oxford the treatment of the Irish bishoprics was interpreted as the laying of profane hands on the ark of the Lord. Edward Bouverie Pusey, Regius Professor of Hebrew and Canon of Christ Church, said the Irish sees were "the patrimony we have received in trust to use ourselves to the service of Almighty God, and to hand down to our successors to be so used."¹¹

While the Irish Bill was before the House of Lords, John Keble, a fellow of Oriel College, preached an Assize Sermon in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, on "National Apostasy." The church was crowded, yet little notice was taken of the sermon by the secular press. But among those who listened to Keble were a group of ecclesiastics, including another fellow of Oriel, John Henry Newman, and Pusey. Newman believed that the influence of this sermon on those who heard it marked the beginning of the movement that later became identified as Anglo-Catholicism.¹²

Oxford was the spiritual home of the High Churchmen—those clerics who had been nurtured on the thought of the Caroline Divines, and the Nonjurors, rather than on the popular ideas of William Paley, who justified the Church on grounds of public utility alone: "there is nothing in the nature of religion, as such, which exempts it from the authority of the legislator, when the safety or welfare of the community requires his interposition."¹³ They were a mixed crew, having in common only their devotion to the faith, discipline, and practice of the Prayer Book, and their conviction that the ultimate ecclesiastical authority in the nation lay with the monarch.

All of them were puzzled by the question of how they should view Parliament, now that it contained both Papists and Nonconformists. In what sense could it still be viewed, as Hooker had said, as the lay synod of the Church? Hooker had claimed that Parliament was "a court not merely so temporal as if it might meddle with nothing but only leather and wool."¹⁴ Could even the authority of Hooker be invoked to justify the Whig meddling in ecclesiastical affairs?

The most practical response was made by those High Churchmen,

10. Richard Whately, *Letters on the Church by an Episcopalian* (London, 1843), p. 4.

11. Pusey House MSS, E. B. Pusey to Philip Pusey, 1 July, 1836.

12. The text of this sermon may be found in John Keble, *Sermons, Academical and Occasional* (London, 1847); it has frequently been reprinted.

13. William Paley, *The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (London, 1788), Vol. II, p. 325.

14. Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, in *Works of Richard Hooker*, edited by John Keble, revised by R. W. Church (Oxford: Parker, 1888), Vol. III, p. 409.

largely from London, who supported the ideas of Hugh James Rose, the rector of Hadleigh, Suffolk. Rose had great influence among the High Churchmen at Cambridge, and was also the founder and editor of the *British Magazine*, which from 1832 devoted itself to the propagation of High Church principles. Ten days after Keble's sermon, Rose held a meeting at his rectory, at which it was decided that an association had to be made of those who would fight for the principles of the Prayer Book. What they desired was a restoration of Hooker's ideal in Church and State relations, where "a Commonwealth is one way, and a Church another way defined."¹⁵ They also discussed practical measures such as the possibility that Convocation might be once more allowed to transact business, as it had not been allowed to do since the Bangorian Controversy of 1717.

One of those who attended the Hadleigh Conference was Richard Hurrell Froude, the close friend of John Henry Newman. The latter had not attended the conference, because he had already decided that Rose and his friends would accomplish nothing, since they were "not yet apostolical," practical men for whom "existing facts had the precedence of every other idea."¹⁶

The attitude of Froude and Newman to the London school of High Churchmen points up one characteristic of the early Tractarians that must be noted—their "unhistorical idealization of the past," in the words of Dean Inge.¹⁷ They looked back to the Caroline era when, they believed, the ecclesiastical power in the nation had rested solely with the sovereign, whose policies had been formed with the advice of the prelates and clergy of the Church. This was the situation they desired to resurrect: "The so called union of the Church and the State as it then had been, a wonderful and most gracious phenomenon . . . a realization of the Gospel in its highest perfection."¹⁸

From 1833 Newman and his followers began to publish *Tracts for the Times*. The first, entitled "Thoughts on the Ministerial Commission, Respectfully Addressed to the Clergy," was written by Newman. The clergy listened as the Tractarians called upon them to remember once more that their authority was derived not from the State, but from the Apostles, whose commission was transmitted to the clergy by their bishops. To many a humble curate, barely keeping himself and his family alive on a minimum stipend, suffering from the "contempt of clergy" which came from the landed gentry, it meant much to be reminded that he "as much as his rector had an appointment from the king of kings."¹⁹

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the Tractarian

15. *Ibid.*, p. 328.

16. John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (Fontana Edition, London: Collins, 1959), p. 124.

17. W. R. Inge, *Outspoken Essays* (London: Longmans, 1921), p. 184.

18. John Henry Newman, "How to Accomplish It," in *Discussions and Arguments on Various Subjects* (London: Pickering, 1872), p. 23.

19. F. D. Maurice, *On the Right and Wrong Method of Supporting Protestantism: Letter to Lord Ashley* (London, 1843), p. 11.

phase of Anglo-Catholicism, about which Church and Ollard, among others, have told us so much. Sydney Smith remarked to Gladstone in 1835: "Whenever you meet a clergyman of my age, you may be quite sure he is a bad clergyman."²⁰ An example of clerical habit at this time has been left to us in a pamphlet written by C. Kegan Paul, who later left the Church of England. As a young curate, he assisted his rector at a celebration of the Eucharist, in a church which apparently had not been cleaned in years. On the altar, which was covered by a dirty wine-stained cloth, stood a loaf of bread and a dusty black bottle of wine, which were to serve as the elements in the Communion. When the prayer of consecration was reached, to the horror of the pious curate the rector turned to the congregation to ask if anyone present had a corkscrew.²¹ Because of Tractarian influence habits of this nature began to disappear. By 1860, in ecclesiastical behaviour and general reputation, the ordinary clergyman was a different person from his counterpart of the 1830s.

II. THE SECOND PHASE

From 1838 Newman was editor of the *British Critic*, and he used the magazine to publish articles dealing almost exclusively with the state of the Church. Keble and Pusey joined Newman in writing both tracts and articles for the *British Critic*, and during the period 1838-41 the Tractarian movement was at its height. Keble had joined it because he believed that the State had forced on the Church terms that amounted to "a renunciation of her fundamental rules."²² Pusey had joined it because he feared the Church had lost its self-consciousness, and could neither speak nor authorize as a whole since it had lent its signet to the state.²³ Newman, Keble, and Pusey agreed that what was needed was restoration of the ideal balance in the relationship of Church, State, and society, which had been lost when the Church became Erastian in the eighteenth century.

Richard Hurrell Froude, a great admirer of the sovereignty exercised by the clergy in the middle ages, died in 1836 at the age of thirty-three. Keble and Pusey never took Froude's enthusiasm for this idea as seriously as did Newman. Froude believed the Reformation to have been a catastrophe in English history, and dismissed all churchmen since the Nonjurors as "twaddlers."²⁴ He believed that the only hope for the Church of England was disestablishment, and then reorganization by the bishops, the successors of the apostles, who would lead the Church in rediscovery of its spiritual resources.²⁵

20. W. E. Gladstone, *Gleanings of Past Years, 1843-1878* (New York, Scribner's, 1878), p. 220.

21. Cf. C. Kegan Paul, *Confessio Viatoris* (London: Kegan Paul, 1891), p. 14.

22. *British Critic*, 26 (July-Dec., 1839), p. 368.

23. On the influence of Pusey in the Oxford Movement, cf. Newman, *Apologia*, p. 142.

24. *Remains of the Late Richard Hurrell Froude* (London, 1858), Pt. I, Vol. I, p. 355.

25. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 396.

Keble, in a moment of passion, could cry out: "Take every pound, shilling and penny and the curse of sacrilege with it; only let us make our own bishops and be governed by our own laws. This is the length I am prepared to go."²⁶ Both he and Pusey had their suspicions about the traditional concept of the Church as the conscience of the nation—or the value of the cleric as the "resident gentleman," the source of culture in the parish.

But both Keble and Pusey had their roots deep in the English countryside, and they were sceptical of the more extreme utterances of Froude, while Newman appeared to take them seriously. Froude believed that even those in positions of secular authority should return to the Church, to accept the direction of the spiritual rulers of the nation, the bishops, and those to whom the bishops delegated their authority. They must "humble themselves before the Most High God in the Persons of His Delegates, and God on His part will secure them from the terrible consequences of high-mindedness."²⁷

Keble and Pusey both knew what Froude was loath to admit, that "persons in the higher and more refined ranks of life do feel a certain awkwardness and reluctance as to acknowledging their filial relations to the clergy."²⁸ In one tract written in 1834 Keble did say: "By submitting yourself to your Bishop as to Jesus Christ you convince me that you guide your lives by no rule of man's invention, but by the rule of Jesus Christ."²⁹ But, from the long experience of his family with the English hierarchy, he knew that most of the bishops, whose office the Tractarians venerated, belonged personally to the Erastian school of churchmanship which the Tractarians despised. When Bishop Ryder, an Evangelical, was appointed to the see of Gloucester, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Manners Sutton, had resented his elevation because he was a "religious bishop."³⁰ Pusey bluntly said that the Church had often been scandalized by the conduct of bishops in the past, and that he did not expect any radical change in their behaviour in his generation.³¹

Newman was influenced by Froude, and his writings show that to him the restoration of catholic principles in the Church of England increasingly meant the restoration of authority in the Church. In an article he wrote for the *British Critic* in January, 1840, entitled "The Catholicity of the English Church," he said that the Church was nothing "unless it is able to bring our passions to order, to make us pure, to make us meek, to rule our intellect, to give government of speech, to inspire firmness, and to destroy self." Without this authority, he said, "we do not deserve to be acknow-

26. Anne Mozley (ed.), *Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman during his Life in the English Church* (London: Longmans, 1891), Vol. I, p. 442. Cf. Pusey House MSS, Keble to Newman, July, 1833 on Keble's approval of "a little wholesome spoliation."

27. *Remains of the Late R. H. Froude*, Pt. I, Vol. II, p. 272.

28. *Ibid.*, Pt. II, Vol. I, p. 310

29. *Tract LII*, in *Tracts for the Times* (London, 1839), Vol. II, p. 5.

30. Carpenter, *Church and People: 1789-1889*, p. 49.

31. Pusey House MSS, Pusey to Liddon, 2 July, 1870. Cf. E. B. Pusey, *History of the Councils of the Church to 381 A.D.* (Oxford, 1857), p. 14, where he speaks of the laity despising Erastian bishops

ledged as a church."³² To Newman, to be Catholic meant the surrender of oneself to the authority of the redeemed community, which was the Church governed by the successors of the Apostles. "To all those who are perplexed in any way whatsoever, who wish for light but cannot find it, one precept must be given—obey."³³ "Obedience is the test of Faith. . . . The whole duty and work of a Christian is made up of these two parts, Faith and Obedience."³⁴

As the movement grew, new men joined it, and, like Newman, they appeared to be fascinated by catholicity interpreted in terms of authority. The most extreme of them, W. G. Ward, spoke, in 1841, of "authoritatively teaching the State its duties in temporals."³⁵ Newman, in his sermon entitled "The Christian Church and Imperial Power, said: "If we will be Scriptural in our view of the Church we must consider . . . that its officers have great powers and high gifts, that they are charged with the custody of Divine Truth, that they are all united together, and that the nations are subject to them."³⁶

Keble and Pusey never toyed with these undeveloped ideas which exalted clerical prerogatives. They viewed the Church as a divinely instituted corporate body that needed to defend itself against the encroachments of the secular power, particularly in matters of doctrine and discipline. They were willing to dispute the notion that the ecclesiastical authority of the sovereign, whom they acknowledged to be the head of the Church, had been delegated to Parliament. But they understood the traditional union of Church and State in England in a way that Newman never did. They could not see how it was possible for the Church to disestablish itself, to pose as a political power in the nation, or to direct the temporal and spiritual life of the people. When Keble read Gladstone's book on Church and State in 1839, his comment was: "We should be much obliged to any lawyer who would point out to us the constitutional process by which the Church of England might assert her independence, only giving up her temporal advantages and not incurring the penalties of *praemunire*, except she could obtain the consent of the civil government."³⁷

By 1841, after the condemnation of his *Tract XC*, which had attempted to show that the language of the Thirty-Nine Articles was not directed against Rome, Newman had begun to despair of the Anglican Church. Then came the setting up of a Protestant bishopric in Jerusalem, which was to be staffed by English and Prussian nationals. Newman believed that this action underlined the Erastianism in the Church of England, which had

32. *British Critic*, 27 (Jan.–June, 1840), pp. 87ff.

33. John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (London: Rivington, 1868), Vol. I, pp. 230–1. Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 190–205, on "Submission to Church Authority."

34. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 153.

35. *British Critic*, Vol. 30 (July–Dec., 1841), p. 355. Cf. T. Mozley in *ibid.*, 25 (Jan.–June, 1839), p. 353: "The State is . . . a child of the Church."

36. John Henry Newman, *Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day* (London, 1844), p. 355.

37. *British Critic*, 26 (July–Dec., 1839), pp. 390ff.

long concerned him. Keble's answer to this example of secularism in ecclesiastical affairs was one of passive resistance: "If persons have thought it their duty to bear with the Puritans and Latitudinarians of times past, so far as not to give up the Church of England to them, nor to acquiesce in their interpretation of its formularies, what is there in this case to make them take a different view?"³⁸ Pusey agreed with Keble that the Church should not abandon its appointed task of Christianizing the nation, for to do so might endanger the throne itself.

The policy of Keble and Pusey did not commend itself to Newman. He left the Church of England for that of Rome because he was convinced that the latter church alone possessed the spiritual authority to withstand the secular world.

If the Church is to be regal, a witness for Heaven, unchangeable amid secular changes, if in every age she is to hold her own, and proclaim as well as profess the truth, if she is to thrive without or against the civil power, if she is to be resourceful and self-recuperative under all fortunes, she must be more than Holy and Apostolic; she must be Catholic. Hence it is that, first, she has ever from her beginning onwards had a hierarchy, and a head, with a strict unity of polity, the claim of an exclusive divine authority and blessing; the trusteeship of the gospel gifts, and the exercise over her members of an absolute and almost despotic rule. And next, as to her work, it is her special duty, as a Sovereign State, to consolidate her several portions, to enlarge her territory, to keep up and to increase her various populations in this ever-dying, ever nascent world, in which to be stationary is to lose ground and to repose is to fail.³⁹

The tragedy of the Tractarians was that they looked upon the Church as an "ark of refuge, divinely provided against the evils of the irreligion of the age".⁴⁰ As opposition to their ideas grew in the Church, they found themselves fighting for their convictions as an end in themselves. Soon they were engrossed to the point of obsession with the problem of the Church as a visible body at war with State and society. "Strictly speaking the Christian Church as being a visible society, is necessarily a political power and party . . . it is the plain duty of its members not only to associate internally, but also to devote that internal unity in an external warfare with the spirit of evil whether in king's courts or among the mixed multitude."⁴¹

Keble and Pusey began to realize that the movement was losing whatever claim to catholicity it had once had, and was becoming a mere schism in the Church. It was so concerned with the evil that threatened the spiritual and temporal privileges of the Church that it had no time or energy left to wage war with the evil to be found "among the mixed multitude." Many scholars have commented on the Tractarians' singular lack of social conscience. One of them, Thomas Mozley, went so far as to view poverty as "a necessary discipline": "Generally speaking nothing but the deepest and bitterest

38. Quoted by Lord Irwin, *John Keble* (Oxford: Mowbray, 1932), pp. 127f.

39. John Henry Newman, *Via Media of the Anglican Church* (London: Pickering, 1877), Vol. I, pp. lxxx-lxxxi.

40. Editor's preface to *Works of Richard Hooker*, Vol. I, p. cviii.

41. John Henry Newman, *Arians of the Fourth Century* (London, 1833), p. 276.

poverty will subdue the uneducated classes. Were it possible to raise them to comfort and ease and security, what a still worse bondage of sin and punishment would they soon draw on themselves."⁴²

In the University of Oxford the Tractarians contributed nothing to the much needed reform of education. There is much truth in Mark Pattison's comment: "Probably there was no period of our history during which, I do not say science and learning, but the ordinary study of the classics was so profitless or at so low an ebb as during the period of the Tractarian controversy."⁴³ Goldwin Smith said they turned the university into an "ecclesiastical cock-pit."⁴⁴

While Newman was losing his faith in the Church of England because he could not find in it the catholicity he longed for—one based on authority—Keble and Pusey were beginning to seek and to find a catholicity of mission, which became of more importance to both of them than the problem of the seat of authority in the Church. In 1836 Keble became vicar of Hursley, near Winchester, and there he remained as a devoted parish priest until his death thirty years later. In his pastoral work he tried to give the Church an ideal of catholicity, with the comment: "If the Church of England were to fail . . . yet it would be found in my parish."⁴⁵ Pusey was haunted by the misery to be found among the working people in the great industrial cities, and referred to London as "a great lazarus-house which I would willingly visit as a physician but not as a spectator."⁴⁶ More than any of the Tractarians, Pusey knew that a Church was catholic not by virtue of purity of doctrine, or a mystical idea of apostolic succession, but only by the presence of spiritual power which could "call forth self-sacrificing efforts, proportionate to the greatness of the needs in the whole length and breadth of our land."⁴⁷

The year 1833 is usually referred to as the beginning of Anglo-Catholicism, but it seems to me that 1845 is a much more important date in the history of the movement, for it marks the end of the Tractarian, or proto-catholic phase of development. Newman's long agony was over, and he left the Anglican Communion in October of that year. Keble was buried in the countryside, passing his days under the influence of the will and presence of God. Pusey, having rid himself of servants and carriage, endowed the parish of St. Saviour's, Leeds, to bring the Gospel to the poor of that city; the Church was consecrated three weeks after Newman's departure. Each of the three Tractarian leaders was devoting himself to what he considered to be catholicism in the Church.

42. *British Critic*, 33 (Jan.—June, 1843), p. 250.

43. Mark Pattison, *Memoirs* (London: Macmillan, 1885), p. 237.

44. Katherine Lake, *Memorials of William Charles Lake, Dean of Durham, 1869–1894* (London: Arnold, 1901), p. 54.

45. Georgina Battiscombe, *John Keble: A Study in Limitations* (London: Constable, 1963), p. 303.

46. H. P. Liddon, *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey* (Oxford: Parker, 1894), Vol. I, p. 130.

47. Pusey, *History of the Councils*, pp. 4f.

III. THE GORHAM CRISIS

After 1845 Pusey was by far the most important figure in the history of nineteenth century Anglo-Catholicism, though he is often the most overlooked. Keble chose to remain in rural obscurity, contributing much to those in need of spiritual guidance, but adding little, apart from the occasional tract, to the party warfare of the time. Pusey assumed the task of keeping together those who had been influenced by Tractarianism but did not choose to follow Newman to Rome. To do this he had to provide a new intellectual basis for the movement. This he achieved, not by abstract reasoning, but by finding truth in the midst of ecclesiastical conflict.

Historically Pusey was the most realistic of the Tractarians. The ecclesiastical crises of the age persuaded him that now in the nineteenth century it was too late to begin to consider giving substance to an abstract and ideal relationship of Church, State, and society. History could not be undone. Church and State in England were helplessly, yet not hopelessly, wedded together.⁴⁸ In their union lay the opportunity for a catholic mission that could influence every aspect of English society:

We need missions among the poor of our towns; organized bodies of clergy living among them . . . brotherhoods, or guilds, which should replace socialism; or sisterhoods of mercy. . . . We need clergy to penetrate our mines, to migrate with our emigrants, to shift with our shifting population, to grapple with our manufacturing system as the Apostles did with the slave system of the ancient world. . . . There is now an appalling need of further organization, for a harder, more self-denying, self-sacrificing warfare, if, by God's help, we would wrest from the principalities and powers of evil, those portions of his Kingdom of which while unregarded by the Church, they have been taking full possession.⁴⁹

The way forward for Pusey was shown during the Gorham crisis of 1850. This arose from the refusal of Henry Phillpotts, the High Church Bishop of Exeter, to institute the Reverend G. C. Gorham as Vicar of Bramford Speke, on the grounds that he denied the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. The Court of Arches supported the Bishop but, when Gorham had his case brought before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, he won his appeal. The Dean of Arches then instituted Gorham as Vicar of Bramford Speke on the order of the Archbishop of Canterbury, J. B. Sumner.

The Church generally was shocked by the decision of the Judicial Committee. When the case had first been brought before it, Bishop Blomfield of London had suggested that the opinion of the bench of bishops might be sought before a decision was made, but Lord John Russell had rejected what he considered to be an attempt to impose the dogmatic decrees of a dominant hierarchy.⁵⁰ To many churchmen it now appeared that the State

48. For Pusey's faith in the Church of the nation, see his *Royal Supremacy Not Arbitrary Authority But Limited by the Laws of the Church* (Oxford, 1850), pp. 162ff.

49. Pusey, *Councils of the Church*, pp. 4f.

50. Cf. *Speech of the Bishop of London in the House of Lords, 3 June, 1850, on Bill Relating to Appeals from the Ecclesiastical Courts* (London, 1850), p. 50.

had taken upon itself the power to thrust into a bishop's diocese an incumbent whom the bishop believed to be heretical, without the bishop's having any redress. It now appeared to be clear that royal supremacy was in fact parliamentary supremacy. Though many members of Parliament were not churchmen, parliamentary power could interfere directly with the interpretation of what was the doctrine of the Church. Another wave of secession to Rome began, led by Archdeacon Henry Manning of Chichester and Archdeacon Robert Wilberforce, the noted theologian and brother of the Bishop of Oxford.

Oxford waited to see what Keble and Pusey would do. Both of them in their earlier days had doubted whether the "uneccelesiastical and Whig" Parliament of the age could be in any way viewed as the lay synod of the Church—as Hooker had believed it to be. What would be their reaction now to the patent Erastianism of the Church of England?

Keble reviewed the situation in two pamphlets, entitled "Trial of Doctrine" and "A Call to Speak Out." What is the priest to do, Keble asked in the latter tract, when he has sworn in his ordination vows to "banish and drive away all erroneous doctrines contrary to God's word?"⁵¹ His answer was: look to English history, and realize that this secular legal decision has affected only the *bene esse*, not the *esse*, of the Church. Reformers in England have always found that, if their case is true, sooner or later they will carry the country with them.

In this time of crisis Keble saw the ultimate authority in the Church rested, not with the bishops, but with the people as a whole. He would ideally have liked to see bishops advise the Queen in matters of doctrine, ritual, and discipline—but only if they were assisted in their deliberations by historians, lawyers, and theologians. He called upon churchmen to pray and wait, and to refuse to listen to those who would "force us into a non-juring movement, or make us acquiesce in what has been done."⁵² The Church was responsible for the English people, and neither the people nor the State could be abandoned in this time of need. In God's own time the Christian people of England would demand truth and justice. "When the whole case of the Church, not in regard of this doctrine, nor of this tribunal only, but in all its relations to the State and the Law of England is fairly and fully set before the people of England we shall carry them with us in our demand for redress."⁵³

Pusey agreed with Keble. He urged the members of the Catholic rump to remember that "we have a sacred duty to the State also. . . . We should not on every offence of the legislature speak of the separation of Church and State."⁵⁴ From this time Pusey began to look for the ultimate authority in the people of the Church as a whole, rather than in the bishops. He agreed

51. John Keble, "Call to Speak Out", in *Church Matters in 1850* (Oxford, 1850), p. 10.

52. *Ibid.*

53. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

54. Pusey, *Royal Supremacy*, p. 211.

with Keble that, in this crisis, "the bishops even had they been separately consulted are by no means representative of the general mind of the Church as everyone must allow."⁵⁵ Pusey now knew that the catholicism the Church needed was not going to be derived from the office of the bishop. "Single bishops or an association do not commit the Church. . . . Dear J. H. N. said to me one day at Littlemore, Pusey we have leant on the Bishops and they have given way under us. Dear J. K. and I never did lean on the Bishops but on the Church. We or rather the whole Church have had plenty of scandals as to Bishops and shall always have them."⁵⁶

Without the revision of Tractarianism made by Keble and Pusey, the Church of Victorian England would not have produced an Anglo-Catholic movement. Tractarianism would have been but a minor non-juring schism in Anglican history—an interesting atavism reflecting the Romanticism of the early nineteenth century. But because Keble and Pusey came to the conclusion that the Church, because it was catholic, was responsible for the whole of the nation and its peoples, the Church in late Victorian England enjoyed what has been called a "golden age of parochial work."⁵⁷

IV. PUSEYISM

Those who developed Pusey's idea of a catholicism of mission, and heroically devoted themselves to bringing the Gospel to the slums of the neglected industrial areas of England, were known by contemporaries as Ritualists or Puseyites. They had no time for the abstract speculations of the early Tractarians, and dismissed them as builders of an ecclesiastical system rather than of catholicism. In doing so they allied themselves, not only with Pusey, but also with F. D. Maurice, who had said about the Tractarians in 1836: "Oh that our High Churchmen would be Catholics!"⁵⁸ By the 1850s Pusey, Maurice, and the clergy who used colourful ritual to bring the light of the Gospel into the drab lives of the poor were all agreed that to be catholic was to be concerned with mission to all parts of society. They saw that the great need of the age was to "raise the poor into men"⁵⁹ and to bring "some of them to feel that the Church was their friend and deliverer, not as they now with great excuse consider it, the bitterest of their foes."⁶⁰

Pusey never appreciated the Ritualists' love of ceremonial. The pious ascetic who chose to wear a hairshirt, rather than adorn himself at the altar, said: "It seems beginning at the wrong end for ministers to deck their own persons; our own plain dresses are more in keeping with the state of the

55. Keble, "Trial of Doctrine," p. 11.

56. Pusey House MSS, Pusey to Liddon, 2 July, 1870.

57. J. G. Lockhart, *Cosmo Gordon Lang* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1949), p. 155.

58. Frederick Maurice, *Life of Frederick Denison Maurice* (London: Macmillan, 1885), Vol. I, p. 188

59. F. D. Maurice, *Social Morality* (London: Macmillan, 1869), p. 15.

60. F. D. Maurice, *Theological Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1871), pp. 244f.

Church which is one of humiliation."⁶¹ He saw clearly that the Ritualists and the old Tractarians differed both in principle and in what they sought, but he allowed them to view him as their "Father-in-God." And when the Ritualists were increasingly attacked for their excessive use of ceremonial, Pusey became their champion, and the popular name for their movement was "Puseyism."⁶²

Typical of the Puseyites was C. F. Lowder, one of the five curates in the parish of St. George's-in-the-East, which encompassed much of London's dockland. Lowder said of his work among the 50,000 souls in the area: "It was simply childish to act as if the Church were recognized as the Mother of the people. . . . She must assume a missionary character . . . by religious association and a new adaptation of Catholic practice to the altered circumstances of the nineteenth century and the peculiar wants of the English character. . . ."⁶³ To Lowder, to be catholic was not only to preach the gospel with evangelical fervour, and to use liturgical techniques such as funeral processions in the streets, but also to attack local brothels, gin-shops, sweat-shops, and the absence of public sanitation. When cholera hit his parish in 1866, Lowder and the religious sisters who worked with him completely won the devotion of the poor of the East End. Not only "Father" Lowder, as he was now called by the docklanders, but Pusey, Lord Halifax, and other volunteers were often seen carrying stricken children into the emergency cholera wards set up by the sisters. Charles Booth, in his survey of London life and labour later in the century, said of the work of the Puseyites: "Saintly self-sacrificing life is that which strikes the imagination of the poor as nothing else does."⁶⁴

As the mission work of the Puseyites progressed, two characteristics began to emerge in the movement, one of which was the loyalty of a large body of laity, who supported this penetration of the slums both financially and through direct mission work. When a study is made of the work of a priest like the Reverend A. B. Goulden, who founded the parish of St. Alphege, Southwark, a religious order of sisters (the Community of the Reparation), a lay brotherhood, and a theological college for "late vocations," it becomes clear that this kind of work was only possible when supported by a large body of privileged laity. With such lay approval each Puseyite priest tended to act as his own diocesan in a missionary area long neglected by the Established Church.⁶⁵

This zeal worried the bishops of the Church, because they found themselves unable to curb or direct the Puseyites. When the slum priests ignored

61. Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, Vol. II, pp. 142-5.

62. The pamphlets against the Puseyites were usually scurrilous; cf. Verus, *Puseyites against Sir Robert Peel* (London, 1841).

63. C. F. Lowder, *Five Years in St. George's Mission* (London, 1861), p. 2.

64. Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London, Third Series, Religious Influences* (London and New York: The Macmillan Co., 1902), Vol. VII, p. 24.

65. Information on the work of Goulden may be obtained from back numbers of *The Elephant*, the parish magazine of the Mission of St. Alphege, now retained by the Community of the Reparation.

episcopal admonitions about innovations in worship, and their other missionary techniques, the bishop began to persecute them. As Father Rowley says, in Compton Mackenzie's *Altar Steps*: "Bishops are haunted by the creation of precedents. A precedent in the life of a bishop is like an illegitimate child in the life of a respectable churchwarden."⁶⁶

Soon the Puseyites were at war with the episcopate. After the passage by Parliament (1874) of the *Public Worship Regulation Act*, which had been presented as a "Bill to put down Ritualism,"⁶⁷ devoted priests were actually imprisoned for refusing to obey their diocesans. It was clear to all that the Puseyite was a different kind of High Churchman from his Tractarian predecessor. The *Church Times* commented in 1877: "The attitude of resistance towards the episcopate into which the whole active section of the High Church school has moved of late years, naturally provokes much comment and some sarcasm from critics of other parties. . . . The conclusion drawn from this fact is that the theoretical champion of Apostolical Succession is in practice a rank Presbyterian or Independent."⁶⁸ The *Church Times* later in the same year dismissed belief in apostolic succession as "Anglican superstition." To believe in it was "no attitude for a freeborn Englishman . . . and the sooner it gives way to a dispassionate recognition of the true limits of Episcopal qualities and powers, the better for the Church of England."⁶⁹

The supporters of the Puseyites upheld the rebellious slum priests because they were convinced that "had the Ritualists obeyed the bishops . . . this revival of the Church of England, with all the Church restoration and the work of social reform . . . , would have been impossible."⁷⁰ Their call was to "turn from the Bishop of London to the Bishop of all the earth, and from the judgment of society to the judgment of Jesus."⁷¹ They claimed that they were followers of Wesley rather than of Newman. The much-persecuted A. H. Mackonochie of St. Alban's, Holborn, said: "If Wesley had flourished in our days how different might the result have been. We need now a man of his marvellous energy, courage and perseverance, to form, organize and carry into work a religious society of priests and lay brothers who shall be the Church of England, but not under the rules of the Establishment, who might act as freely as did Wesley or the Friars."⁷²

By the end of the century the persecution of the Ritualists had abated, and the Church entered a "golden age of parochial work . . . with able and devoted men in charge of industrial parishes everywhere."⁷³ This age ended in 1914, when it seemed as though the catholicism of mission initiated by

66. Compton Mackenzie, *Altar Steps* (London: Cassell, 1922), p. 183.

67. Cf. Edwin Hodder, *Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury* (London: Cassell, 1887), pp. 681f.

68. *Church Times*, 9 February, 1877, p. 81.

69. *Ibid.*, 16 November, 1877, pp. 645.

70. Joseph Clayton, *Bishops as Legislators* (London: Fifield, 1906), p. 12.

71. S. D. Headlam, *Sure Foundation: An Address to the Guild of St. Matthew* (London: Verinder, 1883), p. 9.

72. *Union Review*, 7 (1869), p. 405.

73. Lockhart, *Cosmo Gordon Lang*, p. 155.

the Puseyites, which sought to bring the power of the gospel to bear on all aspects of society, was at last acceptable in the Church of England. The catholicism concerned with episcopal authority and clericalism was much less in evidence.

The reaction and the reassertion of Tractarian catholicism began in our own century. Bishop Blomfield of London and most early Victorian bishops believed that "apostolic succession went out with the Nonjurors."⁷⁴ But from the time of "Soapy Sam" Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford from 1845 and of Winchester from 1869, bishops were found who accepted gracefully a modified form of Tractarianism—the part that exalted the episcopal office. Hensley Henson believed that the growth of the world-wide Anglican Communion had much to do with persuading later Anglican bishops to accept "the exorbitant episcopal theory of this office."⁷⁵ Whatever the reason for contemporary Anglican fascination with Tractarian doctrine, this paper has attempted to suggest that historic Anglo-Catholicism has been more concerned with a catholicity of mission than with ideas of episcopal or clerical authority.

74. Cf. *Christendom*, 2 (1932), p. 94. For Blomfield's ideas on Church and State, cf. Olive Brose, *Church and Parliament* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 90f.

75. H. H. Henson, *Retrospect of an Unimportant Life* (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), p. 291.