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THE OXFORD MOVEMENT: A REVISION *John R. Griffin*

The following study by John R. Griffin of the Oxford Movement, a nineteenth century effort to revitalize the Church of England, is the first of five installments which will later be bound together in book form as a major contribution to scholarship in this field. Griffin finds that the Oxford Movement was quite radical in its denunciation of the Erastian subordination of Church to state-but that it was unable to sustain this attitude in the long run; he finds that the early leaders of the Movement extended their radicalism to the Church itself in an effort to identify more with the people in poverty and in loss of social status (but that this, too, was short-lived); and he finds that the Movement was generally unecumenical and largely anti-Catholic, as revealed in the response to conversions from England to Rome. All of this, as Griffin notes, runs counter to standard Anglican scholarship, so much so that-despite his leadership in studies of this period-the author has met considerable difficulty in publishing his work.

The study is dedicated, in Griffin's words, to "two of my greatest professors, William E. Willer of Xavier University Ohio and R.B. McDowell of Trinity College, Dublin; and it is a faint token of my great admiration for both men and the traditions that they represent. "He also wishes to thank the late Father Dessain, and Fr. Ford of Catholic University.

The work is divided into an introduction, chapters on John Keble, Newman, Richard Froude and Pusey, and a concluding chapter on the later years of the Movement as a whole.

INTRODUCTION



HIS STUDY IS AN INQUIRY INTO THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL THOUGHT OF THE original leaders of the Oxford Movement, Keble, Froude, Newman, and Pusey, and it is primarily addressed to that most pressing question of 1833-erastianism. Without claiming too much for the present study, I do not think it wrong to assert that the question of erastianism has been ignored in the numerous books and articles on the Oxford Movement. It is scarcely accurate to assert that the Keble party, the "apostolicals" as they called themselves, were "anti-erastian" and let the subject pass. The question of authority in the English church from a logical and historical point of view transcended all of the other questions of the moment, and if the ultimate authority was lodged in the Queen, the Prime Minister, or the state, then further discussion on church matters or doctrines by persons of no authoritative standing in the church was useless.

Scholars have noticed the political ferment that gave rise to Keble's *National Apostasy* and the *Tracts for the Times*, but the standard version of Tractarian politics really does not address the question of erastianism, and is, as I hope to

demonstrate, wrong in itself. Starting with Dean Church's seminal account of the Oxford Movement, scholars have invariably suggested that the political basis of the Tracts was conservative and that the Whigs and Radicals of the time were the leading exponents of erastianism.(1) Secular (versus Anglican) historians, following this interpretation, have been inclined to describe the revival in satiric terms, as a defense of a caste-bound system of privilege.(2) But the most superficial examination of the texts clearly does not support such a view. Robert Peel, the Tory Prime Minister, professed himself to be the "Head of the Protestant Church of England", and acted in accordance with that view, as did the later conservative leader Gladstone. Indeed, it can be argued that, whatever might be said against the Whigs and Radicals for the reforming spirit which they showed, the great exponents of erastianism in the nineteenth century were in fact the conservatives or Tories.

A fair illustration of Tory erastianism is to be found in Gladstone's first book, *The State in its Relations with the Church* (1839). Throughout the work, Gladstone subordinated the church to the state, and the conservative journal *The Quarterly Review* clearly endorsed such a relationship between the two powers. Without such subordination, the reviewer for the *Quarterly* insisted, "the worst forms of popery" would emerge.(3) Lord Macaulay reviewed the same book for the liberal *Edinburgh Review*, and he insisted that the function of the state was entirely different from that of the church and that the state was under no obligation, as Gladstone had urged, to profess and enforce a religion. The end result of such enforcements was hypocrisy.(4)

There is also a substantial body of evidence supplied to contemporaries of the apostolicals that suggests that the politics of Keble and his friends were the very opposite of Tory or conservative. William Palmer, leader of a small group of conservatives at Oxford ("Friends of the Church"), noted that one of the critical items of difference between his group and the apostolicals was their respective attitudes towards the alliance. Palmer and his friends wanted to preserve the alliance as essential for the well-being of the church, and the apostolicals wanted the alliance broken.(5) Another early historian of the movement (Copeland) expressly identified Palmer's group of high-churchmen as the erastians for their willing subordination of the church to the state in order to preserve the benefits that went with the established status of the Church of England.(6) Francis Newman also

noted the early radicalism of his brother;(7) and indeed radicalism was the only logical solution to the question of the liberal erastianism that emanated from all of the leaders of the state. What we will find, however, is that the radicalism was short lived. As some of the apostolicals grew older, they came to realize the grim platform that they had proposed for themselves and others was not working, and they quietly abandoned it and settled into the conservative ideal of a good living, wife, and a hundred pounds a year. But in 1833 any willingness to compromise with the state and any expectation of state or aristocratic support (such as a living) marked a man out as a "Z"-a conservative-erastian.

A second area of revision in this study follows closely upon the above. Scholars have frequently suggested that the first revival was exclusively "academic" and spiritual in its interests and that the early Tractarians were indifferent to the great social questions that had called forth the reform measures of the 1830's. According to this view, there was a distinctly narrow sphere of interests that characterized the revival, and this narrowness was the greatest weakness or limitation of the party. Alec Vidler has given an excellent example of such a view of the Oxford Movement:

...the movement had limitations which it is important to notice. Its being called the Oxford movement tells us more than that it originated at Oxford... It tells us also that the movement was academic, clerical, and conservative...

The movement was academic in that its appeal was restricted to the educated classes, not so much from deliberate intention, as from the interests and sympathies of its protagonists. It was not until after 1845 that the Anglo-Catholic revival reached out to the poor and got a footing in the slums.(8)

This study will present an opposite reading of the movement. The political radicalism was extended to the church itself, and a keen dislike of the benefits that derived from the established status of the national church was the second defining note of an apostolical. Each of the apostolicals was intent on restoring the lost popularity of the church; that is, they were intent on removing the church from its connections with the upper-classes, and giving it back to the people, the middle and lower classes. It was for this reason that they looked to the Whigs and their program of disestablishment as one of the agents in the temporal salvation of the church. The

existing establishment, Newman complained, was too much a church for the wealthy; the clergy seemed to have no other function than that of the resident gentleman of his estate. The apostolic clergy would be intimately identified with their flocks in poverty and a loss of social status.

The academic element was introduced into the movement after 1845, as the Anglo-Catholics had to discover a new version of English Church history, a history in which the Reformation was dismissed as insignificant. According to this view, all assertions of Protestantism were dismissed as ignorant; and the exponents of a genuine Catholic orthodoxy, versus the corruptions of Rome and vulgarities of popular Protestantism, were narrowed to about a half a dozen men.

The great difficulty in doing the work on this study has been in cutting through the Anglican version of the Oxford Movement and the work of fervent biographers of the leading Anglo-Catholics. There was in fact no consensus on doctrines at the start of the Oxford Movement, apart from a belief in Baptismal Regeneration and Apostolic Succession. When scholars tell us that Keble and Pusey were teaching doctrines that they had learned from their parents, they ignore a vast body of evidence that clearly refutes such assertions. The intent of this study is to bring some of that evidence to light so that the Oxford Movement and its results can be better understood and evaluated in light of the present ecumenical movement. What we will find is that the original movement was relatively short-lived and that it changed dramatically in the second half of the nineteenth century. But with all of the changes that the movement underwent in the second half, there is nothing in any of them that would justify calling it “ecumenical”.

NOTES

1*The Oxford Movement* (London, 1891), 955; also S.L. Ollard, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement* (London, 1915), 71.

2Cf., A. Woodward, *The Age of Reform* (2nd ed.; 1963), 515.

3“Gladstone on Church and State” in *Quarterly Review* XLV (1839), 132.

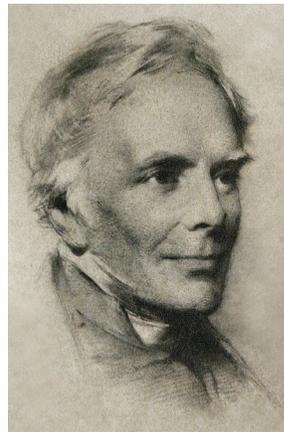
4*The Oxford Movement* (1891), 95; Ollard, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement* (1915) 5.

5*Narrative of Events ...* (1843), 7.

6Cf., *The Oxford Movement* (ms. copy) Pusey House, Oxford, ch. I.

7*The Early History of Cardinal Newman* (London, 1892), 517.

8*The Church in an Age of Revolution* (pb.; 1968) 52.



1. JOHN KEBLE

The place and role of John Keble (1792-1866) in the Oxford Movement have been debated since Newman described him as its “true and primary author” and his sermon, *National Apostasy*, as its formal beginning. In Newman’s words,

The following Sunday, July 14th, 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. (1)

Modern scholars have dismissed both sets of comments as nonsense, a lie, or the results of a nostalgic memory; and even those who accept the accuracy of the Newman comments do so, I believe, for the wrong reasons.

Anglican scholars view Keble as the “saint of Anglicanism”, a man of studied modesty whose greatest boast was that he taught only and always what he had learned from his father.(2) Historians have used this idea to argue that there was nothing new in the teachings and ideals of 1833. Keble’s great role was to call men back to doctrines and traditions that had been put aside in the eighteenth century. So far as Keble had any greater importance than the example he provided in his own life and to Anglicans who might be wavering in the faith, Keble reflected the “pastoral” and “moral” element of the Oxford Movement.(3) He was not, Chadwick has insisted, the man to have founded or led any movement.

There are some excellent arguments against Newman's accuracy and honesty on the question of Keble's role in the original revival. P.L. Cross has noted that none of the early histories of the Movement mention *National Apostasy* or place much emphasis on Keble. James A. Froude, an early historian of the Movement, argued that Keble was no more than a narrow-minded clergyman who believed that people with whom he disagreed were immoral. According to Froude, Newman was always the "indicating number" of the Oxford Movement. (5) Others have seemed to agree with Froude's judgment. In 1878 Thomas Mozley stated that Keble had been the tool of Newman and perhaps some of the others in the affairs of 1833 and beyond: "...He was utilized and walked out for every possible purpose. He had to preach factious sermons and make disloyal protests."(6) These remarks might be traced to Keble himself. In 1854 he told Isaac Williams that he had been "carried away" by the excitements of Pusey and Newman:

About a year ago, when staying at Hursley, I remember John Keble saying, "I look upon my time with Newman and Pusey as a sort of parenthesis in my life; and I have now returned again to my old views such as I had before. At the time of the great Oxford Movement, when I used to go up to you at Oxford, Pusey and Newman were full of the wonderful progress and success of the movement.. .whereas I had always been taught that the truth must be unpopular and to make confession for it was all that one could do."(7)

Whichever version is correct, the above comments suggest that Keble had changed his mind about the ideas of 1833. That period was to be regarded as no more than a "parenthesis" in Keble's life.

EARLY YEARS: TOWARD DISESTABLISHMENT

There is in fact no evidence for the assertion that Keble's teachings of 1833 were the result of a family tradition of Anglo-Catholicism. The senior Keble was the non-resident clergyman for many years of Fairford. The limited evidence we have about his religious views and zeal is far from reassuring. In spite of an eloquent defense of Keble's father by G. Battiscombe and her assertion that Keble's teaching was what he had learned from that source,(8) the available evidence tells us that he was not arduous in the performance of his duties and certainly not an Anglo-Catholic or high-churchman. The collection of his sermons on loan at Lambeth Palace Li-

brary has nothing in it that suggests a high-church view of the Church of England or any of its doctrines.(9)

The careful dating of the sermons implies that the senior clergyman scarcely wrote more than ten or twelve sermons in his life. Each was delivered many, many times; and there are frequent Sundays and Feast Days, including Christmas and Easter, on which none was delivered. More important than the infrequency of his preaching are the absence of any high-church doctrines and an abundance of material that reflect the common Protestantism of the time. There are strong attacks on doctrines that Keble adopted late in his life, notably the Real Presence and Purgatory. If Keble learned anything from his father's teaching, it was a vague kind of religion completely untainted by any trace of doctrine beyond a keen dislike of Catholics and Dissenters.

Keble did, in fact, reflect his father's teaching until he was about forty years old (1832). He was certainly a liberal thinker in religious matters for the first two-thirds of his life;(10) and he once gave up a minor career as a critic for the *Quarterly Review* because of its attacks on the Socinians.(11) In his voluminous letters to friends, especially to Thomas Arnold and J.T. Coleridge, he habitually referred to the Church of England as Protestant and to Catholics as either Catholics or, more commonly, Papists. He defended those who had turned Protestant "in the sixteenth century", (12) and as late as 1832 was scolding a friend's doctrinal ideas for their tendency to turn "good Protestants into Papists." (13) He concluded that censorious letter with the note that he was writing in the presence of his father.

There is another aspect of Keble's early life that has escaped his biographers and historians of the Oxford Movement: Keble's long-standing interest in politics. In the Coleridge collection of Keble's letters there are many references to political problems of the day. There are several petitions on some political question, including one with only Keble's name on it. During the ten years before the Oxford Movement began, Keble grew increasingly angry at the policies of Sir Robert Peel, and in 1827 accused him of political compromise and "erastianism".(14) In another letter of that year he questioned Coleridge, his legal advisor, on the rights of the state to intrude in "matters of [political] liberalism." In the same year he set forward the idea that ultimately became the platform of the Oxford Movement. Writing to Coleridge, he remarked:

Nor has there been any moment in my memory when the Church of England, as an establishment, seemed in so much jeopardy; however Church and State and all together have been brought through so much worse scrapes that it would be most unworthy to despond.. .but I really think matters are in a train to give either us or the next generation an opportunity of practicing your lessons and St. Paul's teaching on non-resistance and acquiescence: which I suppose will apply as well to the subjects of a liberalistic as to those of a monarchical tyranny... such an example would do infinitely more good than the continuance of our temporal advantages.(16)

Keble's hostility to the alliance grew stronger in the following years. By 1831 he was positively eager for the separation of church and state. As he wrote to Coleridge,

If the Church and State are to be untied, I do hope it will be before any attempt has been made to reform us by a Papyrusocratic Parliament.... I am more and more inclined to think, that the sooner we come to an open separation from these people, the better for ourselves and our flocks: and this is some comfort as one watches the progress of Revolution, in which the said separation will, I expect, be a very early step.(17)

The above letter reflects Keble's position for the next four or five years. He would not endure the reform of the church at the hands of non-Anglicans. It would be better for "our flocks" if the church separated from the state before any reform measures were attempted. In a letter of 1831 Keble prophetically wrote to Newman:

We are getting very uncomfortable both here-in the country (meaning by us the bigots-fanatics of the day) at the notion of the Church & State going down without a word of protest from Oxford.(18)

Mention of Newman brings to mind the multiple charges against the accuracy of the Apologia and Keble's own comments that he had been "knocked-off" his feet by the pressures of Newman and Pusey. Keble was the progenitor of the idea of complete separation from the state, and when Newman questioned him on the practicability of his ideas about an independent and impoverished church, he responded:

I am much disposed to agree with you, that very few of our brothers are yet in the right position of mind for looking at this question; but I depend much on the illuminating power of a little wholesome spoliation.(19)

And shortly after *National Apostasy* was published Keble wrote his most radical letter of all to Newman:

I think my mind is made up thus far, that I cannot take the Oath of Supremacy in the sense which the Legislature clearly now puts upon it. I cannot accept any curacy or office in the Church of England.... I think we ought to be prepared to sacrifice any or all of our endowments sooner than sanction it [the Alliance]. "Take every pound, shilling, and penny, only let us make our own bishops, and be governed by our own laws."(20)

Newman was finally convinced that Keble was in earnest about his program, and he wrote to Froude about their mutual friend:

We may use Rose without making him our head; but a head we must have, such a one as we know will go all lengths, when the time comes. I have never till the last month or two thought Keble would go lengths; but I now hope he will, I think he is unchained.... (21)

THE POSITION OF 1833 AND "NATIONAL APOSTASY"

There were others in the Keble circle of friends who noticed the change in Keble about this time. Coleridge, with something like embarrassment, quickly passed over this critical phase of Keble's life: "We have long as a Nation passed by Keble's principles in these matters, and I am not about uselessly to re-agitate them... (22) This is unintelligible if Keble were doing no more than assert the traditional Toryism of Oxford, and there are the equally unintelligible comments to Newman: why should Keble have felt it necessary to offer his resignation if, in his sermon, he had done no more than offer a series of remarks that were consonant with the political beliefs of Oxford and the conservatives at large? Dr. Thomas Arnold was one who noticed the manifest change in Keble at the time of *National Apostasy*, and his friendship with Keble was of far longer standing than that of Newman and Froude. Arnold commented on Keble's "fanaticism" in 1833, and with some justice remarked:

“...on what is commonly called the ‘Alliance between Church and State’...I am far more orthodox according to the Standard of our Reformers, than either the toleration men or the high church men. “(23) Another old friend of Keble noted that he had moved “higher up the ecclesiastical ladder”(24) at this time. And one of Keble’s first pupils, Lord Vane, noticed with astonishment Keble’s anti-liberal ideas in the controversy with Hampden in 1836.(25)

There is yet more evidence to suggest that Keble’s position in 1833 was as new to himself as it was to the other apostolics and that he was not the “tool” of Newman or anyone else in his radical position. On almost the eve of *National Apostasy* he wrote to a friend in America that,

I shall be speaking the thoughts of a very large body of the Clergy in England: who feeling daily that it becomes more and more questionable in point of duty and impossible in point of fact that we should continue in the same relation we are at present to the government..., all Church-men, who are not Erastians (I trust a very considerable party)...will separate [from the state] ...the schismatical body, remaining at such cost, in union with the State.(26)

In other letters of this period Keble went even further in his pronouncements against the traditional Toryism at Oxford and abroad. In a letter of 1834 he expressed the hope that the state would remove all inducements “to marry”, a hit at the living system of the day.(27) None of the above was learned from his father.

R.H. Froude would have agreed with the *Apologia* comments, for he also wrote of the importance of *National Apostasy*:

He calls the Ministers Libertines and the Parliament Erastian and implied that the Bishops are such a set that he hardly knows whether we ought to remain in Communion with them. He doesn’t say this last but only implied it so don’t quote him for it.(28)

Many of his own radical letters were jointly addressed to Newman and Keble under the title of “Fratres Ignavissimi”. When the Hadleigh meetings were concluded, Froude wrote of the platform that had been agreed upon, and noted that Keble was unwilling to even protest in favor of the alliance: “...he thinks the Union of

Church and State as it is now understood, actually sinful.” (29) It was Keble who took what has been called the “advanced” position.(30)

There are still other aspects of Keble’s life that tell against the Anglican portrait of the man as a “shrink-ing violet” sort of clergyman. Keble had no reluctance to go “on record” against whatever he believed was wrong in the society of his day. In a sermon of 1831, for example, Keble preached vigorously--almost to the complete exclusion of any spiritual values--against giving in to the liberal sentiments of the day: Rebellion was always wrong, and even sympathy with rebellion, like sympathy with murderers and adulterers, was immoral. St. Paul had set no great store in personal liberty, and the lesson of Paul and the Prayer Book was “cheerful obedience”. He concluded his sermon with the remarks: “It is something, at all events, to leave upon record the deliberate protest of the Church of England against these lessons of base accommodation.”(31) A careful reader might notice that Keble had no intellectual or moral difficulties in identifying his personal statement with a “deliberate protest of the Church of England:...”

Keble was also the author of the *Christian Year*, the best-selling volume of poetry in 1833. That volume, strictly speaking, had nothing to do with the doctrinal ideals of the Movement, for it derives from the Protestant phase of Keble’s life. There are, however, frequent calls for a reform of the lower clergy throughout the volume, and this call for reform was one of the basic themes of the original Oxford Movement.

It is with this background that we should read *National Apostasy*, and it yields all of the basic ideas that we associate with the Movement. The sermon, however, also represents a break with Keble’s earlier and later work, for he now applied the lessons of Saint Paul and the Prayer Book to the church itself. Keble, it should be noted, nowhere suggested that he was making only a private statement. The advice of *National Apostasy* was extended to every level of church and society, and the best way, perhaps, to read the sermon is not as an extension of his father’s teaching, but rather as a reaction against that teaching and his father’s practice. Arnold had every right to feel aggrieved at Keble’s “fanaticism” in 1833, for the sermon might easily be read as an attack on Arnold’s earlier proposal for a compromise among the Protestant churches in order to preserve the benefits that went with the established status of the Church of Eng-

land.(32) The message of *National Apostasy* was in just the opposite direction, and, ultimately, was a repudiation of conservatism.

Keble began his sermon with a lengthy protest against the projected disestablishment of the church. Spoliation of the church, any church, was an evil; and it was the duty of every clergyman to oppose evil. But Keble's opening protest was not the message of *National Apostasy*. The protest was rather a witness, as he had promised in his letter of 1831, against the evil of such a gesture by the state. The message comes as an answer to Keble's rhetorical question as to the proper conduct and polity of men who find themselves living in a time of national disgrace. The very title of the sermon was taken, I believe, from the first page of Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*; it suggests Keble's studied earnestness about the problems of the day. The Keble question goes,

What should be the tenor of their conduct, who find themselves cast on such times of decay and danger? How may a man best reconcile his allegiance to God and his Church with his duty to his country which now, by the supposition, is fast becoming hostile to the Church, and cannot therefore long be the friend of God?(33)

Keble's answer to his question is just the opposite of what scholars have suggested. Far from being indifferent to evils in his own church, Keble advised his audience to do nothing, in a political way, to prevent disestablishment. This point was made explicit in Keble's use of Samuel as the model for beleaguered churchmen and bishops.

Samuel was the model that Keble selected for such churchmen in 1833:

He was prepared to resist... at all hazards, had he not received from God himself directions to give them their own way; protesting, however, in the most distinct and solemn tone, so as to throw the whole blame of what might ensue on their wilfulness. Having so protested, and found them obstinate, he does not therefore at once forsake their service; he continues discharging all the functions they have left him, with a true and loyal, though most heavy, heart.(p.44)

At the same time, Samuel parted company with Saul; and the inference was that bishops ought to get out of politics, for Saul was almost certainly represented as the ancient equivalent of Lord Grey. Keble's advice to the low-

er clergy was even more explicit in his strictures against political activity to prevent disestablishment:

As to those who, either by station or temper, feel themselves most deeply interested; they cannot be too careful in reminding themselves that one chief danger, in times of change and excitement, arises from their tendency to engross the whole mind. Public concerns, ecclesiastical or civil, will prove indeed ruinous to those who permit them to occupy all their care and thoughts, neglecting or undervaluing ordinary duties, more especially those of a devotional kind.(p.46)



Keble, thus, gave the first expression to the apostolic idea of "no concern with politics". Such advice was of course radical in its implications, for a failure to act against the prospect of spoliation would certainly hasten the process. Yet Keble's advice is repeated towards the very end of the sermon where he encouraged his clerical reader to attend his pastoral duties with greater concern:

...the surest way to uphold or restore our endangered Church will be for each of her anxious children, in his own place and station, to resign himself more thoroughly to his God and Saviour in those duties public and private, which are not immediately affected by the emergencies of the moment; the daily and hourly duties, piety, purity, charity, justice.. .by doing all as a Christian, to credit and advance the cause he has most at heart; and what is more, to draw down God's blessings upon it.(p.46)

The lower clergy, he concluded, should fix their loyalties on "the apostolic church in these realms" and not the Establishment or the Conservative party. Such a process was good in itself, and it would also help towards restoring the lost support of the middle and lower classes for the church. Keble knew of the refined corruptions of the lower clergy in its role of "fox-hunting, trout-fishing..." (34), servile dependence on the aristocracy; and his advice went exactly counter to that trend.

There is yet one more motif in the sermon that might be mentioned. Keble directly addressed the laity

in a part of *National Apostasy*, and his message to them was that they should uphold the political rights of the church. The role of the bishops and the clergy was to provide for the spiritual well-being of their flocks, but the political defense of the church was the function of the laity.

National Apostasy was, then, a perfect manifesto of principles that were shortly afterwards taken up at the Hadleigh meetings and in the first installments of the *Tracts for the Times*. The method of “non-resistance” to the state’s move towards disestablishment became the formal platform of the apostolics. It should also be noticed that Newman and Froude adopted that title only after the sermon was in print. The title was used to differentiate the Keble party from the conservatives at Oxford, Palmer’s “Friends of the Church”.

Keble’s contribution to the Oxford Movement went even beyond the above. He circulated the *Tracts* as eagerly as his two younger friends. As he wrote to another friend:

I therefore take the liberty of sending you a set. They are mostly written by his friend, and mine, Mr. Newman, in persuance of a design which some of us at Oxford have ventured to set on foot, for drawing people’s attention to Church principles.... They are less and less thought of by the generality,... We do not make a formal society, but only lay our heads together as seems good to ourselves, to prepare and circulate Tracts.... As yet I do not think we are got into a popular vein enough in our Tracts, but in this respect I have good hopes of some speedy improvement-to circulate among your poor neighbors.(35)

Keble had earlier recommended that some of the *Tracts* be written expressly for the “lower orders”, (35) though the existing *Tracts* were excellent for the middle classes. Indeed, it might be guessed that the original idea for the *Tracts* belongs to Keble who had mentioned the widespread pamphleteering among the radicals in his opening lecture on poetry in 1831.(37) Keble’s concern to make the *Tracts* more accessible to the lower classes may account for their cheap appearance.

Keble’s first contribution to the series, *Tract Four*, was no less radical in its implication than those which came before and after A. He openly advised his clerical reader to look upon his bishop as something more than

an agent of the state., Such obedience and veneration would be the “safest way” for churchmen in a time of crisis.

A CHANGE OF VIEWS, A LIVING, AND A WIFE

In less than a year Keble gave up some of his ideas, and by 1835 he had more or less abandoned all of the radical notions of *National Apostasy*. Owen Chadwick and other scholars have suggested that when Keble married and took a living at Hursley the principles of the Movement began their slow dissemination into the countryside.(38) According to this version Keble represented the “pastoral” side of the Oxford Movement, versus the erudition of Pusey and the genius of Newman. Keble may have been uneasy about the handsome living that he received from his patron, for he was curiously silent on the subject in his many letters to Newman. He was also silent on the grave question of matrimony, and I believe it could be argued that the idea of clerical celibacy belonged originally to Keble. It is mentioned as an ideal in *The Christian Year* and in Keble’s letters.

Keble’s silence on these vital matters did not escape Froude who complained of his getting off “snugly” to his very handsome vicarage at Hursley. Newman defended Keble in this instance, but he may have felt a confirmation of some of his earlier misgivings about Keble’s reliability. As late as 1835 he was addressing both Keble and Froude as the “philosophers” of the revival, a gesture that suggests a similarity of ideas between the two men. And only when Keble’s edition of Hooker’s *Ecclesiastical Polity* was published in April of 1836 did he comment on Keble’s change from the earlier ideals: “Let the *Christian Year* speak of K. I will not commit him by what I say, but when you read his preface to Hooker, I think you will see his tone is changed....”(39) There was not, then, uniform enthusiasm about the edition, as we read in the recent studies on the Oxford Movement.(40) Indeed, the publication may be read as a formal valediction to apostolic ideals; and it might be that Keble waited until Froude was dead before publishing the work. The whole business of 1833 had been to wean men away from the conservative-erastian system in Hooker and other conservative divines.

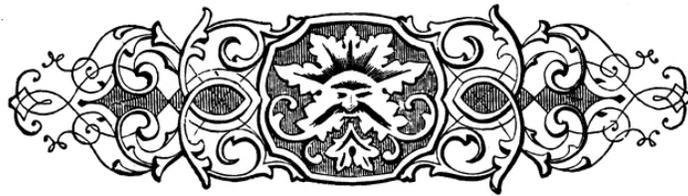
In a tentative way Keble slowly moved into the conservative camp. He believed as vigorously as any of the other conservatives in the alliance; and a sermon of 1835 suggests that he regarded wealth as one of the “notes”

of a real church. That sermon, “Church and King”, was brave in its scolding tone and completely original in its use of Leslie’s *Regale*. For it was Keble’s view that the state, while it supported and defended the church, was actually inferior to the church in its ruling capacity. The state was like a “hired” assistant that might be dismissed if its services were inadequate. There was, moreover, no use of critical terms like apostolic or Catholic in the sermon. Keble’s thesis was that the state should take care of the church in the most handsome way possible “whatever else appear to be neglected.”

In the years between 1835 and Newman’s conversion there were many other changes in Keble’s political ideas, and it is impossible to make any coherent sense of Keble’s theory. In 1839, for example, he reviewed Gladstone’s *The State in its Relations with the Church* for the *British Critic*. The book, he told Newman, was “excellently well meant..”, but not in keeping with “Froude’s principles”. (41) The phrase “Froude’s principles” I interpret as part

of Keble’s effort to extricate himself from some of his own earlier remarks, and it is hard to believe that Froude would have agreed with any aspect of Gladstone’s book. Froude had a keen distaste for rhetoric, and the Gladstone book was overflowing with that rhetoric.

The clearest part of Keble’s review was his response to Macaulay’s review of the same book. Macaulay had attacked every part of the work, its rhetoric, faulty logic, and its central premise that the state ought to profess and enforce a religion. Somewhat unfairly, Keble attacked Macaulay as an “infidel”, and insisted that it was in fact the central duty of the state to enforce a religion in the way demonstrated by the “unanswerable Leslie”. Keble also hinted at the manifest erastianism of Gladstone’s book, and he was unhappy with the “ultra-Protestantism” of the rising statesman. But his review was in general favorable to the book, for Gladstone was at least a pious churchman.(42)



NOTES

- 1 *Apologia*, edited by W. Ward (London, 1913) 56.
- 2 Cf., Battiscombe, *John Keble*, II; T. Parker, “The Rediscovery of the Fathers in the Seventeenth Century Anglican Tradition” in *The Rediscovery of Newman*, edited by J. Coulson and A. Allchin (1967), 38; also G. Donaldson, *Five Great Oxford Leaders* (1902), in passim.
- 3 Chadwick, *The Mind of the Oxford Movement*, 30ff.
- 4 Chadwick, “The Limitations of Keble” in *Theology* LXVII (1964) 46-52.
- 5 “The Oxford Counter-Reformation” in *Short Studies on Great Subjects* (1833), 187-195; for cross reference, see *John Henry Newman* (London, 1933), Appendix A.
- 6 Quoted in *Letters and Diaries of John H. Newman*, edited by C. Dessain and T. Gornall, XXXVIII (1975), 353; hereafter L&D.
- 7 *Autobiography*, edited by G. Prevost (1892), 118.
- 8 *John Keble*, II.
- 9 *Williams Collection #3*, Lambeth Palace, London.
- 10 See J. Griffin, “John Keble: A Report from the Devil’s Advocate” in *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, XLVIII (June, 1979) 222-4.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 224.
- 12 Ms. letter to A.P. Perceval (1832) in *Keble to Perceval*, Pusey House, Oxford.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 Ms. letter to R. Southey (1827), Keble College, Oxford; hereafter KC.
- 15 Ms. letter to Coleridge (June 22, 1827), *Coleridge Collection Bodleian*, Oxford, Vol. I; hereafter CC.
- 16 Ms. letter (Nov. 29, 1827), CC. 17 Ms. letter (Mar. 31 1831), CC.
- 18 Ms. letter (Mar. 26, 1831), *Correspondence Public*, Birmingham Oratory; hereafter CP.
- 19 Ms. letter (July, 1833), CP.
- 20 L&C, 1, 441-2.

- 21 Ms. letter (July 13, 1833), CP.
- 22 *A Memoir of the Rev. John Keble* (5th ed.; 1880), 218.
- 23 Ms. letter to Coleridge (Oct. 23, 1833), CC.
- 24 Ms. letter C. Davison to Coleridge (Aug., 1834), CC.
- 25 Cf., L&D, XXXVI (1974), 375.
- 26 Ms. letter to Mrs. Pruen (July 10, 1833), KC.
- 27 Ms. letter (Dec. 3, 1834), CC.
- 28 Quoted in P. Brendon, *Hurrell Froude and the Reformers* (1974), 158.
- 29 Ms. letter to Perceval (Aug. 18, 1833), KC.
- 30 Brendon, *In passim*.
- 31 Sermons, *Academical and Occasional* (2nd ed.; 1848), 123.
- 32 Cf., T. Arnold, *Principles of Church Reform* (1833), 71ff.
- 33 “National Apostasy” in *The Oxford Movement*, edited by E. Fairweather (Oxford, 1964), 43; pages are given in text.
- 34 *Westminster Review*, XXI (1834), 75-6.
- 35 Ms. letter to Charles Dyson (Dec. 2, 1833), CC.
- 36 Ms. letter to Newman (Nov. 4, 1833), CP.
- 37 *Lectures on Poetry*, translated by E. Francis (2 vols.; 1912) 1,14.
- 38 *The Mind of the Oxford Movement*, 30ff.
- 39 Ms. letter to H. Rose (May 23, 1836), *Rose*, Vol. 112, Birmingham Oratory.
- 40 Cf. M. O’Connell, *The Oxford Conspirators* (1969), 243.
- 41 Ms. letter (March 31, 1839), *Keble* (Vol. II) Birmingham Oratory.
- 42 Cf. H. Liddon (ed.), *Difficulties in the Relations with the State* (1877), 358; Liddon edited Keble’s essay of 1839 and added a long introduction to put down the brief revival of radicalism among a limited number of the Anglo-Catholics. Using Keble’s essay, Liddon insisted that the alliance was holy and important.