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# The Tractarians' Sermons and Other Speeches

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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE TRACTARIANS' SERMONS AND OTHER SPEECHES<sup>1</sup>

Robert H. Ellison

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#### *Introduction*

The Tractarians<sup>2</sup> were orators. They would probably object to the use of this term, for it evoked what they saw as the excesses of Evangelical preaching<sup>3</sup> and ran counter to the notion

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank East Texas Baptist University for granting me a research leave during the Spring 2006 semester, and for providing other financial support through the Faculty Research Grant program and the Jim and Ethel Dickson Research and Study Endowment. The Principal of Pusey House, Oxford, and the staff of Lambeth Palace Library provided invaluable assistance in locating sermons by E.B. Pusey and John Keble, as well as John and Thomas Keble's letters to Isaac Williams. I am also grateful to Dawn Coleman, Carol Poster, and Bob Tennant for their careful reading of my drafts and very helpful suggestions for improvement.

<sup>2</sup> The term "Tractarian" was often used to describe Anglican clergy and laity affiliated with the Oxford Movement (1833–45), an effort to revive interest in and adherence to the teachings of the Church Fathers and the 17<sup>th</sup>-century English theologians known as the "Caroline Divines". It derives from the Movement's flagship publications, the 91 *Tracts for the Times* issued between 1833 and 1841. A classic history of the movement is Richard William Church, *The Oxford Movement. Twelve Years, 1833–1845* (1891; repr. Chicago, 1970); more recent studies include Peter Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship, 1760–1857* (Cambridge, 1994); George Herring, *What Was the Oxford Movement?* (London, 2002); Simon Skinner, *Tractarians and the 'Condition of*

of “reserve” that was central to the ethos of the Oxford Movement.<sup>4</sup> The fact remains, however, that they delivered hundreds of speeches, many of which were published during their lifetimes or shortly after their deaths. A complete list of titles would run to over fifty collections of sermons, some half-dozen volumes of lectures, and nearly thirty archidiaconal charges.<sup>5</sup>

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*England': The Social and Political Thought of the Oxford Movement* (Oxford, 2004); and James Pereiro, *Ethos and the Oxford Movement: at the Heart of Tractarianism* (Oxford, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Tractarian critiques of oratorical display can be found in John Henry Newman, *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, 5, ed. Ian Ker and Thomas Gornall (Oxford, 1980), pp. 44–45; John Keble, *Occasional Papers and Reviews* (Oxford, 1877), pp. 369–70; and Edward Bouverie Pusey, *Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford Between A.D. 1859 and 1872* (London, 1872), pp. 6–7. An occasion on which Keble made a special effort to preach poorly is recorded in Edward Bouverie Pusey’s Preface to *Occasional Papers*, pp. xiii–xiv.

<sup>4</sup> The word “reserve” had a twofold meaning for the Tractarians. The first is analogous to the Fathers’ concept of the *disciplina arcani*, or the “discipline of the secret”: God “reserved” spiritual knowledge for those who were capable of properly handling it. The second sense, which is the one I am using here, holds that Christians should be “reserved” in the way they lived their lives, treating sacred matters calmly and soberly, and avoiding irreverent speech and inappropriate displays of religious excitement or emotion. For detailed discussions of these ideas, see Isaac Williams’ Tracts 80 and 87, *On Reserve in Communicating Religious Knowledge*.

<sup>5</sup> See the Bibliography for the most important texts in each of these categories.

Victorianists and other scholars have not entirely neglected these works,<sup>6</sup> but they generally have not taken the approaches I will employ here. Interest in these texts has largely been historical or theological, focusing on *what* they reveal about the speaker's views on the ancient church, the sacraments, ecclesiastical legislation, or a host of other topics. My concern, however, is rhetorical: I want to know *how* and *why* they expressed those views the way they did, tailoring each message to meet the demands and expectations of a certain place and time. When Victorian preachers and their publishers used a variety of labels, they implied that they recognized a variety of genres; analyzing the distinguishing characteristics of each category can illuminate aspects of the texts we have not noticed before.

### *Definitions and Scope*

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<sup>6</sup> Chapters focusing on the Tractarians' oratory can be found in Kirstie Blair, ed., *John Keble in Context* (London, 2004); Yngve Brilioth, *The Anglican Revival: Studies in the Oxford Movement* (London, 1925); Perry Butler, ed., *Pusey Rediscovered* (London, 1983); F.L. Cross, *Preaching in the Anglo-Catholic Revival* (London, 1933); and Ian Ker, *The Achievement of John Henry Newman* (Notre Dame, IN, 1990). Journal articles include John R. Griffin, "The Meaning of *National Apostasy*: A Note on Newman's *Apologia*," *Faith & Reason* 2 (Spring 1976), 19–33; Ronald H. McKinney, "Preaching within the Oxford Movement," *Homiletical and Pastoral Review* 85.7 (April 1985), 56–61; Lawrence Poston, "Newman's Tractarian Homiletics," *Anglican Theological Review* 87.3 (Summer 2005), 399–421, and Geoffrey Rowell, "'Remember Lot's Wife' – Manning's Anglican Sermons," *Recusant History* 21 (1992), 167–79.

This is not intended to be a study of *Tractarian* oratory, which I would define as those discourses intended to advance the ideas and doctrines of the Oxford Movement.<sup>7</sup> Rather, my interest is in the Tractarians' *oratory*, the larger body of speeches by those associated with the Movement, whether or not those speeches explicitly addressed its agendas.

The number of men whose works could be included here is quite large. In its broadest sense, the term "Tractarian" could apply to several hundred Victorian clergymen, most of whom served small, rural parishes in the southern and southwestern parts of England.<sup>8</sup> In this essay, however, I will focus on twelve men who contributed to the *Tracts for the Times* and published significant numbers of speeches. Greatest attention will be given to the three who are generally regarded as the central figures of the Movement – John Henry Newman, John Keble, and E.B. Pusey – along with Benjamin Harrison, Henry Edward Manning, and Isaac Williams. Some mention will also be made of Charles Page Eden, Thomas Keble (John's younger brother), Charles Marriott, Arthur Philip Perceval, Sir George Prevost, and Robert Francis Wilson.<sup>9</sup> John William Bowden, Antony Buller, Richard Hurrell

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<sup>7</sup> In 1840, Pusey identified the Oxford Movement's chief concerns as "High thoughts of the two Sacraments" (baptism and holy communion); a "High estimate" of the "visible Church" and the Episcopal system of government; "Regard for ordinances" and "the visible part of devotion"; and "Reverence for and deference to the Ancient Church" (Henry Parry Liddon, *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey*, 4 vols. [London, 1893–97], p. 2:140).

<sup>8</sup> Herring, *Oxford Movement*, pp. 69–78.

<sup>9</sup> The lives of Newman, Keble, and Pusey are well-known, but a brief mention of the other nine may be in order. All were students, tutors, or fellows of various Oxford colleges who went on to become curates (Thomas Keble at Bisley, Wilson at Rowhams, and Williams at Littlemore and St Mary's); vicars of St Mary's (Eden and Marriott); archdeacons (Harrison

Froude, Alfred Menzies, and William Palmer wrote eleven of the ninety tracts but published few or no orations, and are thus excluded from the study.<sup>10</sup>

### *The Tractarians' Homiletic Theory*

I begin with the theory of sacred rhetoric, specifically the nature of the sermon. Scholars in fields ranging from history and English to communication and sociolinguistics have produced a large body of scholarship on the analysis and classification of rhetorical texts,<sup>11</sup> along with helpful *descriptive* comparisons between sermons and such related genres as homilies;<sup>12</sup> commentaries and treatises;<sup>13</sup> catechetical addresses;<sup>14</sup> and exhortations.<sup>15</sup> The Tractarians

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of Maidstone, Manning of Chichester, and Prevost of Gloucester), and royal chaplains (Perceval).

<sup>10</sup> Bowden, a commissioner of stamps, wrote a number of religious pieces but published no sermons. Buller, Froude, Menzies, and Palmer were in holy orders, but I have been able to locate only two published sermons by Buller and none at all by the others.

<sup>11</sup> For overviews of the major concepts and publications in rhetorical criticism and genre theory, see James Jasinski, ed., *Sourcebook on Rhetoric* (Thousand Oaks, CA, 2001) and Thomas O. Sloane, ed., *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* (Oxford, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> Mary B. Cunningham and Pauline Allen, "Introduction," in *Preacher and Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics*, ed. Mary B. Cunningham and Pauline Allen (Leiden, The Netherlands, 1998), pp. 1–2.

<sup>13</sup> O.C. Edwards, Jr., *A History of Preaching* (Nashville, 2004), pp. 147, 187–92.

<sup>14</sup> Yngve Brilioth, *A Brief History of Preaching*, trans. Karl E. Mattson (Philadelphia, 1965), pp. 10–13.

<sup>15</sup> Jerry L. Tarver, "A Lost Form of Pulpit Address," *Southern Speech Journal* 31.3 (Spring 1966), 181–89.

were rather sophisticated genre theorists in their own right, and their writings often contain *prescriptive* statements about what sermons should and should not be.

Much of Newman's homiletic theory can be found in *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* and "University Preaching", one of the discourses published in *The Idea of a University*. He believed that "polemical discussions" should be limited to the lecture hall,<sup>16</sup> and he had a self-imposed "rule" against "introduc[ing] the exciting topics of the day into the Pulpit".<sup>17</sup> He adhered to this rule until December 1841, breaking it only because he believed "the moment was urgent".<sup>18</sup> Those whose faith had been shaken by the establishment of the Jerusalem Bishopric and the publication of his own *Tract Ninety* needed to be reassured that it was spiritually safe to remain members of the established church.<sup>19</sup> When he prepared the sermons he preached that month for publication in *Sermons on Subjects of the Day*, he added "a few words...of private or personal opinion", sentiments that he saw as inappropriate for the pulpit but "unobjectionable in the case of compositions, which are *detached* from the sacred place and service to which they once belonged".<sup>20</sup> The volume, in fact, is not just a departure from his usual choice of topics; it might actually be regarded as not containing sermons at all. Because of the changes he had made, the collection could not, in his view, "be

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<sup>16</sup> John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (1852; repr. Oxford, 1976), p. 337.

<sup>17</sup> John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1890; repr. New York, 1968), pp. 125, 236.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 124–27. For a brief discussion of the Jerusalem Bishopric, see *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. revised, ed. E.A. Livingstone (Oxford and New York, 2005), pp. 874–75.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

criticized at all as *preachments*; they are *essays*; essays of a man who, at the time of publishing them, was *not* a preacher”.<sup>21</sup>

Other Tractarians shared Newman’s views about the kinds of subjects that should – and should not – be discussed from the pulpit. Several collections open with statements similar to one in the preface to a volume Pusey published in 1845: “nothing was further from [his] mind”, he wrote, “than to enter upon controversy; his one object being to bring solemn truths before the hearers, with the hope and prayer that God would bring them home to their souls”.<sup>22</sup> The Tractarians appear to have had a particular distaste for using the sermon as a vehicle for political commentary. They often wrote about the relationship between church and state,<sup>23</sup> but they would have agreed with John Keble’s statement that such topics were generally not “fit for the House of God”.<sup>24</sup> When they do address these matters in sermons commemorating political occasions such as Guy Fawkes’ Day or the beginning of a judicial

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 235.

<sup>22</sup> Edward Bouverie Pusey, "Preface," in *A Course of Sermons on Solemn Subjects Chiefly Bearing on Repentance and Amendment of Life, Preached in St. Saviour's Church, Leeds, During the Week After Its Consecration on the Feast of S. Simon and S. Jude* (Oxford, 1845), p. ii.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, “A Trial of Doctrine” and other essays in Keble, *Occasional Papers*; Manning, *Appellate Jurisdiction of the Crown in Matters Spiritual* (London, 1850); Newman, Tract 2, “The Catholic Church” (Oxford, 1833); Prevost, *The Principles of the English Constitution in Church and State* (London, 1848); and Pusey, *The Royal Supremacy not an Arbitrary Authority but Limited by the Laws of the Church of Which Kings Are Members* (Oxford, 1850).

<sup>24</sup> Keble, *Occasional Papers*, p. 238.



term,<sup>25</sup> they admonish their congregations not to get caught up in “earthly activity and worldly schemes”.<sup>26</sup> Instead, they are to submit to the governing authorities and obey Moses’ command as quoted in Pusey’s *Patience and Confidence the Strength of the Church*: “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord”.<sup>27</sup>

The Tractarians sought to minimize discussions of potentially divisive issues because any controversy they provoked could detract from the *raison d’être* of the sermon: the preacher’s appeals for his people to live more fully Christian lives. The difference between sermons and other forms of religious expression can be summed up in the phrase “to convince and to persuade”, an idea which dates back to at least Augustine’s *De Doctrina Christiana*<sup>28</sup> and appears in the writings of theorists and practitioners from ancient times to the present day.<sup>29</sup> The first part of the phrase indicates that sermons, like lectures and essays,

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<sup>25</sup> For examples of the Tractarians’ political preaching, see John Keble, “National Apostasy” and “Church and State,” in *Sermons Academical and Occasional* (Oxford, 1847), pp. 127–72; Manning, “Christ’s Kingdom Not of This World,” in *Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford* (Oxford, 1844), pp. 67–96; and Pusey, *Patience and Confidence the Strength of the Church*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1838).

<sup>26</sup> Pusey, *Patience and Confidence*, p. 56.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1. For a discussion of “audience awareness” in Pusey’s, Keble’s, and Newman’s political writing and preaching, see Robert H. Ellison, “The Tractarians’ Political Rhetoric,” *Anglican and Episcopal History* 77.3 (September 2008), 221–56.

<sup>28</sup> Aurelius Augustine, “On Christian Doctrine,” trans. J. F. Shaw, in *Augustine*, Great Books of the Western World, 18 (Chicago, 1952), IV.13.

<sup>29</sup> For uses of this and similar phrases from the Middle Ages through modern sociolinguistics, see James J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley, 1974), p. 313; George Herbert,

must offer some education in the fundamentals of the faith. They must not, however, end there. Instead, the preacher must also resolve, as Newman did in 1824, to “*always* strive in every pulpit *so* to ... warn people that it is quite idle to pretend to faith and holiness, unless they show forth their inward principles by a pure disinterested upright line of conduct”.<sup>30</sup>

This resolution is not unique to Newman; all the preachers discussed in this essay insist that practical application is an essential part of all true sermons. Isaac Williams defines a sermon as a discussion “of some great point of Christian truth, with its application to the life of faith”,<sup>31</sup> and suggests that some of his own collections might be considered commentaries or lectures rather than sermons because they focus on instruction rather than application.<sup>32</sup> In his archidiaconal charges of 1848 and 1849, Manning criticizes Victorian preaching as “too often general and unpractical” and reminds the clergy under his care that

It is not enough that the matter of a sermon be true. It needs, so to speak, flesh and blood, human sympathy and the breath of life. The preacher must come

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*The Country Parson, the Temple* (New York, 1981), pp. 84–85; Gilbert Burnet, *A Discourse of the Pastoral Care*, 14th ed. (London, 1821), pp. 210–11; John Lawson, *Lectures Concerning Oratory*, ed. E. Neal Claussen and Karl R. Wallace (Carbondale, Ill, 1972), p. 366; J.H. Rigg, "The Pulpit and Its Influence," *Eclectic Magazine* 40 (1857), 383; Douglas Biber, "An Analytical Framework for Register Studies," in *Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Register*, ed. Douglas Biber and Edward Finegan (New York, 1994), p. 32.

<sup>30</sup> John Henry Newman, *Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman*, 2 vols, ed. Anne Mozley (London, 1891), p. 1:89.

<sup>31</sup> Isaac Williams, *A Series of Sermons on the Epistle and Gospel for Each Sunday in the Year and the Holy Days of the Church*, 1 (London, 1855), p. vi.

<sup>32</sup> [Isaac Williams], “Advertisement,” in *Plain Sermons, by Contributors to the "Tracts for the Times,"* 10 vols. (London, 1839–48), pp. 9:1–2.

down into the midst of his people: he must descend into the detail of every day; into the particulars of trial, the commonplace of duty, character, and personal experience.<sup>33</sup>

As the “aim of the Apostles was not controversy, but to ‘make disciples of all nations’”, Victorian clergy must set debate aside and “firmly and peacefully teach, leaving to conscience and to God the issue of [their] work”.<sup>34</sup>

John Keble’s belief that sermons ought not to be “merely speculative”, but address “practical questions of duty”,<sup>35</sup> is discussed at length in his 1816 review of sermons by Archibald Alison, a Scottish Episcopal preacher who lived from 1757 to 1839. In Keble’s view, Alison falls short of the expectations of both classical and Christian speech. He does not satisfy the ancients’ threefold test of “conciliating the good opinion of his hearers, of putting them in possession of the question, and lastly, of moving their feelings”,<sup>36</sup> nor does he live up to what the 18th-century archbishop Thomas Secker called the “business” of the preacher: to “make men think . . . of the state of their own souls; and to fix them in the belief and practice of what will render them happy now and to eternity”.<sup>37</sup> Keble’s “great objection” to the collection is that Alison “uniformly omits that which, in pulpit eloquence especially, can least conveniently be spared”.<sup>38</sup> Because “he does not think it essential to acquaint [the

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<sup>33</sup> Henry Edward Manning, *A Charge Delivered at the Ordinary Visitation of the Archdeaconry of Chichester in July, 1849* (London, 1849), p. 79.

<sup>34</sup> Henry Edward Manning, *A Charge Delivered at the Ordinary Visitation of the Archdeaconry of Chichester in July, 1848* (London, 1848), pp. 54–55.

<sup>35</sup> Keble, *Sermons, Academical and Occasional*, p. i.

<sup>36</sup> [John Keble], “Alison’s Sermons,” *Quarterly Review* 14 (1816), 430.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 443.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 430.

people] *why* they should entertain the feelings and opinions which he proposes, nor what good purpose it would answer if they did”, it is not possible to receive “any instruction or edification from the sermons”.<sup>39</sup> In short, the question Keble attempts to set aside in the opening paragraphs – “whether these discourses would be more properly ranged under the head of sermons or of mere essays”<sup>40</sup> – is in fact the central issue of the review. The stylistic flaws of Alison’s speeches keep them from being regarded as *good* essays, but they are essays nonetheless. “Edification”, on the other hand, is the quality that sets preaching apart from all other species of address; because it is not emphasized to the extent Keble expects, he would say that Alison’s speeches cannot be classified as sermons at all.

#### *“Plain” Preaching and “University” Sermons*

A study of religious oratory must not only examine how sermons compare to essays, lectures, and commentaries; it must differentiate among the many subgenres of the sermon as well. Preachers in pre-Victorian days constructed numerous taxonomies of preaching. Desiderius Erasmus’ Renaissance-era theory, for example, posited “a system of five genera”: he relabeled classical epideictic as “laudatory” preaching and “developed the deliberative genus into four others: the persuasive, the exhortative, the admonitory, and the consolatory”.<sup>41</sup> Several centuries later, in *Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence*, George Campbell offered his own list of five “species”: the “explanatory”, “controversial”, “commendatory”, “pathetic”, and “persuasive”.<sup>42</sup> The Tractarians likewise used a variety of

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 430.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 430.

<sup>41</sup> Edwards, *History of Preaching*, p. 277.

<sup>42</sup> George Campbell, *Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence* (London, 1807), pp. 356–62.

adjectives to describe their work: “village”, “parochial”, “cathedral”, “occasional”, “lenten”, and so on. The ones they preached and published most often were “plain”, “university”, and “visitation” sermons, subgenres that were intended for three very different types of audiences and therefore open many avenues for rhetorical analysis.<sup>43</sup>

Calls for plainness in the pulpit were often made as a reaction against the perceived excesses of earlier preaching styles: the “sophistic abuses” of early Christian preaching,<sup>44</sup> the “ornate style” of the later Middle Ages,<sup>45</sup> or the elaborate wordplay of the “witty” or “metaphysical” sermons of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>46</sup> Advocates of the plain style encouraged preachers to take the middle way, avoiding pedantry and ornament while not ruining their discourses with “colorless words”,<sup>47</sup> “barbarism”,<sup>48</sup> or “vulgarity of speech”.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> There were not always rigid demarcations between these subgenres; in the next chapter of this collection, for example, Carol Poster notes that Richard Whately was notorious for “self-plagiarism” and for publishing the same essay under a number of different labels. Similarly, at least two of Newman’s university sermons were later delivered before parish congregations, usually with only minor changes. See the Editors’ Notes to *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 313, 314, and 330.

<sup>44</sup> Murphy, *Rhetoric*, p. 52.

<sup>45</sup> John N. Wall, “Godly and Fruitful Lessons: The English Bible, Erasmus’ Paraphrases and the Book of Homilies,” in *The Godly Kingdom of Tudor England*, ed. John E. Booty (Wilton, Conn., 1981), p. 95.

<sup>46</sup> W. Fraser Mitchell, *English Pulpit Oratory from Andrewes to Tillotson* (New York, 1962), p. 352.

<sup>47</sup> Alan of Lille, “Art of Preaching,” trans. Gilian R. Evans, in *Theories of Preaching: Selected Readings in the Homiletical Tradition*, ed. Richard Lischer (Durham, N.C., 1987), p. 11.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, preachers from all traditions made at least some mention of the value of plain preaching; at least two – Harvey Goodwin, Bishop of Carlisle, and Robert Wilson Evans, the vicar of Heversham who would go on to become Archdeacon of Westmorland – published complete essays outlining the necessity and effectiveness of an unadorned pulpit style.<sup>50</sup> While most theorists, including Newman,<sup>51</sup> suggested that this approach was appropriate for all audiences, a number of Victorians asserted that it was particularly necessary when a congregation was rural, uneducated, or poor.<sup>52</sup>

If plain preaching is at one end of a homiletic spectrum, the “university sermon” is positioned at the other. The statutes governing the University of Oxford stipulated that a sermon must be preached, generally in the University Church of St Mary the Virgin, “on

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<sup>48</sup> Mitchell, *English Pulpit Oratory*, p. 100.

<sup>49</sup> Augustine, "On Christian Doctrine," IV.10.

<sup>50</sup> Harvey Goodwin, "What Constitutes a Plain Sermon?," in *Homiletical and Pastoral Lectures*, ed. C.J. Ellicott (New York, 1880), pp. 105–31; Robert Wilson Evans, "Sermons to Be Plain," in *Ecclesiastes Anglicanus: Being a Treatise on Preaching, as Adapted to a Church of England Congregation: In a Series of Letters to a Young Clergyman*, ed. W. Gresley (New York, 1844), pp. 320–324.

<sup>51</sup> Skinner, *Tractarians*, p. 161.

<sup>52</sup> Brian Heeney, *A Different Kind of Gentleman: Parish Clergy as Professional Men in Early and Mid-Victorian England*, (Studies in British History and Culture) 5 (Hamden, Conn., 1976), pp. 40–41; John Henry Blunt, *Directorium Pastorale: The Principles and Practice of Pastoral Work in the Church of England* (London, 1880), p. 142; Goodwin, "What Constitutes a Plain Sermon?" p. 127; Charles Marriott, *The Church's Method of Communicating Divine Truth. A Lecture Delivered at the Diocesan College, Chichester, at the Opening of Lent Term, 1841* (Chichester, 1841), p. 19.

Sunday mornings and afternoons, major saints' days, and days of national or university importance".<sup>53</sup> These sermons would be delivered on a rotating basis by "the heads of colleges, by the dean and prebendaries of Christ Church, by the two professors of divinity, and by the professor of the Hebrew tongue";<sup>54</sup> if someone were unable to fulfill his assignment, his place would be taken by one of the ten "Select Preachers" appointed each year by the Vice-Chancellor and other university officials.<sup>55</sup>

The Victorians published a good deal about plain preaching, but they made only passing comments on the theory of the "university" sermon. These comments largely reinforce what we would infer from the label: that these discourses could be longer and more complex than other pulpit speeches. The author of an article published in the High Anglican *Christian Remembrancer* in 1845 stated that a "scholastic attitude" is "tolerable, and indeed frequently desirable" in university sermons,<sup>56</sup> and Newman acknowledged that "they certainly would ... require a treatment more exact than is necessary in merely popular exhortations".<sup>57</sup> Preachers, however, could – and apparently did – take the academic content too far, leading some observers to complain that many university sermons were too "abstruse"<sup>58</sup> or "polemical"<sup>59</sup> to give the students the practical spiritual guidance they needed.

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<sup>53</sup> "Editors' Introduction," in *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford*, ed. James David Earnest and Gerard Tracey (Oxford, 2006), p. xxiv; *Oxford University Statutes*, 2, trans. G.R.M. Ward, ed. James Heywood (London, 1851), pp. 43–47.

<sup>54</sup> *Oxford Statutes*, pp. 43–44.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49–50.

<sup>56</sup> "English Preaching," *Christian Remembrancer* 10 (1845), 608.

<sup>57</sup> Newman, *Idea*, p. 339.

<sup>58</sup> W. Sewell, *Collegiate Reform. A Sermon Preached before the University of Oxford, on the First Sunday in Advent, 1853* (Oxford, 1853), p. 36.

### *Visitation Sermons and Charges*

Plain sermons were meant for rural congregations, university sermons for academic audiences, and visitation sermons for the clergy. A system of episcopal visitation had been in place in England since at least the 8<sup>th</sup> century: canons issued by the synods of Cloveshoe and Calcuith in 747 and 785 required bishops to go through their dioceses every year to preach, preside over confirmations, “excommunicate the wicked; and restrain soothsayers, fortune-tellers, enchanters, diviners, [and] wizards”;<sup>60</sup> by the 13<sup>th</sup> century, archdeacons were required to undertake such duties as well.<sup>61</sup> New requirements published in the 16<sup>th</sup> century stipulated that bishops were to conduct visitations only “every three years in person”,<sup>62</sup> while preserving the annual requirement for archdeacons.<sup>63</sup> By Victorian times, the archdeacons’ tours had largely been replaced by single meetings at the cathedral or a large church in the archdeaconry, but the visitation’s function as a time of recordkeeping, correction, and encouragement remained the same.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> William Basil Jones, *A Letter to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, on the Subject of the University Sermons* (Oxford, 1853), p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> W.P., "On Episcopal Visitations. No. IV.," *Christian Remembrancer* ns 3 (1842), 114.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 116-19.

<sup>62</sup> *The Anglican Canons 1529–1947*, ed. Gerald Bray (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1998), p. 131.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>64</sup> Arthur Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England c. 1800–1870* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 23–24, 46–47. For proclamations concerning what was to take place during the visitations, see *The Anglican Canons*, pp. 131–137, 183.



A 19<sup>th</sup>-century visitation service was the scene of two significant rhetorical events. First, a sermon was preached, generally by one of the junior clergy.<sup>65</sup> We have even fewer theoretical statements about this discourse than about university sermons, but it seems safe to infer that the choice of the term “sermon” suggested it would have the same practical emphasis as other members of the genre, with applications specifically tailored to the clergy.

Later in the meeting, the bishop or archdeacon himself would give a “charge”, which could often take as much as two hours to deliver.<sup>66</sup> This was an excellent example of what Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell have called a “rhetorical hybrid”, in which elements of existing genres are “fused” together to create a new category of address.<sup>67</sup> At times, the charge would resemble a sermon, as the speaker exhorted his clergy to pursue excellence in the execution of their priestly duties. When the subject turned to administrative matters such as the physical condition of the church buildings, it also took on the flavor of a “state of the diocese” address.<sup>68</sup> Finally, it was often essentially a verbal diary of the topics the speaker had been thinking about since the last visitation; one charge delivered in 1832 was described as a “syllabus of ministerial knowledge” that

treats on the Church Societies, King’s College, London, cathedral establishments, parochial duties, preaching, schools, clerical deportment, the infamous conduct of the enemies of the Church ... the Irish plunderers and traitors, necessity of meekness and firmness on the part of the Clergy, the

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<sup>65</sup> W.P., "On Episcopal Visitations. No. I.," *Christian Remembrancer* ns 1 (1841), 38.

<sup>66</sup> Peter C. Hammond, *The Parson and the Victorian Parish* (London, 1977), p. 175.

<sup>67</sup> Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Rhetorical Hybrids: Fusions of Generic Elements," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68 (1982), 146–47.

<sup>68</sup> Hammond, *Parson and Parish*, p. 176.

Ecclesiastical Commission, and the importance of union ... among the clerical body.<sup>69</sup>

These discourses comprise a somewhat small but nonetheless significant part of the Tractarians' canon – approximately a half-dozen sermons and twenty-five archidiaconal charges – and they will be the final genres considered in this essay.

### *The Tractarians' Lectures*

I will now consider the extent to which the Tractarians' practices conformed to the theories, beginning with their lectures. The best-known collections are probably Newman's *Lectures on Justification* and *Lectures on the Prophetical Office of the Church*, published in 1837 and 1838. They may also be among the "purest" examples of the lecture because – to return to Augustine's words – they generally focus on "convincing" their audiences rather than "persuading" them.

Newman's goal in both collections is to establish an Anglican *via media*, a middle ground between the errors of "Romanism", which he believes had "perverted" the principles of true religion, and "popular Protestantism", which he sees as having no principles at all.<sup>70</sup> As he pursues this aim, it becomes clear that offering practical application is not his chief concern. In the Introduction to *Prophetical Office*, he acknowledges that "there certainly is a call upon us to exhibit our principles in action",<sup>71</sup> but he also asserts that one should not proceed without first establishing what those principles are. Consequently, he devotes the

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<sup>69</sup> Review of *A Charge Delivered at the Primary Visitation in August and September, 1832*, by William Howley, *Christian Remembrancer* 15 (1833), 20–21.

<sup>70</sup> John Henry Newman, *Lectures on the Prophetical Office of the Church, Viewed Relatively to Romanism and Popular Protestantism* (London, 1837), p. 52.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23.

fourteen lectures to showing how only the Church of England possesses the right understanding of such matters as the nature of the Scriptures, the authority of ancient tradition, and the notion of “private judgement”, the practice of all believers interpreting the Scriptures for themselves. He does not altogether eliminate exhortations to piety – in the final pages, for example, he reminds his audiences that “the day of judgment is literally ever at hand; and it is our duty ever to be looking out for it”<sup>72</sup> – but the volume as a whole has what the introduction says it would: “more reference to religious teaching than to action”.<sup>73</sup>

Newman’s concern with doctrine is similarly evident in the opening pages of *Lectures on Justification*. He decided to speak on this subject because some had begun to question the “doctrine of justifying faith” as set forth in the “Formularies” of the Church of England.<sup>74</sup> Believing that the best way to counteract this “evil” is to offer “plain statements . . . argued out from Scripture”,<sup>75</sup> he sets out to demonstrate that justification does not come solely by faith, as the “Lutheran” or “Continental view” would have it, nor only by one’s acts of obedience, as Roman Catholicism taught.<sup>76</sup> Neither can stand alone, Newman asserts, as “the elementary principle of the gospel system”;<sup>77</sup> rather, both must be embraced, along with the belief that baptism and the Holy Eucharist are “*generally necessary to salvation*”.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 422.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>74</sup> John Henry Newman, *Lectures on Justification* (London, 1838), p. v.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. vi.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp. 2–3.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 169.

Justification, in other words, “comes *through* the Sacraments; is received *by* faith; *consists* in God’s inward presence and *lives* in obedience”.<sup>79</sup>

Henry Chadwick has described the style of this volume as “falling between lectures and sermons”.<sup>80</sup> Some “parts of the text”, he writes, “provide masterly and detached analysis, while other parts are like the parochial sermons in being in some degree rhetorical and homiletic”.<sup>81</sup> Some of the statements above, and the larger discussion of faith and works of which they are a part, would appear to support this assessment. It is not, however, an even balance, for Newman’s calls to exhibit a “fruitful faith”<sup>82</sup> are easily overshadowed by his discussions of the “instrumentality of faith”<sup>83</sup> the “formal cause of justification”,<sup>84</sup> the “philosophical relation of justification to sanctification”,<sup>85</sup> and other complex theological topics. In his final lecture, moreover, he emphasizes that faith, in the sense he is using it there, is a principle, a “sort of philosophical analysis of the Gospel”;<sup>86</sup> it is not to be taken as a “*rule of conduct*”.<sup>87</sup> Attempting to do so, he says, is one of the great mistakes made by “the religion of the day”.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 318.

<sup>80</sup> Henry Chadwick, “The *Lectures on Justification*,” in *Newman After a Hundred Years*, ed. Ian Ker and Alan G. Hill (Oxford, 1990), p. 289.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 289.

<sup>82</sup> Newman, *Lectures on Justification*, p. 258.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 384.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 382.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 382.

Pusey's *Daniel the Prophet* is a collection of lectures very much like Newman's. Its nine discourses were intended to stem the "tide of scepticism" caused by the 1860 publication of *Essays and Reviews*, which called into question the historical and scientific accuracy – and therefore the divine inspiration – of the scriptures.<sup>89</sup> The *Essays* mentioned Daniel only in passing, but Pusey chose it as the subject of his lectures because "disbelief" in it "had become an axiom" among the Higher Critics.<sup>90</sup> Pusey's goal, therefore, is to renew people's faith in the book's historical and spiritual authenticity. He begins by arguing that Daniel wrote the book "about the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, B.C.", not after the death of Antiochus Epiphanes in 164 B.C., as the Higher Critics maintained.<sup>91</sup> If this were the case, the events envisioned in Nebuchadnezzar's dream – the fall of Babylon; the rise of the Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman empires; and the coming of the Messiah – could not be accounts written after the fact, but were in fact prophecies "not out of, but in harmony with, the rest of the Old Testament".<sup>92</sup> This would in turn prove that God had revealed himself by supernatural means, vindicating the historical faith against the attacks of the rationalist schools.<sup>93</sup>

Pusey's argument seems fairly straightforward, but the development of his case is anything but simple. Those who were present in the Oxford divinity school would have heard him discourse at length on such topics as the history of commerce between Babylon and Greece, the evolution of Hebrew idiom, the empire-building undertaken by Alexander the

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<sup>89</sup> Edward Bouverie Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet: Nine Lectures Delivered in the Divinity School of the University of Oxford* (1885; repr. Minneapolis, 1978), p. iii.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. v.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vii.

Great and his successors, and the formation of the Hebrew canon.<sup>94</sup> His readers would be faced not only with the intricacies of the lectures themselves, but also with voluminous footnotes peppered with Hebrew and Greek and over fifty pages of appendices addressing linguistic and semantic matters “more in detail than an oral lecture admitted”.<sup>95</sup> Pusey does make several references to the need to choose “between the darkness and the light”,<sup>96</sup> between following Jehovah and following Baal,<sup>97</sup> but, to use Chadwick’s words, the collection offers far more “detached analysis” than “rhetorical and homiletic” material.

A revealing statement about how these discourses should be judged appeared in the *Eclectic Review* in 1840. In that issue, a critic notes that if the *Lectures on Justification* are “any specimen of [Newman’s] preaching, they are all that sermons ought not to be; for the hungry sheep must have looked up and stared to find themselves mystified, but not fed”.<sup>98</sup> He probably would have said the same of *Prophetical Office* and *Daniel the Prophet*, but the verdict would not be entirely fair, for he would be evaluating discourses in one genre according to the standards of another. He goes on to write, however, that “candor” required him to “view them as theological lectures, which should have been delivered, not from a pulpit in the church, but from the chair in the Divinity Hall”.<sup>99</sup> He seems to have reached this conclusion somewhat reluctantly, but it is the most reasonable perspective to adopt. It is, in fact, a distinction made by Newman himself. He gave these talks not from the raised pulpit in

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., pp. 90–113, 168–80, 270–308.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. viii.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., pp. 453–54.

<sup>98</sup> Review of *Lectures on Justification*, by John Henry Newman, *Eclectic Review* ns 7 (1840), 633.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 633.

St Mary's, but in a side chapel named for Adam de Brome;<sup>100</sup> he believed that "the *general object* of preaching" is to "make [people] understand their need of pardon",<sup>101</sup> but he wrote the lectures to instruct them in the "theological system" that served as the foundation upon which the Established Church was built.<sup>102</sup>

The *Eclectic Review* article and Newman's own statements capture the essence of the rhetorical critic's work. Lectures are not to be assessed in terms of how they fail as sermons, but by the degree to which they succeed as doctrinal or apologetic works. Critics who have judged these collections as successes include Richard Penaskovic, who called *Justification* "a powerful new synthesis of St Paul and the Greek Fathers";<sup>103</sup> F.L. Cross, who hailed *Prophetic Office* as "a magnificent apologia for ... the Anglican ethos",<sup>104</sup> and a Victorian reviewer who regarded *Daniel* as an important "contribution to the critical understanding of

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<sup>100</sup> Adam de Brome constructed the chapel in 1328, while he was rector of St Mary's. It originally functioned as a kind of "courtroom", where "the Chancellor of the University ... fixed rents, fined sellers of bad meat, and even sent a scolding woman to prison" ("The Church Buildings," <http://www.university-church.ox.ac.uk/info/build.htm#>, accessed 16 December 2008). Newman's practice of delivering most of his lectures there may have been a simple matter of capacity: the audience for lectures was almost certainly smaller than the audience for sermons, making the chapel a more appropriate venue. It may also have been a statement about the "rhetoric of space", a suggestion that the pulpit is best reserved for the delivery of sermons.

<sup>101</sup> Newman, *Letters and Diaries*, 5, p. 47.

<sup>102</sup> Newman, *Lectures on Justification*, p. vi.

<sup>103</sup> Richard Penaskovic, "J.H. Newman's *Lectures on Justification*: A Forgotten Classic," *Faith & Reason* 11.3,4 (1985), 222.

<sup>104</sup> Frank Leslie Cross, *John Henry Newman* (London, 1933), p. 70.

the prophet, and as a magnificent protest against the quasi-infidelity that begins to infest our biblical commentaries”.<sup>105</sup> This is also the conclusion I am advocating here: these collections may not be sermons, but they were never intended to be. They are instead examples of the speaking the Tractarians did when they – by design rather than by neglect – emphasized education over exhortation.

Not all the Tractarians’ lectures, however, are written in Newman’s and Pusey’s style. To varying extents, volumes published by Harrison, Perceval, and Marriott are “hybrid” works, displaying the characteristics of lectures while also incorporating significant amounts of sermonic material.

Harrison preached his *Prophetic Outlines of the Christian Church and the Antichristian Power* in accordance with the will of William Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester from 1759–79, who endowed a series of lectures on “the prophecies relating to the Christian Church, and in particular the apostacy of Papal Rome”.<sup>106</sup> Most of the perceived associations between biblical prophecy and the Roman Church appear in the last two discourses, which are based on Revelation 13:5 and 17:1, while the four lectures on Daniel deal with many of the same subjects Pusey addresses: the arguments for and against the traditional interpretations of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, the harmonies between Daniel’s prophecies and those found elsewhere in the scriptures, and the extent to which Alexander the Great’s

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<sup>105</sup> Review of *Daniel the Prophet*, by E.B. Pusey and *An Historical Exposition of the Book of Daniel*, by William Harris Rule, *London Quarterly Review* 32.64 (18 July 1869), 512.

<sup>106</sup> Benjamin Harrison, *Prophetic Outlines of the Christian Church and the Antichristian Power as Traced in the Visions of Daniel and St. John: In Twelve Lectures Preached in the Chapel of Lincoln's Inn on the Foundation of Bishop Warburton* (London, 1849), p. 392.



imperial efforts were the realization of the visions recorded in Daniel 8.<sup>107</sup> Harrison's arguments, like those in *Daniel the Prophet*, are buttressed with numerous references to ancient authorities, with footnotes quoting from their works in the original Latin and Greek.

Harrison differs from Pusey in the stress he places upon the audience's responsibilities in handling the prophetic texts. On several occasions, he tells his hearers and readers that they must engage in their own "diligent study",<sup>108</sup> and that it must be a spiritual as well as an intellectual pursuit. The study must be preceded by the cultivation of the "reverential and self-distrusting spirit"<sup>109</sup> necessary for a deep understanding of the Scriptures; then, it must be followed by the holiness and spiritual diligence that would prepare them for life in the "latter days", when the remaining prophecies would be fulfilled.<sup>110</sup>

The prominence of practical application in Marriott's and Perceval's lectures can be attributed, at least in part, to the texts upon which their discourses are based. Pusey and Harrison dealt with prophecies, which, by definition, were concerned with future events and thus might have had limited relevance for the people who first encountered them. Marriott and Perceval, on the other hand, lectured on epistles – Marriott on Romans and Perceval on Ephesians – in which Paul sought to help people understand what it meant to be "reconciled to God" and to inspire them to "walk worthy of the vocation" to which they had been called (Romans 5:10; Ephesians 4:1). Both lecturers note Paul's dual purpose, writing "we will ... see how St Paul places before us the practical consequences which ought to follow from our

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., pp. 24–70, 86–100.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

being made partakers of Christ's Resurrection"<sup>111</sup> and "The Apostle now ... proceeds to impress upon the minds of the Ephesians the practical conclusions to which all the high mysteries and awful truths he had been dwelling upon, were calculated to lead them".<sup>112</sup> They also adopt this purpose themselves, outlining and explaining Paul's arguments and asserting that the exhortations he offered are as applicable to Victorian believers as they had been to first-century Christians. Perceval both offers definitions of "grace" and "peace"<sup>113</sup> and indicates how his listeners should respond to these gifts from God. They should, he said, be quick to repent when necessary, and afterwards strive to live lives characterized by obedience, humility, self-denial, and prayer.<sup>114</sup>

Marriott's approach is much the same. The terms and mysteries he addresses include "faith",<sup>115</sup> "righteousness",<sup>116</sup> and "the whole course of God's dispensations" from Abraham to the resurrection of Christ.<sup>117</sup> His insistence that "doctrine, in the Apostle's language, comprehends practical doctrine"<sup>118</sup> is at least as strong as Perceval's: nearly every lecture ends with statements like "We have heard, and it remains for us truly to believe and heartily

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<sup>111</sup> Charles Marriott, *Lectures on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans* (Oxford, 1859), p. 141.

<sup>112</sup> Arthur Philip Perceval, *Plain Lectures on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians* (London, 1846), p. 134.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21–22, 55, 71, 109–10, 232–36.

<sup>115</sup> Marriott, *Lectures*, p. 20.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

to obey”.<sup>119</sup> Such appeals are precisely what the Victorians expected in their preaching; it would have been almost as fitting for these collections to have been published with “sermons” rather than “lectures” on the title page.

*Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford*

The university sermon is the homiletic genre most closely related to the lecture. The best known specimens are Newman’s 1843 *Sermons, Chiefly on the Theory of Religious Belief*, republished in 1872 as *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford*; the most numerous are the several dozen Pusey preached from the 1830s through the 1870s. These are also the most academic of all the Tractarians’ spoken works. Newman’s series of talks is indeed theological: he investigates Christianity’s perceived incompatibility with “the advance of philosophy and science”,<sup>120</sup> the “connexion between Natural and Revealed Religion”,<sup>121</sup> the “distinct offices of Faith and Reason in religious matters”,<sup>122</sup> “implicit and explicit reason”,<sup>123</sup> and the proper use of “Evidences, Biblical Exposition, and Dogmatic Theology”.<sup>124</sup> These are all difficult subjects, and probably better suited for specialists than laity; it is not surprising, therefore, that Newman himself, and numerous scholars and critics

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 292.

<sup>120</sup> John Henry Newman, *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford* (Oxford, 2006), p. 15.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

since, classified the *University Sermons* not with his parochial material, but rather with the *Grammar of Assent*, his 1870 treatise on the nature of religious belief.<sup>125</sup>

Pusey's addresses also include several sermons on the nature of faith, as well as discussions of justification, prophecy, apostolic tradition, the day of judgement, and science and religion. "Dissertation", a word Pusey used to describe a sermon entitled "Un-Science, not Science, Adverse to Faith",<sup>126</sup> could be applied to virtually all of them, which were written in a scholarly style and published with the notes, appendices, and other academic apparatus we find in many of their lectures.

These discourses, then, may often seem to be more "university" than "sermon", but we should not be too quick to evict them from the homiletic canon. Newman told his sister that his university sermons bore "immediately upon the most intimate and practical religious questions",<sup>127</sup> and a strong hortatory strain is present throughout the volume. He warns the

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<sup>125</sup> Newman, *Fifteen Sermons*, p. 10; Wilfrid Ward, *Ten Personal Studies* (London, 1908), p. 251; David Newsome, *The Parting of Friends: The Wilberforces and Henry Manning* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1966), p. 88; Edwards, *History of Preaching*, p. 607; Ian Ker, *The Achievement of John Henry Newman* (Notre Dame, IN, 1990), p. 46; David Nicholls and Fergus Kerr, "Introduction," in *John Henry Newman: Reason, Rhetoric and Romanticism*, ed. David Nicholls and Fergus Kerr (Carbondale, Ill, 1991), p. 3. The *Grammar* is perhaps best known for introducing the notion of the "illative sense", the intellectual faculty that, when "perfected", pronounces the "sole and final judgment on the validity of an inference" (Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, new impression [London, 1903], <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/grammar/chapter9.html>, accessed 16 December 2008).

<sup>126</sup> Liddon, *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey*, p. 4:333.

<sup>127</sup> Newman, *Letters and Correspondence*, p. 2:406.

members of the university not to allow intellectual pursuits to take precedence over a life of faith. He insists, moreover, that the faith he has in mind is not a kind of “philosophical analysis”,<sup>128</sup> as it was in the *Lectures on Justification*, but rather a “principle of action”.<sup>129</sup> It is “perfected, not by intellectual cultivation, but by obedience”,<sup>130</sup> so people must “seek [Christ] in the way of His commandments”,<sup>131</sup> always behaving “as if He were sensibly present ... to approve or blame [them] in all [their] private thoughts and all [their] intercourse with the world”.<sup>132</sup> The volume closes on a practical rather than a theoretical note: Newman asserts that all that “remains” is to “make our prayer to the Gracious and Merciful God ... that in all our exercises of Reason, His gift, we may thus use it, – as He would have us, in the obedience of Faith, with a view to His glory”.<sup>133</sup>

Pusey’s university sermons likewise assert that reason must ultimately be subordinate to faith. Because “The ‘I am’ survives the ‘I think’”,<sup>134</sup> learned persons possess no *a priori* “advantage in appreciating the Cross of Christ”.<sup>135</sup> Their education, in fact, could wind up leading them astray, into the arrogance of allowing their reason to become the “judge and arbiter” of revelation.<sup>136</sup> Pusey is not, I think, being anti-intellectual here, but he does insist

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<sup>128</sup> Newman, *Lectures on Justification*, p. 384.

<sup>129</sup> Newman, *Fifteen Sermons*, p. 134.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>134</sup> Pusey, *Sermons Preached Between A.D. 1859 and 1872*, p. 8.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

that the scope of scholarly investigation is never unlimited or absolute. As he puts it in a sermon preached in 1868, “Free enquiry has its place, but in the enfringed soul”.<sup>137</sup>

Pusey also insists that even a religiously-informed intellect is not to be cultivated simply for its own sake. Instead, believers must take the critical next step of consistently acting upon what they learn. In his university sermons, he therefore not only educates his hearers about the nature of justifying faith, the mystery of the Real Presence, and the nuances of Hebrew idiom, but also exhorts them to demonstrate their convictions through the deeds they perform, to receive the Sacrament in a penitent and humble spirit, and to obey the Messiah whom the Jewish prophets had foretold.<sup>138</sup> Some of his addresses, in fact, focus entirely upon pious living. The importance of prayer and the reality of Judgement Day need little theoretical underpinning or patristic support, so he is able to devote entire sermons to calling people to earnest devotion and admonishing them to conduct themselves in a way that would place them on the road to heaven rather than the path to hell.<sup>139</sup> Such activities, he declares, are the best defense against the 19<sup>th</sup> century’s increasing tendencies toward rationalism, skepticism, and atheism. “Live as you believe”, he preaches, “and you will not lose your faith”.<sup>140</sup>

Calls to a holy life can also be found in university sermons preached by other members of the Tractarian circle. When Manning took his turn as Select Preacher in the 1840s, he delivered sermons that a reviewer named Arthur Hutton described as “less

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., pp. 134–60.

<sup>139</sup> Edward Bouverie Pusey, *The Miracles of Prayer. A Sermon Preached Before the University in the Cathedral Church of Christ, in Oxford, on Septuagesima Sunday, 1866* (Oxford, 1866); Pusey, *Sermons Preached Between A.D. 1859 and 1872*, pp. 313–37.

<sup>140</sup> Pusey, *Sermons Preached Between A.D. 1859 and 1872*, p. 30.

scholarly, but more emotional” than Newman’s, focusing “on considerations that warm the heart and bend the will, rather than on such as force the intellect to assent”.<sup>141</sup> Manning did not forget that he was speaking in the university church: he often mentions the unique atmosphere of Oxford’s educational system and of the careers his hearers would pursue in just a few years’ time. Neither did he allow his audience to forget that their “chief aim” should not be receiving academic recognition or securing professional success, but rather approaching God “with awe” and learning to “know Him by self-abasement, worship, [and] holiness”.<sup>142</sup> The seven sermons he published in 1844 are accordingly replete with admonitions to pray as well as study, to avoid succumbing to the temptations of the world, and to consider the eternal consequences of everything they said and did.<sup>143</sup> We do not see extended treatments of difficult theological concepts, but this is not necessarily a sign of inferior preaching; as Hutton asserted in 1892, “Manning was at his best in the hortatory style”; and his decision to focus on exhortation rather than on argument was the very “secret of his power”.<sup>144</sup>

Hutton would probably have said much the same thing about Charles Page Eden and Charles Marriott, the two Tractarians who succeeded Newman as vicar of St Mary’s. A “hortatory style” permeates their preaching, as they admonish their congregations to regularly engage in private devotions, to resist the fleeting pleasures of the flesh, to obey their pastors and other Church authorities, and to faithfully sow the spiritual crops that Christ would

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<sup>141</sup> Arthur Wollaston Hutton, *Cardinal Manning* (Boston, 1892), p. 219.

<sup>142</sup> Henry Edward Manning, *Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford* (Oxford, 1844), p. 178.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34–38, 103–6, 173–78.

<sup>144</sup> Hutton, *Cardinal Manning*, p. 219.

harvest when he returned to the earth.<sup>145</sup> This emphasis upon practice is particularly evident in sermons on topics that would seem especially amenable to academic or theoretical exploration. Eden and Marriott explicitly set such approaches aside, frequently making statements such as “I cannot bring myself to approach it apologetically”<sup>146</sup> or “argument will not make these things plain”.<sup>147</sup> Their concern is that Christians focus more on purifying their hearts than on developing their intellects; more on accepting the Bible as God’s revelation to his people than on constructing elaborate theories of inspiration; more on preparing their souls for Christ’s coming than on charting a precise chronology of the last days.<sup>148</sup> They do not maintain that these elements of the faith *cannot* be proven, but rather that they *need not* be; they are plainly stated in the scriptures, and the congregants’ duty is to accept them as given, determine what demands they make on their character and conduct, and live out what they learned as faithfully as they are able.

Keble’s university preaching contains elements of all of these approaches. Two of his university sermons seem to have been written for parochial rather than academic audiences: “Counsels of Perfection” is a series of “plain observations” on the virtue of “self-sacrifice”,<sup>149</sup> while “Endurance of Church Imperfections” cautions the people against allowing “religious

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<sup>145</sup> Charles Page Eden, *Sermons Preached at S. Mary's in Oxford* (London, 1855), pp. 7–22, 225–39; Charles Marriott, *Sermons Preached Before the University, and in Other Places* (Oxford, 1843), pp. 332–33, 336–56.

<sup>146</sup> Eden, *Sermons Preached at S. Mary's*, p. 171.

<sup>147</sup> Marriott, *Sermons*, p. 408.

<sup>148</sup> Eden, *Sermons Preached at S. Mary's*, pp. 147–73, 196–217; Marriott, *Sermons*, pp. 320–323, 340–341, 380–382, 404–09.

<sup>149</sup> Keble, *Sermons, Academical and Occasional*, p. 277.



perplexities” to undermine their fidelity to the established church.<sup>150</sup> Others, however, are clearly academic essays. *Sermons Academical and Occasional* opens with three discourses in which Keble asserts that intellectual sophistication is not a prerequisite to spiritual maturity; in many cases, he suggests, knowledge can actually do more to hinder faith than to cultivate it. This idea is simple enough, but he develops it in fairly complex ways. He introduces a new theological concept – the idea of “implicit faith” – and discusses it in a highly allusive way, touching upon such varied subjects as Jewish history, the Arian and Socinian heresies, Bishop Butler’s analogies, and even Plato’s and Aristotle’s works.<sup>151</sup> His Preface to the collection states that his goal was “to take a popular view” of “great ecclesiastical subjects”,<sup>152</sup> but these sermons would have been beyond the grasp of all but the most sophisticated congregations; an editor would not have been out of line in choosing to publish them alongside Newman’s or Pusey’s university sermons.

#### *A Collection of “Plain” Sermons*

From 1839 to 1848, Rivington, a prominent London firm known especially for publishing religious works, issued ten volumes of *Plain Sermons, by Contributors to the “Tracts for the Times”*. With nearly 200 sermons by Newman, Pusey, and John Keble, along with another 150 by Thomas Keble, George Prevost, Isaac Williams, and Robert Francis Wilson, the series offers scholars an excellent overview of the Tractarians’ parochial work.

Victorian readers probably came to this collection with two sets of expectations. On the one hand, the subtitle identifies it with the Oxford Movement, so they could reasonably have anticipated that it would reinforce the doctrines expressed in the *Tracts for the Times*,

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., pp. 1–75.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. i.

most of which had been published by the time the series commenced. On the other hand, these texts were published as sermons, not as tracts, so readers could also expect to find a good deal of exhortation and practical application. They were, moreover, billed as *plain* sermons, suggesting that both their doctrine and practice would be presented in a simple, straightforward, readily accessible fashion.

All of these elements are evident in the collection. The titles of some of the sermons – “The Apostolic Church”,<sup>153</sup> “Infant Baptism”,<sup>154</sup> “The Church Prayer-Book a Safe Guide”<sup>155</sup> – sound very much like those given to the tracts.<sup>156</sup> Readers who browsed through these and other sermons would find ample references to sacramentalism, episcopacy, and other leading tenets of the Oxford Movement.<sup>157</sup> These concepts are not often discussed in detail, but it is nonetheless clear that the *Plain Sermons* were written by men committed to the doctrines which the *Tracts for the Times* were intended to uphold.

These documents, however, are plain sermons, not tracts. They are among the shortest and simplest of all the Tractarians’ works: they rarely exceed ten or twelve pages, they offer few references to ancient authorities or 17<sup>th</sup>-century divines, and there is none of the scholarly apparatus that we find in abundance in the lectures and the tracts.

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<sup>153</sup> [Thomas Keble], “The Apostolic Church,” in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 1:295–302.

<sup>154</sup> [John Henry Newman], “Infant Baptism,” in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 5:139–47.

<sup>155</sup> [Isaac Williams], “The Church Prayer-Book a Safe Guide,” in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 2:197–205.

<sup>156</sup> See, for example, *The Episcopal Church Apostolical* (#7, Newman); *Scriptural Views of Holy Baptism* (#67–69, Pusey), and *Indications of a Superintending Providence in the Preservation of the Prayer Book and in the Changes which It has Undergone* (#86, Williams).

<sup>157</sup> Liddon, *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey*, p. 2:140.

While other discourses often offer applications only near the end, the *Plain Sermons*' emphasis upon Christian conduct is evident from the opening page. The Advertisement to the inaugural volume notes that while the contributors had been pleased with the "extensive reception" of the *Tracts for the Times*, they were concerned that some who embraced Tractarian doctrines "in theory" appeared to be "at no pains to realize them in their daily practice".<sup>158</sup> The sermons were, accordingly, published "in order to show that the subjects treated of in the 'Tracts' were not set forth as mere parts of ideal systems", but were rather "truths of immediate and essential importance, bearing more or less directly on our every day behaviour".<sup>159</sup>

The relationship between knowledge and action is twofold. First, people must act upon the religious knowledge that they have. Thomas Keble was not the only contributor who found it "strange and unaccountable that Christians should go on from day to day ... reading and hearing the word of God" while making "little or no progress in holiness".<sup>160</sup> His brother warns his congregants that "the knowledge of Christ, without striving to obey HIM ... is only fit to pervert and ruin the soul",<sup>161</sup> and Pusey notes that "An especial judgement is throughout Scripture denounced on those who have much knowledge, but little love and cold deeds".<sup>162</sup> In keeping with the idea of "reserve", they also emphasize that obedience is the only way to

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<sup>158</sup> "Advertisement," in *Plain Sermons*, p. 1:1.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>160</sup> [Thomas Keble], "The Certainty of Judgment," in *Plain Sermons*, p. 1:9.

<sup>161</sup> [John Keble], "We Must Have Root in Ourselves," in *Plain Sermons*, p. 2:53.

<sup>162</sup> [Edward Bouverie Pusey], "The Cross Borne For Us, and In Us," in *Plain Sermons*, p. 3:2.

gain more knowledge.<sup>163</sup> The opening Advertisement notes that John 7:17 – “if any one *will* do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God” – is an “admonition which ... we might, many of us, be too apt to forget”.<sup>164</sup> Newman, Pusey, and Williams quote or

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<sup>163</sup> The corollary of this maxim – that knowledge will not be given to those who are unable or unwilling to obey – also appears occasionally in the *Plain Sermons*. Its most extended treatment can be found in Robert Francis Wilson’s seven sermons for Passion Week (pp. 7:45–100), which focus on the mercy Christ showed to all who mistreated him in the days before his crucifixion. The expression of this mercy was twofold: Christ concealed the truth from those who were not “ready to receive it”, lest they reject it and thus “sin against the HOLY GHOST” (p. 50). To those who *were* ready and repented, he offered forgiveness rather than condemnation, restoring Peter to the circle of the Apostles and assuring the penitent thief that he would receive “an immediate place” in heaven when he died (pp. 67–69, 96).

<sup>164</sup> “Advertisement,” p. 2. This verse is one of two major changes made in the planning stages of the series. In a letter to Williams, probably written in December 1838, Thomas Keble asked that the title be changed from “village sermons” to “plain sermons” and that the “motto” for the project be 2 Cor. 13:8–9 – “For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection” (London, Lambeth Palace, MS 4474, fol. 185). His first suggestion was adopted, but John 7:17 was ultimately selected as the “motto”. I have not found the reasons for the changes, but both decisions were fortuitous: the title and Advertisement in their current forms clearly capture the simple and practical nature of this genre of the sermon.

closely paraphrase this verse,<sup>165</sup> and its essence appears throughout the series. Thomas Keble defines “doctrine” as the “truths offered to the hearts ... of true believers”;<sup>166</sup> John cautions that “Our humble obedience, not our self-willed speculations, will prepare us for the revelation of ‘the mystery of GOD’”;<sup>167</sup> and Prevost promises the working classes that if they would “do their duty as in HIS sight ... HE will be mindful of them ... and make known unto them ... the secrets of His love”.<sup>168</sup>

Additional evidence of the “plain” nature of these sermons can be seen in how they differ from university discourses preached on similar subjects. When Keble spoke on faith before the university, he attempted both to “convince” and to “persuade”, to bring his audience to assent to his historical and theological propositions, and to inspire them to nourish their souls even more zealously than they were developing their minds. In parochial sermons entitled “Justifying Faith” and “Practical Faith, the Condition of Life”, however, persuasion is his sole concern.<sup>169</sup> He makes the same appeals to choose “the way of the Cross ... before all others”,<sup>170</sup> but he does so without also touching upon matters such as “the

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<sup>165</sup> [John Henry Newman], “Inward Witness to the Truth of the Gospel,” in *Plain Sermons*, p. 5:245; [Edward Bouverie Pusey], “Obedience the Condition of Knowing the Truth,” in *Plain Sermons*, p. 3:137; [Isaac Williams], “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,” in *Plain Sermons*, p. 9:226.

<sup>166</sup> Keble, “The Apostolic Church,” pp. 297–98.

<sup>167</sup> [John Keble], “A Lesson of Humility,” in *Plain Sermons*, p. 8:208.

<sup>168</sup> [George Prevost], “The Hidden God,” in *Plain Sermons*, p. 7:303.

<sup>169</sup> [John Keble], “Justifying Faith,” in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 8:236–44; [John Keble], “Practical Faith, the Condition of Life,” in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 4:25–32.

<sup>170</sup> Keble, “Justifying Faith,” p. 241.

history of theology”, “Apostolic principle[s] of interpretation”, or the philosophical notion of “Moral Taste”.<sup>171</sup>

Similar contrasts can be seen in two sermons Newman preached on John 10, in which Jesus portrayed himself as “the good shepherd” who “giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11 KJV). Both end with calls for people to demonstrate their faith by their obedience, but he arrives at those applications in very different ways. Like all of his university sermons, “Love the Safeguard of Faith against Superstition” deals with the proper relationship of faith and reason. Christians, he says, need a means of ensuring that their faith does not go “to seed” and become mere “superstition or fanaticism”.<sup>172</sup> Some might expect such a “safeguard” to be found in reason, but Newman asserts that it is instead found in a “right state of heart”.<sup>173</sup> Those who loved Christ would hear his voice and follow him, and thus be assured of eternal life; they would not be deceived by strangers who would lead them astray and put them in peril of their souls.<sup>174</sup>

The application Newman offers in a plain sermon entitled “The Shepherd of Our Souls” is grounded not in the tension between the intellectual and spiritual faculties, but in Old Testament prophecy and the realities of pastoral life in 1<sup>st</sup>-century Palestine. Ezekiel, Zechariah, and the other prophets had long foretold the coming of a shepherd for the lost sheep of Israel. When Jesus came and took that title for himself, being a shepherd was a dangerous task, requiring constant vigilance – and sometimes personal sacrifice – to protect

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<sup>171</sup> Keble, *Sermons, Academical and Occasional*, pp. 5, 10, 74.

<sup>172</sup> Newman, *Fifteen Sermons*, p. 161.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 162–63.

the flocks from predators and thieves.<sup>175</sup> These physical dangers may not have been an issue for the members of Newman's congregation, but Victorian believers were in the same perilous spiritual condition as the ancient Israelites had been: they were as "sheep in the trackless desert, who, unless they follow the shepherd, will be sure to lose themselves, sure to fall in with the wolf".<sup>176</sup> The task for Newman's parochial congregation is thus no different from that of his university audience: they must "keep close" to Christ, resolving that whatever may come their way, "He shall be their LORD and MASTER, their KING and GOD".<sup>177</sup>

Perhaps the greatest differences between "plain" and "university" preaching can be seen in Pusey's sermons on the Eucharist. In "The Holy Eucharist a Comfort to the Penitent" and other academic works, he focuses on "this is my body" and "this is my blood", the difficult and controversial statements recorded in Matthew 26 and 1 Corinthians 10. As we would expect, he rejects both the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation and the Dissenters' belief that the communion service was "*only* a thankful commemoration of His redeeming love".<sup>178</sup> In his view, a "solemn" and "literal" exegesis would lead to a *via media*,

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<sup>175</sup> [John Henry Newman], "The Shepherd of Our Souls," in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 5:316–17.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>178</sup> Edward Bouverie Pusey, *The Holy Eucharist, a Comfort to the Penitent* (Oxford, 1843), p. 18.

the traditional Anglican view that “the outward elements remain, and still that there is the real Presence of the Body of Christ”.<sup>179</sup>

These discourses illustrate H.P. Liddon’s observation that Pusey “could not easily express himself other than at length”.<sup>180</sup> It was not uncommon for his sermons to last for ninety minutes;<sup>181</sup> when he published his Eucharistic sermons, he added extensive footnotes and lengthy passages that he had not had time to deliver.<sup>182</sup> In one instance, the revisions led to a change in genre: Pusey added so many quotations to “The Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist” that it was essentially transformed from a sermon to a *catena patrum*, an anthology of patristic writings similar to those found in many of the later *Tracts*.

Pusey’s two plain sermons on the topic are virtually the antithesis of these works. The differences are first evident in the titles: instead of “The Holy Eucharist”, Pusey uses the phrase “Holy Communion”, which appears to be the Tractarians’ preferred title for plain sermons on the subject.<sup>183</sup> As far as I know, they left no records of why they made this

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<sup>179</sup> Edward Bouverie Pusey, *The Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. A Sermon Preached before the University in the Cathedral Church of Christ, in Oxford, on the Second Sunday After Epiphany, 1853* (Oxford, 1871), pp. 14, 26.

<sup>180</sup> Michael Chandler, *An Introduction to the Oxford Movement* (London, 2003), p. 27.

<sup>181</sup> "Dr. Pusey and the Oxford Movement," *Blackwood's* 162 (December 1897), 804.

<sup>182</sup> Pusey, *Holy Eucharist*, pp. vi–vii; Edward Bouverie Pusey, *This is My Body. A Sermon Preached Before the University at S. Mary's, on the Fifth Sunday After Easter 1871* (Oxford, 1871), p. 5; Pusey, *Presence of Christ*, p. vii.

<sup>183</sup> Newman’s sermon in this series for example, is entitled “Attendance on Holy Communion” and stresses the importance of receiving the sacrament often and in the proper spirit (5:94–102). His “Eucharistic Presence” is a “parochial” rather than a “university” address, but it is nonetheless a more doctrinal discourse, focusing on how Jesus’ reference to



choice, but we can reasonably infer that they regarded “communion” as a somewhat less formal or technical term than “eucharist” and thus better suited to a parochial, perhaps less educated, audience.

The subtitles are significant as well, for they are the first indication of Pusey’s hortatory goals. “Privileges” is meant to remind people of the blessings to be gained in a spiritual union with God, while “Exceeding Danger in Careless Receiving, Death in Neglecting” serves as a warning against holding those blessings in too low esteem. Pusey “presented” Apostolic doctrine in “The Holy Eucharist a Comfort to the Penitent” and “dwelt” on it in detail in “The Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist”,<sup>184</sup> but in the plain sermons, exposition is not his central concern. He devotes several pages to the “nature of GOD’S Sacraments”,<sup>185</sup> but he also insists that such matters should not be pursued too far. His congregants’ task, he says, is not to acquire more knowledge, but to “retrace in [their] minds the things which [they] already know”, and to “strive to deepen and keep [them] by thinking

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himself as the “bread of heaven” in John 6:50 is an allusion to his mysterious but nonetheless very real presence in the bread served in the communion service (John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons* [1891; repr. San Francisco, 1997], pp. 1272–81). Other practical sermons with “communion” in the title include Manning’s “Worthy Communion” (*Sermons*, 4 [London, 1850], pp. 260–72); Williams’ “Self-Examination before Communion” (*Plain Sermons, on the Latter Part of the Catechism* [London, 1851], pp. 285–96); and Pusey’s own “Increased Communion” (*Parochial Sermons*, 1 [London, 1868], pp. 392–418).

<sup>184</sup> Pusey, *Presence of Christ*, pp. iii, vi.

<sup>185</sup> [Edward Bouverie Pusey], “Holy Communion – Exceeding Danger in Careless Receiving, Death in Neglecting,” in *Plain Sermons*, p. 3:90.

and acting thereon".<sup>186</sup> If they were to think devotionally, meditating on the magnitude of God's sacramental gifts, they would be more apt to behave righteously, spending time each weekday in confession, self-examination and other spiritual disciplines in order to be "worthy partakers" of the Eucharist on Sundays.<sup>187</sup> In Pusey's university addresses, application is not omitted, but it tends to appear only at the end; here, admonitions and exhortations are the entire *raison d'être* of the sermons.

The Tractarians' plain sermons are the most homogeneous of all the discourses discussed thus far. This is due in part to the circumstances of their publication. While each volume of university sermons was published as an independent project, the *Plain Sermons* appeared in a single series overseen by an editorial team. The uniformity was also, and perhaps more importantly, a function of the genre. Lecturers had the greatest freedom in their work: their arguments could be straightforward or complex, and they could vary greatly in the level of practical exhortation they contained. University preachers needed to be more hortatory than lecturers, but they enjoyed much the same liberty in their style. While their sermons were often technical and highly academic, there was nothing in the theoretical literature or Oxford statutes that demanded that this be the case. The clergyman who wished to preach a plain sermon, however, faced limitations of both content and style; according to Harvey Goodwin's definition, his discourse must be simple in its "words", "construction", "thoughts", "manner", "doctrine", and "purpose".<sup>188</sup>

This is not to say, however, that the *Plain Sermons* are monolithic. They are based on texts from throughout the scriptures, and every contributor addresses a range of subjects. In

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<sup>186</sup> [Edward Bouverie Pusey], "Holy Communion. – Privileges," in *Plain Sermons*, p. 3:105.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>188</sup> Goodwin, "What Constitutes a Plain Sermon?," p. 131.

addition to the familiar topics of the life of Christ and the importance of holy living, we find discourses on Christian education,<sup>189</sup> the angelical orders,<sup>190</sup> the consecration of churches,<sup>191</sup> and Christianity and the political order.<sup>192</sup>

A question of genre arises in the ninth volume, which consists entirely of sermons by lead editor Isaac Williams. In the Advertisement to that volume, Williams writes that his works

perhaps might come more properly under the name of Catechetical Lectures. For although they have been preached as Sermons, they consist, for the most part, of what had been brought forward in catechizing children after the Second Lesson ... These will therefore be found to differ from the ordinary Sermons in this publication, as consisting not so much of deductions drawn from a particular passage, or from the general tenor of Scripture, as of an accumulation of direct texts and Scriptural illustrations in confirmation of some fundamental point of doctrine.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> [Thomas Keble], "Christian Education," in *Plain Sermons*, p. 10:285–95.

<sup>190</sup> [John Keble], "Angelical Order and Obedience," in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 6:165–71.

<sup>191</sup> [Isaac Williams], "Anniversary of Consecration," in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 10:89–97.

<sup>192</sup> [John Keble], "Kings to Be Honoured for Their Office' Sake," in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 1:236–47.

<sup>193</sup> Williams, "Advertisement," pp. 1–2. John Keble also had doubts about the suitability of these addresses. In an 1844 letter to Williams, he noted that he saw the *Plain Sermons* as "a vehicle for what people will not otherwise read". He evidently saw greater potential in Williams' catechetical pieces, suggesting that they might "do more good" if they were published separately bearing Williams' name (London, Lambeth Palace, MS 4474, fols. 152–152v).

It is true that Williams is sometimes more wide-ranging than the other contributors in his use of biblical quotations, but this strikes me as a fairly minor issue. More important are the traits that Williams' sermons have in common with his colleagues'. Some of his topics are also addressed in other volumes; his discussions of the faith of Abraham,<sup>194</sup> the divinity of Christ,<sup>195</sup> and the communion of the saints<sup>196</sup> are similar to what we find in Thomas Keble's "Fidelity of Abraham",<sup>197</sup> Prevost's "The Word Made Flesh",<sup>198</sup> and Newman's "Unity of the Church".<sup>199</sup> Throughout the volume, moreover, Williams does not stop with the doctrinal confirmations mentioned in the Advertisement. He goes on, rather, to ask "what great practical lesson may we derive from this circumstance?"<sup>200</sup> or to declare, "Let us bring this awful subject home to ourselves in the most real and practical way".<sup>201</sup> He both examines what it meant to say that baptism made someone "A Member of Christ"<sup>202</sup> and notes the

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<sup>194</sup> [Isaac Williams], "God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth," in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 9:78–79.

<sup>195</sup> [Isaac Williams], "Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord," in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 9:82–90.

<sup>196</sup> [Isaac Williams], "The Communion of Saints," in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 9:186–95.

<sup>197</sup> [Thomas Keble], "The Fidelity of Abraham," in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 1:186–95.

<sup>198</sup> [George Prevost], "The Word Made Flesh," in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 7:294–301.

<sup>199</sup> [John Henry Newman], "The Unity of the Church," in *Plain Sermons*, pp. 5:148–56.

<sup>200</sup> [Isaac Williams], "The Christian Name," in *Plain Sermons*, p. 9:7.

<sup>201</sup> [Isaac Williams], "Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord," in *Plain Sermons*, p. 9:88.

<sup>202</sup> [Isaac Williams], "A Member of Christ," in *Plain Sermons*, p. 9:20.

“points of duty” given to “baptized Christians”,<sup>203</sup> he asserts that keeping “*all* the laws of God” is at least as important as believing “all the Articles of the Christian Faith”,<sup>204</sup> and he writes that while the resurrection of Jesus was of course a miraculous event and a key tenet of the faith, “there is no greater miracle or marvel upon earth than a good Christian, such a one as lives up to the Gospel of CHRIST in all things”.<sup>205</sup> The frequency of these applications in Marriott’s and Perceval’s discourses is almost enough to classify them as sermons. The inclusion of them here is sufficient to keep these addresses from being reclassified as lectures; they are, like all the other addresses in the series, properly regarded as sermons.

### *The Tractarians and Visitations*

Another significant rhetorical contrast is to be found in the Tractarians’ visitation sermons and episcopal charges. I have not seen any theoretical statements specifically concerned with visitation preaching but, given the educated clerical audience, it seems reasonable to infer that it would be viewed as belonging closer to the “university” end of the homiletic spectrum.

This is indeed what we find in John Keble’s and Manning’s work. Their three visitation sermons are heavily doctrinal, dealing with matters of particular importance to the clergy. In “The English Church”, preached in the summer of 1835, Manning follows a long “line of evidence” to establish that Anglican bishops are in fact “*the successors, in lineal*

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<sup>203</sup> [Isaac Williams], “A Child of God,” in *Plain Sermons*, p. 9:31.

<sup>204</sup> [Isaac Williams], “All the Articles of the Christian Faith,” in *Plain Sermons*, p. 9:57.

<sup>205</sup> [Isaac Williams], “He Rose Again from the Dead,” in *Plain Sermons*, p. 9:137.

*descent, of the Lord's Apostles*";<sup>206</sup> if this were not so, he declares, the clergy whom they had ordained would have no assurance of the validity of their commissions.

Manning's other visitation sermon – "The Rule of Faith", preached three years after "The English Church" – and Keble's "Primitive Tradition Recognised in Holy Scripture", delivered in the fall of 1836, address an equally crucial matter: the body of beliefs that had been transmitted through that unbroken Apostolic line. Keble's text is perhaps the most familiar one to speak of those beliefs: 2 Timothy 1:14, in which St Paul exhorts his protégé to "keep" that "good thing which was committed unto [him]".<sup>207</sup> He argues that this "thing", which Paul elsewhere refers to as a "deposit" or a "commission", is the "Primitive Tradition" of his title, that oral body of "apostolical doctrines and church rules" that predated the New Testament.<sup>208</sup> The Fathers had used this tradition as a "touchstone" to determine which texts were orthodox and thus could be admitted to the canon;<sup>209</sup> the Church since then had invoked it as a guide to properly interpreting the Scriptures.

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<sup>206</sup> Henry Edward Manning, *The English Church, Its Succession, and Witness for Christ. A Sermon, Preached in the Cathedral Church, July 7, 1835, at the Visitation of the Ven. the Archdeacon of Chichester* (London, 1835), p. 10.

<sup>207</sup> John Keble, *Primitive Tradition Recognised in Holy Scripture: A Sermon, Preached in the Cathedral Church of Winchester, at the Visitation of the Worshipful and Reverend William Dealtry, D.D. Chancellor of the Diocese, September 27, 1836* (London, 1836), p. 5.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 20.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Manning uses a different text – Galatians 1:8, 9 – but comes to the same conclusion. The Bible, he says, is “*the one sole foundation . . . of the faith*”,<sup>210</sup> but its meaning is not self-evident. Because it is “the fixed witness and representative of the *apostolic preaching*”, it is best viewed through the lens of apostolic tradition as set forth in the creeds, and of “the consent of the Christian Church” as expressed in the Thirty-Nine Articles.<sup>211</sup> “Private judgment” is, therefore, to be relied upon only in matters that the Church has not directly addressed.<sup>212</sup>

The practical implications of these arguments are not difficult to discern. Keble’s text contains a command – *keep* “that good thing” – which suggests that once the nature of the “deposit” has been determined, those who receive it have the responsibility of preserving it. The recipients are, of course, the Anglican clergy, and their duties are twofold. First, they are not to be given to “novelty”, the pursuit of “improvement, discovery, [and] evolution of new truths”.<sup>213</sup> Since the Gospel had already “once for all” been “delivered to the saints”,<sup>214</sup> such innovations are unnecessary and dangerous, for they could cause the Church to leave the moorings of “primitive tradition” and drift away into the errors of Protestantism or Romanism. They were also to resist “*Erastianism*”, which Keble defines as “the Church betraying to the civil power more or less of the good deposit, which our LORD had put

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<sup>210</sup> Henry Edward Manning, *The Rule of Faith. A Sermon, Preached in the Cathedral Church of Chichester, June 13, 1838, at the Primary Visitation of the Right Reverend William, Lord Bishop of Chichester* (London, 1838), p. 14.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 39.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38–45.

<sup>213</sup> Keble, *Primitive Tradition*, pp. 46, 48.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

exclusively into her hands”.<sup>215</sup> “Betrayals” Keble condemns in other works include the Irish Church Temporalities Act of 1833, in which Parliament unilaterally reorganized diocesan boundaries and finances, and an 1850 judicial decision that allowed George Gorham to take a post in the diocese of Exeter despite his bishop’s belief that his views on infant baptism were unsound.<sup>216</sup> In this sermon, he does not refer to any specific developments, but he does insist

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., p. 50. Keble’s definition is somewhat unusual, for the term “Erastianism” more commonly refers to the government usurping the authority of the church, not to the church voluntarily surrendering it (the *Oxford English Dictionary*, for example, defines an Erastian as one who supports “the complete subordination of the ecclesiastical to the secular power”). Keble uses it in this sense in the Advertisement to “National Apostasy” (*Sermons, Academical and Occasional*, pp. 127–28); the connotation also underlies statements such as government is “to execute the laws of Christ’s Church, not impose laws upon her” ([John Keble], Review of *The State in Its Relations with the Church*, by W.E. Gladstone, *British Critic* 26 [October 1839], 375) and the “persecution of the church has begun. Where it is to end, who can tell?” ([John Keble], “Church Reform. No. IV.,” *British Magazine* 3 [March 1833], 366).

<sup>216</sup> For discussions of the Irish Church Act and the Gorham Judgment, see Olive J. Brose, *Church and Parliament: The Reshaping of the Church of England 1828–1860* (Stanford and London, 1959), pp. 101–119, and Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church* (New York, 1966), pp. 250–271. Keble published his objections to these developments in his Advertisement to “National Apostasy”; “Church Reform,” pp. 360–378; *Occasional Papers*, pp. 201–37; and “Letter to the Editor of the British Magazine,” in “*The State in Its Relations with the Church*”: A Paper Reprinted from the “*British Critic*,” October 1839, ed. H. P. Liddon (Oxford, 1869), pp. 55–63.



that the clergy must not acquiesce in any further efforts to force the Church to “yield one jot or one tittle of the faith”.<sup>217</sup>

Keble’s application focuses on what the clergy should observe; Manning’s addresses a deed they must avoid. Since the Church has been entrusted with the truth, her spokesmen must not be found to be propagators of error. This warning is as old as the scriptures themselves; his text was Paul’s decree recorded in Galatians 1:8: “If any man preach any other Gospel . . . than that we have preached unto you . . . let him be accursed”.<sup>218</sup> Manning leaves no doubt of its relevance to Victorian times. Early in the discourse, he tells his fellow clergy that Paul’s “apostolic sentence . . . is everlasting. We may no more swerve from the pure faith of Christ’s Gospel, and be held guiltless, than the fickle Galatian, or the inflated Gnostic”.<sup>219</sup> The consequences of such swerving, he cautions, would be grave indeed: “besides the sinful temper of mind producing the error, the pernicious effects which the error in turn produces on the flock of Christ, involve the ministers of the Church . . . in the peril of condemnation”.<sup>220</sup> In short, Keble’s and Manning’s visitation addresses fulfill both of the terms used to describe them: they contain the features expected of all sermons, and those features are specially tailored for the audience at hand. Keble and Manning may not have been familiar with the phrase “audience awareness”, but their sermons are excellent examples of the concept.

To a certain extent, the charges given later in the visitation service read like sermons as well. At times, Harrison and Manning take the role of “the pastors’ pastor”, speaking to the clergy about their character and conduct in much the same way a priest would address his

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<sup>217</sup> Keble, *Primitive Tradition*, p. 44.

<sup>218</sup> Manning, *Rule of Faith*, p. 7.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

own congregation each Sunday. As was the case with the visitation sermons, these comments are specifically tailored for the audience. The priests are instructed to teach the Apostolic faith,<sup>221</sup> be sure parishioners regularly receive the Sacrament,<sup>222</sup> distribute alms to the poor, and collect offerings for the support of overseas missions.<sup>223</sup> They are not merely to tell their people what the Christian life demands; they are to live it out before them as well. Instead of simply avoiding offenses punishable in the ecclesiastical or civil courts, priests are to be blameless in all their ways: pure in their thoughts, perfect in their spirits, models of “lowliness, zeal, love, devotion” and “deadness” to the world.<sup>224</sup>

Holiness and unity are the virtues most often mentioned in the charges. Manning often speaks of the importance of *ethos*, declaring that people will not heed what a priest says in the

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<sup>221</sup> Benjamin Harrison, *The Church the Guardian of Her Children: Her Guide, the Oracles of God. A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Maidstone, at the Ordinary Visitation, in May, MDCCCL* (London, 1850), p. 85; Benjamin Harrison, *The Continuity of the Church, and Its Present Position, in England. A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Maidstone at the Ordinary Visitation in April MDCCCLXXXIV* (London, 1886), p. 27; Benjamin Harrison, *Visitation Courts and Synods. A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Maidstone, at the Ordinary Visitation in May, MDCCCLXXI* (London, 1871), p. 39.

<sup>222</sup> Manning, *Charge of 1849*, pp. 81–86.

<sup>223</sup> Henry Edward Manning, *A Charge Delivered at the Ordinary Visitation of the Archdeaconry of Chichester in July, 1842* (London, 1842), pp. 23, 31.

<sup>224</sup> Henry Edward Manning, *A Charge Delivered at the Ordinary Visitation of the Archdeaconry of Chichester in July, 1846* (London, 1846), pp. 24–26.

pulpit if they do not respect the sermons he preaches with his life.<sup>225</sup> In many of his published works, Harrison insists that he does not want his visitations to be contentious events and cautions his clergy against creating divisions among themselves.<sup>226</sup> Such unity would be desirable in any age, but it is especially important in the times of trial and crisis that often faced the Victorian Church.<sup>227</sup> Clergy who find themselves in the midst of such difficulties must beware of those who would attempt to set them against each other, and be prepared to set aside their differences in order to present a united defense against an increasingly hostile world.<sup>228</sup> Such a defense, Manning says, should be spiritual and peaceful, not intellectual and combative. “We have too much of rash speculation, and headlong assertion”,<sup>229</sup> he declared in 1845. “The deeper movements of men’s hearts need other arguments. Self-denial and silence are overwhelming answers even to the intellect. Controversial reasons weigh little

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<sup>225</sup> Henry Edward Manning, *A Charge Delivered at the Ordinary Visitation of the Archdeaconry of Chichester in July, 1843* (London, 1843), p. 45; Manning, *Charge of 1848*, p. 57.

<sup>226</sup> Harrison, *Church the Guardian of Her Children*, pp. v-vi; Harrison, *Visitation Courts and Synods*, p. 10.

<sup>227</sup> Harrison, *Church the Guardian of Her Children*, pp. 74–75.

<sup>228</sup> Benjamin Harrison, *Prospects of Peace for the Church in the Prayer Book and Its Rules. A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Maidstone at the Ordinary Visitation in April, MDCCCLXXV* (London, 1875), p. 23; Benjamin Harrison, *Measures and Means of Unity in the Church at the Present Time. A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Maidstone, at the Ordinary Visitation, in May 1874* (London, 1874), pp. 17–18.

<sup>229</sup> Henry Edward Manning, *A Charge Delivered at the Ordinary Visitation of the Archdeaconry of Chichester in July, 1845* (London, 1845), p. 55.

against devotion, or historical difficulties against visible sanctity of life. And these best of arguments are most in our power”.<sup>230</sup>

Churchwardens, the people responsible for a parish’s legal affairs,<sup>231</sup> were also present for the charge, and they received specific instructions as well. Both Harrison and Manning thank them for filling what was often a difficult and unglamorous post, and encourage them to faithfully discharge their duty of ensuring “good order in the congregation, and decency in Divine worship”.<sup>232</sup> Manning goes on to remind them that exemplary character is just as important for them as for the priests; as he put it in 1846, “if they who bear the vessels of the Lord must needs be holy, they who guard them must not be unworthy of their charge”.<sup>233</sup> It would not always be easy to meet such a lofty expectation, but those who succeeded and used their year in office well would “leave a blessing behind [them], and the remembrance of it will endure even to [their] dying day”.<sup>234</sup>

Charges, then, do have some homiletic elements, but they are not just sermons published under another name. The differences in genre are largely a function of the occasion and the speaker’s office. When an archdeacon presided over a worship service, he was engaging in a pastoral act; we would therefore expect his primary concern to be teaching the people about the faith and exhorting them to live lives marked by repentance, obedience,

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<sup>230</sup> Manning, *Charge of 1845*, p. 55.

<sup>231</sup> Frances Knight, *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 182.

<sup>232</sup> Benjamin Harrison, *Rights and Duties of Churchmen at the Present Time. A Charge Delivered to the Churchwardens and Sidesmen of the Archdeaconry of Maidstone, at the Easter Visitation in April, MDCCCLXXX* (London, 1880), p. 9.

<sup>233</sup> Manning, *Charge of 1846*, p. 8.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

patience, and other Christian virtues. When he conducted a visitation, however, he was acting in what was essentially an administrative capacity, collecting and reporting information about the churches, interviewing candidates for ordination, assessing the quality of the priests' and churchwardens' work, and punishing those who had been found guilty of impropriety.<sup>235</sup> The charge was, accordingly, a managerial address; in Manning's words, its focus was not developing "individual character", but rather attending to "the institutions and administration of the Church".<sup>236</sup>

Some of these administrative discussions would have satisfied the critic who insisted that a charge should be "a guide to the Diocese", not "an essay on the Church".<sup>237</sup> Harrison takes some time, for example, to eulogize clergy who had recently passed away; both he and Manning call for support of local charities and engage in lengthy discussions of the physical condition of church properties. Most of their time is spent commending the people for work already done; many pages of almost every charge are little more than lists of churches that had been built, restored, or re-consecrated since the last visitation. A few charges do call for additional efforts, for greater care and reverence in the maintenance of churchyards,<sup>238</sup> or for all future renovations to include replacing private pews with common benches so that the congregation would not be divided during worship.<sup>239</sup> Such instructions are always

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<sup>235</sup> Burns, *Diocesan Revival*, pp. 41–44.

<sup>236</sup> Henry Edward Manning, *A Charge Delivered at the Ordinary Visitation of the Archdeaconry of Chichester in July, 1841* (London, 1841), p. 9.

<sup>237</sup> Burns, *Diocesan Revival*, p. 36.

<sup>238</sup> Benjamin Harrison, *The Religious Care of the Church's Sanctuaries, and the Religious Education of Her Children. A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Maidstone at the Ordinary Visitation, MDCCCXLVII* (London, 1847), pp. 10–11.

<sup>239</sup> Manning, *Charge of 1842*, pp. 11–23.

accompanied by expressions of trust and encouragement; the archdeacons express their gratitude that the work would be done because the people loved their churches, not because an outside authority had commanded it.<sup>240</sup>

This rhetoric is significant because it allowed the speakers to minimize the negative reactions that visitations often provoked. In 1851, Keble complained that the service was “too commonly mutilated” by the absence of the sacraments, the churchwardens’ reports seldom painted a true picture of their parishes’ moral state, and the charge was often used as “a public reprimand, without a trial, and without a possibility of reply”.<sup>241</sup> He was not alone in his opinions: the archdeacon was widely regarded as some kind of dictator or enforcer, sweeping into the area to pry into the people’s affairs and require work that the parishes could ill afford.<sup>242</sup> Harrison and Manning did much to try to distance themselves from these perceptions. In 1843, Manning stated that he would rather inspire his people to “fulfil [their] duties freely, and of a willing mind, than obtain the most exact obedience to legal orders and directions”.<sup>243</sup> That had been the case throughout the early years of his tenure as archdeacon, and he was confident that “no case for legal steps” would present itself in the future.<sup>244</sup>

Similar statements appear throughout Harrison’s charges as well. He begins his first address by stating that he would prefer to regard the clergy of Maidstone not as his subordinates, but as equals, or even, in the case of the older priests, as his spiritual “fathers

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<sup>240</sup> Harrison, *Religious Care*, p. 11; Manning, *Charge of 1842*, p. 7.

<sup>241</sup> Keble, *Occasional Papers*, pp. 272, 273.

<sup>242</sup> Knight, *Nineteenth-Century Church*, pp. 170–71.

<sup>243</sup> Manning, *Charge of 1843*, p. 9.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

and elders”.<sup>245</sup> He returns to this idea often, observing that “a willing mind, and a ready zeal” are always to be preferred to “authoritative injunctions”.<sup>246</sup> In 1875, he directly challenged the negative opinions of his office, reminding his people that he was the bishop’s administrative assistant, not his “spy or informer”, and expressing his hope that nothing would be permitted to undermine “friendly and brotherly relations . . . between the clergy and their archdeacons”.<sup>247</sup>

Like many of their contemporaries, Harrison and Manning also address a host of topics of national, rather than merely local, interest. A favorite topic is the relationship between church and state, which is not at all surprising given the climate of the time: in the space of only about seventy-five years, England went from a country in which Percy Shelley could be expelled from Oxford for writing *The Necessity of Atheism* to one in which Charles Bradlaugh, an avowed unbeliever, could win the right to take his seat in Parliament.<sup>248</sup>

The change from parochial administration to political commentary involves shifts in topic and tone. When Harrison and Manning discuss the priests’ and churchwardens’ duties, they are generally complimentary rather than critical; when they speak of the work of legislators and judges, they find far more to bury than to praise. One of Manning’s first

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<sup>245</sup> Benjamin Harrison, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Maidstone, at His Primary Visitation, MDCCCXLVI* (London, 1846), p. 6.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>247</sup> Harrison, *Prospects of Peace*, p. 38.

<sup>248</sup> Shelley was expelled in the spring of 1811, the year after he entered University College. Bradlaugh was elected to Parliament in 1880 but refused to take the oath of office; six years later, following a series of legal challenges, he was permitted to offer a nonsectarian “affirmation” instead. See Edward Royle’s article on Bradlaugh in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

protests came in 1845, when he objected to an Act that would create a secular court to oversee almost all of the matters previously decided by Church judges, including the regulation of marriage and divorce. Such a move was unacceptable, he declares, because it would reduce holy matrimony to a merely civil affair and lead to great confusion as the state dissolved unions that the church still recognized as binding.<sup>249</sup>

Later in the century, in 1877, Harrison took issue with another shift of power from ecclesiastical to civil authority. A provision in the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874<sup>250</sup> had combined the archbishops' ecclesiastical courts into a single office. Although the judge would be nominated by the two archbishops, he could not serve without the consent of the monarch; if some difficulty were to arise in the nomination process, the Crown would have the authority to fill the position on its own. Such an arrangement, Harrison feared, could lead to ecclesiastical affairs ultimately being managed by a layman who had taken office without the consent of the Church.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Manning, *Charge of 1845*, pp. 13–17.

<sup>250</sup> The Public Worship Regulation Act was an attempt to curb the rise of Ritualism – liturgical practices similar to those found in Roman Catholicism – within the Church of England. Rather than enumerating any specific offenses, it stipulated processes to ensure “the better administration” of laws already on the books. See John Shelton Reed, *Glorious Battle: The Cultural Politics of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism* (Nashville, 1996), pp. 238–56; the text of the Act appears in James Bentley, *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain: The Attempt to Legislate for Belief* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 129–42.

<sup>251</sup> Benjamin Harrison, *The Church in Its Divine Constitution and Office and in Its Relations with the Civil Power. A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Maidstone, at the Ordinary Visitation in May 1877: With Notes* (London, 1877), pp. 41–43.



Other developments Manning and Harrison criticize in their charges include an attempt to modify the Deceased Wife's Sister Act;<sup>252</sup> the state's contention that the consecration of bishops was ultimately in the power of the Crown;<sup>253</sup> the Gorham Judgment;<sup>254</sup> and the 1849 "Bill for the Relief of Persons in Holy Orders", which would allow clergymen to register as Dissenters in order to avoid church discipline but would not exclude them from "the rites and sacraments of the Church".<sup>255</sup>

In 1849 and 1850, they both spoke out against the Church's decreasing role in the educational system. For the first three decades of the 19th century, schools had been governed by two voluntary organizations: the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church and the nondenominational British and Foreign Schools Society.<sup>256</sup> Limited public support began in 1833, and in 1839 Lord John Russell proposed to significantly increase the grants on the condition that the schools be

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<sup>252</sup> Harrison, *Church the Guardian of Her Children*, pp. 16-21. Laws governing the persons whom one could and could not marry dated back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. A bill introduced in 1842 would have amended the laws to allow a man to marry his dead wife's sister. Many objected to it on the grounds that such a union violated both the Old Testament codes – specifically Leviticus 18:16 – and Anglican law. It was debated and defeated virtually every year after that, finally becoming law in 1907. See Nancy F. Anderson, "The "Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill" Controversy: Incest Anxiety and the Defense of Family Purity in Victorian England," *Journal of British Studies* 21.2 (Spring 1982), 67–86.

<sup>253</sup> Manning, *Charge of 1848*, pp. 8–38.

<sup>254</sup> Harrison, *Church the Guardian of Her Children*, pp. 43–75.

<sup>255</sup> Manning, *Charge of 1849*, pp. 6–9.

<sup>256</sup> Graham Balfour, *The Educational Systems of Great Britain and Ireland*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1903), p. 3.

inspected by a committee composed entirely of laymen from all denominations. The measure was defeated, and a compromise reached in 1840: inspections would take place, but would be carried out only by those who had received the approval of the appropriate archbishop.<sup>257</sup>

In 1846, the government's Committee of Council on Education modified the agreement by adopting "management clauses" limiting the clergy to providing "religious instruction", placing all other matters under the control of a lay committee.<sup>258</sup> Manning argues that the change created a false and untenable dichotomy: because a school was a "living system ... united and penetrated by one common spirit", it is not feasible to give the clergy control over "the moral and religious *instruction* of the scholars" while excluding them from the "moral and religious superintendence of the *school*".<sup>259</sup> Harrison suggests that allowing laymen to oversee the schools could be a violation of Church law;<sup>260</sup> he goes on to maintain that matters of governance should be decided locally, not surrendered to a "centralizing power" that threatened the "permanence" and "purity" of Christian education.<sup>261</sup> Both contend that the effect of the change would be almost apocalyptic, placing England in the degraded spiritual condition of many countries on the Continent. Manning declares simply that the "greatest disaster which could befall this country would be a State-education like that of France",<sup>262</sup> while Harrison predicts that allowing the management

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<sup>257</sup> G.I.T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain 1832 to 1868* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 64–69.

<sup>258</sup> R.A. Soloway, *Prelates and People: Ecclesiastical Social Thought in England 1783–1852* (London, 1969), p. 420.

<sup>259</sup> Manning, *Charge of 1849*, p. 18.

<sup>260</sup> Harrison, *Church the Guardian of Her Children*, p. 37.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>262</sup> Manning, *Charge of 1849*, p. 45.

clauses to remain in effect would lead “directly to the establishment of a supreme Minister of Public Instruction, on the ruins of the Church system of education; and eventually to the production among ourselves of those disastrous results to Church and State, which have been seen and read . . . on the face of the kingdoms or the anarchies of Europe”.<sup>263</sup>

Such vehemence is evident in other passages as well. Manning calls giving the power of excommunication to a secular court “a prostitution of the discipline of Christ”<sup>264</sup> and describes the clergy relief act as a “truly intolerant measure” that made “a mere mockery of sacred laws”.<sup>265</sup> Some of Harrison’s most strident rhetoric appears in his condemnation of the Burial Act of 1880, which essentially erased all distinctions between consecrated and unconsecrated ground. Taken by itself, it was an act of “intolerance, persecution, and tyranny”; as part of a series of bills intended to gradually disestablish the Church, it stood as evidence that England was quickly becoming “a godless State” with “godless policy and law”.<sup>266</sup>

Some might say that the amount of time Harrison and Manning devote to these topics shows they had lost the audience awareness they demonstrate in other portions of their charges. One commentator described the trend toward political commentary as “peculiar” and “painful”;<sup>267</sup> Keble accused the people’s “Chief Pastors” of too often acting like “Members of Parliament”, forsaking “matter that may be properly termed pastoral” in favor of extended

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<sup>263</sup> Harrison, *Church the Guardian of Her Children*, p. 41.

<sup>264</sup> Manning, *Charge of 1845*, p. 18.

<sup>265</sup> Manning, *Charge of 1849*, pp. 8–9.

<sup>266</sup> Benjamin Harrison, *Disestablishment and Disendowment by Instalment, and Piecemeal. A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Maidstone at the Ordinary Visitation in May, MDCCCLXXXII, with Notes* (London, 1883), pp. 20, 26.

<sup>267</sup> Burns, *Diocesan Revival*, p. 31.

reports on legislative affairs.<sup>268</sup> The archdeacons themselves, however, believed such discussions to be a proper exercise of their office, not a departure from it. Harrison acknowledges that purely secular matters are unsuited to a “hallowed place”, but he also insists that civic affairs could be discussed when they affect the business of the Church.<sup>269</sup> Manning, in fact, sees such discussions as not only appropriate, but mandatory: it would be “new and unnatural”, he says, if he did not speak plainly about how the Anglican position had been affected by political developments that had taken place since the previous visitation.<sup>270</sup>

Their reactions to these developments also show that they realized they were addressing a gathering of priests, not politicians or political activists. The petitions Harrison circulated in 1849 and 1850 to protest changes in the marriage laws<sup>271</sup> were something of an anomaly; he and Manning responded to every other bill by calling for spiritual rather than legislative action.<sup>272</sup> In times of political unrest, they maintain, clergy should not change *what* they did, but rather the *intensity* with which they did it, laboring even more vigorously to be what Manning called “the guide of souls, the almoner of the poor, the comforter of afflicted hearts”.<sup>273</sup> Such efforts could be doubly effective, for while political agitation would likely weaken the Church, pastoral endeavors could actually result in God looking favorably upon the government. Harrison ends his charge of 1855 with a note of hope he probably would have sounded in any year of his tenure: “While . . . we endeavour faithfully to do our duty,

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<sup>268</sup> Keble, *Occasional Papers*, p. 274.

<sup>269</sup> Harrison, *Measures and Means of Unity*, p. 15; Harrison, *Rights and Duties*, p. 13.

<sup>270</sup> Manning, *Charge of 1848*, p. 5.

<sup>271</sup> Harrison, *Church the Guardian of Her Children*, p. 20.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70–71; Harrison, *Prospects of Peace*, pp. 24–25; Manning, *Charge of 1841*, p. 45; Manning, *Charge of 1843*, pp. 18, 39.

<sup>273</sup> Manning, *Charge of 1841*, p. 45.

fulfilling the responsibilities laid upon us, we shall the more confidently trust that a blessing may attend the counsels of our legislators”.<sup>274</sup>

*Conclusion: Rhetorical Criticism and the Future of Tractarian Studies*

“What, then, is the point of doing any further studies on the Oxford Movement? Do we not know everything, or almost everything, that is worth knowing about it and about its leaders (at least Newman)?”<sup>275</sup> This question was posed by the Swedish scholar Rune Imberg, in the introduction to *In Quest for Authority: The “Tracts for the Times” and the Development of the Tractarian Leaders, 1833–1841*. He seems to have his doubts at first, suggesting that Newman had been aptly studied and that Pusey and Keble have properly attracted less attention because “their theological production did not have the timeless qualities of Newman’s”.<sup>276</sup> Ultimately, however, he acknowledges that more work could and should be done, provided that it meets at least one of three criteria: it should “use *new sources*, work with *old sources in a new way*, or *ask new questions*”.<sup>277</sup> He suggests that others could study John Keble’s writings on the Eucharist or “Pusey’s contribution to the study of exegetics in England”,<sup>278</sup> his own book explores the publishing history of the *Tracts* in an effort to

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<sup>274</sup> Benjamin Harrison, *Church-Rate Abolition, in Its Latest Form. A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Maidstone, at the Ordinary Visitation in May MDCCCLV* (London, 1855), pp. 32–3.

<sup>275</sup> Rune Imberg, *In Quest of Authority: The “Tracts for the Times” and the Development of the Tractarian Leaders, 1833–1841*, (Bibliotheca historico-ecclesiastica lundensis) 16 (Lund, 1987), p. 13.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

determine what “their different versions reveal about the development of the leaders of the Movement”.<sup>279</sup>

The state of affairs now is much as it was then. There is no shortage of scholarship on Newman, and the members of his circle continue to be rather neglected in comparison.<sup>280</sup> After more than twenty years, moreover, there are still familiar sources to be reexamined, new materials to be discovered, and new questions to be asked.

I propose that we pursue these goals by thinking in terms of “hybrids”. We can speak first of *scholarship about hybrids*, which examines how a recognized genre is a blend of several others. Campbell and Jamieson take this approach when they note that presidents’ inaugural speeches often employ both “deliberative” and “epideictic” strategies;<sup>281</sup> I employed it here when I examined how the episcopal charge functioned as both a sermon and a “state of the diocese” address.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>280</sup> Newman has been the focus of over 500 books and articles on virtually every conceivable subject: celibacy, romanticism, education, philosophy, ecclesiology, and the circumstances surrounding his conversion to Rome in 1845. In contrast, only a few dozen have been written on Pusey, Williams, and John Keble combined. Titles include David A.R. Forrester, *Young Doctor Pusey* (London, 1989); Rodney Stenning Edgecombe, “Allegorical Topography and the Experience of Space in Isaac Williams’s *Cathedral*,” *English Studies* 80.3 (June 1999), 224–38; and Esther T. Hu, “Christina Rossetti, John Keble, and the Divine Gaze,” *Victorian Poetry* 46.2 (Summer 2008), 175–89.

<sup>281</sup> Jamieson and Campbell, “Rhetorical Hybrids,” pp. 154–55.

<sup>282</sup> There may also be times when existing labels are insufficient and new categories must be created. We see this in Teri Reynolds’ and Linda Hutcheon’s use of the terms “imagetext” and “historiographic metafiction” to describe works that blur the boundaries

We can also entertain the notion of *hybrid scholarship*. Just as crossing breeds can produce more robust varieties of plant and animal life, blending schools of thought can create interesting new vistas in the academic landscape. Most of the research on the Oxford Movement has been produced by historians and theologians; expanding the scholarly community to include literary scholars, political scientists, rhetoricians, and others will help to enrich an already vibrant subject. Twenty years after Imberg expressed concerns about the future of the field, a group of scholars gathered in Oxford to mark the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Movement; making our future work increasingly multidisciplinary – or “integrative”,<sup>283</sup> “interdisciplinary”,<sup>284</sup> or “interdiscursive”<sup>285</sup> – can help ensure that interest remains sufficiently strong to support a bicentennial celebration in 2033.

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between verbal and visual expression, or that use novels as vehicles for “rethinking and reworking ... the forms and contents of the past” (Teri Reynolds, “Spacetime and Imagetext,” *Germanic Review* 73.2 [Spring 1998], 161; Linda Hutcheon, “Beginning to Theorize Postmodernism,” *Textual Practice* 1.1 [1987], 12). I have not coined any neologisms here, but it is certainly conceivable that new research will require new language, terms that do not appear in either Victorian genre theory or the vocabulary of 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century rhetorical criticism.

<sup>283</sup> Julie Thompson Klein, *Interdisciplinarity: History, Theory, and Practice* (Detroit, 1990), p. 25.

<sup>284</sup> For discussions of the various prefixes (e.g., anti-, inter-, multi-, post-, and trans-) and adjectives (e.g., “critical” vs. “instrumental,” “narrow” vs. “broad,” “supplementary” vs. “unifying”), see Julie Thompson Klein, *Humanities, Culture, and Interdisciplinarity* (Albany, 2005), pp. 55–80; Klein, *Interdisciplinarity*, pp. 55–73.

<sup>285</sup> Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, “A Convenience of Marriage: Collaboration and Interdisciplinarity,” *PMLA* 116.5 (October 2001), 1371.

