

The Anglican Mind in Caroline and Tractarian Thought

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Ressourcement Theology

Let me begin in the mid-twentieth century in France with some French theologians, that included Henri de Lubac, Jean Danélou, Henri Bouillard, Yves Congar, Louis Bouyer and Marie-Dominique Chenu, and the Swiss, von Balthasar. They initiated a remarkable theological movement termed *ressourcement* theology. It was not a unified school of thought but these theologians shared a common belief that the writings of the early church constitute an incomparable source for the contemporary renewal of the Church. Here were sources for a deeper understanding of the gospel in our world and for the renewal of liturgy and the sustaining of our spiritual life. In a post-Christian Europe, these *ressourcement* theologians turned to the work of great patristic and medieval theologians such as Origen, Ignatius of Antioch, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine, John of Damascus, and Thomas Aquinas. Here they recovered crucial sources for the revitalization of contemporary theology and pastoral life. This movement emphasized the central role of the biblical text in theological argument. This emphasis on a return to the sources offered a vision of Catholic theology that differed subtly but radically from what was almost universally available in the textbooks of the time. It was a theology that was deliberately crafted to break out of the clerical, apologetic, largely anti-Protestant and anti-modern forms of thinking that had bound it for a century and more. Their aim was to find in the textual roots of the Christian tradition inspiration for a theology more open to ecumenical dialogue, more engaged with the social needs of the modern world and more nourishing for the spiritual hunger of lay people. Chenu, a French Dominican, argued that theology is not simply reasoning about the church's official teachings, but that it expresses the mind's serious engagement with its own conversion to God through Christ Jesus. Therefore theology is always radically historical in its way of reasoning, simply because God has revealed himself to human beings in the contingent events and characters of history.¹

To see the world from a particular standpoint which our tradition has given us is the condition of creaturely knowledge. To trust a tradition for the insight and knowledge

¹ Brian D. Daley, SJ, "Old Books and Contemporary Faith", in *Ancient Faith for the Church's Future* ed. Mark Husbands and Jeffrey P. Greenman (IVP Academic 2007), p. 55.

it has given us, to go on to appropriate more of what it has to offer, is not irrational, nor is it necessarily conservative. Even the revolutionary, whatever his destination, can see only from where he is.²

What we have in the resources of the patristic tradition that has been appropriated into Anglicanism by the Reformers, the Carolines, the Tractarians and others, is a tradition that was outside the parameters of their particular time and thought, the solitary confinement of the 'present'. It offered to them alternatives that were not available to the historically-limited world of their time and enabled them to escape from the imprisoning effects of their contemporary religious controversies by bringing a productive past that still lived in the Church. It brought a critical stance to those controversies of their time and enabled them to render the more recent answers of their time questionable and not to be accepted simply as given. The appropriation of the patristic mind, this way of doing theology, enhanced the life of Anglicanism beyond the increasingly closed options of the sixteenth, seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. This was by no means regression into conservatism, a simple conservation of the past. These theologians were concerned with the future, to find in the past the way into the future by reading and listening attentively to the Fathers in order to find where they dissented from the Reformation controversies, and what they offered as constructive solutions, for therein may lie their relevance.

What results, particularly so in the Carolines and the Tractarians, is a contextualization of the patristic mind within the parameters of an English theology, as they used the thought and piety of the Fathers within the structure of their own theological vision. This brought the resources of the past into a positive and critical relationship with their own particular historical context for the sake of the future, but allowed that historical context to be critical of these same resources from the past. In their *return to the Fathers*, they demonstrated how the theology of their day could overcome its inner weakness and deficiencies. This was not done by a mere repetition of the Fathers or the transforming of them into a purely formal and infallible authority, and their theology into a patristic scholasticism. What we find in this Anglican appropriation is the recovery of the spirit of the Fathers, of the secret inspiration that made them true witnesses of the Church and the acquiring of their mind. They recovered and made their own the experience of the Church not as mere 'Institution, doctrine or system', but as the all-transforming *life*, the passage into the reality of redemption and transfiguration. They saw that you cannot enter into the truth of Christianity apart from its history, and that the historical *condition* of Christian truth

² *Ibid.* p. 134.

is not something that starts in Bethlehem and ends on Calvary. It applies equally to the Church, the Body of Christ, ‘which he launched into history no less unreservedly than the Body of his flesh.’³ It placed them in the larger room of the Christian centuries and freed them from the solitary confinement of the present. As masters of English theology they represent the new point of departure, from which the Church of England started on her career as a Reformed Branch of the ancient Catholic Church.

In doing this they avoided the defect of so much theology today, the division between theology and spirituality. It is a dissociation between the mind and the heart, between thought and feeling, that has its roots in what T. S. Eliot described as ‘a dissociation of sensibility’, and is damaging to theology, threatening its fabric in both its spiritual and intellectual aspects. Cut off from the movement of the heart towards God, theology finds itself in a void. Being steeped in patristic divinity, our divines avoided this contemporary phenomenon of a dissociation between thought and feeling. To repeat the characteristic phrase of Michael Ramsey they ‘did their theology to the sound of church bells’ because they understood the issue of theology to be, ‘not only one of intellectual clarity but of a union of human lives with God in the way of holiness’. It was in the many-sided thought and sanctified divinity of the undivided Church that they found a theology that knew of no such dissociation between thought and feeling, between theology and spirituality. There they discovered that *theologia*, in its strictest sense is discourse about God, in his being and relations, the doctrine of the Trinity. In a wider sense it means also contemplation of the Trinity, because, as Evagrius claimed, the one who prays is a theologian and the theologian is one who prays, or in the words of John Klimakos, ‘the climax of purity is the beginning of theology’. The theologian lives in the Trinity. For ‘*theologia* is the apprehension of God by a man restored to the image and likeness of God, and within this apprehension there can be discovered two sides, what *we* call the intellectual and the affective.’⁴

Ancient Faith for the Church’s Future

Ancient Faith for the Church’s Future edit. Mark Husbands and Jeffrey P. Greenman (IVP Academic 2008) is a significant book of essays written by Anglican Evangelicals and Roman Catholics. The essays from the Wheaton Theology Conference 2007 set out to demonstrate the lively and significant importance of the patristic mind for contemporary

³ Mascal, *Ibid.* p. 7.

⁴ Louth, *Ibid.* p. 4.

Christian witness and practice. The concern is to engage with the witness of Christians throughout the history of the church which has been inspired by God's Word.

When the content of the church's confession coheres with the witness of Scripture, and when Scripture is regarded as the ground of the church's tradition, respect for the place of tradition is a matter of considerable importance ... when a given tradition is consonant with God's self-revelation, it is to be upheld and honoured by the Church. On this count, the early confessions, creeds, hymns, commentaries, sermons and works of theology constitute a deposit or treasury of ancient witnesses.⁵

The inspiration came from an earlier call in 2006 in the document *A Call to an Ancient Evangelical Future*, by Robert Webber and Phil Kenyon. It is a call to examine our faithfulness to God's revelation in Jesus Christ, authoritatively recorded in Scripture and handed down through the Church. The Editor's *Introduction*⁶ calls for 'the Church's reflection to remain anchored in the Scriptures in continuity with the theological interpretation learned from the early Fathers. Thus, the call to Evangelicals is to turn away from methods that separate theological reflection from the common traditions of the Church.' Anti-historical attitudes also disregard the common biblical and theological legacy of the ancient Church. This Call stands in a much larger tradition, to learn from one of the most significant theological developments of the twentieth century, *ressourcement* theology as previously referred to.

C. S. Lewis using the analogy of conversation says that coming late to a discussion, results in missing the drift of what is being said because of being absent from the conversation's early stages, so in thinking about faith 'the only safety is to have a standard of plain, central Christianity which puts the controversies of the moment in their proper perspective. Such a standard can be acquired only from the old books.'⁷ 'With a sense of the long theological tradition, the reader has a chance, at least, of seeing beyond the real and tragic present divisions and confusions within the Christian family to "something positive, self-consistent, and inexhaustible," running through every age, something that expresses for us a still more fundamental unity in faith and moral vision.' . In conversation with Irenaeus, Origen and Augustine, it is only within a "worshiping, discerning, interpreting, preaching church that Scripture becomes Scripture—is received as a canon and generates the rule of faith."

⁵ Introduction, *Ancient Faith for the Church's Future* ed. Mark Husbands and Jeffrey P. Greenman (IVP Academic 2007), p. 9.

⁶ Husbands and Greenam (IVP Academic, 2008), pp. 9-23.

⁷ Lewis, *Ibid*, p. 54.

Caroline Ressourcement

The “great figures”, the Caroline Divines, the successors of the Reformers, were builders, their work being the natural outcome and growth of what the Reformers had laid, not merely in the opinions of thinkers but in the foundation documents of Anglicanism. If those foundations had not been there Anglican theology in the seventeenth century would have been quite different. These Anglican divines of the seventeenth century continue to hold the Fathers in special esteem, but as Michael Ramsey pointed out:

Whereas the Edwardian and Elizabethan divines had been interested in the Fathers chiefly as a means of proving what had or had not been the primitive doctrine and practice, the Caroline divines went farther in using the thought and piety of the Fathers within the structure of their own theological exposition. Their use of the Fathers had these two noteworthy characteristics. (1) Not having, as did the Continental Reformers, a preoccupation with the doctrines of justification or predestination they followed the Fathers of the Nicene age in treating the Incarnation as the central doctrine of the faith. Indeed a feeling of the centrality of the Incarnation became a recurring feature of Anglican divinity, albeit the Incarnation was seen as S. Athanasius saw it in its deeply redemptive aspect. (2) Finding amongst the Fathers the contrast of Greek and Latin divinity, the Anglican divines could be saved from western narrowness, and were conscious that just as the ancient undivided Church embraced both East and West so too the contemporary Catholic Church was incomplete without the little known Orthodox Church of the East as well as the Church in the West, Latin, Anglican and Reformed. The study of the Fathers created the desire to reach out to Eastern Christendom. Thus did Anglican theology find in the study of the Fathers first a gateway to the knowledge of what was scriptural and primitive, subsequently a living tradition which guided the interpretation of Scripture, and finally a clue to the Catholic Church of the past and the future: in the words of Lancelot Andrewes 'the whole Church Catholic, Eastern, Western, our own.'⁸

It is not surprising that no period in our Church's history is richer in writers of high distinction in the field of theology, a feature which did not diminish until the end of the century in an age of general intellectual ferment. These distinguished writers include Hooker and Andrewes, Laud, Hammond and Thorndike, Overall, Field, Ussher, Sanderson, Taylor, Pearson, Barrow and Bull, to name but a few. Walter Frere of the Community of the Resurrection, claimed that with Hooker, Andrewes and Overall there came a revulsion against the dominant Calvinism, which

introduced a more mature conception of the position of the English Church, based upon the appeal to Scripture and the principles of the undivided Church. The earlier theologians had been able to recognize in principle the soundness of this appeal, but they had hitherto been unable to work out in practice its detailed results.⁹

⁸ A. M. Ramsey, “The Ancient Fathers and Modern Anglican Theology”, *Sobornost*, Series 4:6 Winter-Spring 1962.

⁹ W.H.Frere, *A History of the English Church in the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I 1558 -1625*, p. 284.

If one was to define the ethos of these Caroline divines then it will be found in the holding together of what Baron von Hügel maintained as necessary strands of the Christian life, the mystical, the intellectual and the institutional.

It was marked by a time of massive scholarly activity. Following on the classical work of Richard Hooker (1554-1600) which only began to be assimilated in the years following his death, it saw the beginnings of a distinctively Anglican theological position, on the one side clearly distinguished from Rome, on the other from that of Calvinist Geneva. Above all it was marked by a renewal of the understanding and the practice of the Christian way of common and private prayer. And all these things were held together in a single focus.¹⁰

In the theology of these divines thinking and praying are indissolubly connected, in an orthodoxy which was not a static repetition of the past but a living, growing pattern of truth.

Prof. Owen Chadwick wrote¹¹, ‘... if High Churchmen of that age like Bramhall or Thorndike had been asked what led them not to compromise, they would have replied in terms like the following:

Our paramount duty is to the Catholic Church; our subordinate and derivative duty is to the Church of England as the representative of the Catholic Church in this country. The Catholic Church is known by its faithfulness to the primitive model. The Church of England has no choice but to follow that model, must seek to apply the principle rigorously and exactly¹². “I am satisfied”, wrote Thorndike in 1660,” that the differences, upon which we are divided, cannot be justly settled upon any terms, which any part of the *Whole* Church shall have just cause to refuse, as inconsistent with the unity of the *Whole* Church.”¹³

Chadwick continued,

The argument ... represents a contention which has survived the centuries and must still be reckoned with ... Any act which divides Anglicanism from the universal Church of the centuries is to be rejected, even if that act offers temporary or local advantage; and the test of universality, in this sad, divided state of Christendom, may be found in appeal to the ancient and undivided Church of the first centuries. The question whether there are sufficient ambiguities or exceptions in the Episcopal practice of the ancient Church to warrant modern exceptions, Thorndike answered with a vigorous ‘no’.¹⁴

¹⁰ A. M. Allchin, *The Dynamic of Tradition* (DLT : London, 1981), p. 56.

¹¹ Preface, *From Uniformity to Unity 1662-1962*, edit, Geoffrey F. Nuttall and Owen Chadwick [SPCK, London 1962], pp. 13ff.

¹² A. W. Haddan, “Life of Herbert Thorndike,” *Works*, vol. vi, p. 218.

¹³ “The Due Way of composing Differences on Foot,” *Works*, vol. v. p. 29.

¹⁴ Chadwick, *Ibid.* pp’ 15-16.

What he is saying is that the Primitive model of the undivided Church must be the interpretative principle of Anglicanism because it transcends party labels.

Tractarian *Ressourcement*

In principle this is what the Tractarians were doing for the revitalization of the Church of England in the nineteenth century. Their *ressourcement* theology was Caroline divinity which led them to patristic sources. Their concern was to focus on the doctrine and discipline of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church and so they turned not only to these same patristic theologians but also to those seventeenth century theologians whose classical Anglican mind had been formed by them. Here they found that our reading of the Bible should be mediated not primarily through the secondary sources of post-Reformation manuals—what C. S. Lewis would label "new books"—but through the “old books” of the Fathers of the Church, who were the first to recognize and receive the Christian biblical canon, which is the spirit of the English Reformers.

Michael Ramsey claimed that next to the Reformers in the sixteenth century and the Caroline divines in the seventeenth century it was the Tractarians who specially cherished the appeal to the ancient Fathers. Divines in England endeavoured to restore a due and proper estimation to the primitive writings: John Kaye (1783-1853), on his election as Regius Professor of Divinity in Cambridge in 1816, became the first to recall theological students to the study of the Fathers. The appeal to the Fathers among the Tractarians was a living heritage despite a decline in this among eighteenth century Latitudinarian divines

So the Tractarian appeal to the ancient Fathers was not the rediscovery that some have tended to assume. There is before them a line of eminent men of learning and what happened in 1833 had been smouldering in what Dean Burgon¹⁵ described, as the ‘residuum of the altar-fires of a long succession of holy and earnest men,’¹ who were not Tractarians themselves but were the precursors of the Tractarians and it was from these men that they inherited what has been described truly as English Church theology.

Martin Routh, who was not a Tractarian is the most interesting and remarkable figure that has ever appeared in Oxford. Thomas Mozley¹⁶ spoke of him as ‘the greatest name in patristic theology at Oxford—indeed a name in Europe’. Dean Church said that he ‘stood alone among his brother Heads in his knowledge of what English theology was’.¹⁷ Church claimed that

¹⁵ J. W. Burgon, *Lives of Twelve Good Men* (John Murray, London 1891), p. 81.

¹⁶ T. Mozley, *Reminiscences*, 1882, vol. I, p. 318.

¹⁷ R. W. Church, *The Oxford Movement, Twelve Years 1833-45* (MacMillan & Co, London, 1897), p304.

Oxford was the home of what was especially accounted Church theology; and the Tractarian teaching, in its foundation and main outlines, had little but what ought to have been perfectly familiar to anyone who had taken the trouble to study the great Church of England writers. Dr. Routh had gone below the surface, and was acquainted with the questions debated by those divines. But Dr. Routh stood alone among his brother Heads in his knowledge of what English theology was. To most of them it was an unexplored and misty region.

Routh born in 1755, died in his one hundredth year having retired as President of Magdalen at ninety-four after sixty three years. He was twenty-eight when he advised the envoys of the American Church not to accept Episcopal Orders from the Danish Church because of their irregularity as an invalid succession. He sent them to the Scottish Episcopal Church. Routh had a great personal regard for Newman and often they would meet for extended discussion of theological matters. He spoke of Newman as that 'clever young gentleman of Oriel, Mr. Newman', and later as 'the great Newman'. Newman described Routh as one who had been preserved to report to a *Forgetful Generation* what was the Theology of their Fathers.

What alarmed many minds in the teaching of the Tractarians was perfectly natural to Routh with his solid patristic learning and wide knowledge of English theology since the Reformation. Their appeal to antiquity he did not find disturbing.

a perusal of many of the acknowledged writings of Dr. Pusey and Mr. Newman enables me to express my admiration of the ardent piety, holy views, and scrupulous adherence to the ancient summaries of Catholic belief displayed in them. I likewise state my persuasion that these, in conjunction with other estimable works, have contributed to correct many erroneous notions too long prevalent amongst us, and subverting the unity and authority of the National Church.¹⁸

He alone of the Heads of Oxford Colleges, with the exception of Dr. Richards, the Rector of Exeter College, stood by them in the conflict, and he followed the course of the Movement with sympathy and understanding, counting among his friends some of its strongest supporters. Routh was a devoted member of the Church of England with a great reverence for Catholic tradition. He was, to put it in his own words, 'attached to the Catholic Faith taught in the Church of England, and averse from all papal and sectarian innovations'. 'He represents the permanence of the Catholic tradition in the English Church, linking the theology of the

¹⁸ J. R. Bloxham, *The Magdalen College Register: the den iv*, cited by R> D. Middleton, *Magdalen Studies* (SPCK. 1936). P. 22.

Non-jurors and the Caroline Divines with the Oxford Movement'.¹⁹ Routh's greatest sympathy with the Tractarians lay in those expressions of Christian doctrine which they held in common with the Elizabethan divines.

John Jebb, the Bishop of Limerick, claimed that this adherence to the Catholic Faith as received in the primitive and purest ages of Christianity is what especially characterises the Church of England and distinguishes her from every other reformed communion. This is what Jebb describes as her 'peculiar character' in that she derives all "that is to be believed for necessity of salvation," from the Scripture alone: and herein she differs from the Church of Rome. But she systematically resorts to the concurrent sense of the Church catholic, for assistance in the interpretation of the sacred text and for guidance in those matters of religion, which the text has left at large: and herein she differs from every reformed communion.'

John Jebb, was a pioneer and anticipator of the movement that includes the unbroken continuity of the Church and the *via media* character of the Church of England. He was a great advocate of Vincentius's rule, that what has been *received*, *extolled* and *acted upon* by such men as Ridley, Jewel, Hooker, Andrewes, Grotius, Overall, Hammond, Beveridge, Bull, Hickeys, Bramhall, Grabe, Cave, and our own Archbishop King, ... even Chillingworth .. and Jeremy Taylor ... I cannot at present feel any difficulty in applying Vincentius' rule.

Nearer to the actual movement is the great work done by Hugh James Rose who is described as the 'restorer of the old paths', and restoration was the aim of the whole movement. Rose was, in T. Mozley's view, 'the one commanding figure, and very lovable man, that the frightened and discomfited church-people were now (1833) rallying round. Sir William Palmer, saw him as a bright and shining light of the Church of England. He wanted the Bishops to come forward and stop those clergy throwing away so much in the name of innovation. Rose started, and ably edited, the *British Magazine*, that appeared in March 1832. The leaders of the movement accepted it as the organ of the party, and both Newman and Keble expressed their determination to support it and not allow the *Tracts for the Times* to interfere with it. It was at Rose's parsonage in Hadleigh that the first meeting was held which led immediately and directly to the Oxford movement.

Rose became editor of *The Theological Library* - a series of manual volumes on various subjects and he invited Newman to contribute a *History of the Principal Councils*. The volume

¹⁹ S. L. Ollard, 'Martin Joseph Routh', *Dictionary of English Church History* (A. R. Mowbray & Co Ltd, London and Oxford, 1912), p. 526.

appeared in 1833 under the title *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, and proved to be Newman's greatest work. Rose supported the publication of the *Library of the Fathers* that would give the ordinary reader the large and Christian views of the Gospel found in the Fathers. An interesting series of papers appeared in 1833 in successive numbers of *The British Magazine* and which were eventually (viz. 1840) collected into a volume entitled *The Church of the Fathers*. Rose's concern was teaching the younger Clergy *what* the Church is, the true notions of the *Sacraments* and the *Ministry*, and what we teach has ever been taught by the Catholic Church. The need is to light up those parts of our system, existence of which is not in doubt but which have been thrown into the shade, by pouring in the light of Antiquity. Enable people to study the wholesome tone of doctrine contained in the writings of the great Lights of the Church

In Oxford Dr. Charles Lloyd, the Regius Professor of Divinity, in his lectures on the Book of Common Prayer gave quite a new view to many of his hearers, some of whom became prominent in the movement such as Newman, Pusey, Hurrell Froude, Isaac Williams, and Frederick Oakeley. Lloyd's teaching affected the movement deeply. As an independent thinker Lloyd was considerably in advance of the high churchmen of his time. His Lectures on the Prayer Book informed his students of the sources from which all that is best and noblest in the English liturgy is derived. Pusey was a thorough disciple of Dr. Lloyd.

The publication of William Palmer's *Antiquities of the English Ritual with a Dissertation on Primitive Liturgies*, published in 1832, is a chief factor in the preparation for the movement which was fast approaching. Palmer, was 'insisting upon the almost forgotten fact that the Prayer Book is mainly a translation from earlier office-books, and so represents the descent of the Reformed Church of England from the church of earlier days, it powerfully contributed to increase that devotion to the traditions of the church which characterised the Tracts',²⁰

Here the Tractarians found that Anglican theological method always included, what was mentioned earlier, a concern for church history and the 'proper' historical setting or context of the Bible: that is, the living apostolic community, the catholic Church of the Fathers, which ensures authoritatively, normatively, and critically, the historic continuity of the apostolic community and her apostolic faith and praxis. This ecclesial dimension was appropriated by Anglicanism and made the basis of Christian living, the context of Christian thinking. Studying and preaching Scripture in its context must be the main source of Anglican renewal. This

²⁰ Liddon, *ibid.*, p. 264.

renewal came with the Oxford Movement under the leadership of Keble, Froude, Newman and Pusey, the parish priests and the rediscovery of the monastic life for men and women.

Conversation

Here in conversation with these Fathers, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, The Cappadocians, Augustine et al, our Reformers, our Caroline and Tractarian forbears, we will discover how they confronted the revisionists of their day in the Arian and Gnostic ideologies and in their antipathy to the Church's tradition. With their preconceived notions these revisionists assailed the Church's orthodoxy with their own Scriptural hermeneutic that was enslaved to the letter and devoid of an ecclesial sense of living tradition, which, with Scripture comprises a single sacred deposit of the Word of God. Today we need to confront the contemporary revisionists in the Gnostic/Feminist and secularist ideologies attacking the Church's orthodoxy, who have fallen captive to a hermeneutic of sociological reductionism in the political correctness that is more akin to Marx than Augustine and again is devoid of an ecclesial sense of living tradition. It was from the patristic mind that took shape in the Anglican mind in the Reformers and Caroline Divines that was instrumental in the renewal of Anglicanism and the inspiring of the Tractarians. This was their *ressourcement* theology the theology of the Oxford Movement and it was ecclesiological. Therefore, to elucidate the principles of Caroline and Tractarian divinity and work for the renewal of the Anglican Communion we will need to re-engage with this *ressourcement theology*.

Our Battle

Our battle today is against all that would make us captive to a sociological reductionism as the interpretative principle of Anglicanism that uses political correctness to re-interpret the Bible and apostolic faith and order. It is a secularism that stalks the Church and would reduce Christian Faith and Life to a respectable secular humanism. It wants to set the agenda for the Anglican Communion and dresses it in Christian language. It is what I call genetically modified theology and like genetically modified crops we cannot tell where it will lead us as sight is lost of where we have come from. In a time like this it is crucial that we know what the patrimony of Anglicanism is as the great theologians of our Anglican tradition did. This Anglican *ressourcement* has certain distinguishing features

The Constant

First, its constant is the Catholic faith of the Primitive church, the *faith once for all delivered to the saints*, summarized in the Rule of Faith or Scripture and the Creeds. This is the doctrine of the Anglican Communion and she refuses to affirm as of the faith any doctrine not so qualified in or by Scripture or the Primitive Church. John Jewel affirmed, in his *Apologia*, that "Scripture and the Primitive Church are

the criteria by which the authenticity of a Church and the truth of its teaching are assessed”²¹ and John Bramhall claimed that the Church of England was not “ a new Church, a new Religion, or new Holy Orders.”²² This constant of the Anglican patrimony is found in different shapes from the 16th Century onwards.

Distinctiveness

Secondly, its distinctiveness is derived from theological method not content and emerged with Archbishop Parker’s theological interpretation of the Elizabethan Settlement in the 1571 Thirty-Nine Articles, *The Second Book of Homilies* and the “Canon of Preaching”. Rooted doctrinally in Scripture and antiquity, we find this method in the works of Anglican divines and in our formularies. Richard Hooker articulated it in his *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, and Michael Ramsey describes its spirit as, “... doing theology to the sound of church bells,” to stress the essential connection between theology, doctrine and Christian worship. *The Book of Common Prayer* is as much about a way of doing theology as about liturgy, *lex orandi est lex credendi*, which means that the Rule of Prayer governs the Rule of Belief; and as Athanasius’s theology cannot be understood apart from the liturgy of Bishop Serapion, so Anglicanism cannot be understood apart from *The Book of Common Prayer*.

For Hooker God’s revelation in Christ and the Church, what is called *the Whole Christ*, is authoritative, but the language in which it is expressed is not infallible. In essence it is rational but mysterious, defying exact definition. Lancelot Andrewes put it succinctly: “One canon ... two testaments, three creeds, four general councils, five centuries and the series of the Fathers in that period ... determine the boundary of our faith”.²³

Divine Revelation

Thirdly, God’s revelation does not deny God’s presence in creation. C.S.Lewis,²⁴ whose theology was greatly influenced by Hooker, noted that Hooker’s universe was “drenched with Deity” and Hooker’s words “All things that are of God, have God in them and they in himself likewise, and yet their substance and his are very different.” Lewis spells out what this presence of the transcendent God in his world implies, keeping together things that can easily be set in opposition,

reason as well as revelation, nature as well as grace, the commonwealth as well as the Church, are equally though diversely, ' of God' ... All kinds of knowledge, all good arts, sciences and disciplines ... we meet in all levels the divine wisdom shining out

²¹ 1562: *Apologia for the Church of England*, John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, being the chief author.

²² Archbishop John Bramhall *Works*, Vol.I. LACT.p.119.

²³ *Opuscula*, (L.A.C.T.) p.91.

²⁴ C. S. Lewis, “ English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, excluding drama ”, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Literature* (Oxford, 1954), p. 460

through 'the beautiful variety of things' in 'their manifold and yet harmonious dissimilitude'.

This is nothing less than the patristic vision of God's creation filled with his energy and wisdom, the presence of God participating in his world which can be the only context within which to speak of man's participation in God in terms of deification. "The Word of God, who is God, wills in all things and at all times to work the mystery of his embodiment."²⁵ Within this context Hooker expounds a vision of man which finds its fulfilment in God, a theocentric humanism. "If then in him we are blessed, it is by force of participation and conjunction with him ... so that although we be men, yet being into God united we live as it were the life of God."²⁶

This divine presence is one in revelation and nature, creation and redemption, consistent and reasonable, In revelation it brings to a climax what God does in nature and in nature it gives us the clue to revelation, because "The Word" that "became flesh ..." is the Word or *Logos* at work in all creation. So the Incarnation becomes central and primary to Anglican theology. We see this appreciation of the natural world in those great poets of our Anglican tradition – George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Thomas Traherne, John Keble, T. S. Eliot and R. S. Thomas.

Scripture, Tradition, Reason

Fourthly, Michael Ramsey claimed that it was the nature of Elizabethan theology rather than imitation of Hooker in the style of Lutherans to Luther or Calvinists to Calvin that made it possible to creatively appeal to Scripture and tradition and it must remain so today. Scripture is the supreme authority because it contains all things necessary to salvation, but not as regulations for everything in the Church's life, for the Church has authority to decree rites and ceremonies. Our Formularies affirm the Old Testament revealing Christ by pointing to him and the New Testament revealing Christ fulfilling what is foreshadowed in the Old. The Bible is about God's saving work and self-revelation through law and prophets, Christ being the head and climax.

Scripture became the self-evident basis but because the Bible without the Church becomes a mere collection of ancient documents, Scriptural interpretation depends on the appeal to antiquity as mutually inclusive. The Bible and the Church must be dancing partners and where the one is detached from the other it leads to an uncontrollable doctrinal space-flight. Anglicanism maintained the Catholic notion of a perfect union between Scripture and Tradition or the Church and Scripture in that the Church's authority is not distinct from that of Scripture but rather that they are one. George Tavard, the Jesuit claimed that, in making Scripture the self-evident basis of Anglicanism but alongside Tradition as mutually inclusive, a consistency with the patristic spirit is maintained. Anglican divinity has an ecclesial context in which the Church bears witness to the truth not by reminiscence or from the words of others, but from its own living, unceasing experience, from its Catholic fullness that has its roots in the

²⁵ A. M. Allchin, *The Kingdom of Love and Knowledge* (DLT: London, 1979), Ch 6.

²⁶ Hooker, *Of The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. I. xi, 2.

Primitive Church. This appeal is not merely to history but to a charismatic principle, tradition, which together with Scripture contains the truth of divine revelation, a truth that lives in the Church. In this spirit Anglican divines looked to the Fathers as interpreters of Scripture. The 1571 Canons authorize preachers to preach nothing but what is found in Holy Scripture and what the ancient Fathers have collected from the same, ensuring that the interpretation of Scripture is consistent with what Christians have believed always, everywhere and by all, the Vincentian Canon. The voice of the Bible could be plainly heard only if its texts were interpreted broadly and rationally, in accordance with the apostolic creed and the evidence of the historical practice of Christendom. Only the heretics relied most on isolated texts and ignored scriptural principles.

Fifthly, Anglican theological method appeals to reason. Hooker's response to Puritan narrowness, which saw the Bible as a handbook of regulations for everything in life and religion was to elucidate a much wider and realistic understanding of divine law. God is Creator as well as Redeemer. The harmony and purpose in the natural order are expressions of the divine Reason which lies behind Scripture and the decrees of Church Councils, emanating from God himself and found in the lives of all his creatures. God's revelation comes to us in various ways and our reason and conscience arrives at knowledge of God's will by a number of concurrent means and faculties. In creation God reveals himself as the principle of rationality, purpose and unity, described as the divine *Logos* that informs our consciences and minds enabling us to perceive purpose and order in the universe. Such knowledge requires revelation to complete it and redemption to cleanse and free the heart and mind from things that inhibit and corrupt us. It is an appeal within the context of the appeal to Scripture and antiquity. Unbalancing in one direction degenerates into the ghetto mentality of either Scripturalism, or Traditionalism, or Liberalism. The 19th century scientific undermining of Christianity found this threefold appeal able to respond to and absorb scientific method and historical criticism.

The fashionable addition of *experience* is unnecessary because Tradition enfolds past and present, and embraces as its source and power the contemporaneity of the Gospel through which the true character of present experience is refracted and thereby critically evaluated. It is a way of looking at and experiencing the world; but with the kingdom of God, the *sui generis* experience of the Church and not the world as the ultimate term of reference.

Dean Church pointed out that Andrewes recalled an age into a diviner, purer, freer air, back to the many-sided thought, to the sanctified divinity of the undivided Church. By the influence of this divinity he led his contemporaries away from a theology which ended in cross-grained and perverse conscientiousness to a theology which ended in adoration, self-surrender and blessing,

and in the awe and joy of welcoming the Eternal Beauty, the Eternal Sanctity and the Eternal Love, the Sacrifice and Reconciliation of the world.²⁷

This fusion of thought and feeling in Hooker and Andrewes is what drew that 20th century man of letters, T.S.Eliot, back to Christian faith and life and prompted his small book of essays *For Lancelot Andrewes*, who for Eliot embodied in himself the learning, the theology and the devotion which marks the best men of this age. For Eliot, Hooker and Andrewes made the English Church more worthy of intellectual assent, and in them, as in the actual life and worship of the period, he found a Catholicism which was not ignorant either of the Renaissance or the Reformation. Here for Eliot was a tradition which had already moved into the modern world that was a way of living and thinking the Christian tradition and which had taken humanism and criticism into itself, without being destroyed by them.

A Postscript : *Let me end with a postscript concerning Catholics and Evangelicals*

The Evangelical Revival and the Oxford Movement have been two great post-Reformation movements of revival in the Anglican Church that gave their respective shape to the two principal traditions, the Evangelical and the Catholic, which today exist side by side and with great vigour in our Church.

both traditions are older than these revivals. Their continuity and homogeneous development can be traced from Reformation times: through Nicholas Ridley, bishop of London, to Charles Simeon (1759-1836); through Lancelot Andrewes, bishop of Winchester, to Bishop Charles Gore (1853-1932); through Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding to Richard Meux Benson, the founder of the Society of St John the Evangelist at Cowley (1824-1915). At all periods throughout these centuries, we observe men of great piety and devotion within both traditions: Henry Martyn, the Evangelical missionary (1781-1812) and John Keble, one of the fathers of the Oxford Movement (1792-1866); Charles Simeon, one of the main leaders of the Evangelical Revival and Edward Bouverie Pusey, the outstanding Tractarian leader (1800-82); James Hannington, the Evangelical bishop of East Equatorial Africa (1847-85) and Frank Weston, the Anglo-Catholic bishop of Zanzibar(1871-1924). Yet the differences between each pair of men seem to disappear, when contrasted with the Christ-centred devotion which enlivened them all ... The remarkable feature of the different types of devotion, shown by various saintly men of the Church of England, is not the tenacity with which each holds to his particular tradition, but their common devotion to Christ. This devotion has always grown, and still grows, out of the love and study of the Scriptures, and out of an affectionate adherence to the piety of the Book of Common Prayer. Neither the Catholic nor the Evangelical type of Anglican holiness can be explained in terms of a practical *via media*, or of a Church which is committed to some form of Anglo-Saxon compromise.²⁸

²⁷ R. Church, "Lancelot Andrewes" in *Masters of English Theology*, ed. By A. Barry (London 1877), p. 90.

²⁸ Emmanuel Amand de Mendieta, *Anglican Vision*, (SPCK, 1971.), p. 38

Such men like Henry Venn and Charles Simeon were not only Evangelicals but Churchmen because while they emphasized personal experience and commitment to Christ they held the doctrines contained in the Articles, Prayer Book and Homilies. I would describe these as classical Anglican Evangelicals in their commitment to an emphasis on personal experience of Christ and their adherence to the ecclesiology of the Book of Common Prayer that is often lacking in some Evangelicals today. The emphasis of many Evangelicals today is on Gospel ministry and preaching is exalted above Sacraments reducing salvation to *gnosis*, knowledge rather than grace that Hooker condemned as Gnostic heresy. Sir Edwyn Hoskyns would always remind Evangelicals that the Gospel implied the Church. The fruits of Evangelical revival enriched the Oxford Movement when heirs from Evangelical homes became leading Tractarians. To quote again the Belgian Benedictine turned Anglican, de Mendieta,

"The fullness of Anglicanism will be utterly catholic and uncompromisingly evangelical at the same time". Both these emphases are present in the New Testament making it necessary to set such Scriptural truths and realities in their Scriptural complementarity. Michael Ramsey claimed that the Anglican Church does not see the Evangelical and the Catholic views as alternatives, but in the Scriptural sense where both elements are one. This ethos has enabled the Anglican Communion to look not for a synthesis but rather for a symbiosis, a growing together in a living whole of the sundered Christian traditions and with humility seek to promote it. They can do so because in its own ecclesial life the Anglican Communion has found these evangelical and catholic elements to be complementary and necessary to the fullness of a Church's life and mission.²⁹

²⁹ de Mendieta, *Ibid.*