

BOOK REVIEW

Bruce D. Griffith with Jason R. Radcliff, *Grace and Incarnation: The Oxford Movement's Shaping of the Character of Modern Anglicanism* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2022), pp. xxii + 192. ISBN 9780227177884.

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This book focuses on three leading figures of the Oxford Movement – Edward Bouverie Pusey, John Henry Newman and Robert Isaac Wilberforce – making the case for their having revitalized the doctrines of grace and incarnation within Anglicanism. This was not, the authors argue, something that was left to Anglo-Catholics of a later generation, such as Charles Gore, whose theology of grace was ‘insipid’, although his incarnational theology is judged more positively. Pusey emerges as the most significant in this triumvirate, a theological leader who has been insufficiently appreciated. His *Tract Sixty-seven: Scriptural Views on Holy Baptism* (1835) is given detailed attention and is seen as laying the groundwork for Newman’s *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification*, which appeared a few years later. The suggestion is that Newman’s conversion to Rome led to the unwarranted neglect of this particular work, with its strong sense of imparted righteousness changing the basis of the doctrine of grace. It is argued that Newman on *Justification* in turn laid the foundation for Wilberforce’s *Doctrine of the Incarnation* (1848). Wilberforce, a relatively obscure member of a famous family, is less well known than Pusey and Newman, not least because he converted to Rome in 1854, and died in 1857. It is interesting to see his theological rehabilitation here.

The three substantial chapters on each of the protagonists is followed by a chapter on ‘Critics and Opponents’, which focuses on some specific criticisms – or alternative positions – advocated by those in varying levels of sympathy with the Oxford Movement. They include Charles Webb LeBas, Charles Marriott, R.D. Hampden and F.D. Maurice, who is given his own section, in recognition of his significance within Anglican theology. The final chapter, ‘Penitential Ministry’, considers the development of auricular confession, particularly at St Saviour’s Leeds, in the mid-nineteenth century, and then more briefly, the role of Anglican sisterhoods in setting up penitentiaries for ‘fallen women’ who were also encouraged to take up auricular confession. The link with the earlier material is that this focus on penitential ministry was a practical outworking of the Tractarian teaching on grace, incarnation, baptismal regeneration, and other key themes, as explored in the previous chapters.

There is a feast of detailed scholarship on the writings discussed, but there are also some curious features. The first is the absence of an index, which limits the

book's usefulness. The second is the tendency to excerpt lengthy quotations from the primary sources on almost every page. Some editorial intervention should have discouraged this feature. The third is the approach to historiography. The Oxford Movement has of course been highly studied. Although some of the recent work, such as Jeremy Morris's *The High Church Revival in the Church of England* (2016) and multi-authored *Oxford Handbook to the Oxford Movement* (2017) is noted in the bibliography, the only fairly recent work to be consistently drawn upon is Peter Nockles's *The Oxford Movement in Context* (1994). Instead, the authors go back to the movement's early historians, including R.W. Church (1891), C.C.J. Webb (1923) and Y. Brilioth (1925), as well as various authors writing in the mid-twentieth century. Judgements which scholars have spent the last thirty years overturning are repeated, for example Richard Church's reference to the Church 'slumbering and sleeping when the visitation of days of change and trouble came upon it'. A footnote explains that 'in our work we have chosen not to dig deeply into the historiographical questions and scholarship surrounding Church's memory...'. The authors might have added that they want to live among the primary sources. But is opting out of historiography a viable option in a book that is aimed at a scholarly audience? The intention of this book is clearly theological, but good historical theology needs to do both history and theology well. Fourthly, I would have liked more fleshing out of the book's subtitle, *The Oxford Movement's Shaping of the Character of Modern Anglicanism*. How indeed did the world of sisterhoods and 'fallen women', and parishioners going to confession, shape modern Anglicanism? The book stays firmly in the nineteenth century, and we are not really told.

The authors' understanding of the Church of England's past, and of church history more generally, is very different from my own. They see church history is a series of great, grace-based movements; 'The Oxford Movement' (always spelt in this book with a capital T) 'deserves to be placed in this grace-based line as one of *the* key movements in church history, not least Anglicanism'. I see it all as being rather more messy. But if you are in sympathy with their approach, then this will be the book for you.

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