

The Library of the Fathers

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Abstract: The Oxford Movement in the nineteenth century sought to emphasise the nature of the Church of England as "Catholic", continuing the work of the Incarnation throughout all times and places. Part of this theological and historical polemic involved being in harmony with the writers of the early Christian centuries, the Fathers of the Church. John Henry Newman, John Keble, Richard Hurrell Froude, and (later) Edward Bouverie Pusey, appealed to the Fathers of the Church from the beginning of the Movement. This eventually blossomed into an ambitious programme for translating the works of the Fathers into English, many of them for the first time. "The Library of the Fathers", as it was called, was a major contribution to historical and theological studies. It had an influence well beyond the narrow confines of a church "party" or movement.

IN THE 1830S A REFORMING BRITISH GOVERNMENT confronted the difficult task of bringing some measure of peace to troubled Ireland. They decided to tackle the privileged position of the ecclesiastical establishment in Ireland, the Church of Ireland which claimed the allegiance of no more than 12% of the population. This policy, embodied in the Irish Church Act of 1833, dismantled 10 of the 22 Irish Anglican dioceses and merged them with the remaining 12 dioceses.

To a group of theologians at Oxford this seemed tantamount to a "national apostasy".¹ The state was prepared to jettison its traditional relationship with the Church articulated by that classical champion of Anglicanism, Richard Hooker: "(T)here is not any man of the Church of England but the same is also a member of the commonwealth; nor any man a member of the commonwealth which is not also a member of the Church of England."²

The Irish Church Bill was "an interference with things spiritual".³ The response to this political reform movement came to be known as

1. Sermon preached by John Keble at the Oxford Assize 14 July 1833, which Newman considered "the start of the religious movement of 1833"; see J. H. Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (London: Longmans Green, 1891) 35.

2. Richard Hooker *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1595).

3. (J. H. Newman) *Tracts for the Times No 2. The Catholic Church* (9 September 1833) 3.

"The Oxford Movement", sometimes by the less formal description "Tractarianism" after the *Tracts for the Times*, the central publications of the movement. These Tracts were begun in late 1833 and at least for the first few years, were short pungent statements arguing that the Church was not merely the instrument or tool of the state, even if in close alliance with it. The Church, the Tract writers argued, owes its identity to something greater: it is "Catholic", belonging to all places and all ages. It links the present with Christ.⁴ So the ministry of bishops and their helpers "Admit(s) us into His fold by the waters of Baptism, and ...nourish(es) us in the same, not only with the pure word of His doctrine, but with the spiritual nourishment of His most blessed Body and Blood".⁵

To support their case the Tractarians appealed to history. At one level the appeal to history argued that since the sixteenth century reformation, the Church of England had always been "Catholic". But such an apologia required a further argument to bolster it. The present Church also had to be seen to be in harmony with the church of the first centuries of Christendom. The "Catholic thing" is but a house of cards unless it stands firmly on the foundations of the Patristic age. John Henry Newman, for his part, felt that the Church of England had solid grounds for making such an appeal; "If there was anything in the Fathers of a startling character, this would be only for a time; it would admit of explanation."⁶ E. B. Pusey argued as a scriptural scholar: being so close to Biblical times, "(the Fathers) are witnesses...as to the sense in which God willed His Scripture to be understood".⁷

From the beginning, the Tractarians argued that the Church inherited its life and mission from apostolic times. The very first of the *Tracts for the Times* challenged clergy:

There are some who rest their divine mission on their own unsupported assertion; others, who rest it upon their popularity; others, their success; and others, who rest it upon their temporal distinctions. This last case has, perhaps, been too much our own; I fear we have neglected the real ground on which our authority rests – OUR APOSTOLICAL DESCENT.⁸

If the Church claims lineal descent from apostolic times, the witness of the early Christian writers is paramount. Along with the early tracts,

4. (J. H. Newman) *Tracts for the Times* No 2. *The Catholic Church* (9 September 1833) 2-4.

5. (J. W. Bowden) *Tracts for the Times* No 5. *A Short Address to his Brethren on the Nature and Constitution of the Church of Christ, and of the branch of it Established in England* (18 October 1833) 2.

6. Newman *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, 56.

7. Rev E. B. Pusey DD, *The Confessions of S Augustine* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1838)

v.

8. (J. H. Newman) *Tracts for the Times* No 1. *Thoughts on the Ministerial Commission, Respectfully addressed to the Clergy* (Oxford, 1833) 1.

the leaders, John Henry Newman, John Keble and Richard Hurrell Froude, also published equally short patristic texts under the title *Records of the Church*. There were twenty five of these publications, each amounting to little more than a leaflet. They included the seven letters of Ignatius of Antioch (an obvious witness to the "Catholic Thing"), several accounts of early martyrs including some extracts from Eusebius, Cyprian on Church Unity, Irenaeus and Tertullian on the Rule of Faith, Tertullian on Baptism and Vincent of Lerins on Tests of Heresy and Error.

By 1836 it was decided to embark on a more adventurous scheme of propagating the Fathers of the Church. By this date Froude had died and the Professor of Hebrew, Dr Edward Bouverie Pusey, had joined Newman and Keble as the accepted leaders of the movement. On August 24, 1836 when Newman was on a short visit to Pusey at Holton Park, the two agreed to launch the project.⁹ It was to be entitled *The Library of the Fathers*.¹⁰ Keble, while giving his name and support to the project, was away in his parish at Hursley, and so took very little part in its practical implementation. The manner in which Pusey and Newman worked together partly solves the riddle posed by Christopher Dawson as to "the relative importance" of each of the leaders.¹¹ The correspondence reveals an easy give and take between Pusey and Newman and between them and Keble on the few occasions he discussed the project. With typical aristocratic *noblesse oblige*, Pusey thought translators would devote their time and effort free of charge: Newman (displaying his commercial background) thought each should be paid and eventually twenty five pounds per hundred pages was decided upon.¹² Pusey made generous financial support available to ensure the beginnings of the Library.¹³ In most practical issues Pusey deferred to Newman. Pusey preferred each work to be translated and published whole and entire, while the publishers agreed with Newman who preferred these being divided into a more "user friendly" size.¹⁴ Pusey also wanted individual volumes to be sold, Newman agreed with the publishers that

9. Henry Parry Liddon, *The Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey* (4 vols; London: Longmans Green, 1893-97) 1.420.

10. Eventually to appear as: *A Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church Anterior to the Division of the East and West* (Oxford: James Parker, London: J. G. F. & J. Rivington: 1838-72).

11. Christopher Dawson, *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1933) 12.

12. Newman to H. E. Manning 22/10/1836, C. S. Dessain et al. (eds.), *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman* (henceforth *LD*), vols. 1-8 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978-2000); vols. 11-22 (London: Thomas Nelson, 1961-72); vols. 23-31 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973-77) 5.370-1 (where the sum of 20 pounds is mentioned) and Newman to Henry Wilberforce 22/10/1836 *LD* 5.373 (where the sum of 25 pounds is mentioned).

13. Liddon, *Pusey* 4.424; and see Geoffrey Faber, *Oxford Apostles* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1954) 355.

14. Newman to Keble 19/7/1839, *LD* 7.111

having definite subscribers would ensure the economic viability of the series.¹⁵

A more serious difference arose concerning the approach to translating: Newman preferred an “idiomatic translation” while Pusey thought “one may even sacrifice idiom...to retain an effect of the original”.¹⁶ Pusey remained sensitive to the dilemma: to combine “the greatest clearness with the greatest faithfulness”.¹⁷ The tension between the two approaches was noted later by *The Dublin Review*.¹⁸

But if Newman took the lead in most practical matters, he deferred to Pusey on matters of more profound significance: Newman was enthusiastic to include Origen’s *Against Celsus*, being “full of matter for reflection” and his *Commentary on St Matthew* as “full of beautiful thoughts”.¹⁹ Pusey was decidedly cool on the idea. Regarding *Against Celsus* he was even more emphatic. He thought the work “may do harm. I cannot but think that discussions about evidences, and familiarity with the low notions which people venture to have of Him, as Man, practically Socinianizes many”.²⁰ Pusey’s concerns won the day and these works of Origen were not included in the series. Newman also deferred to the views of Pusey when they discussed selecting some works by Tertullian, including *Ad uxorem*.²¹ Newman long regarded Tertullian as the towering theological figure of the early church.²² Once again Pusey was not enthusiastic.

As it evolved, the *Library of the Fathers* was hardly a very well planned operation. There was some considerable difficulty in obtaining suitable translators. Of the ten names Pusey suggested at the beginning, only three eventually produced something.²³ While the programme was still in its early stages, Newman gave prospective translators generous scope: “you can take your choice of works” he told Henry Edward Manning as “the whole plan is rough as yet”.²⁴ In practice, Newman seems to have made suggestions to some people to undertake translations, others offered their services. He originally thought the series would be about 25 volumes. In fact, it far exceeded that.²⁵ Progress though was slow. In March 1837 Newman assured Keble there was no need to hurry with his translation of Irenaeus. Keble took this

15. Liddon, *Pusey*, 1.424.

16. Liddon, *Pusey*, 1.422.

17. Pusey, *Confessions of S Augustine*, Preface, xxxi.

18. *Dublin Review* 7 (November 1839), 443-44.

19. Newman to Pusey 13/10/1836, LD 5.368.

20. Pusey to Newman (no date) LD 5.58 note 1.

21. Newman to Pusey 12/9/1839 LD 7.143-44.

22. Wilfred Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman* (2 vols.; London: Longmans Green, 1912) 2.354.

23. Pusey to Newman September 1836, in Liddon, *Pusey*, 1.421.

24. Newman to Manning 19/10/1836, LD 5.370.

25. Newman to Miss Giberne 29/1/1837, LD 6.19.

literally. It was published posthumously, 35 years later in 1872.²⁶ Throughout the early years there were disappointments aplenty: Manning was enthusiastic enough though he preferred the later authors as being “less likely to scare our Protestant contemporaries”.²⁷ Newman had to temper his original enthusiasm and advised him to undertake only one work of translation at a time. In the end he contributed nothing to the series. It is little wonder that Newman confessed to having great difficulty with translators.²⁸ Indeed the project is littered with failures. Newman, doing most of the administrative work, had to handle the bulk of these problems: H. W. Street failed to deliver with Eusebius,²⁹ Frederick Oakeley with Augustine *Against the Pelagians*.³⁰ C. B. Pearson likewise failed to complete Chrysostom’s *Select Homilies*;³¹ Frederick Faber did not complete *St Optatus on the Donatist Schism*;³² George Ryder was originally discussed as prospective translator of *Regula Pastoralis* of St Gregory the Great. Newman and Pusey left the matter to Keble to decide, who apparently did nothing about it.³³ In the end the *Regula Pastoralis* was not included in the series.

At times Newman could be quite brutal with translators. Among the failures are Henry Wilberforce, whose translation of *The Confessions of Augustine* was not progressing: “It is better for both of us that you give over the translation of St Austin. It will be a continual burden upon you, a vexation and anxiety to me.” He gave him a week to have the first book complete, or else he would “consider it given up”.³⁴ In the event, Pusey decided to adapt an older translation of the work and that became the first of the series.³⁵ Poor Wilberforce failed a second time: the Letters of St Augustine did not eventuate either.³⁶ The failures are significant. All those who failed to produce as promised were people closely associated with the Movement. Their failure tends to accentuate the towering contribution of the central characters.

Newman’s robust demands concerning translating are best seen in a letter to Augustus Short who was working on *St Hilary on the Trinity*. Newman tactfully assured him that he appreciated the effort he has taken so far; and indeed the subscribers too would be most grateful for his diligence. However, the results were not good enough. Here,

26. Newman to Keble 31/3/1837, LD 6.51.

27. Manning to Newman 22/2/1837, LD 6.33.

28. Newman to Manning 12/4/1837, LD 6.54. Manning made a further offer in 1841, this time to translate Justin Martyr; see Manning to Pusey in LD 8.354.

29. Newman, diary entry for 30/1/1839, LD 7.22-23.

30. LD 6.130 note 2.

31. LD 7.298 note 2.

32. Newman to Pusey 19/7/1840, LD 7.362, note 1.

33. Newman to Pusey 25/7/1840, LD 7.366-67.

34. Newman to H. Wilberforce 29/1/1837, LD 7.20-21.

35. Newman to H. Wilberforce 18/2/1837, LD 7.29.

36. Newman to H. Wilberforce 22/1/1839, LD 7.17 and Newman to H. Wilberforce 1/2/1839, LD 7.22-23.

Newman opted for a more literal approach to translation because “it occupies an historical position in the course of doctrinal development”. Newman then proceeded to write in parallel columns some five passages of the original and Short’s translation. Numerous questions and suggestions were added.³⁷ While Short’s translation did not eventuate he remained a faithful Tractarian, even writing a defence of the controversial *Tract 90* by Newman. His Tractarian sympathies persisted through his career as first Anglican bishop of Adelaide. Among the failures of the series one might also mention the proposal to translate the *Acta Conciliorum*. Pusey was keen that R. W. Jelf undertake these. Newman liked the idea: “They are very graphic and spirited, abound in oriental vehemence.” He thought they would “disgust” Jelf because of their apparent subservience to Rome.³⁸

Despite these many failures and disappointments, the *Library of the Fathers* **did** succeed. And this, despite these setbacks and the extraordinary number of energy consuming controversies in which the leading Tractarians were involved. By April 1837 Newman was confident that “We hope to begin our Catholic Library (sic) in August with Confessions of St Austin – a volume of Chrysostom or Cyril of Jerusalem – in October – and then quarterly.”³⁹ By the end of 1837 Newman was still confident: the Library is progressing “slowly but well”.⁴⁰ The first two volumes indeed did appear in 1838: *St. Augustine’s Confessions* (24 August 1838, just two years to the day after the venture was decided upon) and *St Cyril of Jerusalem Catechetical Lectures* (21 September 1838). However Newman’s hope of quarterly publications did not materialise: only two volumes appeared in 1839, and only one a year for 1840 and 1841. The furore over Newman’s *Tract 90* and his own personal issues meant his gradual withdrawal from his leading role. This was taken over by Charles Marriott in the latter part of 1841.⁴¹ Newman described him as a “grave, sober and deeply religious person; a great reader of ecclesiastical antiquity”.⁴² Such he clearly was.⁴³ Marriott became the main driving force behind the publications, writing the preface for fifteen of the succeeding volumes. He was able to build on the foundations laid by the combination of Pusey’s wisdom and Newman’s practical enthusiasm.

However from now on publication was at a much slower rate. While three volumes appeared in 1842 and five in 1844, in 1845 there were only

37. Newman to A. Short 28/8/1840, *LD* 7.381-383.

38. Keble to Newman 13/3/1840; Newman to Pusey 17/3/1840. and Pusey to Newman 19/3/1840, *LD* 7.264-66.

39. Newman to R. I. Wilberforce 25/4/1837, *LD* 6.63.

40. Newman to S. L. Pope 18/12/1837, *LD* 6.178.

41. Newman to W. C. Cotton 13/9/1841, *LD* 8.271.

42. Newman to M. J. Routh 15/11/1841, *LD* 7.334.

43. R. W. Church, *The Oxford Movement Twelve Years 1833-1845* (London: Macmillan, 1892) Chapter 5.

2; while in 1846 none appeared; in 1847 – 3; 1848 – 4; 1849-1852 – 2 each year; the remaining eleven appeared intermittently between 1852 and 1885. All told, there were some 43 numbered volumes and the last five to appear between 1877 and 1885 were not numbered.⁴⁴ *The Catena Aurea of Thomas Aquinas*, though having the same format, was not numbered either, being considered not strictly a patristic work. The final 49 volumes far exceeded the vague hope of 25 that Newman had foretold.⁴⁵ The authors translated are interesting: of the 49 volumes some 16 are devoted to Chrysostom; 12 are works by Augustine; 5 are Athanasian texts (a much favoured project of Newman's); 4 are works of St Cyril of Jerusalem; and the *Moralia on Job* by Gregory the Great took up some four volumes.

As they became available, the Oxford men were purchasing new editions of patristic works. This had one important ramification for Australia. Most, if not all, of their older versions found their way to this country through that indefatigable worker for the Church overseas, the Rev Edward Coleridge of Eton College. Closely in touch with his friends at Oxford, he dispatched the older versions to Bishop William Grant Broughton in Sydney. They can be seen with their splendid dedicatory plates in the library of Moore College, Sydney. For their part, the Tractarians made use of numerous sources. For *The Confessions*, Pusey adapted an older translation by the Catholic, Sir Tobie Matthew (1620) as revised by Rev W. Watts in 1650.⁴⁶ For the *Catechetical Lectures of St Cyril of Jerusalem*, use was made of the recent Benedictine edition.⁴⁷ Newman purchased the 13 volumes of the Benedictine edition of Chrysostom's *Opera Omnia*, and sent one volume to Keble for his work on the *Homilies on 1 Corinthians*.⁴⁸ Sometimes there are acknowledgments to Bernard of Mountfaucon (one of the Maurists, 1655-1741) and at other times to Henry Savile (1549-1622) though neither was considered without fault.

One historian has noted that the printed prospectus for the series (printed at the back of most volumes) gives twelve reasons for publication, but no principle of selection.⁴⁹ Perhaps there wasn't one. Yet some tentative judgements may be made. Pusey had an undoubted affection for Augustine.⁵⁰ The series was launched with Augustine's *Confessions*. This classic was not only a recognised devotional work, Pusey also thought it especially appropriate reading for young men

44. Liddon, *Pusey*, 1.445-47.

45. Newman to Miss Giberne 29/1/1837, LD 6. 17.

46. Pusey, *Confessions of S. Augustine*, Preface, xxx.

47. *The Catechetical Lectures of S Cyril Archbishop of Jerusalem* (4th ed. Oxford: Parker & Co and Rivingtons, 1872) Preface (by Newman) xxii.

48. Newman to Keble 24/7/1839, LD 7.115.

49. R. W. Pfaff "The Library of the Fathers. The Tractarians as Patristic Translators", *Studies in Philology* 70 (1973) 331.

50. Liddon, *Pusey* 1.413.

preparing for Holy Orders.⁵¹ This may look like skilful planning. On the other hand, it is surprising that one can find no sustained effort made to find a suitable translator for the *Regula Pastoralis* of Gregory the Great. For a religious movement which placed such emphasis on episcopacy, one would have expected its inclusion. The presence of so many volumes of the works of Chrysostom may be explained by the very nature of his life and ministry. He was one of the first of the Fathers with whom Pusey came into contact.⁵² And Pusey always entertained a special affection for this writer.⁵³ He was also one of Newman's favourites among the Fathers of the Church, according to Henry Dudley Ryder.⁵⁴ Chrysostom's fearless proclamation of the truth, despite the opposition of political forces along with his down to earth, pragmatic spirituality made him an obvious figure of veneration among the Tractarians. He was also singled out in the prospectus for the library as an especially appropriate commentator on the New Testament.⁵⁵

It can reasonably be argued that the appearance of the *Library of the Fathers* did make a significant impact. In the first instance there was undoubtedly the negative aspect. The three promoters expected as much. The Preface written for the first volume by Pusey and for the second volume by Newman sought both to assuage fears and to forestall criticism. Pusey assured readers that there was no intention to put any author or group of writers on a par with Holy Scripture. He was careful to claim the authority of the Canons of Convocation of 1571 that the commentaries of the "Catholic Fathers and Ancient Bishops" should be used in explaining the Scriptures.⁵⁶ On these grounds, no individual writer is regarded as authoritative, "for no one mind can embody within itself the whole of the Catholic Faith".⁵⁷ "(I)t is only by their harmony or unity with others, that we ascertain them to be part of the Catholic Verities".⁵⁸ So any appeal to their witness is done "*subordinately* to Scripture, to bring out the meaning of Holy Scripture".⁵⁹ Newman, for his part, followed the same line of argument. The Fathers comprise a universal witness to "an historical fact, namely the religion which the

51. E. P. Pusey, *Sermons on Selected lessons of the New Testament by St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo*, Volume I, *St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1854) Preface (by E. B. Pusey) iii-v.

52. Liddon, *Pusey*, 1.409.

53. Liddon, *Pusey*, 1.409.

54. Ward, *Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, 2.354.

55. *Prospectus* p. 2 (printed at the back of most volumes of the *Library of the Fathers*); Liddon, *Pusey*, 1.417.

56. Pusey, *Confessions of S Augustine*, Preface, ii.

57. Pusey, *Confessions of S Augustine*, Preface, xvi.

58. Pusey, *Confessions of S Augustine*, Preface, vii.

59. Pusey, *Confessions of S Augustine*, Preface, ix.

Apostles transmitted to the early Churches".⁶⁰ This is clearly evidenced in the case of Cyril, who though not connected with the school of Athanasius holds "expressly the same doctrines".⁶¹ Also invoking the authority of the Convocation of 1571 Newman pushed the argument further:

Nothing can be more certain than that Scripture contains all necessary doctrine; yet nothing, it is presumed, can be more certain either, than that, practically speaking, it needs an interpreter; nothing more certain than that our Church and her Divines assign the witness of the early ages of Christianity concerning Apostolic doctrine, as that interpreter.⁶²

Anticipating criticism, Newman tackled the delicate point as to whether such writers add to Scripture. In one sense they do not and in another sense they do: he pointed out that no one in the Church objects to the need for credal statements as "an addition to Scripture in any other sense than that in which an individual's own impression concerning the sense of Scripture is an addition to it".⁶³ Despite these cautious explanations, suspicions were soon aroused. Dr Pusey forwarded the first volumes to Bishop Broughton in Australia through Edward Coleridge. Broughton replied to Coleridge:

I beg you will offer my respects and best thanks to Dr Pusey for his donation of the already published parts of the "Library". He and his colleagues are pious, learned and able men, and (this to yourself) have no doubt considered well the *effect* of their undertaking; and have decided that it will be *good*. This I have no intention to dispute; but still I see it is not without risk and danger. Let anyone read only Cyril's Lectures on the Mysteries, and it must be seen how necessary it is to be able to distinguish Catholic consent from the private opinions of individual doctors: otherwise into what dangerous errors may readers be misled? Have readers, then, in general, knowledge and ability to make that distinction?⁶⁴

Closer to home, Newman had some explaining to do to his sister who was probably thinking much along the same line as Broughton. Newman replied through his brother-in-law, Tom Mozley,

As to (Harriet's) other objection about the words, "penance, confession, satisfaction, and absolution" first of all they are words used in our Church in the Prayer Book and Homilies – next, they are so

60. J. H. Newman, *The Catechetical Lectures of S Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem*, Preface (by J. H. Newman) vi.

61. Newman, *Catechetical Lectures of S Cyril*, Preface, x.

62. Newman, *Catechetical Lectures of S Cyril*, Preface, xii.

63. Newman, *Catechetical Lectures of S Cyril*, Preface, xiv-xv.

64. Broughton to Coleridge 14/10/1839 (Mss. Moore College, Sydney, N.S.W.).

commonly used by the Fathers, that, since we are translating them, unless we claim them, we shall be surrendering the Fathers to the Romanists. We must familiarize people with them, or the Fathers will frighten them.⁶⁵

Frighten them they did. As the *Dublin Review* noted, the library occasioned “a very animated controversy”.⁶⁶ It reviewed works critical of the *Library of the Fathers* by Baden Powell, Philip N. Shuttleworth, William Fitzgerald and Isaac Taylor. The latter, in *Ancient Christianity, and the Doctrines of the Oxford tracts for the Times*, castigated the “degradation of the intellect” and “bondage of the moral sentiments” in such reverence for the works of the Fathers.⁶⁷ At the same time, there were other voices. The 1839 Bampton Lectures by W. D. Conybeare were devoted to the study of Patristics. The Tractarians, however, were not impressed. Newman thought “people are not sure which side he is on and seems to doubt if he knows himself”.⁶⁸ E. Budge had embarked on a translation of some Chrysostom texts unaware that the Library was also intending to publish them: Newman thought he should go ahead regardless, as the Church is big enough for both translations.⁶⁹

If the *Library of the Fathers* did not make giant strides, it can be claimed that it limped on. Even if the production in later years was tardy enough, it did survive some traumatic challenges in the years 1841 to 1845: between *Tract 90* and the conversion of Newman to Rome. All in all, its survival must be classed as a substantial achievement. But it did more than survive. If it can be argued that it has its limitations in that almost all the authors were later Fathers – from the fourth to the seventh centuries, it must be remembered that in almost all cases this was the first translation of these works into English. None of Chrysostom’s homilies had appeared before,⁷⁰ nor had the *Moralia in Job* of Gregory the Great.⁷¹ Nor, indeed, had the *Catechetical Lectures of Cyril of Jerusalem*. The success of the series can be measured in part by the number of editions: some volumes were re-issued time and again. Cyril’s Lectures had their second edition just one year after first being published.⁷² Indeed the first three volumes sold extremely well.⁷³ *Cyril’s Lectures* had its fourth edition in 1874. Again, one can note the large number of subscriptions: in 1838 there were slightly under 800

65. Newman to Tom Mozley 11/2/1839, LD 7.33.

66. *Dublin Review* 7 (November 1839), 430-53.

67. Quoted in LD 7.120, note 4.

68. Newman to Manuel Johnson 13/3/1839, LD 7.51.

69. Newman to E. Budge 25/1/1841, LD 8.24.

70. J. Quasten, *Patrology*. Volume 3: *Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature* (Utrecht: Spectrum Publications, 1962) 432.

71. Quasten, *Patrology*, 3.366.

72. Newman to R. W. Church (the translator) 3/7/1839, LD 7.115-118.

73. Newman to Pusey 14/7/1839, LD 7.107.

subscribers; the following year the number exceeded 1,100; by 1843, 1,000 including 5 bishops; in 1851 2,500 including 25 bishops; in 1853 3,700 including 31 bishops.⁷⁴ In addition, of course, individual volumes were sold. And this was encouraged by the organisers.⁷⁵

The widespread dissemination of the *Library of the Fathers* points to another interesting factor. Historians of the Movement have, on the whole, not given it a great deal of attention. While Dr Peter Nockles made only passing reference to the Library in his *Oxford Movement in Context*, he did note the widespread support the venture could elicit from moderate Evangelicals. He cited the support given the Library by the Rev E. Bickersteth, no friend to the Tractarians.⁷⁶ One further example might be added. Here in Australia, the Bishop of Melbourne, Charles Perry, the only one of the six original Australasian bishops who was not a Tractarian, had at least 11 volumes of the collection in his library.⁷⁷

Perhaps a better measure of the success of the venture is to note its impact on Roman Catholics. In two successive numbers, the *Dublin Review* carried lengthy articles on publications related to the Oxford Movement.⁷⁸ These articles comprised reviews of 4 volumes of *Tracts for the Times*. This was the review that contributed so significantly to undermining Newman's confidence in Anglican claims. There was also a thirty six page review of Cyril's *Lectures* and some works unfriendly to the *Library of the Fathers*. Finally there was a lengthy review of *The Confessions*.

The review of Cyril was well spiced with cynical comment: the editors are like men "awakening, as it were, after centuries, to the discovery of treasures hidden under lumber in their own storehouses".⁷⁹ The review terminates with a surprising statement:

For the purpose of drawing out a body of doctrine from the fathers, the execution of the present work is not well adapted from the scantiness and want of exactitude of its critical apparatus.... Employed as a book of pious reading, it will answer well, and as such, we sincerely wish it wide diffusion.⁸⁰

The Tractarians, for all their faults, would not so casually have divorced spirituality from doctrine. Wide diffusion it certainly had. For

74. Liddon, *Pusey* 1.442-43.

75. Thus Newman to Miss Giberne 24/7/37, LD 6.104.

76. Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 110-111, 321.

77. 7 volumes of Chrysostom; 2 of Cyprian; 1 of Cyril and 1 of Gregory the Great. These are now housed in the Leeper Library, Trinity College, University of Melbourne.

78. *Dublin Review* 7 (August and October 1839). These reviews covered 20% of the entire volume.

79. *Dublin Review* 7 (August 1839), 6.

80. *Dublin Review* 7 (August 1839), 36.

evidence of this, one only needs to look at some libraries in Catholic institutes. In a survey of twelve such libraries in Australia, two libraries had no volumes of the *Library of the Fathers*; five libraries had several volumes and five libraries had virtually complete sets.

Some of these have a special interest. The Centre for Christian Spirituality in Randwick, NSW, has a set belonging to Dr Jeremiah Joseph Doyle, the first bishop of Lismore (1887-1909). While many pages remain uncut, a surprising number are covered with annotations. The Redemptorist Library in Kew has a set which originally belonged to Benjamin Harrison. He was author of several of the *Tracts for the Times*, and was later chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Howley to whom the *Library of the Fathers* was dedicated. This set found its way to Australia through St Augustine's College, Canterbury (a Tractarian venture), presumably by a student of the college who later joined the Redemptorists. So the Library was not only well diffused; it was also widely read!

The *Library of the Fathers* was clearly a success in terms of the statistics that can be enumerated. But is there any other criterion that can be applied? The Oxford Movement can often be seen in terms of its support for a traditional church order and for episcopacy in particular. But that in turn, only made sense in terms of its making the Incarnation present today in Word and Sacrament. But that only exists to give people life, and life in its fullest dimension. In other words, the Oxford Movement is finally about a call to holiness. That, surely, is the context in which the *Library of the Fathers* must be located. Pusey's commitment to the Movement was signalled by his *Tract on Fasting* (No. 18). This was a clear move in stressing aspects of spirituality. Newman, for his part, could do much as a theologian to present a well reasoned argument: as an historian he could make the past speak to the present; but as a preacher he had the extraordinary ability to create an impression. There are parts of Newman's sermons where one is treated to passages of lyrical beauty that have much the same influence on hearers as music.⁸¹ These clearly had a remarkable ability to evoke an experience of the beauty of holiness. The argument can be advanced that the Tractarians used the study of Patristics as a polemic in contemporary debates and challenges.⁸² Newman for one clearly agreed. He opened his popular essays on the Fathers with the uncompromising assertion: "This is a world of conflict, and of vicissitude amid the conflict.... It is so in every age; it is so in the nineteenth century; it was so in the fourth."⁸³ But here there is no

81. Church, *Oxford Movement*, 21, 129 and 139-45, where he recounts the impression of others.

82. See for instance Stephen Thomas, *Newman and Heresy: The Anglican Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

83. J. H. Newman, *The Church of the Fathers* (London: Burns, Oates, 1868 ed.) 1.

argument using quotations and interpretations from the Fathers. In the *Library of the Fathers* the Oxford men let the Fathers speak for themselves. In presenting this impressive set of texts they sought to create an impression: a “flood of divinity”,⁸⁴ to give “a general impulse in a certain direction”.⁸⁵

A specific aim of the Library was to provide material for *lectio divina*.⁸⁶ There were parts which lay folk would find “especially touching”.⁸⁷ Newman confessed to a friend “when one has the Fathers around one...on the whole one feels secure and comfortable”.⁸⁸ He confessed to finding his work with the Fathers something that gave him “most peace of conscience”.⁸⁹ Indeed, in the midst of the numerous controversies occasioned by the Movement, the production of the *Library of the Fathers* acted as “a steadying influence.... it reminded men of a type of life and thought which all good men, in their best moments, would have been glad to make their own”.⁹⁰

This aim is made even more explicit by Pusey, introducing the *Confessions*:

The great practical aim of the study of the fathers (is) not to prove any thing, not to satisfy ourselves of any thing, but to bring more vividly home to our own thoughts and consciousness the rich treasures of doctrine and devotion which our Church has from their days brought down to us.⁹¹

And likewise Newman introducing the *Lectures of Cyril* :

To those who believe that moral truth is not gained by the mere exercise of the intellect, but is granted to moral attainments, and that God speaks to inquirers after truth by the mouth of those who possess it, the writings of the Fathers must always have an authority.⁹²

Archbishop Yngve Brilioth of Uppsala was one of the most respected historians of the Oxford Movement. In his book, *The Anglican Revival*, he made the startling claim that *The Library of the Fathers* was the most important work of the Tractarians.⁹³ Perhaps he was right.

84. Newman to J.W. Bowden 28/8/1836, LD 5.345.

85. Newman to Miss Giberne 24/7/1837, LD 6.104.

86. *Prospectus* for the *Library of the Fathers* (see n. 54 above), Reasons for publishing No. 3.

87. Newman to Mrs J. Mozley (his sister Jemima), 4/3/1839 LD 7.47.

88. Newman to Miss Giberne 13/1/1837 LD 6.13.

89. Newman to Keble 5/12/1838, LD 6.353.

90. Liddon, *Pusey*, 1.434.

91. Pusey, *Confessions of S Augustine*, Preface xviii.

92. Newman, *Catechetical Lectures of S Cyril*, Preface vi.

93. Yngve Brilioth *The Anglican Revival: Studies in the Oxford Movement* (London: Longmans Green, 1933) 141.