

JOHN KEBLE AND THE ETHOS OF THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

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The student of the Oxford Movement soon becomes familiar with the word *ethos*: it keeps appearing in the writings and correspondence of the Oxford Tractarians – particularly those of Keble, Froude and Newman – and it seems never to have been far from their lips. The well-known and often-quoted remarks of Isaac Williams and Thomas Mozley reinforce the impression that it encapsulated a concept of vital importance for Tractarianism. Keble, in Isaac Williams's words, 'in opposition to the Oriel or Whatelian [school], set *ethos* above intellect' (Williams (1892), 46); and Mozley, on his part, would affirm in his *Reminiscences*, that what 'Froude and others discovered continually was *ethos*, the dominant moral habit or proclivity' (Mozley, I, 211–12).¹ Being so present in their thoughts, and given the amount of scholarly attention focused on the Oxford Movement, it comes as a surprise that there should be such a dearth of studies on the subject.² Most scholars pass over the concept in the study and the interpretation of the Oxford Movement, as if the Tractarian idea of *ethos* had little or nothing to contribute to its understanding. If one were to seek reasons for this neglect, there can be but little doubt that, among them, John Taylor Coleridge's explanation of the idea of *ethos* in his *Memoir* of Keble made a considerable contribution to its trivialization. He considered that with Keble it 'imported certainly no intellectual quality, scarcely even any distinct moral one, but an habitual toning, or general colouring diffused over all man's moral qualities, giving the exercise of them a peculiar gentleness and grace' (Coleridge, 398).³ These were deceptive words, and have in fact deceived many a scholar. It is the contention of this paper that, in the language of the Tractarians, *ethos* is a concept rich in consequences, involving a complex theory of knowledge – and of religious knowledge in particular – which deeply influenced the genesis and development of Tractarianism.

The concept of *ethos*, in its modern and Tractarian sense, was coined by Keble. However, as often happened with Oxford Movement ideas, the concept underwent considerable development in pre-Tractarian and Tractarian times. Froude and Newman – starting from Keble's original idea – contributed significantly to the development of the notion and the unfolding of its corollaries. Keble had forged the concept in Oxford, and two books included among those studied at Oxford – Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Bishop Butler's *Analogy* – provided the materials he used to fashion it.⁴ And Keble would always maintain that his concept of right *ethos* reflected the spirit of the University.

Butler, writing in the eighteenth century, had been primarily concerned with the defence of revelation from objections levelled at it by the deists. These, among other things, argued that if God had intended a revelation for the good of all men, it was unimaginable that he would have allowed most of humanity to remain in ignorance of it. Again, the argument went on, given the vital nature of that knowledge for man's salvation, it did stand to reason that God would not have left his revelation to rest upon doubtful evidence. Butler, in his response to these objections, delineated the general lines of a philosophy of religious knowledge which was to have great influence among the Tractarians. He relied on the argument from analogy to respond to the critics of revelation, and started by defining the concept of the analogy of nature in words borrowed from Origen: he who believes Scripture to proceed from him who is also the author of nature, might well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in his knowledge of revelation as he encounters when approaching nature (Butler, 9). Along those lines, Butler argued that the seeming lack of universality of revelation should not be an argument for incredulity: natural gifts are diversely distributed not only among different natures but even among individuals who share the same nature; therefore, there is no reason for wonder at the fact that revelation may have reached men in different degrees.

Butler probably felt that the second argument of the deists had greater force, and he dealt with it at length. They had argued that God could not have left his revelation to rest on doubtful evidence. Butler countered that the order of nature vastly exceeds in its complexity our powers of intellectual perception. As a result, we are unable to see the multiple connections which would explain realities and events which, although *a priori* seeming unreasonable to us, we are bound to accept as incontrovertible facts. The

appearance of deficiencies and irregularities in nature is owing to its being a scheme but in part made known.... Now we see no more reason why the frame and course of nature should be such a scheme, than why Christianity should. And that the former is such a scheme, renders it credible, that the latter, upon supposition of its truth, may be so too (Butler, 248-9).

Butler considered it unreasonable to demand higher standards of proof and evidence in matters of religion than in matters of science or in the practical ordering of human life. The imperfection of the human intellect forces man to admit that, in most cases, he will have to be satisfied – both in his knowledge of nature and in that of revelation – with only probable knowledge, rather than certainty: 'probability is the very guide of life' (Butler, 5). Only the divine intellect, comprehending the whole of the natural and revealed dispensations, is able to have certain knowledge in every respect.

The vital question then was: how can man find his way to truth – particularly in respect of religious truth – in a maze of probable arguments? In his answer to this objection Butler took as his starting point the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* or practical wisdom, as described in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. There Aristotle had affirmed that it is impossible to be practically wise – i.e., to discern the good to aim at and the means to achieve it – without being good: moral excellence confers a sort of instinct for goodness. Butler considered, with all Christian tradition, that God has granted man a perfectible nature, and that its potential for perfection is not confined to man's present earthly life: there is a future life which is to this one as manhood to youth. And man qualifies for that other life by developing his moral character in the practice of virtue: the improvement of one's human nature is achieved by the acquisition of sound habits resulting from the repetition of good actions. This is not a foregone conclusion. The present life is a state of discipline and probation, and man's resolve is tested by the disordered inclinations he experiences, calling on him to deviate from right. Besides, part of that probation consists in the very fact that the distinction between good and evil is not always perceived with absolute clarity. Man, however, is not left unprovided. Butler affirmed with Aristotle that virtue already achieved is – in its own measure – also a 'security against the danger which finite creatures are in, from the very nature or propensity, or particular affections' (Butler, 122). Virtue strengthens the will in its search for good, and facilitates the perception of the path that leads to it.

Having followed Aristotle so far, Butler moved a step forward, taking the concept of practical wisdom or *phronesis* well beyond the confines Aristotle had set for it. In Butler's hands, without losing its ethical character, moral goodness acquired a more intellectual dimension. Doubtfulness in respect of the evidence of Christian revelation is, according to Butler, an element in man's probation. And he regarded probable knowledge as being perfectly adapted to the state of probation in which man has been established on this earth. In that respect, he even admitted the possibility that God, with that aim of probation in mind, might have withheld some truths which, had they been laid before us, might have facilitated our apprehension of revelation. This, however, by the very nature of the case, would be unknown to man. In

man's present circumstances, different moral tempers would behave differently in respect to the evidences of revelation. Neglect in examining them generally implies one form or another of depravity: lack of interest, a desire that those things may be proved not true, passion, prejudice, and so on. On the other hand, a virtuous moral temper would pay active and careful consideration to the evidences of revelation. It would be more inclined to give religion its assent, and follow conviction by obedience to revealed precepts. For Butler, speculative difficulties play a role similar to moral temptations. Virtue, once more, is the reliable guide in doubt, helping the individual this time to weigh rightly the probability of divine revelation. A higher degree of virtue would be accompanied by a clearer perception of truth. Butler felt that it 'is a real imperfection in the moral character, not to be influenced in practice by a lower degree of evidence when discerned, as it is in the understanding, not to discern it' (Butler, 290).

Butler had used the argument from analogy to defend Christianity against unbelief. Keble, for his part, would develop it further, applying the same argument to the maintenance of orthodoxy against heresy, to the practical guidance of individual consciences among the contrasting claims of the different denominations within Christianity or among parties and schools within a particular Church. He was conscious of marching into territory uncharted by Butler but he thought that Butler's doctrine had not closed the door to this particular use of the analogy (Keble (1847), vi–viii).⁵ And Keble considered his ideas a useful and timely development of the theory in the *Analogy*, given that in their days intellectual temptation and doubt were more common than previously.⁶

Already in 1814, Keble had suggested the importance of criticism for discovering the laws of the human mind, and, in particular, the connections between the intellectual and moral faculties (Keble (1814), 588). But it is in his sermons of the early 1820s that we find the clearest and best-developed study of his new application of the analogy of nature, supported by a different set of arguments from those used by Butler. The latter had argued with the deist who rejected revelation, and therefore used arguments drawn from human reason; Keble spoke or wrote for those who accepted revelation, and, consequently, made use of the witness of Holy Scripture. And Scripture, to his mind, confirmed Butler's theory and his own. Among the scriptural texts he quoted, two were particularly useful in support of his theory. One was taken from the Psalms: 'I have more understanding than all my teachers; for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients; because I kept Thy precepts' (Psalm 119, 99–100). The other quoted words of Christ: 'a good will to do His Will shall know of the doctrine if it is from God' (John 7. 17).⁷ From these, and similar scriptural texts, he concluded that moral rectitude, honest attention and thoughtfulness, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

are not only necessary, but sufficient...to guide us into all truths really important to our final welfare; not only to make us virtuous rather than vicious, but also to make us Christians rather than Infidels, orthodox Christians rather than Heretics, and conforming Christians rather than Schismatics (Keble (1847a), 4).

The inspired writers considered orthodox faith associated with sound morality; truth and duty were unailing tests of each other (Keble (1847c), 44–5).

As far as Keble was concerned, moral qualities were of greater importance than intellectual ones when analysing the truth of religious propositions. The reason was his conviction that, in matters of revealed truth, the moral sense is empowered to correct the errors of the intellect, and to supply its imperfections. A person experienced in the life of virtue, and desirous to do good, would have a sort of instinct for truth, making him or her more able to detect the bent of a particular doctrine (Keble (1847), xvii; (1847c), 64). This not only corresponded to the nature of things but also played a particular role within the plan of God's providence: 'it has been God's will to constitute uprightness, rather than ability, judge of the truth on the highest of all subjects, as a means to put down spiritual pride' (Keble (1847b), 42).⁸ On the other hand, as St Paul had written to Timothy, 'evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived' (II Timothy 3. 13). Keble thought that there is a sort of blinding power in moral disease, leading man along an inexorable descent from error into further error; a sliding into heterodoxy which could only be arrested by spiritual conversion (Keble (1847d), 102).

Keble went on to establish

as a kind of canon of sacred criticism, that, in disputed cases, that interpretation of God's works and ways which approves itself most entirely to the sober and devout spirit, stands in general a fairer chance of being the true interpretation, than what has the suffrage of minds ingenious and original but deficient in those moral requisites' (Keble (1847a), 14).

If that offered a guarantee on the part of the interpreter, Keble also provided a criterion – based on his concept of *ethos* – for judging the interpretations in themselves: the doctrinal view or interpretation of Scripture tending to deepen faith, and promote holiness, humility, etc., is safer than that which lowers the standard of morality, engenders spiritual pride and the like; this latter one cannot be of God (Keble, (1847c), 62–3). He supplied further scriptural texts in support of these general criteria, which, he felt, were much the same thing as the Aristotelian concept of practical wisdom (*phronesis*), although, with

Butler, he had transferred Aristotle's *phronesis* to the realm of intellectual knowledge. Keble used the term *ethos* to refer to this moral disposition or character and, in his early *Lectures on Poetry* (started in 1832), described it as a stable disposition, not just a passing impulse but the result of a lifetime searching after virtue (Keble (1912), I, 75).⁹

Following Butler, Keble considered that man's knowledge is, for the most part, based on probable arguments. Within that scheme of human knowledge, he conceived moral rectitude as a light guiding man to find his way to truth, through the maze of possible answers offered to him; the right moral temper would provide sure guidance to identify truth among sometimes conflicting probabilities (Keble (1847), xvi). This principle, already suggested by Butler, was not only suited to, but almost demanded by the general theory, in order to give firmness and certitude to human knowledge of revealed truth. In this way, Keble's theory, according to Newman, conferred on knowledge based on probability a degree of certainty that it does not have of itself: the firmness of assent to religious doctrines is not derived from mere probability but, fundamentally, from the power of faith and love which serve as sure guides in determining where truth lies (Newman (1913), 19).¹⁰ Keble saw the search for truth as a spiralling ascending movement: moral rectitude influences discovery of truth; truth discovered should commit the person vitally; this commitment, in turn, would bring with it a clearer perception of revealed truth, and so on. As a result, Keble – as Isaac Williams had said – set *ethos* above intellect, but he did so, among other things, for intellect's sake.¹¹

Keble considered that God, the author of both reason and revelation, had conformed the latter to the permanent laws of human knowledge. The many-layered richness of Holy Scripture was well adapted to the ethical process of discovering truth. Christ's divinity implies that the least of his words and actions is charged with heavenly and mysterious meaning, has eternal and infinite associations and consequences. The deepest meaning of the Gospel can only be understood by those who are in close communion with Christ. On this count, Keble defended a mystical interpretation of Holy Scripture against those who only admitted a literal approach. A mystical interpretation, as its critics had remarked, might not be free from dangers, but Keble thought that this was so with all ways of communicating divine truth. The remedy is to strengthen the eyes of the intellect by means of repentance, devotion and self-denial, so as to make them able to stand the light of divine truth. Then, the assiduous study of Holy Scripture, together with the devout observances of the Fathers, will make man gain by degrees their perceptive eye and enable him to discern their first principles. Intellectual acuteness and industry, on the other hand, if not accompanied by that moral training, would be equivalent to the blind leading the blind. And experience showed that pouring scorn on the Fathers'

mystical interpretation of Scripture, and reducing it to the merely critical and historical, had been in some well-known cases a step towards Arianism and other doctrinal errors. The poor and unlearned, who feared God and led pure lives, were for the most part better prepared to receive those divine lights than men of great learning and cultivation (Keble (1841), 134–6; (1847a), 17).

It followed that when it came to determine the primary aim of education, in its broader and truest sense, Keble saw it as the formation of a right *ethos*. Within this process, he thought that poetry played a central role. Indeed, writing in 1814, he described as poetry's mission 'the awakening of some moral or religious feeling, not by direct instruction (that is the office of morality or theology)' but by a process of imaginative associations (Keble (1814), 579). He considered religion and poetry closely related. God has used poetical language to communicate himself to man, employing symbolical associations – whether poetical, moral or mystical – to reveal a world beyond sense perception. Besides, in Keble's mind, poetry has a power of healing and restoring overburdened and passionate minds, and therefore, the more deeply a feeling penetrates human affections, the more permanently it influences them, the closer its relation with poetry. As it happens, man finds in divine revelation the deepest and most transforming feeling, and it naturally follows that poetry and religion are meant to advance each other. Poetry offers religion a means to express high realities, otherwise inexpressible, while religion offers poetry a lofty field of sentiment to work upon (Keble (1912), II, 478–84). The true poet is the one who uses ideas and language calculated to raise religious and moral associations: presenting something absent, awakening longings, making man feel his own dignity and a desire to better something still imperfect, detaching him from earthly affections and lifting him nearer to what he once was (Keble (1814), 581, 585).¹² Even the great pagan poets could not but be interpreters of the mysteries of nature, helping to restore a unified vision and experience of life. In so doing, they had prepared men to welcome the revealed doctrines of Christianity, and Keble highly recommended their study (Keble (1912), II, 470, 475, 477).

Keble went even further in claiming that history showed how religious revivals tended to be preceded by a change of tone in the immediately preceding poets. They had led the way, and had prepared men to accept a more serious and holier creed (Keble (1912), II, 473). By way of example, he mentioned the poetical revival of the late Elizabethan period. It produced poets like Spenser and Shakespeare, whose tone and temper had unconsciously prepared the religious revival in the reign of Charles I (Keble (1912), II, 479). And Keble, with Newman and Froude, thought that something similar had happened in Great Britain with the appearance of poets like Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth and others. Their poetry, their personal shortcomings notwithstanding, had heralded, and prepared, the arrival of a new religious revival. They had reflected

in their poetry the glory of God in his creation. Wordsworth, Keble said in his 1838 Creweian Oration, had exhibited 'the manner, the pursuits, and the feeling, religious and traditional, of the poor, – I will not say in favourable light merely, but in a light which glows with the rays of heaven' (Coleridge, 261). His poetry had infused in his readers those emotions which were most conducive to a religious revival. Scott's feeling for the chivalry and feudal life of past ages, imbued with a deep sense of honour and fidelity, as well as the strong bond of blood and of the clan, had a similar effect, and exerted a great influence on his age. It had prejudiced people in favour of ancient institutions, and the chivalrous tone of his writings had shaped the feelings of many who had reacted against the utilitarian temper of the times (Keble (1838), 438).

Keble could, however, criticise them both at the same time as he recognized their contribution as true poets to this revival. He tried to distance himself publicly from Wordsworth in 1815 when reviewing two books by the poet. Keble admired Wordsworth's talents but he did not subscribe all the tenets of his poetical system. He criticised Wordsworth's 'theories and eccentricities', his vision of poetic sensibility giving access to a higher realm inaccessible to mere humans, or his use of poetry to convey metaphysical ideas (Keble (1815), 225).¹³ Many years after, he was even doubtful about whether he should dedicate to Wordsworth his lectures on poetry, given the unorthodoxy of some of the poet's tenets. As in the case of Sir Walter Scott, the *ethos* was right (the Catholic one), but both of them laboured under the disadvantages of the system in which they had been raised, and the prevailing tone of their time and place. They had both, however, risen above it by means of good sense and right instinct. And Keble could only wonder what their reaction would have been if the complete Catholic system had been fully and fairly presented to their minds. He thought that they would have welcomed it (Keble (1815), 474).

Froude absorbed the concept of *ethos* from Keble and made it central to his vision of the intellectual and religious life, developing at length the relationship between character and opinions, both in general and in the religious sphere. In 1827 he jotted down some of his thoughts about the connexion between right faith and right practice, and *vice versa*, claiming that opinions are essentially consistent with particular characters, and that in a double sense: a temper of mind or character would tend to generate a certain set of opinions, and, conversely, a given set of opinions would tend to shape mind and character in a particular way. Froude, however, avoided all thought of psychological determinism: men were not born either Platonists or Aristotelians, heretical or orthodox believers. Character for Froude is defined morally, being as such in a constant state of formation and flux, and the alternative moral phases of the individual would have their corresponding effects on his opinions. Froude saw the development of character as controlled by a very sensitive tiller, holding

or altering the course of moral progress at the touch of every moral decision. An almost imperceptible departure from the previously plotted course, if not corrected, could show itself later as having had momentous consequences. He concluded by repeating that opinions are essentially homogeneous with particular characters: a man who is morally good will have a right faith, while heresy would be the intellectual fruit of a vicious *ethos*. Froude did not, however, apply the principle too strictly, and partly exonerated those in error, particularly those whose opinions – while they were engaged in the search for truth – were still in process of formation (Froude, 'Connexion', 114–17).

This theory helped Froude answer a question pressing upon him. He had at first been puzzled by the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed: he could not understand how opinions, of themselves, could be the object of God's wrath. Froude had also to contend with St Paul, who had clearly affirmed that errors of opinion, as well as of practice, made men unfit for the kingdom of Heaven. The new ideas about the influence of a particular *ethos* on the intellectual life offered Froude the elements for reaching a solution. He rehearsed the argument *ab initio*. Men deserved reward or punishment on the basis of the choices made in the exercise of their free will: they cannot be responsible for events or opinions over which they have no control. Therefore, if liberty of choice is implied in the idea of punishment or reward, the condemned opinion must involve something moral, either in its cause or in its effect. Froude concluded that, if men are to be punished or rewarded also for their beliefs (as the Athanasian Creed professes), this can only be in so far as these are accepted and held under the influence of man's will, and consequently the will's character cannot but play a decisive role in this process. Man is, therefore, responsible for his faith to the degree that he is responsible for his character. This line of argument, however, was not without its difficulties: it is a fact that man originally tends to accept religious truth – and also natural truths – on the authority of those who instruct him, and it is not easy in some cases (in others, perhaps, impossible) to rise above the errors or prejudices inculcated in early life. Froude, however, thought that the time arrives for all when one becomes responsible for adhering to error, and this implies that there must be some means by which truth is gradually open to man. When confronted by it, he is called to make his decision: either to become responsible for the errors transmitted by his instructors, or to accept the new truth now presented to him (Froude (1838b), 114–17).¹⁴ Newman, along the same lines, would link these ideas with another element of Butler's general theory. Divine truth is revealed for our probation. Were man to enjoy absolute proof and certainty of the revealed truth presented to him, he would not be left any room for choice: the truth in question would impose itself on the mind, and there would be no merit in believing, no room for praise or blame. As it is, given that 'probabilities have no definite ascertained value, and are reducible

to no scientific standard, what are such to the individual, depends on his moral temper' (Newman (1872), 200). Froude, commenting on Pascal's famous 'wager', had suggested in 1835 an interesting corollary to the general theory. The safest course, in truth or practice, is not always to be found in what is most probable: it may be safe to risk little if there is a small probability of a great gain; it may not be safe to risk much – i.e. eternal life – even when the probability of that happening is small (Froude (1839c), 379–80).

Man, unfortunately, does not start as a *tabula rasa*. As result of his sinfulness – beginning with original sin – man grows blind to God's revelations, and it is man's work to remove that blindness by persevering in good habits (Froude (1838e), 86). Froude would claim in one of his sermons that, without the discipline of loving and fearing God, man cannot even know him: it is by doing God's will that man shall gradually understand the doctrine God taught us about himself (Froude (1838c), 83, 93). People assume that familiarity with the words necessarily implies familiarity with the ideas they contain. This is not always the case. Froude distinguished between the knowledge of the fact, and the knowledge that truly affects the life of the person to his or her advantage: the latter depends on the habitual religious convictions of the individual in question (Froude (1838d), 49). A disposition to a life of ease and pleasure will indispose the person to understand and welcome God's word, and he or she must remain in ignorance, although familiar with the words of revelation.

Froude stressed the powerful 'influence of habit in moulding our opinions, and the consequent probability that every evil habit we may have contracted, consciously or unconsciously, from the day of our birth till the present hour, has in its degree perverted our judgement' (Froude (1839c), 359). It could be said, therefore, that there are as many different prejudices and opinions as there are different turns of mind, resulting from different moral histories. People, whether they are conscious of it or not, are likely to be prejudiced in some degree in the examination of evidences, inclined to underrate and neglect some while overrating and emphasizing others. The fact that they may not be conscious of those prejudices only makes the influence more pervasive and determining (Froude (1839a), 34–5). On the basis of this theory, Froude criticized the Protestant principle of private judgement. He ridiculed those who thought that they would not be prejudiced in their interpretation of Scripture:

Such people are under a great delusion, let them try ever so much, they neither think for themselves nor interpret for themselves. ... Their notions, their feelings, their associations, are not their own. They have picked them up from others, or from opposing others. ... The views of their times are most dogmatic commentators, and will intrude at every instant or

unprejudiced thought, unperceived and unsuspected. (Froude (1839a), 88).

Keble's 1833 sermon on 'National Apostasy', later considered the first shot in the campaign of the Oxford Movement, did not merely denounce a particular measure being contemplated by Parliament (the suppression of some Irish bishoprics); his main criticism was aimed at the dominant national *ethos*. Its symptoms or characteristics, as Keble described them, were: growing indifference, following the rule of public opinion rather than the rule of truth, impatience under pastoral authority, etc. A nation led by this prevailing temper would go from bad to worse, abandoning the law of the Gospel through accommodations with evil, sometimes on the plea of toleration, at other times on that of State security or of sympathy with popular feeling, and similar others (Keble, 1833). A few years later, when comparing the liberal, indulgent and utilitarian ethics of the times with what was to be found in the Primitive Church, he remarked that the discrepancies between the two ages were the result of a difference as to first principles (moral temper or *ethos*) rather than being attributable to accidental or temporary circumstances (Keble (1841), 10).

Froude echoed Keble's words, and denounced the religious condition of the country: indifference to sacred things – amounting sometimes to contempt – accompanied by a veneer of empty artificial respect; and a clergy anxious to make the country appear Christian after it had ceased to be so (Froude (1839b), 273–4; (1838f), 186–7). The danger the Tractarians foresaw and dreaded was that the day might come when the State, without destroying the establishment, would corrupt it, constructing, 'under the pretence of the convenience of a profession of religion', a national religion, which the State would then proceed to use for its own purposes (Copeland, II, 18).

Keble's 'National Apostasy' was the first public stir of Tractarian religious and political agitation, and it set in motion, or rather accelerated, a chain of intellectual and doctrinal developments. The Tractarians wanted to restore the Church to its proper place in the life of the country, renewing its spiritual influence by restoring Catholic doctrine and practice. They intended at first only to reinstate and present afresh the old neglected truths of the Church of England; but their intellectual momentum impelled them to throw out new conclusions and advance novel theories. The concept of *ethos* was among those to develop further as years went by. Keble had taken Butler's ideas a step further, and conceived *ethos* as a light helping man to find religious truth among a variety of possible answers, and to discern it from error. Froude was to further refine Keble's concept, and Newman would add new dimensions to it. It is to the latter's writings that one must turn for a fuller perception of what the Tractarians came to understand by *ethos* and its dynamism, but this is beyond the purpose and the scope of the present study. Keble had opened up a rich seam of thought. Those who had discovered it under his influence will continue

working it.

Notes

- ¹ Mozley himself, on occasion of his election as a Fellow of Oriel, was described by Newman as possessed of an admirable *ethos* (Newman to S. Rickards, 28 Apr. 1829, *LD*, II, 139).
- ² The concept does not even appear as a separate entry in L. N. Crumb (1988 and 1993).
- ³ Later biographies of Keble have tended to ignore or gloss over the subject; see for example W. Lock (1893), G. Battiscombe (1963) and J. R. Griffin (1987). The only scholar who has made a cursory and rather unsatisfactory incursion into the subject seems to have been W. A. Beek (1959).
- ⁴ Keble seems to have become familiar with the ideas of the *Analogy* during his earlier education at Fairford, well before his Oxford studies.
- ⁵ Although the sermons were published more than twenty years after their delivery, and may have been revised for publication, there is no real reason to doubt their substantial identity with the original text.
- ⁶ Froude may have been the first among the Tractarians to express this idea in writing, even though he owed it to Keble: 'These thoughts are indeed cast by Bishop Butler in a mould more immediately suited to the doubts of the Deist than a Christian: but by very slight alterations here and there of words obviously immaterial to the argument, it will be found that they apply with equal force, and carry equal satisfaction, to those who doubt how much they shall accept for revelation, as to those who doubt about accepting any at all' ('Essay' 83).
- ⁷ These words of Scripture were a banner for the Tractarians. Frederick Oakeley used the same text of St John, and gave it a similar interpretation (Oakeley, viii). Isaac Williams also quoted those words in his tracts on reserve, writing in *Tract* 87: 'the senses of Scripture are revealed only to good men' ((1840), 37; see also (1838), 36).
- ⁸ His ideas were in dramatic contrast with the atmosphere at the time in the Oriel common room, which, it was said, stank of logic.
- ⁹ He considered that right *ethos* was a fundamental characteristic of true poetry. Froude had mentioned to Newman Keble's intention of connecting in his lectures high *ethos* with poetical feeling (Froude to Newman, 11 August 1830, *LD*, II, 260).
- ¹⁰ Newman would, however, consider Keble's concept deficient as a general theory of knowledge: Keble achieved no more than a 'loving guess', no more than a 'practical certainty.'
- ¹¹ Stephen Prickett considers that Butler reinforced in Keble ideas which he had received first from Wordsworth (108). The results of the present study suggest, on the contrary, that Wordsworth and Coleridge only reinforced ideas which Keble had already elaborated from his reading of Butler. Keble said as much, and it is interesting to note how his concept of the role of imagination was already well developed in his review of Copleston's lectures on poetry. This appeared in the *British Critic* in 1814, three years before the publication of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (Keble, 'Praellectiones', 577-88). Keble's insistence on the

associational character of poetry seems to owe much to David Hartley, through the medium of Butler.

- ¹² Poetry in general, and sacred poetry in particular, to be successful in this respect should be the expression of the general tone and feeling of the poet (Keble, 'Sacred Poetry' 217, 219, 220).
- ¹³ He thought that the true merit of a poet does not consist in possessing sensibilities 'different or more intense than those of other people, but in the talent of awakening in their minds the particular feelings and emotions with which the various objects of his art are naturally associated' (Keble (1815), 225). Again, in Keble's view, poetry is not an adequate vehicle for instruction: the poet teaches by association, using sign and gesture not to impart religious doctrine but to describe the effect that those doctrines have upon the human heart and mind ('Praellectiones', 579, 586; 'Sacred Poetry', 221).
- ¹⁴ 'Anathemas', 117-18; 'Essay', 107.

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