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Vincent de Paul
in Nineteenth Century England:
Charles Lowder, the Society of the Holy Cross
and a Church in Crisis

by
Nicholas T. Groves

On February 28, 1855 a group of six Anglican priests met to found an organization they named The Society of the Holy Cross, hereafter SSC. The chief founder of the Society, Charles Lowder, described the ideas behind the foundation in these words:

It was so ordered also, by God's good Providence, that a society of priests had lately been founded in London, called the Society of the Holy Cross. Its objects are to deepen and strengthen the spiritual life of the clergy, to defend the faith of the Church, and then, among others, to carry on and aid Mission work both at home and abroad. The members of this Society, meeting together as they did for prayer and conference, were deeply impressed with the evils existing in the Church, and saw also, in the remedies adopted by St. Vincent de Paul, the hopes of lessening them.¹

Earlier in this account of the founding of the Society, Lowder emphasized that a concern for the condition of the poor was an equal motive:

The spiritual condition of the masses of our popula-

¹Charles Lowder. *Twenty-One Years in S. George's Mission. An Account of its Origin, Progress, and Works of Charity.* (London: Rivington, 1877), p.14. Hereafter Lowder. *Twenty-One Years.*

tion, the appalling vices which prevail in our large towns, and especially in the teeming districts of the metropolis, the increasing tendency of the people to mass together multiplying and intensifying the evil, and the unsatisfactory character of the attempts hitherto made to meet it, were enough to make men gladly profit by the experience of those who had successfully struggled against similar difficulties.²

Lowder felt that radical times demanded radical measures:

She (the Church) must assume a missionary character, and by religious association and a new adaptation of Catholic practice to the altered circumstances of the 19th century, and the peculiar wants of the English character, endeavor with fresh life and energy to stem the prevailing tide of sin and indifference.³

It was in his concern to meet the needs of the Church and a neglected part of that body that Charles Lowder appealed to the example and experience of a French seventeenth century priest, Vincent de Paul. The purpose of the essay to follow will be to examine how Charles Lowder and the second generation of the Oxford Movement in the Church of England understood and appropriated Vincent and the Congregation of the Mission for themselves. In order to provide a context for Lowder's use of Vincent, it will also be necessary to give some attention to the condition of the Church of England in the mid-Victorian period, and the various attempts being made then to prompt a reform of a body that many saw as lethargic at the least in meeting the spiritual and material needs of the

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

nation. It will be of particular importance to study the second generation of the Oxford Movement, since it was from this group that Lowder was to speak and work.

From my own study of Lowder and the Society of the Holy Cross which he helped to found, I believe that we can demonstrate that there were at work in the Church of England in the mid-nineteenth century individuals and organizations that were creating an ecclesiology⁴ that built an "option for the poor" into their basic understandings of the nature of the church, and in doing so reached back to certain Roman Catholic examples, such as Vincent de Paul. There was a conscious ecumenical dimension to their perceptions of Church, which was revolutionary in light of the strained ecclesiastical relationships of the time.

The Oxford Movement as a Response to a Church in Crisis

Charles Lowder's appreciation of Vincent de Paul was by no means unusual in Anglican circles where the Oxford Movement had influenced church people to look back to earlier ages and a more universal vision of Church. Thus in a work that antedates the beginning of the Oxford Movement by only four

⁴I am not using the term "ecclesiology" in this essay in its more technical sense: that is, as a formal written treatment on the nature of the Church, a *de Ecclesia*. Rather, I am indicating both a direction of thought and practice of a whole generation of clergy in the Oxford Movement, to which Lowder belonged. These were parish priests involved in a work where their understanding of the Church was challenged and developed in the force of circumstances as much if not more than by formal theology. I am continuing my own researches of this question of the "ecclesiology" of the second generation of the Oxford Movement.

years,⁵ Robert Southey has Thomas More ask in an imaginary colloquy:

Why then have you no Beguines, no Sisters of Charity? Why in the most needful, the most merciful form that charity can take, have you not followed the example of the French and the Netherlanders? No Vincent de Paul has been heard in your pulpits, no Louise le Gras has appeared among the daughters of Great Britain! Piety has found its way into your prisons, your hospitals are imploring it in vain.⁶

So speaks a sympathizer with those reform movements that will soon come to the Church of England. As a Romantic, Southey shared many of the perceptions and concerns that were to lead to the Oxford movement. These concerns were by no means exclusively churchly in an organizational sense, but were rooted in a sense (perhaps at times somewhat vaguely conceived) that the Church was the entire body of people -- laity and clergy, and that the Church of England as the particular home of the people was ill equipped as it was to meet the most pressing needs of its own. The crisis to which the Oxford Movement responded was a crisis in the entire fabric of a society undergoing rapid and dramatic social change.

Perhaps few contemporaries have described the situation of the Church of England in relation to the growing number of urban poor better than Priscilla Sellon, founder of the Angli-

⁵Robert Southey (1774-1843) *Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society*, 1829, Vol.II, p.317, quoted in A.M. Allchin. *The Silent Rebellion. Anglican Religious Communities 1845-1900*. (London: SCM Press, 1958), p.42. Most historians date the beginning of the Oxford Movement with John Keble's Assize Sermon of July 14, 1833. We shall discuss the importance of Keble's sermon later in this essay.

⁶*Ibid.*, p.42.

can Sisters of Mercy. Her words ring strong with both the spirit and actual work of St. Vincent:

There are some hearts who cannot live in luxury when our Lord lived in poverty, who cannot be idle when He went about doing good, who cannot but live for His poor when he told us that in ministering to them we minister unto Him -- some hearts who hate wealth and despise "respectability", which is a very strong idol in our country, and which word does not bear any Christian interpretation.⁷

The poor that Ms. Sellon was describing were the victims of an Industrial Revolution that had begun about 100 years earlier, and that had in that period altered both the physical and social landscape of England.⁸ One of the most important results of this change in the manner of the production of goods was an exodus of working people from rural areas. Populations of cities and other industrial centers increased dramatically, as did all the concomitant problems of urban expansion with which we are quite familiar in the later 20th century. Further contributing to the population of industrial areas were natural disasters in certain parts of the British Isles, especially the potato famine in Ireland in the mid-century. The end result of

⁷Quoted by R. Kenyon in "The Social Aspect of the Catholic Revival", p.387 in N.P. Williams and C. Harris, eds. *Northern Catholicism. Centenary Studies in the Oxford and Parallel Movements*. (London: SPCK, 1933). Lydia Sellon was one of the first women in the Church of England to revive the religious life, and was particularly involved in service to the poor. See T.J. Williams. *Priscilla Lydia Sellon, The Restorer after Three Centuries of the Religious Life in the English Church*. (London: SPCK, 1950).

⁸On the effects of the Industrial Revolution in changing an earlier, agricultural society see P. Laslett. *The World We Have Lost*. (London: Methuen, 1965).

massive population shifts and rapidly expanding industries was the type of urban world portrayed grippingly by Dickens and other novelists -- cities where the poor suffocated in coal smoke and huddled together in conditions of crowding that certainly rivaled, if they did not surpass, the worst of inner city neighborhoods in the 20th century United States.⁹

In large measure mid-Victorian government and society were not ready for such a challenge to the social and economic structure. It was a situation that in many ways has parallels with the much debated "crisis" in the seventeenth century France during the time of Vincent de Paul.¹⁰ Although Victorian England had few open revolutions such as the Fronde or the Thirty Years War, it barely escaped revolution in the early years of the nineteenth century. The Chartist movement encouraged such protests as led to the Peterloo Massacre and the specter of revolt continued for years to haunt respectable and "eminent" Victorians. Bertrand Russell reported that his

⁹There are many good studies of Victorian London. One that is based on extensive experience of life among the poor is Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People of London* (originally published in 1889) which is readily available in abridged form as A. Fried and R.M. Elman, eds. *Charles Booth's London. A Portrait of the Poor at the Turn of the Century, Drawn from His 'Life and Labour of the People in London'.* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968). See also A.D. Bell. *London in the Age of Dickens.* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967) and F. Sheppard. *London 1808-1870: The Infernal Wen.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), especially pp. xv-45, 345ff. Of London's growth in population, Sheppard says: "Yet as always, London continued to grow--not at the vulgar upstart rate of the new northern towns, but evenly and inexorably, never, in any one decade between 1801 and 1871, at less than 16 per cent and never at more than 21 per cent. And so by 1871 her population had reached the enormous figure of over three and a quarter million." (p. xviii).

¹⁰See: A.D. Lublinskaya. *French Absolutism: the crucial phase, 1620-1629.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968) and P.J. Coveney, ed. *France in Crisis, 1620-1675.* Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977).

grandfather, while lying on his deathbed in 1869, "heard a loud noise in the street and thought it was the revolution breaking out."¹¹ Much of the reform legislation that was passed by Parliament in the early and middle parts of the century was intended to pacify, if not always ameliorate the causes of social unrest.¹²

If the society as a whole was in poor condition to respond to such massive social change, the Church of England was in an even worse position to do so. The "Tory Party at prayer" as one wit named it, was slowly and rudely awakening from a kind of corporate slumber that had afflicted it in the eighteenth century. The reasons for the slumber are rather complex, but most historians of the eighteenth century British Church would agree that, with a few notable exceptions, the Church was not responsive to the needs of the majority of its people during this time. Its record in regard to the poor was particularly bad, and led to the success of John Wesley and other preachers of the Evangelical movement and Nonconformity.¹³ Many Church of England divines feared the disease of "enthusiasm" (as they called any kind of religious fervor), and saw it as the worst kind of ailment that could afflict the

¹¹W.E. Houghton. *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 54. See also the entirety of Houghton's discussion of "Fear of Revolution", pp. 54-58.

¹²See particularly for background on social conditions that led to legislation: G.M. Young. *Victorian England. Portrait of an Age*. (Oxford: Cumberlege, 1953), esp. pp.1-62; J.W. Dodds. *The Age of Paradox. A Biography of England 1841-1851*. (New York: Rinehart, 1952).

¹³On the Church of England in the eighteenth century see the differing views of J.H. Overton. *The English Church from the Accession of George I to the End of the Eighteenth Century*. (London: Macmillan, 1906); N. Sykes. *Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century*. (New York: Octagon Books, 1975); and W. Legg. *English Church Life from the Restoration to the Tractarian Movement*. (London: Longmans, 1914).

body ecclesiastic.¹⁴ Thus there was considerable reason for many concerned church people to fear, as Thomas Arnold expressed in 1832, that: "The Church as it now stands no human power can save."¹⁵ In such a contest it can come as no surprise that the Church of England and its clergy were not popular with the urban poor. The clergy themselves recognized this, as the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Howley, mentioned in response to a dead cat being thrown at his carriage: he was thankful that at least it was not a live one.¹⁶ There were few clergymen trained or inclined to meet the needs of the working classes. As in Vincent's France, any kind of regular or compulsory seminary training was uncommon. The chief requirement for ordination in most cases was to find a bishop willing to ordain, and there were many who did this without a great concern for objective standards of fitness.¹⁷

¹⁴For a discussion of Wesley in light of the question of enthusiasm see R.A. Knox, "A Profile of John Wesley", pp.422-458, *Enthusiasm. A Chapter in the History of Religion*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950).

¹⁵Thomas Arnold quoted in S.C. Carpenter. *Church and People, 1789-1899. A History of the Church of England from William Wilberforce to 'Lux Mundi'*. (London: SPCK, 1933), p. 62. Carpenter quotes from A.P. Stanley's 2 vol. *The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold*, the standard 19th Century biography.

¹⁶Quoted in D. Morse-Boycott. *They Shine Like Stars*. (London: Skeffington, n.d.), p.16, note 1. Morse-Boycott (who was himself a twentieth century slum priest) provides a full scale history of the Oxford Movement into the early twentieth century. Both its great strength and weakness as a work of historical research is its anecdotal quality. Much of his material seems to be drawn from a fund of "oral tradition" which would have been available to him at the time he was writing. But we have in his work no control over the reliability of his particular accounts, since there are no notes or source references. Hence although this is a work of considerable, and perhaps unique value, it needs to be used with caution.

¹⁷For the condition of the French clergy on the even of Vincent's initiatives see P. Broutin. *La réforme pastorale en France au XVIIe siècle; recherches sur la tradition pastorale en France après le Concile de Trente*. 2 vols. (Tournai: Desclée, 1956, I, pp.1-51. 2

There were three identifiable responses to this crisis condition in the Church of England according to historians of this period. Although distinct in many of their characteristics, they would in some instances overlap and be cross-fertilized by each other: the Evangelical movement, the emphasis on a renewed "national church" advocated by such clergy as Thomas Arnold (father of the poet and critic Matthew Arnold), and the Oxford Movement. Since in this study we are concerned with Charles Lowder (1820-1880) who is a second generation figure in the Oxford Movement, it is important that we understand how the movement related to other attempts to respond to a church and society in crisis. This is of particular necessity in regard to the Evangelicals, because the Evangelical approach to the Christian life was of fundamental significance for the Church of England in the nineteenth century. All three "movements" (if we wish to designate them as such) were responses to the basic question of how to revive a church that many of its members felt had degenerated into a complacency and worldliness that blinded it from seeing itself as an extension of the Incarnation of Christ at work in the world.

Perhaps the most concise description I have found of the different groups within the Church of England at this time is provided by Torben Christensen in his study of F.D. Maurice, an important Anglican clergyman and theologian of the mid-nineteenth century. As Christensen describes Church and reform:

Maurice had joined this Church at an extremely critical moment. In the heated debates, preceding the passing of the Reform Bill, it had become notorious as the stronghold of political reaction -- a staunch advocate of an England built upon the rights and privileges of the aristocracy as the ruling class. The ecclesiastical machinery was cumbrous, brimming with abuses, and completely inadequate to cope with the new problems of a rapidly

changing society. It was with good reason that the Church of England was regarded as a tottering building, a remnant of the past, doomed to downfall unless it was radically reformed and reshaped for the new pattern of society which was emerging.

The demand for Church reform was in the air. Some even expressed dissatisfaction within the Church itself. The Evangelicals felt that the main problem was to awaken the Church from its spiritual lethargy, the result of the baneful influence of the Latitudinarian Christianity of the Enlightenment. For decades and with increasing success they had worked for a spiritual regeneration of the Church and the nation. Now in the 1830's they were joined by the Tractarians under John Henry Newman's inspiring and powerful leadership. Although they had the same starting-point as the Evangelicals, the Tractarians reacted against Evangelical subjectivism and adherence to the Reformed tradition and stood up for the piety and Catholic tradition found in the great Caroline divines. By 1840, although few in number, they wielded a considerable influence. Not the least important result of the Tractarian movement was that their attacks constrained the previous liberal breadth of the Evangelicals and welded them together into a clearly-defined party which stood for Protestant and Biblical Christianity in sharp contrast to all "Romanizing" deviations.

However, besides these two dominating parties, there was also a small group of talented clergymen and scholars who were equally dissatisfied with the Evangelicals and the Tractarians. They desired a reform in which the Church would cast off the irksome strait-jacket of the orthodoxy of a bygone age and reformulate the message of the Bible in accordance with current scientific and philosophical insights. Although these men did not act as a group and were not as articulate as the Evangelicals and

Tractarians, we see here the characteristics of what was later to be known as the "Broad Church" movement.

Thus the 1830's was a time of great upheaval in the Church of England. The traditional groupings were giving way to be replaced by the three emergent parties which, in conflict and interaction, were to shape the Church and, with shifting emphasis, to set the pattern of its religious and theological debate for the rest of the century. Broadly speaking this was the situation of the Church when Maurice decided to devote his life to its service.¹⁸

The Oxford Movement itself is generally dated as beginning with the "Assize Sermon" of John Keble, delivered at St. Mary's Church in Oxford on July 14, 1833, and later published with the title *National Apostasy*.¹⁹ The particular "apostasy" that angered Keble was an attempt on the part of Parliament to abolish certain episcopal sees in the Church of Ireland. In his sermon he connected this with what he saw as a growing indifference to the church as a spiritual reality. For Keble the problem was that the state was treating the church not as an equal partner in a holy compact (the view of Eusebius and of many western medieval authors) but rather as a mere department in a bureaucracy, where bishops and other clergymen were functionaries who could be either eliminated from certain posts or moved from place to place. Keble criticized this kind of ecclesiastical civil service. To view the church in such

¹⁸Torben Christensen. *The Divine Order. A Study in F.D. Maurice's Theology*. (Leiden: Brill, 1973), pp.10-11.

¹⁹The text of this sermon is available in E.R. Fairweather, ed. *The Oxford Movement*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp.34-49.

a way, according to Keble, was to deny the essential nature of the Church as a heavenly reality, the Church as Keble presented it in his very popular cycle of hymns *The Christian Year*.²⁰ Much in the fashion of Wordsworth and other Romantic poets, Keble felt that there was a "childhood remembered" in the nature of the Church, however much the current institution had been forgetful of it. Rather than stress a wider variety of national church, the first generation of the Oxford Movement wanted to call the Church of England back to its patristic origins where fidelity to doctrine was an essential note of the Church Catholic. Theirs was from the first a rather pragmatic romanticism.²¹

²⁰Although begun in 1819, Keble only published these verses together as *The Christian Year* in 1827. By 1854, 108,000 copies of this work had been sold; by 1878, 265,000. See O. Chadwick. *The Victorian Church*. Part I. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp.66-68. On the relationship of the Oxford Movement to Romanticism see C.B. Tennyson. *Victorian Devotional Poetry. The Tractarian Mode*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981). In regard to the importance of an aesthetic impulse for the Oxford Movement, Tennyson writes:

From Newman's treatment in the Apologia it is clear that to him the forces behind the Oxford Movement were simultaneously literary (or, more properly, aesthetic) and religious, and, on the basis of sheer numbers cited, literary by a margin of two to one. But the key concepts are always intertwined and not distinguished as sources of influences.--p.16.

²¹Louis Weil in *Sacraments & Liturgy. The Outward Signs*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983) chapter 3, "Models for the Church" (pp.21-30), suggests that at times the nature of the Oxford Movement required of its authors a polemical stance (e.g. on the nature of apostolic succession) that boxed them into rigidity. While I believe there is some truth to this (for the first generation), this needs to be continually balanced by keeping in mind the very low esteem to which either episcopacy or ministry had fallen in the Church of England as a whole by 1825. Against this almost purely utilitarian view of the clergy, Pusey et al. did react with what I call "pragmatic romanticism". There is a vivid portrait of the general state of church and clergy in S.C. Carpenter. *Church and People, 1789-1889. A History of the Church of England*

This view of the Church set forth by the leaders of the first generation of the Oxford Movement was to serve as the foundation for a future understanding of the church in its relations to society in the second generation, and afterwards in the witness of such representatives as Charles Gore, Christian socialist and bishop, and William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury into a Second World War.²² What was a more conceptual understanding of the church for Keble and Newman was to turn into an active opposition to various practices of the church as institution as the Oxford Movement (what contemporaries call "Tractarian") entered mid-century. The ecclesiology of the first generation carried over into the second, and became more particularized in struggle. But the essential elements were the same: the recipe contained two basic ingredients, a consciously Patristic and Augustinian emphasis on the earthly church as an incarnation of a heavenly reality, and the view that under conditions of crisis a "faithful remnant" of that church can and must maintain the true faith even if large parts of hierarchy and people have

from *William Wilberforce to 'Lux Mundi'*. (London: SPCK, 1933), chapter 3, "The Necessity of Reform and the Case for Drastic Surgery," pp.49-67. Two excellent works which give the theological background for Keble's ecclesiology are: W.J.A.M. Beek. *John Keble's Literary and Religious Contribution to the Oxford Movement*. (Nijmegen: Centrale Drukkerij, 1959) and J.M. Leahy, O.S.M. *John Keble and his Concept of Tradition*. (Rome: Facultas Theologica Marianum, Dissertationes ad Lauream, 6, 1964). The parallels between the condition of the Church of England and its clergy on the eve of the Oxford Movement (1833) and the church and clergy in France at the time Vincent de Paul began his ministries are very striking, as Lowder himself realized.²²M. Reckitt. *Maurice to Temple*. (London: 1946); G.L. Prestige. *The Life of Charles Gore. A Great Englishman*. (London: Heinemann, 1935), especially p.10-11, which describe how Fr. Authur Stanton and the parish of St. Alban's, Holborn (London) influenced the young Gore.

apostatized.²³ It is not surprising that some students of this generation are impressed with the rigidity implied in much of this thinking; however it may be mixed with Romanticism.²⁴

These two emphases in their ecclesiology created a rather curious response of the Tractarians and their followers to the church as institution throughout the nineteenth century. A variety of ecclesiastical "civil disobedience" developed. While underlining and celebrating the authority and antiquity of bishops as a class, Tractarians could at the same time advocate disobedience and varieties of both passive and active

²³Besides works on Keble's ecclesiology listed in n.28, see G.H. Tavard. *The Quest for Catholicity. A Study in Anglicanism*. (New York: Herder, 1964), chapter 7, "The Oxford Movement", pp.148-178. As Tavard understands the crisis in the Church of England which produced the Oxford movement: "Yet the great crisis of the Oxford Movement did not arise from this institutional emphasis. It grew from the spiritual concerns of the Oxford men, or, more exactly, from the perception, first by some of the lesser men of the Movement, then by Newman himself, of a discrepancy between their spiritual conception of Catholicity and its institutional embodiment in Anglicanism."--p.161.

On the "faithful remnant" idea in medieval ecclesiology, there is an important discussion by B. Tierney. *Foundations of the Conciliar Theory. The Contribution of the Medieval Canonists from Gratian to the Great Schism*. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1955), pp.36-46. As Tierney observes:

"The Conciliarists were to treat the quality of indefectibility as a positive authority inhering in the Church which could be turned against even the Pope if necessary; the Decretists saw it rather as a kind of negative capacity in the Church, an inability to err simultaneously in all its parts."--p.46.

The influence of Conciliarist (15th century) thought on the original formulators of Anglican thought is discussed by Tavard. *Op. cit.*, chapters 1-3. Through the works of Richard Hooker and the Caroline Divines these ideas would have entered the mainstream of High Church ecclesiology as it would have been understood by Newman, Keble, and Pusey. See also G. Biemer. *Newman On Tradition*. (New York: Herder, 1967), pp.5-24, 36-48.

²⁴Notably and most recently, Louis Weil. See n.28.

resistance to the decrees of particular bishops. This was due in some part to the fact that the Church of England was a part of the State, established by law. Ecclesiastical matters would be tried in courts under the watchful eye of Parliament. Yet beyond the established nature of the Church there was a certain combativeness that Tractarians developed in their relations to the institution. Their particular ecclesiology, a curious blend of the ideal and the pragmatic, urged them into combats in an increasingly polarized and often self-contained Church. The second generation of the Oxford Movement would bring this crisis to a head.²⁵

The Second Generation of the Oxford Movement: The Revolution Continues

John Mason Neale, a priest who emphasized the Catholicity of the Church of England from his posts at Cambridge and in country parishes, was an individual who had great influence on many second generation clergy. He was a friend of Charles Lowder, and collaborated with him on a number of occasions, as we shall see later in this essay. In a poem he wrote he expressed both the idealism and the combativeness of the

²⁵The increasingly polemical and partisan nature of the Church of England in the middle of the 19th century is one central reason for the legal prosecutions of second generation Oxford Movement clergy for ritual practices. This polemicized nature of the Church is described by M.A. Crowther. *Church Embattled: Religious Controversy in Mid-Victorian England*. (Mamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1970), pp.23-28 particularly for ritualists; P.T. Marsh. *The Victorian Church in Decline. Archbishop Tait and the Church of England, 1868-1882*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1969).

second generation, a generation poised for battle in the cause of what many critics would see as mere externals:

Again shall long processions sweep
 through Lincoln's minster pile;
 Again shall banner, cross and cope
 gleam thro' the incensed aisle;

England of Saints! the peace will dawn,
 -- but not without the fight;
 So, come the contest when it may,
 And God defend the right.²⁶

The poem expresses some of the most important concerns of the second generation of the Oxford Movement. Historians generally describe this phase of the Oxford Movement as "ritualist".²⁷ In some ways this term is an unfortunate and inaccurate one in describing a remarkable and diverse group of individuals. The term has been applied, and has been useful because it calls to mind the very public and at times sensational struggles that occurred in the 1850's and 1860's (including several incidents in Lowder's churches) that arose over such

²⁶Quoted in *Ibid.*, p.111. On the life of Neale and his importance for the second generation, see: E.A. Towle. *John Mason Neale D.D. A Memoir*. (London: Longmans, 1906); A.G. Lough. *The Influence of John Mason Neale*. (London: SPCK, 1962). A prolific, if not exactly "eminent" Victorian, Neale was involved in founding and advising religious orders, doing original research on liturgy and history of the Eastern Church, founding the Cambridge-Camden Society for the study and promotion of church art and architecture, translating medieval Latin hymns, as well as being a parish priest.

²⁷Typical treatments are S.C. Carpenter. *Op. cit.*, chapter 9, pp.212-250, although he carefully delineates his designation; D. Bowen. *The Idea of the Victorian Church. A Study of the Church of England, 1833-1889*, chapter 3, pp.112-136; O. Chadwick. *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp.491-501; Vol.II, pp.308-327.

issues as the wearing of certain vestments, the use of candles on the altar, the eastward position of the officiant in celebrating the Eucharist. From our late twentieth-century perspective we may be tempted to see this as a tempest in an incense pot. Yet to approach it in this way would be to miss what was one of the distinguishing characteristics, and indeed one of the particular marks of genius of this generation. For these clergy of the second generation, some of whom even spent time in prison for these (to us) rather inoffensive practices, what was at stake in the Church of England was much more than ecclesiastical haberdashery.²⁸ Rather, it was a more fundamental understanding of the nature of the Church and its mission. Clothes make the person as the saying goes. For J.M. Neale and Charles Lowder and others, clothes are also seen as making the Church. Eucharistic vestments and other accessories said in a graphic and indisputable way that the Church of England was part of a universal Catholic Church that had historical and theological roots reaching far deeper than England itself.²⁹ These were fighting words and deeds for many in the Church of England at this time -- words and actions that denied the Protestant foundation of the Church which many believed was a priceless and essential heritage from the sixteenth century. As if circumstances of the time were to add insult to this traitorous injury, the Pope reestab-

²⁸A certain Arthur Tooth, vicar of St. James, Hatcham, in South London in 1877, was at the center of a storm of controversy. See: J. Coombs. *Judgement On Hatchman. The History of a Religious Struggle, 1877-1886*. (London: Faith Press, 1969).

²⁹On significance of vestments, etc., see L.E. Ellsworth. *Charles Lowder and the Ritualist Movement*. (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1982), pp.5-12. Hereafter Ellsworth.

lished the Roman hierarchy in England.³⁰ Coming as this did in tandem almost with the “defection” to Rome of John Henry Newman, who had been the Oxford Movement’s most public standard bearer, there was much reason for those with Protestant sympathies in the Church of England to have ecclesiastical, if not medical indigestion. To such prelates as Archbishop Tait, who was at one time Lowder’s superior in London, some cooks had been at work spoiling a perfectly good, if tepid, broth.

There are two basic reasons at least why ritual and points of architecture and ceremonial were so important to priests of this second generation. As we enter the period of the 1860s and 1870s, which is the period of the ritualist slum clergy of whom Lowder was a part, we are reaching a time when the Oxford Movement is moving out of the setting of universities and scattered country parishes and is entering the cities, where growing industrialism is the predominant fact of life. As the Oxford Movement comes to the cities, it becomes increasingly a “grass roots” phenomenon on the part of first clergy and members of the sisterhoods, and later of sectors of the laity. Thus one important reason for the emphasis on ritual and externals was that they made the Church and the church building itself appealing to many of the poor whose daily lives had little of the beautiful about them. Besides providing color and uplift in the somber settings of poverty, ritual and Catholic practices of devotion created bonds of real warmth

³⁰The date of the restoration of the Roman hierarchy is 1850. For treatments of this and of the Catholic Church in England at this time see: Chadwick. *Op. cit.*, Vol.1, pp.271-309; D. Holmes. *More Roman than Rome: English Catholicism in the Nineteenth Century*. (London: Burns & Oates, 1978); E.R. Norman. *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

and solidarity of the poor with each other and with their clergy in what had been until then a highly impersonal and moralizing Church. As Charles Lowder was to explain in *Twenty-One Years in S. George's Mission*:

It is also well known that the Ritual of S. Peter's is not a mere aesthetic embellishment, but the onward expression of a great reality. It exactly meets the wants of those who have been taught to value their Lord's Sacramental Presence; they rejoice to see His Throne made glorious, His priests ordering themselves as His representatives, and the whole arrangement of the service typical of its heavenly counterpart. The poor and uneducated are thus taught by the eye and ear, as well as by the understanding ... Surely those who know the trials and hardships of the working classes, the dreariness of their homes, the dark and cheerless surroundings of their work, and the few innocent pleasures which are within their reach, cannot deny them the gratification to be derived from the one bright spot in their neighborhood. . . .

The people love and glory in their Church. It is their home -- it is GOD'S, but it is also theirs -- and they feel a just pride in its adornment and in the improvement of its services; nay, the very attacks which have been made on the Ritual of other Churches only band them together more resolutely in its defense.³¹

For Lowder and his colleagues ritual and right doctrine went hand in hand, and the Catholic Faith as they saw it championed the poor in both their material and spiritual plight. That this was a reality in the lives of the people in some

³¹Lowder. *Twenty-One Years*, pp.163-165.

of these industrial parishes, and not just a fond dream of the clergy, can be seen by examining an incident from the parish of St. Alban's in the Holborn section of London, another one of the centers for ritualist activity. Assaulted by troubles connected with his use of certain ceremonial practices, the priest in charge, Alexander Mackonochie, was suspended by Bishop Tait. In response to this, a group of working men from the parish demanded a meeting with the bishop. In this meeting the men told the bishop that they wanted the Eucharist celebrated "as we have it at Saint Alban's," and went on to argue:

This is a working man's question; and when the working classes of this country become aware of the way in which their heritage in Church matters is being attacked, they will rise up, and the Church of England, as an established Church will fall. The working men themselves could cause the whole fabric to fall about your ears.³²

These would be bold words to address to a bishop under any conditions. Under the social and class distinctions of Victorian society where bishops were also nobility of the realm, they assume even more boldness. They attest to a certain achieved solidarity of clergy and people in some ritualist parishes. There was something about the vision of Church expressed in ritual that even such outspoken critics as Lord Shaftsbury realized could not be "put down".³³

³²This incident is quoted by B. Markwell. "The Anglican Left: Radical Social Reformers in the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church, 1846-1954." (University of Chicago Ph.D. dissertation, 1977), pp.79-80.

³³Dean Stanley of Westminster Abbey is reported to have said after his visit to St. Alban's, Holborn: "I saw three men in green, and you will find it difficult to put them down." Quoted in G.W.E. Russell. *Saint Alban the Martyr, Holborn.*--p.49.

Besides the understanding of ritual as expressing Incarnation and creating a solidarity with the poor, the second generation clergy often favored it because it was a prominent fashion of the times. Mid-Victorians were fascinated with almost anything that was medieval. A return to the golden age of the Church for them meant a return to the externals of the medieval Church, and the trappings of the Roman Catholic Church, seen as the medieval world's successor.³⁴ The concern of the second generation for the poor was to go far beyond questions of providing them with certain kinds of environment for worship. E.B. Pusey, one of the leaders of the Oxford Movement, and a recognized spiritual director of many clergy in the second generation, expressed himself on several occasions on the radical challenge that the poor presented to the Church. He felt that the Church of England had to fulfill a mission to them that it had too long neglected. He even went so far as to see the very essence of the Church itself (that rather ideal Church of Keble, Newman, et al.) as being contained in the lives of the poor. For Pusey, only as the present Church discovered and embraced those poor who were its essence could it be faithful in its search for a greater Catholicity:

The Church herself ought to debate upon remedies, and should not leave to individual effort the work of the whole. We need missions among the poor of our towns; organized bodies of clergy living among them; licensed

³⁴K. Clark. *The Gothic Revival. An Essay in the History of Taste.* (Pelican Book edition, 1962), especially chapters 7 and 8; M. Trappes-Lomax. *Pugin. A Medieval Victorian.* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1932); P.B. Stanton. *The Gothic Revival & American Church Architecture. An Episode in Taste, 1840-1856.* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1968), especially pp.3-29; J.F. White. *The Cambridge Movement. The Ecclesiologists and the Gothic Revival.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962).

preachers in the streets and lanes of our cities; brotherhoods, or guilds, which should replace socialism; or sisterhoods of mercy. We need clergy to penetrate our mines, to emigrate with our emigrants, to shift with our shifting population, to grapple with our manufacturing system as the Apostles did with the slave-system of the ancient world.³⁵

Pusey was in these words to give a blueprint to the clergy and sisters working in the slums, and to lead them to look to such examples of dedication to the poor as Vincent de Paul. Pusey openly criticized a Church and society grown complacent and respectable:

We will not limit our self-indulgence; and so in order to obtain it cheaply, we pare down the wages of our artisans. Those who have seen it, know that full often the very clothes we wear are, while they are made, moistened by the tears of the poor.³⁶

It was a question of basic Catholic Theology:

But if we would see Him (Christ) in His Sacraments we must also see Him where ever He has declared Himself to be, and especially in his poor. In them also He is 'with us' still. And so our Church has united mercy to His poor with this sacrament of His Body and Blood, and bade us, ere we approach to receive Him, to remember Him in His poor, that so, 'loving much', we, who are otherwise unworthy, may be 'much forgiven', we 'considering' Him in His 'poor and needy', may be partakers of His Heavenly. . . . Casual alms giving is not Christian charity.

³⁵E.B. Pusey. *The Councils of the Church*. (1857).

³⁶E.B. Pusey. *Parochial and Cathedral Sermons*. (1882), No. XXIX, quoted in Kenyon, Op. cit., p.377.

Rather seeing Christ in the poor. . . we must. . . seek them out as we would seek Christ, looking for a blessing from it, far greater than any they can gain from our alms. . . . The poor of Christ are the Church's special property. . . . The poor are the wealth, the dowry of the Church; they have a sacred character about them; they bring a blessing with them; for they are what Christ for our sake made Himself.³⁷

What Pusey preached, he practiced. A wealthy man himself, from the relative quiet of professorial life at Oxford he directed and encouraged others in work among the poor. He did everything from helping to found the various sisterhoods that were to give aid to the poor in many direct ways to providing spiritual counsel to such priests who worked in the slums as Lowder and Mackonochie. Perhaps his most well-known effort on behalf of the spiritual welfare of the poor was his foundation of St. Savior's in Leeds in 1845, seen by some scholars as the first of the slum parishes. He personally took the cholera-stricken to hospitals in London in the epidemic of 1867.³⁹ By both words and actions Pusey proclaimed a new era in the consciousness of the Church of England. As a student of the "Anglican Left", Bernard Markwell has observed:

During an era when poverty was all too often equated with sin, Pusey proclaimed the poor as a means of grace, a manifestation of the Incarnate God like unto the Sacraments of the Church. The boldness of his argument

³⁷E.B. Pusey quoted by O. Chadwick, ed. *The Mind of the Oxford Movement*. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1960), p.227. See citations as quoted in B. Markwell. Op. cit., p.59.

³⁸H.P. Liddon. Life II, pp.466-4898.

³⁹Markwell, Op. cit., p.62 and references given there.

is astonishing. He cites the favorite text of those who claim that social injustice is ordained of God, but sees in it a mysterious mercy that confounds their argument more profoundly than any rationalistic *explication de texte*. We must help the poor, not those with the means to help. His position undercuts any possibility of pride and self-satisfaction in the mind of the do gooder. His insights are truly revolutionary on a psychological level.⁴⁰

Charles Lowder, Vincent de Paul and the Society of the Holy Cross



Charles Lowder.

(Frontispiece in Marie M. Trench, *Charles Lowder. A Biography.* New York: Dutton, 1883.)

Charles Lowder, born in 1820, was one of those clergy in the second generation of the Oxford Movement who were to take these words of Pusey's to heart and use them as the foundation for ministry. The tremendous influence Pusey exerted on young clergy in the Church of England at this time has long

⁴⁰Ibid., p.60. The revolutionary nature of Pusey's thought on this question deserves further study.

been recognized, as well as his involvement in the establishing of sisterhoods which we mentioned earlier.⁴¹ A student at Exeter College in Oxford from 1840-1843, it is quite likely that he was aware of many of the issues Pusey was involved with, although we have no precise record that Lowder and Pusey knew each other.⁴² What we do know with certainty is that Lowder's first desire was for missionary work in New Zealand. Lowder's biographer writing in 1891, could see the intimate connection of this first "vocation" with his subject's later life work:

The zeal which he would so willingly have employed in foreign lands was, however, to be concentrated on the teeming thousands of his native land, and the large sympathies of his heart were to find their vent in the unattractive slums of the great Babylon of England⁴⁴

Finding that the salary he received at Axbridge was not sufficient to support himself and his parents, Lowder took a curacy at Tetbury in Gloucestershire, an area steeped in rural poverty.⁴⁵ From at least this early period in his life Lowder joined a desire to work with the poor with a conviction that the "Catholic" principles of the Oxford Movement represented the Church at its most authentic. That Lowder had made some conscious choices about his ministry with the poor from the very beginning seems evident from his own account of why he went from Tetbury to St. Barnabas in the Pimlico section of

⁴¹See the essays on "Dr. Pusey as a Confessor and Spiritual Director," by K. Denison and "Leader of the Anglo-Catholics?" by P.G. Cobb in P. Butler, ed. *Pusey Rediscovered*. (London: SPCK, 1983).

⁴²Charles Lowder. *Twenty-One Years*, pp.11-12. Ellsworth, Op. cit.

⁴³Ellsworth, pp.2-3; Lowder, pp.16-17.

⁴⁴Ellsworth, p.3.

⁴⁵Ibid.

London in 1851:

He (Lowder) felt that in his own parish he had reached the end of his tether: after nearly six years of parochial labor he could not induce his vicar to move further in advance, and S. Barnabas offered a most inviting field for more congenial work. Here the experiment of winning the poor to the Catholic faith by Catholic teaching and services was being successfully tried.⁴⁶

As we have seen earlier in this essay, ritual was for Lowder and other clergy who agreed with him an essential element in an incarnational theology. Thus, when Lowder refers in the above section to moving “further in advance”, he is describing his disquiet with the priest who was in charge at Tetbury. Lowder felt that Catholic practices, as he understood them, were not being carried far enough. Work among the poor, for Lowder, included promoting many ritual practices that were far from common in the Church of England at that time.

It was here in this conviction about ritual that Lowder was going to meet the strongest opposition. His fidelity to his ideas, as well as his own combative temperament, were to involve him in an incident at St. Barnabas that was both amusing and sad. This incident, in turn, was to lead him to the minor seminary at Yvetot in France, where he was to read Abelly’s *Vie de S. Vincent de Paul, Instituteur et premier supérieur général de la Congrégation de la Mission*, a book that

⁴⁶Lowder, p.14. It was towards the end of Lowder’s term at Tetbury that he wrote his first work, a pamphlet on Confession entitled *The Penitent’s Path*. As Ellsworth describes this treatise: “Urging general repentance, amendment and growth in grace, Lowder wrote specifically of Confession, of the sacraments as holding a greater and more certain blessing than individual prayer and study, and, above all, of the duty and privilege of receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist.” p.4.

became a veritable blueprint for Lowder in his future life and work. It is worth recounting the story of Lowder's exile in France because it shows us both Lowder's own tenacity in what he perceived to be his vocation, and the climate of opinion and opposition he was to encounter in various degrees throughout his ministry.

Lowder went to St. Barnabas both because of the opportunity presented to work with the poor and because of its advanced ritual practices. These practices (most of which would appear very mild today) were exciting opposition from individuals who felt that the Protestant character of the Church of England was being betrayed. The parish was in the forefront of the second generation of the Oxford Movement, and as such, was to become a target for anti-Tractarian feeling. Since the church of England was established by law, the election of churchwardens in a parish was a public event and could stir up a fair amount of interest. Such was the case at St. Barnabas when a certain Charles Westerton became a candidate for this position. Westerton was of strongly Protestant sympathies, and thus allied himself with the current bishop of London, Blomfield, who was himself then trying to limit the ritual practices at St. Barnabas. As one of the curates at the parish, Lowder was determined to help defeat someone he saw as anathema to his own cause. In his zeal to discredit Westerton, Lowder allowed (encouraged?) an eleven year old cousin of his to buy rotten eggs with which to dispatch one of Westerton's campaign workers. Far from harming Westerton, the blow struck became a rallying point for opponents of the Oxford Movement. The ultimate result, as far as Lowder was concerned, was that he was suspended for six months by the bishop. It was in this time that Lowder went to France and visited the Petit Séminaire in Yvetot in Normandy. It was there that he began to read Abelly's biography. At Lowder's departure *Punch* was to deliver a judgment on both the curate himself and the entire Tractarian movement: "as straws

thrown up show which way the wind blows, so eggs and stones flung at a man's head from the instigation of a Puseyite curate, indicate the animus of Tractarianism."⁴⁷

In attempting to understand the appeal of the Abelly biography to Lowder, it is important that we remember that there was a great fascination on the part of Pusey and second generation figures in the Oxford Movement with the French Catholic Church. Pusey himself met Bishop Dupanloup, one of the leaders at that time of that part of the French Church most open to accommodations with other Christians. One of Pusey's biographers describes the encounter of Pusey and Dupanloup thus: "One eminent theologian saluted him (Pusey) as a true brother; an archbishop (Dupanloup) introduced him to a somewhat startled subordinate as a fellow-Catholic."⁴⁸ In the area of moral theology, Pusey was important for the Church of England in adapting the work of Abbé Jean Joseph Gaume for Anglican confessors.⁴⁹ One of the final results of this interest of the Tractarians and their followers with the Church in France was to be the conversations in the latter years of the nineteenth century between the Vincentian priest Fernand Portal and the Anglo-Catholic leader Charles

⁴⁷*Punch* XXV (1854), p.197, quoted in Ellsworth, p.16. See the description of the entire incident as given by Lowder's first biographer in M. Trench. *Charles Lowder. A Biography*. (London: Kegan Paul, 1891), pp.57ff.

⁴⁸On Pusey and Dupanloup see H.R.T. Brandreth. *The Oecumenical Ideals of the Oxford Movement*. (London: SPCK, 1947), pp.46-48. The occasion of the meeting was Pusey's defense of his own work, the *Eirenicon* (1866) where he stated "in my conviction, there is no insurmountable obstacle to the union of the Roman, Greek and Anglican communions," (Brandreth, p.41). One result of Pusey's appeal was that Dupanloup and others urged that Anglicans should attend the forthcoming Vatican Council (Brandreth, pp.48ff.).

⁴⁹J.J. Gaume. *Advice for those who exercise the ministry of reconciliation, etc.* (London: J.Parker, 1878).

Viscount Halifax.⁵⁰ One of the most significant influences of French Catholicism on the Tractarians and their descendants was that of the religious orders and institutions which were discovered by Anglicans in their journeys to the continent. We shall be describing these later in some detail because of their relation to the origins of the Society of the Holy Cross. There was a strong, if frequently implicit, ecumenical consciousness that arose as there were more contacts between French Catholicism and other inheritors of the Oxford Movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Charles Lowder in his own way was to contribute to this consciousness.

When Lowder had to leave Yvetot, he had not finished the Abelly biography. He asked to have the book lent to him on his return to St. Barnabas. Fr. P.L. Labbé, the director of the Petit Seminaire, wrote to him on this occasion:

My Dear M. Lowder:

As you did not have the time while you were with us to finish reading the Life of St. Vincent de Paul, which seemed to interest you, I am taking the liberty of sending it to you, and I ask you to read it in memory of your friends at Yvetot, and still more in memory of the great saint whose life it tells.⁵¹

This letter of Pere Labbé represents as much a meeting of persons as it does one of minds. One of the reasons for Labbé's interest in Lowder was that Labbé himself had once lived in

⁵⁰A.T. Macmillan, ed. and trans. *Fernand Portal (1855-1926) Apostle of Unity*. (London: Macmillan, 1961).

⁵¹Letter quoted in Ellsworth, pp.19-20. Translation mine. See also account of Yvetot visit in Trench. *Charles Lowder*, pp.60-67. Lowder himself describes it in *Twenty-One Years*, pp.14-16.

England, where his father was an emigre.⁵² Thus, Lowder's response to the "loan" of Abelly says much about his own appreciation of the life and work of Vincent, and of how he saw his own Church in the light of the Church in France in the seventeenth century. Lowder saw a direct application to the Church and society in crisis in which he found himself. Vincent became a model to follow in response to that crisis:

No one can read this interesting Biography without the deepest interest, and the heart must be dull indeed which is not stirred with emotion at the self-denial and energy with which the Saint gave himself to the work to which he was called. The sad condition of the French Church and nation in the 16th Century, and the wonderful influence of the institutions founded by S. Vincent in reforming abuses and rekindling the zeal of the Priesthood, made a deep impression on the writer's mind. The wise mingling of means for relieving the spiritual and temporal wants of the people; the various associations of religious persons under the rules of different degrees of strictness, according to their several vocations, and the objects to which they were devoted; and the deep wisdom which sought out the root of so much evil, in the unspiritual lives of the Clergy, and provided means for its redress -- all this was well calculated to impress those

⁵²Trench, p.61. On the influence of French emigré Catholics on the Church of England, particularly the impact of emigré religious orders banished by the French Revolution, see R.W. Sockman. *The Revival of Conventual Life in the Church of England in the Nineteenth Century*. (Columbia Ph.D. Dissertation printed by W.D. Gray, New York, 1917), pp.25-37. Sockman sees these groups as in some ways preparing the Church of England for an acceptance of the religious life in its own midst later in the century.

who seriously reflected on the state of our own Church and people, and honestly sought for some remedy.⁵³

Lowder then goes on to describe the condition of the English people in the throes of an Industrial Revolution in the words we quoted earlier (see p. 1).

It appears from Lowder's reaction to Abelly that he had found a long desired source for his own plans to bring the Gospel as he understood it to the poor. His immediate response to the book lent on June 9, 1854, was to request further information from Labbé about the actual rule of the Congregation of the Mission. In a letter dated on October 17, Labbe writes in answer to Lowder:

My Dear Sir:

. . . I regret that I cannot give you the information that you desire on the Constitutions of the Priests of the Mission; I have never had them in my possession, and I am not sure even if they are available to the general public, and not having myself any relation with the Lazarists, I cannot inform you on this point.⁵⁴

There are certain things made clear by this all too brief but interesting letter, and certain intriguing questions that it raises. First, we have evidence of Lowder's strong desire to found in the Church of England some version of the religious life based directly on the Congregation of the Mission. Second, we have indication that Labbé and Yvetot were Lowder's initial point of contact with Vincent and seventeenth-century

⁵³Lowder. *Twenty-One Years*, pp.15-16.

⁵⁴French text given in Trench. *Charles Lowder*, p.6. Translation mine. Labbé ends his letter with a friendly but firm exhortation to his young friend to join the Roman Catholic Church.

French Catholicism. It is clear from the letter that Labbé was not himself a Vincentian, since he did not have the Common Rules, and that Yvetot was not formally related to the Vincen-tians. Beyond these certainties we have the questions: What knowledge could an Anglican priest such as Lowder obtain of the Lazarists and their practices? How could he get the information that he desired? We do not, alas, have clear answers to these questions at this stage in our knowledge.

What we do have, however, is some evidence from analogy to closely similar situations. There was much interest among the clergy and religious of the second generation of the Oxford Movement in the religious life as it was actually lived in France and Belgium in the nineteenth century. The interest was practical, an interest in using continental Roman Catholic forms of the religious life as models for Anglican foundations. Pusey had visited Ireland in the period around 1841 to collect contributions from Irish Catholic communities.⁵⁵ William J. Butler, vicar of Wantage and an acknowledged leader in the second generation, made a trip to France in 1867 to make a study of Jesuit practices. The account of his trip in Arthur J. Butler's biography is revealing of the receptiveness of the second generation to what continental Catholic communities had to offer to Anglicans in search of direction for their own

⁵⁵G. Rowell. *The Vision Glorious. Themes and Personalities of the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.93: The same year (1841) Pusey visited Roman Catholic communities in Ireland, having already received information from France about the constitu-tions of the Augustinian sisters and those of St. Vincent de Paul, a reminder of the influence of the French seventeenth-century orders on the revival of the religious life in Anglicanism.--Unfortunately, Rowell does not give a source for this statement.

religious communities:

I think it was about the year 1867 that he made a study, during his holiday, of some of the Jesuit houses in France. I can never forget his account of this tour on his return. He had done the thing thoroughly, like everything else. He had gone prepared for controversy, humbly secure that he was doing God's work at home, and that it was impossible that he could be called to sever his connection with those whom God had taught with and through him, but at the same time, with an open mind, ready to learn all that the sight of principles just reviving at home, but here in France habitually accepted, could teach him. Thus when his hosts, stimulated to their most eager and demonstrative efforts by the value of one who seemed a possible convert of the first rank, pressed him with a priori arguments for the Papal monarchy, he felt an almost amused pleasure in reminding them that the English were never logical, and strong in his conviction that their theoretical structure would not bear the test of historical fact, bade them grateful farewell, while they stretched after him eager hands, and kept repeating, "Soyez consequent, monsieur."⁵⁶

On his return to England, Butler "taught the Sisters of the value of a pause of some minutes after the Consecration and before Communion, during which special adoration might be offered to our Lord, present in His glorified humanity under the Sacramental veils."⁵⁷

⁵⁶A.J. Butler. *Life and Letters of William John Butler, Late Dean of Lincoln and Sometime Vicar of Wantage*. (London: Macmillan, 1897), pp.193-4.

⁵⁷Ibid., p.204

John Mason Neale, who from his studies at Cambridge became involved in the Catholic revival in the Church of England, was in contact with Charles Lowder at various times. At one point he had hoped to accompany Lowder in his enforced exile in France in 1855, at which point Lowder had visited Yvetot. Unable to do this, he did visit France on his own very shortly thereafter, at which time he visited the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.⁵⁸ Later when Neale drew up a rule for the sisterhood at Clewer he based it in large part on the institutions of Vincent for the Daughters, making part of his central idea for the community that it have "trained Sisters, ready to be sent out at the superior's discretion gratuitously to any Parish Priest within a circuit of (say) twenty-five miles, that may need their services in nursing any of his people."⁵⁹ In this context we need to stress that there was at this very time another group of Sisters which Charles Lowder himself had founded as the Community of the Holy Cross (1857), dedicated to work in Lowder's church, directed by Neale's sister, and also modeled on Vincent's Daughters of Charity.⁶⁰ Thus, we have the remarkable phenomenon of at least three religious communities -- Neale's sisterhood at Clewer, Lowder's sisterhood called the Community of the Holy Cross, and the Society of the Holy Cross -- founded in the Church of England within a three year period. Neale and Lowder worked at times separately and at times together to

⁵⁸Ellsworth, p.19, quoting a letter from Neale to Lowder; Rowley. Op. cit., p.111.

⁵⁹Neale quoted in Rowell, p.111. See also Lough. Op. cit., pp.52-70 for a discussion of the Society of St. Margaret which Neale helped found, and T.J. Williams. *The Park Village Sisterhood*. (London: SPCK, 1965), pp.15-16, 129-145 (on the Rule of that sisterhood).

⁶⁰Ellsworth, pp.34-35 for Community of the Holy Cross.

import consciously into the Church of England the ideals and the institutions of Vincent de Paul.

The Society of the Holy Cross: St. Vincent in Nineteenth Century England

At the present we do not have the kind of precise information about the founding of the Society of the Holy Cross which would enable us to answer specific questions about the degree and quality of influence from Vincent and the Congregation of the Mission. There does not exist for the SSC an *Exordium Parvum* or *Carta Caritatis* as for the Cistercians, or Vincent's *Common Rules* with its important introductory chapters for the Congregation of the Mission. What we do have are two accounts of the foundation -- Embry's in *The Catholic Movement and the Society of the Holy Cross* and Ellsworth's in his biography *Charles Lowder and the Ritualist Movement* -- which are based on examination of records that the Society itself holds. According to Ellsworth, who has most recently examined these documents, there are volumes of Minutes for the years 1855-1865.⁶¹ It seems to this present author that the examination of these Minutes and other relevant manuscript material and the preparation of an edition of these is a highly desirable if not necessary preliminary to other further original research into the Society of the Holy Cross and its activities.

⁶¹See *Ibid.*, p.214. He mentions a Volume of Minutes for 1855-60, Volume of Minutes for 1860-65, and "Volume of Acta, Addresses and other Papers 1866-79." These appear to be at the current address of the SSC in Kent (Ellsworth, "Acknowledgements.") Of the records of the parish, St. Peter's, London Docks, which was originally St. George's mission, Ellsworth has this to say: "The St. Peter's collection of material about Lowder and the early years of the parish is vast." p.211. He then lists over three pages of materials from there that he used in preparation of his book.

In the absence of such research we can study what Embry and Ellsworth have to tell us, but only make provisional conclusions. Yet even from evidence that is at least one remove from the original documents, profound influence from the ideas and plans of St. Vincent is evident.

Whether it was primarily from Lowder's reading of Abelly or from some copy of "Common Rules" of the Congregation that Lowder had managed to obtain, he had sufficient knowledge of the Vincentians so that in February of 1855 he, along with six other Anglican priests, founded the Society of the Holy Cross in close imitation of the Congregation of the Mission.⁶² In the founding of the Society Lowder could have had in mind the opening words of Abelly's work where he described the Church in France that Vincent was to revive:

The wisdom and the power of God in the conduct of his Church never appears more remarkable than when He sees the miseries which afflict it, and directs towards it his greatest mercies, and brings to advantage the losses which have plagued it, and shows his glory in its humiliations, and his abundance in its sterility: so that, following the words of the Prophet, when he seems to have left it for a little time, it is only to increase its reception of his mercy and love: when He turned away his face and seemed to have forgotten, it was only to fill her with new blessings, and to favor her with more particular graces.⁶³

⁶²Lowder. *Twenty-One Years*, p.16.

⁶³In preparing this study, I have used a nineteenth century edition of Abelly: *Vie de S. Vincent de Paul, Instituteur et premier supérieur général de la Congrégation de la Mission*. (Paris: Poussielgue-Rusand, 1854). Lowder gives no indication in any of the material that I have examined as to the particular edition of Abelly he used. This particular quote from Abelly is from I, p.13. Translation mine.

In the discussion of the Society of the Holy Cross and its work that is to follow, I shall attempt to indicate particular points where Charles Lowder deliberately followed Vincent's ideas and practices. I shall do this by noting places in Abelly's biography, and a few other sources, where there is direct parallel with the ideas and practices of Lowder and the Society of the Holy Cross. Since we lack certain knowledge of whether Lowder knew the Common Rules, we shall see what Abelly has to say because we know that Lowder was intimately acquainted with the biography. Thus our method in studying Lowder's use and understanding of Vincent will be to read Lowder and the SSC through the medium of Abelly.

It can be argued that in many senses the Society of the Holy Cross was the first successful form of religious life for men in the Church of England since the seventeenth century. It was not technically an "order" or "congregation" because there was not at the time of the foundation (1855) any provision for such in the Church of England. Also, Lowder and the other founders of the SSC were aware of much hostility and suspicion towards any practice that was seen as "Catholic".⁶⁴ This

⁶⁴On the first religious communities for men in the Church of England, see Sockman. *Op. cit.*, pp.183-204; P. Anson. *The Call of the Cloister. Religious Communities and kindred bodies in the Anglican Communion.* (London: SPCK, 1958), pp.29-181. There was organized opposition to convents of Roman Catholic women at this time, and religious orders had become a partisan issue for some in the Church of England. See W.L. Arnstein. *Protestant versus Catholic in Mid-Victorian England. Mr. Newdegate and the Nuns.* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1982). In 1852, an anonymous pamphleteer declared that inspection of convents by public authorities was not enough, but that the House of Commons ought "to demand the suppression of these dens of infamy." (Quoted in Arnstein, p.62.) This was barely three years before the founding of the SSC. The opposition to religious communities continued to be a fiery issue into the 1880s. It went hand in hand in most cases with opposition to certain ritual practices and ritualist parishes in the Church of England.

was especially true of religious communities. Nonetheless, in spite of the absence of any canonical precision, the essentials for religious life in the form of a Rule were provided for the first members of the Society. In this the vision of St. Vincent for his own Priests of the Mission was to be followed explicitly. Lowder was to adapt from Vincent and the Congregation of the Mission with an ingenuity and creativity that showed sensitivity, as well as compassion for the particular needs of the poor in Victorian England.

At its foundation, the objects for which the Society was to be established were these: "to resist the enemies of the Church and to spread the reign of Christ by (a) mutual sympathy and aid, (b) constant prayer, (c) counsel in difficulties, and (d) works of charity."⁶⁵ The Society was to be open to both ordinands and clergy, although it was expected that the clerical element would be the strongest. Two Rules were drawn up: The White Rule, for celibates only; and the Red Rule, for single and married. Later another Voluntary Rule, the Green Rule, was added. Although there were not formal vows as such, there were "promises" which were given:

After the recitation of the Office, the six made their promises, which were marked by simplicity and distinctness. The first was to observe solemnly the confidences of the Society; the second was a promise of faith and was simply the Nicene Creed; and the third concerned mutual help, both temporal and spiritual, after the manner of brotherhood.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Articles for the foundation of the SSC as quoted in Embry. *Op. cit.*, p.6

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p.3. Embry maintains that Pusey, who was for a time to be a member of the SSC, was consulted on the formulation of the Rules.

There were to be a Master, four Vicars, Secretary and Treasurer to be elected by the Society. As might have been expected, Charles Lowder was chosen as the first Master, and he celebrated the first Eucharist for the Society at its First Synod in the Church of All Saints, Margaret Street, London -- a parish which was to become a central place for Anglo-Catholicism for a century to come.⁶⁷ The Rules themselves were primarily concerned with shaping the spiritual lives of the individual members, and followed continental Roman Catholic models in the way they did this: "enjoining daily Holy Communion, extensive prayer, frequent self-examination, daily study and meditation, control of the senses, restraint in speech and recreation, abstinence and fasting."⁶⁸ Such practices among the clergy in the Church of England in the mid-nineteenth century were quite unusual, and they indicate the importance Lowder and companions placed on a renewal of the Church itself, and a particular emphasis on work among the poor as essential to this renewal ("to spread the reign of Christ . . . constant prayer . . . works of charity"). The two ends of the Society were connected with each other. The words of St. Vincent himself, as recorded by Abelly, may very well have served as Lowder's guide when he and the Society placed personal holiness of the priest at the beginning of an increased liveliness in the Church:

It seems, he said, that by the grace of God all the Rules of the Congregation of the Mission work to separate us from sin, and even to avoid imperfections, so as to bring about the salvation of souls, and to serve the Church and to give glory to God, so that whoever will observe them as

⁶⁷Ibid., p.11.

⁶⁸Ibid., p.21.

he ought to will separate himself from vices and sins, and will place himself in the state that God will ask of him, so that he will be useful to the Church and will give our Lord the glory that he waits for. . . . Our rules only prescribe what seems like a common enough life, and nonetheless they have what is needed for those who practice them to lead them to a high perfection; and not only that, but even to destroy sin and imperfection in others, since they would have first destroyed these in themselves. . . . If, by the mercy of God, the Company has accomplished any good in the Church by its missions and by the exercises for ordinands, isn't it because it has guarded the order and customs that God himself introduced within it and which are prescribed by these same rules?⁶⁹

Lowder may very well have known as well the words of Vincent about the danger bad priests pose to the Church:

The Church has no enemies so dangerous as the priests. . . . It is due to the priests that the heretics have flourished, that vice has gained its mastery, and that ignorance is so prevalent among the people. Is it not worth any sacrifice that you can make, Messieurs, to help to their reform, so that they may live in conformity with the greatness and dignity of their calling, and by this means the Church may be delivered from the contempt and desolation that has come upon her?⁷⁰

⁶⁹As reported in Abelly, p.216.

⁷⁰Conference of Vincent of May 6, 1658, as quoted in E.K. Sanders. *Vincent de Paul. Priest and Philanthropist, 1576-1660*. (London: Heath, Cranton and Ouseley, Ltd., n.d.), pp.51-52. We are uncertain at this stage of our knowledge of Lowder whether or not he had read directly in Vincent's works, or had read other material about him than Abelly. Certainly Abelly's

Besides the Rules of the Society of the Holy Cross which were intended to strengthen the spiritual lives of the members, the Society from its beginning undertook certain specific projects for the renewal of the clergy as a whole. One of these was the revival of clergy retreats. The original idea seems to have been to provide an Annual Retreat every July for the Society's own membership. But before long this plan developed into the giving of Conferences on set topics, silence, etc. One of the earliest retreat masters was Fr. R.M. Benson, who later on was to found one of the most well-known of Anglican religious orders for men -- the Society of St. John the Evangelist, generally known as the Cowley Fathers.⁷¹ At a time when formal seminary training in the Church of England was not the norm, the provision of these retreats was to be a means for increasing both the education and devotion of clergy.⁷² It is very possible that Lowder had become acquainted with Vincent's retreats for clergy from Abelly's biography.⁷³

biography abounds in statements attributed to Vincent about the state of the clergy of his time to the effect of *radix malorum malus sacerdos*. See for example: Vol.II, 3, section 5; Vol.I,2, section 25.

⁷¹Embry, pp.13-14. On the life and spirituality of Fr. Benson see besides Allchin (n.71): M. Smith, SSJE ed., *Benson of Cowley*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Cowley Publications, 1980); M.V. Woodgate. *Father Benson of Cowley*. (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1953), and A.M. Allchin's study of Benson's spirituality in the context of nineteenth century Anglicanism, *The Spirit and the Word. Two Studies in Nineteenth Century Anglican Theology*. (London: Faith Press, 1963).

⁷²On a notable reform of clerical education in the Church of England at this time, see W.O. Chadwick. *The Founding of Cuddesdon*. (Oxford: 1954). Cuddesdon also made considerable use of Roman Catholic devotional manuals, especially under H.P. Liddon's tenure there.

⁷³Abelly, Vol.I, chapters 2 and 3.

Another important contribution the Society wished to make to the benefit of the clergy and the Church at large was more complete instruction in moral theology, particularly in relation to the hearing of confessions. The restoration of confession as an essential spiritual discipline was a common concern of both Charles Lowder and of Vincent de Paul. Both saw an original general confession (covering the particulars of an individual's past life before a conversion experience) and continual use of that sacrament thereafter as part and parcel of missionary enterprise. But in order for confessions to be heard, there needed to be priests who had some form of instruction in hearing them. Such instruction was not to be found in the Church of England in the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed, the restoration of confession was one of the very worst abuses of the Oxford Movement in the view of its opponents. In the 1850s there were two instances at least where clergymen were disciplined and in one case denied faculties by bishops who strongly disapproved of this "Romish" practice.⁷⁴ The final result of the concern of the Society for education of clergy in moral theology was the book *The Priest in Absolution* intended as a guide for confessors.⁷⁵ Once again the Society found itself in the middle of one of the raging debates that were increasingly to characterize the religious climate of Victorian England. As Embry describes it:

In the House of Lords, in Convocation, at numerous meetings in London and the Provinces, in newspapers, from the acrid pens of Protestant pamphleteers, in the

⁷⁴There is a full discussion of the SSC and its efforts to restore confession in the Church of England in Embry, chapter 5. For prosecutions of priests urging confession, see Ellsworth. Op. cit., p.116-119, 151-152.

⁷⁵Ellsworth, pp.65 and 138-143.

committee-rooms of Anglican Societies, in drawing rooms, even to a cartoon in *Punch* -- The Priest in Absolution was the one thing everywhere spoken against.⁷⁶

Confession was also one of those things closest to the original vision of the Society of the Holy Cross. Throughout the later years of the century Lowder and his colleagues were to struggle for it, often against episcopal opposition.

In response to a city-wide revival held in London, in which Lowder's parish participated, Lowder had emphasized the practice of confession -- a practice which the Society of the Holy Cross had sought to establish. Again, episcopal reaction was anything but supportive, as confession was seen as just another ugly sign of a rampant and unmanly Romanism. In his reply to the bishop of London, Lowder bases his primary defense of the Sacrament of Penance on pastoral experience, not academic theology:

Again, my Lord, why should priests of great pastoral experience, and with parishes which demand their whole time and attention -- and for which they live and die -- devote so much of their time and toil to the hearing of confessions, unless they had tested the paramount importance of the practice by their own experience? Can it be supposed that they would willingly give up their work and plans of usefulness, allow their leisure to be continually interrupted by penitents seeking to make their confessions, sit for hours hearing the like sad story of sin and trouble, be continually perplexed by trying

⁷⁶Embry. *Op. cit.*, p.98. Also J. Bentley. *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain. The Attempt to Legislate for Belief.*

and difficult questions concerning the spiritual life. . . .

It seems surely reasonable to suppose that priests, who have borne the burden of this weighty ministry for years, are better witnesses of its influence, than those who have never touched it with one of their little fingers.⁷⁷

It is characteristic of Lowder, a born fighter, that this strongly reasonable plea would end with a barb of impudence. It is as much characteristic of Lowder, and other second generation clergy of the SSC that they would support Confession because it encouraged a personal relationship of the penitent with Christ, and with the priest. Again, the ritualism of the clergy of the second generation of the Oxford Movement was an individual and warm response to a Church and a society perceived to be cold and impersonal.⁷⁸

⁷⁷C.F. Lowder. *Sacramental Confession. Examined by Pastoral Experience. A Letter to the Right Rev. and Right Hon. The Lord Bishop of London.* (London: Rivingtons, 1874), pp.7-8. This entire pamphlet is well worth reading for the insight it provides into Lowder's understanding of the importance of confession. Also see Rowell. Op. cit., pp.134-138 for revivals and confession.

⁷⁸As Fr. Arthur Stanton of St. Alban's, Holborn, who was in the same ritualist evangelical movement as Lowder was to say:

Never be ashamed of the Blood of Christ. I know it is not the popular religion of the day. They will call it medievalism, but you know as well as possible that the whole Bible from cover to cover is incriminated, reddened, with the Blood of Christ. . . and the second thing is this: Let us remember that our religion is the religion of a personal Savior. It is not a system of ethics, it is not a scheme of philosophy, it is not a conclusion of science, but it is personal love to a personal living Savior--that is our religion! Why, you can hear the voice of Christ off the altar today at Mass, "Do this in remembrance of Me. 'You' and 'Me'."

E.F. Russell, ed. *Father Stanton's last sermons in S. Alban's, Holborn. 1916,* pp.312-13, quoted in Rowley, p.138.

A few words need to be given here to the matter of secrecy involved in the foundation of the SSC. As we mentioned earlier, one of the original "promises" made by someone joining the Society was "to observe solemnly the confidences of the Society." What did this signify? Probably we would translate it today as discretion. In other words, there was much reason for the very principles that the Society was promoting to be excuses for public persecution of the members. As Embry observes:

It would be no unfair assumption that, if it had been known that a few priests had assembled together, for prayer and conference, the action would have been misinterpreted and their proceedings, as a consequence, disturbed and their persons insulted.⁷⁹

There was no intention on the part of the founders to establish some sort of secret society -- rather a careful precaution against the very real partisan climate of the Church at large and the society as a whole.

Charles Lowder and Vincent de Paul both saw that mission work was at the heart of their communities. As Lowder and his companions took promises to "resist the enemies of the Church and to spread the reign of Christ" and to perform "works of Charity" they were responding to needs that Vincent de Paul had recognized as early as 1626, when initial work among the rural poor and the living of the priests together in community had begun. As Vincent outlined this work to Jane de Chantal in a letter in 1639:

And since you wish to know in what our little way of life consists, I shall therefore tell you, my very worthy

⁷⁹Embry. *Op. cit.*, p.4

Mother, that our little Company was founded to go from village to village at its own expense, to preach, catechise, and induce the poor people to make general confessions of their whole past lives; to strive to bring about settlements of quarrels, wherever we may find them, and to do all we possibly can that the sick poor may be helped corporally and spiritually by the Confraternity of Charity, composed of women who may wish to join it, and which we set up wherever we give a Mission.⁸⁰

Lowder was to follow these same ends in his own work and in the aims of the Society he founded. The chief difference in Lowder's approach to missionary work from Vincent's was that Lowder and the SSC wanted to reach primarily the industrial poor. The main reason for this was that poverty in centers of industry was the chief concern of most Victorian reformers. It was one of the most obvious results of a society and an economy that had grown too fast to provide for those who sustained that growth.

So it was that one of the first works of the Society after its foundation was to provide a *Manual for the Poor*, and a committee was set up to do this.⁸¹ We are not certain as to just what this manual was, but we do know that it may have been related to the publication of various tracts and pamphlets to encourage Catholic faith and practice among the poor.⁸²

⁸⁰St. Vincent de Paul to Jane Frances de Chantal, July 14, 1639 in J. Leonard, C.M., ed. *Letters of St. Vincent de Paul*. (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1937), p.96. See also the Acte d' Association of Vincent and his first companions (1626) given in Sanders. Op. cit., p.409-410.

⁸¹Embry. Op. cit., pp.21-23 for Lowder's desire to have the SSC establish a mission for the poor.

⁸²Ellsworth, p.21, quoting SSC minutes.

The primary missionary work of the Society of the Holy Cross was to be the actual founding and sustaining of missions in particular areas. The first of these and the one with which Charles Lowder was most involved was St. George's Mission in the parish of St. George's-in-the-East; later to become St. Peter's parish, London Docks. In a letter of January 1856, about a year after the founding of the SSC, Lowder asked the Society to establish a home mission among the poor as a part of the work of the Society. Clergy members were asked who would welcome such a venture in their parishes, and the parish of St. George's was offered for this trial effort. The original idea was not to found a place where the mission clergy would live, but rather to have church services in rooms of the parish church and give sermons. Handbills and posters were used to publicize the events.⁸³ Few places more desperate in terms of both material and spiritual poverty in nineteenth-century England could be found. This was a section of the city that was in the dock district. Most employment depended directly on the unloading of ship cargoes, the lodging and entertainment of sailors, and garment manufacturing industries. There was a large immigrant population, especially of Irish who had fled famine. The established Church, for the most part, had until this time neglected this area. The prime religious affiliation would seem to have been to "indifference".⁸⁴ The first reaction of some of the people the mission had come to serve was hostility. Perhaps these individuals felt fury at a Church which had so long neglected them, or perhaps

⁸³Ibid., p.22.

⁸⁴For a description in great detail of the area of the mission, see Ellsworth, chapter 5, "Vast and Neglected Populations", pp.26-32. Ellsworth bases his account on much of the intensive study that was done of social conditions in Victorian London (see pp.187-188 for his references).

they were provoked (and paid) by more respectable sorts who wanted the mission discredited. In any case, the response to one service was:

a violent opposition displayed itself on the part of the Irish who swarmed in the alley, and who on the first evening interrupted and almost frustrated all attempts at preaching by their clamor and violence, many dangerous missiles flying at our heads and frequent attacks on the door and ourselves overpowering our exhortations and prayers. This was continued with more or less energy for another fortnight, when we were left to fulfill our work in peace.⁸⁵

Lowder and his companions soon realized that this sort of mission was not going to work. It would need to have a more permanent character, and be sustained by a mission house. In his establishment of permanent missions, which could later become parishes, Lowder made a particularly imaginative adaptation of St. Vincent's work.

These permanent missions were to be the chief response of that part of the Oxford Movement who worked among the poor to the problem of poverty in both its material and spiritual dimensions. Hence the nickname "slum priest" given to these clergy. The basic idea behind the permanent

⁸⁵Lowder's account, quoted in Ellsworth, p.23. Disruptions of this sort were not uncommon in Victorian London. Very often someone with a grievance would buy beer for a crowd and then send the fueled mob forth against a particular person or event. See description in Ellsworth, pp.40-54, chapter 7, " 'Romanism' and Riots", especially the quote from a schoolboy in St. George's: "It's all a question of beer, sir, and what else they can get. We know them. They're blackguards, like ourselves here. Religion ain't anything more to them than it is to us. They gets paid for what they do--and they does it, like they'd do any other job."--p.53.

missions was to create a sustained attack on the conditions of poverty in a particular area, to saturate the area with what today we might call an "alternative lifestyle." This was to be done not so much by a direct opposition to the material causes of poverty (although in later generations of "slum priests" there was such explicit social action), as by pastoral involvement with individuals and families. The parish church and its various activities were to be alternatives -- in both their splendor and busyness -- to the depression of life surrounding it. Preaching and individual counseling, including confession, were to bring the clergy into contact with the people. While such styles of ministry may seem commonplace today, they were highly revolutionary in Victorian England, where the clergyman was primarily considered to be more of a public figure, and an example of erudition and exemplary family life.⁸⁶ The Society of the Holy Cross presented in place of this model of clergy one that was more European and Roman Catholic, and one that was influenced strongly by the ideas and example of Vincent de Paul.

The clergy were to live together in a mission house in the district in which they were working. Their life was to have a monastic ordering to it, based on the recitation of the Office and Eucharist. The day began with Prime at 7:00, and ended with Compline. Lowder recognized that the advantage of a mission house was that the priests could be at the disposal of those who needed them at all times.

⁸⁶Much work has been done in the last few years on the character of the Victorian Anglican clergy. Two studies of particular usefulness are: B. Colloms. *Victorian Country Parsons*. (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1977) and B. Heeney. *A Different Kind of Gentleman. Parish Clergy as Professional Men in Early and Mid-Victorian England*. (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1976).

The advantage of the Clergy being linked together in all the details of their daily life, and especially in prayer and constant intercourse, must be evident to all. The mutual sympathy and counsel, and the greater unanimity and consistency of purpose with which all are thus enabled to work together, make it most desirable to carry out, wherever practicable, this important feature of missionary organization. The Mission House was a center of operation, where someone of the Clergy might always be found; where friends interested in the work could at any time be received. . . and where plans could be discussed either generally at meals, or more formally in regular conclave.⁸⁷

The monastic ordering of the day, finishing the day's formal activities with Compline, did not in any way shut out those people who needed counsel:

Supper at 9:15, followed by Compline, when those who had finished their work retired to their rooms. It was desired that all should be in bed at 11:00 p.m., when the gas was put out; but of course in the case of the Clergy, much of whose work was late in the evening with those who could not come to them at any other time, it was impossible to form absolutely this rule.⁸⁸

Work in these parishes demanded a kind of total commitment that was hard to sustain. Lowder himself had to take periodic breaks for his physical and emotional health, although these were usually very brief. Life in the rectories was demanding, as an assistant to Lowder recalled.

⁸⁷Lowder, *Twenty-One Years.*, p.84.

⁸⁸Ibid., p.85.

Certain dinners meant sick headaches and agonies untold. Anyone was good enough to be our cook, and I shudder to think what we suffered in this respect. On one occasion I sent down my cup of cocoa to the cook with my compliments, and remarked that cockroaches were not the necessary ingredient of cocoa. The good woman thought I was very dainty.⁸⁹

Victorians of all social classes, including the poor, loved to join clubs. So it was a conscious part of the missionary work of Lowder and his clergy to create as many organizations as they felt were needful to attract people.⁹⁰ A special emphasis was placed on the youth. Even the liturgy, whose splendor was a main concern of these clergy, was tailored at different times to fit the needs of children:

On festivals there is a special celebration for the children. In this the very simplest music is employed, and hymns are sung at various points of the service, in which are set forth the Eucharistic mysteries, and the affections which it should draw forth. . . . The great point is to draw the affections of the young to holy things.⁹¹

The worship of the mission, the various club and guild activities, and counseling were to radiate out from the mission house, where the clergy led a life regulated by prayer and recollection. It is very likely that in his manner of organizing

⁸⁹Ellsworth. *Op. cit.*, p.70.

⁹⁰See all of chapters 7,8 and 10 in Lowder's *Twenty-One Years* for descriptions of the many parish organizations.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, p.106.

life at the mission house Lowder had been impressed by St. Vincent's words that "true missionaries ought to be like Carthusians at home and Apostles outside" as Abelly quotes.⁹² This is also, in more detail, the substance of Vincent's explanation of the importance of the mission house in his letter to Jane de Chantal:

We practice poverty and obedience, and we strive, with God's help, to live like Religious, although we are not Religious. We rise every morning at 4 o'clock, spend half an hour in dressing and making our beds, make an hour's mental prayer together in the church, and recite Prime, Terce, Sext, and None in common. . . . We then make another particular examen, and have supper afterwards, followed by another hour's recreation; when this is over, we go to church to make a general examination, night prayers, and a reading of the points of prayer for the following morning. This being finished, each one goes to his room, and retires to rest at nine o'clock.⁹³

The concern to "live like Religious, although we are not Religious" was a principle that Lowder and his own mission priests may have borrowed directly from St. Vincent. A careful reading of Abelly would have shown how important this foundation of priestly life was to Vincent: chapters 20-23 of Vol. I, book I discuss how Vincent worked to provide a contemplative community for his mission priests.⁹⁴

It was Lowder's hope that this type of Mission would "spread more widely", but circumstances were to provide

⁹²Abelly, *Op. cit.*, quoting Vincent, p.101.

⁹³Letter 383, to Jane de Chantal in Leonard, *Op. cit.*, pp.96-97.

⁹⁴Abelly. (Poussielgue-Rusand ed., 1854), pp.87-110.

otherwise.⁹⁵ Lowder's comments on the personal value of this life by rule in the clergy house show that he, very much like Vincent, saw common life of the mission clergy as a foundation for apostolate:

The writer has great reason to be thankful for the blessing of such a community life for himself and he believes that his brethren feel equally its advantages. Though no trial could be greater than the loss of those very near and dear to him, which twice befell the Mission, once in its early days, and again in 1868, yet nothing happily was strong enough to break the ties of friendship which subsisted between those who had lived and worked together. Separation was necessary, but not estrangement. And with respect to others, Clergy and Laity, who have lived and worked in the Mission, it is a comfort to know that many engaged in good works for the Church acknowledge the blessing which their life here has been to them, and that both in England and the Colonies they do not forget St. George's Mission.⁹⁶

To a man, these clergy saw their work and their ritual as of a missionary nature. That is, it was directed deliberately to appeal to the poor whom the more staid and somber Church of England services had left unaffected. Here is another occa-

⁹⁵Lowder. *Twenty-One Years*, p.86.

⁹⁶Ibid., p.87. Compare these words with those of Vincent as reported by Abelly.:

The paradise of communities is charity; and charity is the soul of the virtues, and it is humility which attracts and guards them; it is with humble companies as it is with valleys, which draw down to themselves all the waters of mountains; so that if we are empty of ourselves, God will fill us with himself, because he cannot suffer a void. (Translation mine.)--Abelly, p.95.

sion of a variety of solidarity with the poor. Seeing their daily lives as depressed in almost every conceivable way, clergy such as Lowder sought to provide some color, even excitement, and a vision of the Kingdom of Heaven. Confession, solemn Eucharists, and processions were to be combined with revival meetings and club activities. Few better explanations of this work and the reasons underlying it can be given than Lowder's, in a letter to Bishop Tait who was trying to forbid certain usages in Lowder's church:

Here, my Lord, are a few clergy undertaking a work of acknowledged importance and vast difficulty requiring self-denial, patience, faith, and hopefulness. They have been invited to a very providential manner, into a parish of which they had before known nothing but where there is a wide and unoccupied field for their labor. . . . To narrow our liberty in working out this system is to mutilate it in points which your Lordship may deem unimportant but which to us are most important; is to weaken and abridge where we so much need strength and elasticity; is to deprive those who have the work to do of that spring and energy which results from confidence in the truth and consistency of their teaching. To put it even on a lower ground, the Church permits us these ceremonies and outward expressions of devotion, and we find them a help to our devotion and that of our people, is it too much to claim from your Lordship and the world in general, that we should be allowed the comforts of them in our work, which requires us to give up other comforts, and that which we willingly resign in our homes we should enjoy in our churches?⁹⁷

⁹⁷The entire letter is quoted in Ellsworth. *Op. cit.*, pp.42-43.

The Works of Charity: Preaching, Visiting and Confession

The purpose for which Charles Lowder and his fellow priests established their mission at St. George's was that outlined in the first rules of the Society of the Holy Cross: "to spread the reign of Christ. . . constant prayer. . . works of charity." Lowder understood this as an attack on both the material and spiritual foundations of poverty. He did not intend that the Mission clergy themselves become directly involved in most cases in alleviating misery that came from want of food, education and employment. This day to day work was to be the province of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, a group of women whose rule was directly patterned after the Daughters of Charity. As Lowder describes their work:

The Sisters, then, are ladies who desire to devote their whole lives to God's service. In our case their work was Missionary; i.e., in the presence of the great spiritual destitution of large and populous parishes, they desired to aid the Parochial and Missionary Clergy in all works of mercy and charity to the bodies and souls of GOD's people which might fitly be entrusted to women.⁹⁸

Lowder had a very broad understanding of what these women could do. Besides administration of a House of Mercy for prostitutes, the Sisters visited the sick in workhouses and hospitals, provided food, ran a girls' Sunday School, supervised a "Parochial Nurse", ran a Hostel for the elderly, taught in the parish schools, as well as taking care of the sacristy

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⁹⁸Lowder. *Twenty-One Years*, pp.91-92.

duties.⁹⁹ This was a principle of Mission work that Lowder would have found described by Abelly (particularly chapters 23-24 of Vol. I, 1). Besides giving scope to the talents of many women, Lowder (as well as his friend and colleague in priesthood, J.M. Neale) found that the work of the Sisters left the mission priests free for what he saw was their most important ministry: preaching, parish visiting, and hearing confessions.

Lowder and other priests of the early Society of the Holy Cross believed that preaching was the beginning of a Mission, and in many ways the Mission's most direct contact with larger groups of people who had until then been neglected by the Church. The preaching that was to begin the Mission was to be of the simplest kind:

In the commencement of the Mission we used often to preach in the open air as a means of gaining the attention of those who could not be otherwise induced to harken to God's message. In quite early days sermons were preached from the steps of the Parish Church, so that those who would not come inside the Church itself might have this opportunity of hearing the Gospel truths.¹⁰⁰

On the whole, this type of preaching was at the time rather uncommon in the Church of England at large. It was more in the style of Methodists and Dissenters. As the century advanced, and as the institutional Church came to see how vast was the gulf separating it from the majority of England's industrial population, there were attempts to emulate this kind of simple, Gospel preaching. In fact, the bishop of London would even give his approval to a mass revival in

⁹⁹Ibid., pp.99-138.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p.62.

London in the 1870s -- provided, that is, that confession' was not to be included in it.¹⁰¹ In this, as well as in many of the methods of ministry to be adapted, reluctantly at times, by an established Church of England, the slum priests had pioneered. But the first reactions of people in the district of St. George's were none to friendly.

On one occasion, having made the attempt in a very bad quarter, the attack became so violent that we were obliged to beat a retreat; and it required some generalship and knowledge of the alleys and passages to bring off our forces, consisting of the choirboys and others who had been singing the hymns.¹⁰²

As we have seen, this response to the first sermons may have been prompted by a number of motives. Yet Lowder and his assistants continued in their efforts, and set up the Mission House to enable them to have a base in the area in which they were preaching, and to bring them into closer contact with the people of the district.

Besides preaching and liturgical services of the Mission, Lowder was willing to adapt different types of devotional services to the needs of his people. "He seemed to have a remarkable liturgical sense: liturgy of any kind had to be the work of the people", appealing to their lives and experiences as much as to their aesthetic sensibilities. It was from such conviction of the value of a particular kind of liturgical worship that he instituted the Way of the Cross as an outdoor procession. We can sense how Lowder viewed this devotion in

¹⁰¹See J. Kent. *Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism*. (London: Epworth, 1978), pp.262ff. 2

¹⁰²Lowder. *Twenty-One Years*, p.63.

the context of his congregation from such an account as this:

A more suitable spot, a square plot of vacant ground called the Ruins, was chosen for the sixth Station, "Jesus stripped of His garments", conveying lessons which it need scarcely be said were peculiarly applicable in such a district, where many a half-dressed woman and child was listening intently. "There will be no clothes in the kingdom of heaven," said Mr. Lowder, who like a second Wesley, appealed to his hearers to dress the soul rather than the body, and never to be absent from Church because of shabby clothes.¹⁰³

The devotion included the singing of such hymns as "O Paradise", "Soul of Jesus" and "Rock of Ages". Worship was for Lowder not only an appreciation of God in majesty, but an opportunity for intimacy towards a loving Savior on the part of the people. In this approach to both worship and preaching Lowder would have found support (if not direct inspiration) from Vincent as described by Abelly:

In speaking one day to the priests of the Mission House on this same subject, he said: "It is necessary that the Company give itself to God, so that it can explain by easy comparisons the truths of the Gospel when we work in the Missions. Let us then study so that we can mold our spirits to this method, imitating Our Lord himself who, as the Evangelist says, 'spoke to them without words.' Let us only sparingly use in our preaching passages from profane authors, and only in that case in order to underline the words of Scripture itself."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³Ibid., p.71.

¹⁰⁴Abelly, I,11,1 (p.254).

Such instructions would have been as startling for Victorian preachers used to the well-turned phrases of the classical Anglican pulpit as they were to seventeenth century French clergy used to the rhetorical heights of preaching in *le grand siècle*.

One of the most important, and time-consuming, works of the clergy in the Mission House was visitation of the people. Lowder took this work quite seriously, particularly when it involved the sick poor. Although the Sisters were of great help in this, it appears that the clergy themselves by no means avoided this part of the ministry, even when it involved considerable risk to health. In this respect the cholera epidemic of 1866 (one of several in Victorian England) was to be an occasion for Lowder and his Mission clergy to be especially effective. One of Lowder's assistants was A.H. Mackonochie (who was later to achieve some notoriety as priest in charge of St. Alban's, Holborn, London -- another important "slum parish"). He records these pastoral visits with eyes of compassion and detail:

Sunday, 2nd in Advent, Dec. 5. . . . Before tea I went to see the Trotmans on whom I had called yesterday. The two boys were ill of scarlet fever, the eldest daughter just recovering. The boys are in our choir. The youngest was ill first and is better. The elder was sickening last night. This afternoon I find him dangerously ill.

Monday, December 6. . . . Visited the Trotmans again. The eldest died this morning about 4:30. It is very sudden. They are very nice people.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵Mackonochie quoted in Ellsworth, p.48. on the cholera epidemic and the clergy, see *Ibid.*, chapter 9 and Lowder, pp.199-224.

What the Mission clergy lacked in material resources to aid the sick, they made up for in their care for the last moments of the lives of these victims of society. In this, they would have been faithful to the vision of the mission priest, as Abelly records it:

They (Vincent and his first companions) considered themselves as the least of all those who worked in the ministries of the Church, and assigned themselves only to serve in the meanest works, and to serve the lowest classes of people, the most abandoned and scorned according to the world's judgment; so as to instruct and catechise the poor, especially in the villages and in other more abandoned places; to assist, help, and aid the sick poor.¹⁰⁶

The care that the Mission priests gave to the sick in their district won them a fair amount of support from the official Church. Archbishop Tait of London even visited the cholera wards and preached in 1866.¹⁰⁷ One would hope that the fruits of charity would banish the suspicions of those in positions of authority, yet such was not to be the case, given the spiritual climate of Mid-Victorian England. If any issue were to enrage the establishment in the Church, it would be that of confession. Confession was to Lowder and his Mission clergy, as well as to the entire Society of the Holy Cross, essential to the work of the mission. As the Mission clergy prepared people for Confirmation and First Communion they recommended Confession. As Lowder explains it:

¹⁰⁶Abelly I,1,10 (p.87).

¹⁰⁷Ellsworth. *Op. cit.*, p.79.

When the soul is touched with contrition, and anxious to make her peace with GOD, we recommend Sacramental Confession, and have reason to be most thankful that this has been our practice from the beginning. With the many instances we could adduce of GOD's blessing abundantly poured out and constantly following his Holy Ordinance of the Church, we should have been unfaithful alike to our vows and to the souls committed to us, if we had ever allowed any outward opposition to wrest from our hands this most powerful weapon against the enemy of souls.¹⁰⁸

In this use of Confession, Lowder saw the personal complement to the more public work of the mission:

Although the Church throws herself upon the masses, she deals with each individual soul as if it alone were entitled to all her labour and all her love.¹⁰⁹

It is significant that St. Vincent himself saw Confession, particularly the "general confession" on one's past life, as essential to the work of the mission. Abelly records Vincent on the importance of this confession:

. . . to assist, help, and aid the sick poor; to urge the ones and the others to make a good general confession.¹¹⁰

Or, as Vincent himself describes it in his letter to Jane de Chantal: to induce the poor people to make general confession of their whole past lives.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸Lowder. *Twenty-One Years*, pp.48-49.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p.44. Lowder quoting H.P. Liddon.

¹¹⁰Abelly, p.88.

¹¹¹Leonard ed., p.96.

Conclusion: Charles Lowder's Vision of the Church

It is one of the sadnesses as well as the realities of history that so much of Lowder's life and ministry was to be consumed by the struggles that developed over ritual. His own life is perhaps the best record we could ask for as to what his view of the Church was. He continued in ministry at St. Peter's, London Docks, from the time in 1865, when it became a parish instead of St. George's Mission, until his death in 1880, at the age of 60. As Trench describes his work in her biography: "There is little to record of Father Lowder's work from this time, for in the eyes of men it was the same, year after year."¹¹² That is, the round of parish work -- missions, visitations, confessions, etc., we have described in the preceding pages. At one point (1874) Lowder wrote to his father: "I have been very tired, and unable to get through more than necessary work."¹¹³ Lowder died while on a holiday on the continent. His tombstone in London was to read: "In Pace/Charles Fuge Lowder/Priest, M.A./First Vicar Of/St. Peter's London Docks/Called Suddenly to Rest/At Zell Am See, Austria/Sep. 9, 1880 Aged 60 Years."¹¹⁴

In both many particular details and in basic understanding of the nature of mission work in parishes, Charles Lowder followed the example of Vincent de Paul. As we have indicated, we cannot be certain at the current state of research whether this influence came chiefly through a reading of Abelly or through knowledge somehow gained of the Common Rules and Constitutions. We have indicated in the preceding sections areas where Lowder could have found discussion of

¹¹²Trench, *Op. cit.*, p.299.

¹¹³*Ibid.*

¹¹⁴Quoted in Ellsworth. *Op. cit.*, p.168.

various aspects of the work of the mission and mission priests in Abelly, because we know that the biography had a profound effect on Lowder. It is also parallel between the condition of the Church in seventeenth century France and that of England in his own time. One of the greatest similarities was the widespread neglect of the poor -- be they rural or urban, in times of great social unrest and dislocation. Another was the condition of the clergy, so many of whom were immune to any type of evangelism for the poor because of the low level of their own spiritual lives, as well as inadequate training and education. As was the intention of Vincent, Lowder worked with the SSC to form a clergy more in the model of Christ. The question that remains at the end of this study is perhaps a more synthetic one -- in terms of his ideas about the clergy and his observations of the poor with whom he worked every day, what was Lowder's vision or understanding of the Church as a whole? How, if at all, could Lowder describe this Church?

As a parish priest active in a slum parish and as one intimately involved in the working of the SSC, Lowder had little time (nor probably the inclination) to outline a formal "ecclesiology". Thus, in trying to understand how Lowder viewed the Church we need to look at his comments in his work often made in passing. Yet although made in passing, or in describing a particular situation, they are valuable indications of Lowder's thought.

Lowder makes his own the words from a sermon preached on behalf of the Mission (St. George's) by Rev. H.P. Liddon. Liddon was one of the great preachers of the second generation of the Oxford Movement, the official biographer of Pusey (four volumes), a theologian of no mean reputation at the time, and Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Liddon spoke of the work of the Mission in these words:

Never while the Church has comprehended her mission had she affected to win souls by general measures which ignore the individual needs of each. The soul of

man is not a mere part of a machine, which moves because you set the machine in motion. It is a living force, a center of undying life. . . the Good Shepherd calleth His sheep by name. Individualizing work is a matter not of taste, but of necessity. A religion which does not attempt this may succeed in adding to the stories of the understanding; it can never win the heart. It may cover the wounds of society; it can never bind and heal.¹¹⁵

Liddon's conclusion from his observation of the work of St. George's Mission was that although it might not have significantly, or permanently, lessened the reality of poverty and crime in the area, it was by no means to be considered a failure:

It has not aimed beyond the mark of the Apostle. It has not attempted the mere civilization of the many; it has attempted the actual salvation of some.¹¹⁶

Lowder goes on after reporting Liddon's sermon to stress that "The great object, then, of all Missionary enterprise is the saving of souls. . . there is always great danger lest the Clergy, forgetting their proper vocation, should sink to the level of merely agreeable or humanizing members of society." (Lowder, pp. 46-47). These words of Liddon and Lowder need to be emphasized. In the context of the majority of the Church of England in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the "civilizing" mission of the Church was a very important one, whether at home or in the Empire. The code of a university-trained elite (Oxford-Cambridge), combined with the ethic of

¹¹⁵Liddon sermon quoted in Lowder, *Twenty-One Years*, p.44.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, p.45.

the "good sport" (Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's Schooldays*), often made of Christianity a Sunday version of that "respectability" which Lydia Sellon had denounced so strongly. Lowder and those who supported him and the SSC in their work had no time for such an acculturation of the Gospel.

If Lowder's great desire in his ministry from his very first missionary impulses through his service at St. Peter's, London Docks was to bring the Gospel to the poor -- rather than dress up the poor so they could hear a "respectable" version of that Gospel -- he combined this with an understanding of the Church that was what can be called one of service in all its aspects, from the care and visitation of the poorest and most ill in his neighborhood (always with the help of the Sisters -- the Community of the Holy Cross) to the celebration of the Solemn Eucharists. The purpose was the same, that some might be saved. There is here no calculated weighing of efforts, rather an all-out striving to be one with the poor so as to awaken them to Christ present in their weakest moments. The greatest illness of the institutional Church, for Lowder, was that it did not know its own sickness of spirit, but rather counted on its establishment and respectability. Very much in the spirit if not in the exact words of his contemporary and colleague Fr. Maconochie, the church "our Holy Mother, the Church of England" should be prayed for when praying for the sick.¹¹⁷

Lowder believed that the Church existed to serve, and that it should make efforts to improve the lives of people both spiritually and materially without counting the cost too carefully. As he observed when writing about the work of a

¹¹⁷I have not been able to trace the exact source of this quotation.

Working Men's Club in St. George's:

It has been conducted on Catholic principles without disguise; not that all the members are even Churchmen, but all understand what the principles of the club are and that the Church provides them with the social and intellectual advantages which they here enjoy (quoted in Ellsworth, p. 66.)¹¹⁸

These words were sufficient explanation of the Club for Lowder. Perhaps he would be impatient with those who wanted to "define" his perception of the Church more precisely than this. His instinct and impulse would be to want to get on with the work in his parish, and leave all assessments for later.

What assessments he did make were usually in terms of the effects of the Gospel on the lives of individual people he worked with, or in the reports he heard of others who carried on his work. Thus, he quotes the letter of one Rev. Linklater, who left St. George's to work with the Society of St. John the Evangelist (Cowley Fathers) in Boston:

I am called out to visit a dying man at the London Hospital. This poor old man, a lighterman, has lived a hard, wicked life. GOD has been wonderfully good to him; on his sick-bed He has brought him to repentance, a

¹¹⁸Note the similar comments on a mens' club made by Fr. Arthur Stanton of St. Alban's, Holborn:

When the question is asked "What good has the League (Postmen's League) done? Have you made the members High Church!" No! Talk as I will, I cannot get incense substituted for tobacco. My companions of ten years (the postmen), whom I cherish with the deepest affection; who have kept the life in me when Church dignitaries had all but turned my blood into vinegar and my heart into stone. Quoted in C.E. Osborne. *The Life of Father Dolling*. (London: Edward Arnold, 1903), p.18.

repentance; the big, strong man has come to GOD with the simplicity and love of a little child. This very morning I administered to him his first Communion; tonight he is dying, and I go to commend his soul to GOD. (Lowder, p. 189)¹¹⁹

Charles Lowder and the Society of the Holy Cross were to make this work with individuals as well as with particular groups the focus of ministry. The Church was discovered in the poor, as with the dying lighterman. In bringing the poor into a consciousness that they were living members of Christ's Church, the clergy of the SSC used means -- such as confession -- that often provoked the severest type of discipline from the bishops of their own Church, the Church of England. Yet this faithfulness to the integrity of their idea of mission was also a faithfulness to their understanding of Vincent de Paul. The chance event of a French book coming into the hands of an Anglican priest, and the meeting in that encounter of seventeenth century France and nineteenth century England, were events that were to carry the influence of St. Vincent de Paul far beyond any audience that the Bishop of Rodez would have imagined. In this there was a unique ecumenical meeting in what was a sharply defensive age. It was to be an example of Vincent at work in his efforts to "strive to bring about settlements of quarrels, wherever we may find them."¹²⁰

¹¹⁹Robert Linklater had been a teenager when he had met Lowder. His mother had first lent, and then given her house for Lowder's Mission in 1859. Young Linklater followed Lowder in the Priesthood, first spending a year in the Mission House. He worked in St. Agatha's Mission in London from 1869, later to be appointed to the parish of Holy Trinity, Stroud Green. (Osborne, p.64).

¹²⁰Vincent in Leonard ed., p.96.

*We shall never be richer than when we resemble Jesus Christ.
Saint Vincent de Paul*



*Good works are often spoiled because we go too fast.
Saint Vincent de Paul*



*True wisdom consists of following Providence step by step.
Saint Vincent de Paul*