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THE TRACTARIAN *PENNY POST*'S EARLY YEARS (1851–1852):

AN UPPER-CLASS EFFORT

“TO TRIUMPH IN THE *WORKING MAN'S HOME*”

by

Kellyanne Ure

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of English

Brigham Young University

December 2009

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Kellyanne Ure

This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

Date

Leslee Thorne-Murphy, Chair

Date

Nicholas A. Mason, Reader

Date

Steven C. Walker, Reader

Date

Daniel K. Muhlestein, Graduate Advisor

Date

Nicholas A. Mason, Associate Chair for
Graduate Studies

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Kellyanne Ure in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

Date

Leslee Thorne-Murphy
Chair, Graduate Committee

Accepted for the Department

Phillip A. Snyder
Graduate Coordinator

Accepted for the College

Joseph D. Parry
Associate Dean, College of Humanities

ABSTRACT

THE TRACTARIAN *PENNY POST*'S EARLY YEARS (1851–1852):

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Kellyanne Ure

Department of English

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The *Penny Post* (1851–1896), a religious working-class magazine, was published following a critical time for the Oxford Movement, a High Church movement in the Church of England. The Oxford Movement's ideas were leaving the academic atmosphere of Oxford and traveling throughout the local parishes, where the ideals of Tractarian teachings met the harsh realities of practice and the motivations and beliefs of the working-class parishioners. The upper-class paternalistic ideologies of the Oxford Movement were not reflected in the parishes, and the working-classes felt distanced from their place in religious worship. The *Penny Post* was published and written by Tractarian clergymen and followers to “triumph in the *Working Man's Home*,” attempting to convince a working-class audience that

the upper-class Tractarian clergymen and parishioners both understood and wanted to help the poorer peoples of society.

However, an analysis of the *Penny Post* reveals that its creators had more complex motives and were targeting a more diverse audience than they claimed. Because of these complexities, the *Penny Post*'s creators could not reconcile the discrepancies between working-class ideologies and upper-class ideologies; the *Penny Post*, in the end, undermined its own intended purposes. The elements of the magazine that attempted to address working-class concerns were overshadowed by other elements that, while appearing to address working-class concerns, directly targeted an upper-class audience. This dichotomy of purpose—simultaneously addressing different classes with different, often contradictory, beliefs—reveals the multifaceted nature of the *Penny Post*'s efforts to reach their audiences. The *Penny Post* is a magazine that simultaneously addresses an upper-class audience and a working-class audience, a duality that creates ideological contradictions and tensions throughout the magazine.

These tensions reflect the class issues within Victorian society and the ways religious movements dealt with those tensions in periodicals like the *Penny Post*. The *Penny Post* provides an important look into how the Oxford Movement, a movement not known for its understanding of and interest in the working classes, did attempt to reach and understand the working classes through periodical literature.

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Foreword

Since the 1950s, numerous scholars have pioneered a meandering path through countless archives, creating a way for future scholars to journey as they explore the great world of Victorian periodicals. This foreword is a summary of some of this scholarship, particularly those studies that have impacted my thesis methodologically, theoretically, and ideologically, as well as my reading of the *Penny Post* and its place in Victorian society. I will not focus on the content of the *Penny Post* itself; rather, I will explain everything which informs how my thesis has developed.

Methodological Concerns

The study of periodical literature poses many methodological and theoretical challenges, as scholars such as Lynn Pykett have pointed out: “Students of the periodical press have persistently confronted the double problem of defining the object of study, and devising an appropriate methodological framework within which to conduct that study” (3). Below, I examine the specific problems scholars have addressed, their solutions to those problems, and how I approach solving those problems in my own study.

Defining What to Study

The problem of defining the object of study is in part due to the value scholarship has (traditionally) placed on periodical literature, and the problem focuses on whether one should study the periodical press in general or focus on specific journals. Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff admit to the impossibility of the task of examining the entire periodical press because of its “sheer bulk and range,” which is “so unwieldy as to defy systematic and general study” (iii). Yet, this does not prevent scholars from attempting more general studies. For example, before Shattock and Wolff even voiced this concern, three scholars—Paul Murphy, R. K. Webb, and Louis James (*Fiction*)—explored working-class literature, including

periodical literature. The trend, however, seems to focus more on specific periodicals and, to use Shattock and Wolff's metaphor, see specific trees of the great forest of periodical studies.

However, these specifics cause problems of their own. As Kay Boardman reflected in her essay "Charting the Golden Stream?: Recent Works on Victorian Periodicals," there has been a " 'distorting effect' of modern indexes that tend, perhaps inadvertently, to direct readers to more highbrow [periodical] titles, and away from periodicals aimed at women, children, artisans, and particular religious audiences. . . . Scholarship on working-class periodicals is now coming into its own, while that on religious periodicals has been slow to follow" (515). The interest in religious periodicals has been intermittent over the past thirty years. Josef Altholz, in his historical study, *The Religious Press in Britain, 1760–1900*, provides an overview of religious periodicals; however, he focuses on "high-brow" titles and dismisses lesser known periodicals for more specific groups, such as working-class magazines. Recent efforts have focused on religious periodicals for women. For example, June Sturrock has considered the editorial character of Charlotte Mary Yonge's *Monthly Packet* (1851–1899), a magazine with Tractarian leanings for upper-class young women (see also Baggs; Jordan, Craig, and Antonia). There has also been an interest in periodicals for more "radical" religious groups, such as K. G. Valente's examination of the late-Victorian spiritualist press and Jeffrey Cox's recent reexamination of the nonconformist press. The efforts of these and other scholars have begun to correct the overall "distorting effect" in periodical studies; however, these studies themselves also contribute to distorting our understanding of religious periodicals. They show only a piece of the forest. Mary Carpenter, in her study of the women's religious press, observes that "commercial religious literature has been largely ignored in British studies: to put it in the more appropriate fiscal terms, it has been devalued" (Carpenter 150; see also Mountjoy, "The" 267). My project attempts to

show the value of studying religious working-class periodical literature by looking at a specific magazine and using it as a type of case study to show what similar religious working-class periodicals can offer scholarship.

Considering the Periodical Form

The second problem of methodological approaches to studying periodical literature is more complex than that of defining the object of study, in part because scholars themselves do not necessarily agree on what the problems are. Margaret Beetham has explained that the periodical is both open-ended and end-stopped: “it resists closure because it comes out over time and is, in that respect, serial rather than end-stopped. . . . Yet . . . each number of the periodical is a self-contained text and will contain sub-texts which are end-stopped or marked by closure. And each periodical positions its readers in terms which construct for that reader a recognisable self” (29). The periodical, then, is both a text that continues and one that ends; one that encourages different meanings and one that does not. For modern scholars, especially, these concerns with periodical form become problematic because we do not see or interpret periodicals in the serialized form that their original readers did (Beetham 23). This further complicates the way we occasionally see texts as products of authors (Beetham 26); instead, the periodical is a compilation of various authors’ and editors’ interests, making it difficult to find a central unity to a text (Beetham 24). However, Beetham still insists that a periodical has “a recognisable persona or identity” (29; see also Parker 2; James “The Trouble” 349; Murphy 2). At the same time, however, Laurel Brake and Julie Codell deny that there is a unifying aspect of a periodical and that periodicals “consist of individuals’ contributions patched together and fitted, very practically, to the space, readership, and politics of the structure of a single periodical issue” (1). Brake and

Codell represent another side of scholarship that denies the unifying “persona” of a periodical.

Despite the disagreement over whether periodicals have a distinctive “unifying” feature, scholars readily agree about the importance of studying periodicals as their own genre. Beetham makes the assumption in the arguments summarized above that the periodical is to be studied as a genre, and Brake and Codell, James, Parker, and numerous other scholars have made it clear that it is important to study the periodical as a run or as a whole (an issue or a volume), since removing any part of a periodical and examining it on its own disrupts the periodical’s form. Every piece of the periodical must be examined in relation to the other pieces that are with it. This, too, presents some methodological problems because of the complexity of a periodical run.

My approach to these methodological problems is to consider the interdisciplinary nature of periodicals. Pykett argues that periodicals are now seen (in scholarship) as *part of* the culture in which they were produced, instead of representing that culture or being produced by that culture (6–7). This is the approach that Fraser, Green, and Johnston take in their *Gender and the Victorian Periodical* (5). Pykett also emphasizes the importance of textual analysis when examining periodicals (16), and Mary Poovey, though speaking of literary study in general, suggests studying literature by examining the “historical deployments” of a text (what caused a text to be produced) and by determining the *functioning* of a text (to its readers) (344). My study of this magazine, then, is an approach that considers the various cultural contexts, including religious, social, and commercial, that surrounded the formation of the *Penny Post*, and how those cultural contexts influenced the way the *Penny Post* portrays class issues. To further address the challenges associated with periodicals as both open-ended and close-ended, I examine the *Penny Post* as a run, specifically a run of two volumes,

and I explore both open-ended texts and close-ended texts (serialized stories and stand-alone essays). Finally, the issue of whether the magazine has a unifying “identity” is central to my argument: the editors claim a distinct identity, but the texts I closely examine suggest otherwise.

Studying Readership and Audience

As the scholars noted above have brought out, any study of periodicals must consider the people associated with the production of the periodicals, and Beetham notes that the open-ended aspects of the periodical allow for the readers to create their own meaning (30). This, however, raises the question that many scholars attempt to answer: What *can* we say about the people who read periodicals (see Bennett 225)? The recent scholarly focus on readers and reading experiences has allowed us to examine this question in great detail. Scott Bennett offers this solution: “‘The People’ are identified not by a supposed ideological allegiance or social status but rather by demonstrable behavior: making a purchase in the mass market for reading matter,” making it more about “what ‘the People’ *did* rather than what they thought” (225, emphasis added; see also St. Clair and Eliot). Poovey goes beyond this idea by suggesting that it is how a text *functioned* to readers that should be the focus of analysis for literary scholars; in other words, how readers used a text based on the historical evidence (344). However, this approach is somewhat unsatisfactory, as Altick points out, and it fails to account for the many different things that affected readers and their reading experiences (3; see also Rose; Webb). Looking at what readers *did* is a valid way to approach the problem of understanding readers, yet it does not provide a complete picture of readers.

Another approach is to take what readers did and make assumptions about what they thought. Patricia Anderson, speaking of working-class illustrated magazines in particular,

suggests that “workers actively chose to buy pictorial magazines and, in doing so, consented to the values embodied in these publications; their consent was also a matter of choice and accorded with their individual and collective needs as an emergent class” (6). Patrick Scott also adopts this view in relation to religious periodicals, arguing that “subscription to a periodical, almost irrespective of its content-matter, served Victorians [*sic*] as a kind of religious self-identification” (328). Taking this idea a step further, Andrew King and John Plunkett, in their recent reader of periodical literature, consider the implications of “popularity,” which creates a “group cohesion through the labeling of an inferior other outside that group” (165). In other words, what people bought suggests a group identity. Most periodical scholars have adopted this approach of assuming certain things about readers based on the magazine’s content (though other approaches are often chosen because they are more appropriate for other purposes). However, this approach has its problems as well. Brian E. Maidment points out one cannot assume the entire ideological outlook of a reader who habitually read the morning paper on the train to work every day; perhaps a better way would be to consider trends within publishing to make generalizations more correct (“Victorian” 144).

The final approach that is of concern here is one related to the purposes of the magazine’s producers. Beetham combines the two approaches mentioned above: what readers bought suggests their *needs* and also implies authorial or editorial purpose: “Those who owned, edited, and wrote for the nineteenth-century periodical press had more power to define their world and ‘make their meanings stick’ than did their readers, whose most important power was the choice of whether to buy or not” (20). This also departs from other scholars’ suggestions that the meaning of texts to readers is unimportant or impossible to discover. Beetham argues that the very purpose of the periodical press was to create

meaning (20–21). This approach assumes the complexities of periodical production and relationships with readers but also does not deny the important aspect of all literature: what does it (or did it) mean?

I approach studying the *Penny Post* by acknowledging these complexities and combining elements from all of these approaches. Because of limited external evidence about the *Penny Post's* readership, I focus on the intentions of the editors and authors of the magazine and how they interpret the issues important to the Oxford Movement and understand their audience. My hope is that the historical and cultural context of what produced the *Penny Post* provides the needed evidence to address these important methodological concerns.

Class and Religious Contexts

As these religious and social contexts are critical to understanding the approach I have taken in analyzing this magazine, the remainder of this foreword will summarize the class and religious forces that affected the production of the *Penny Post*.

Unraveling Victorian Class Structure

Class was a very important element to the Victorians, and they were concerned with defining class hierarchies within classes, though even that “was not so tidily demarcated” (Picard 81). Does one define class by education, birthright, economic conditions, or something else? The classifications of class were fluid and changed readily throughout the nineteenth century. There is little consensus among scholars as to whether there was a defined “middle class” or a “working class” in the Victorian period. Anderson argues that “in considering the period 1830 to 1860, we find little evidence of a fully formed, unified working class” and that “in the mid-nineteenth century there was no specific, dominant, and cohesive middle-class culture” (6–7). However, both Louis James and Paul Murphy argue

that in the years leading up to the mid-century, the working classes had created a distinct cultural (and literary) identity (*Fiction* 1; 2). As many historians have concluded, the “classes” in Victorian society were based on social, economic, and political conditions, and the distinctions between classes were fluid because of these conditions as well as the changing culture of society throughout the nineteenth century (Thompson 131–132; Joyce 324; Cannadine 62). The Victorians themselves acknowledged the complexity of their class hierarchy, and the language they used to describe classes varied depending on their purposes and ideologies (Cannadine 61). In general, historians understand that Victorians did not think of a “middle class” or a “working class”; instead, there were “working classes” and “middle classes” (Thompson 131; Cannadine 59–60).

For my study, I have chosen to distinguish between the “upper classes” and the “working classes” simply because this is the distinction the magazine itself seems to make. As Murphy proposes, “Most periodicals of the day strongly reflected individual preferences and values. Because of this, class standings and values of the journalists behind these periodicals are crucial in determining whether a periodical is ‘working class’ or not. In many cases [the producers of periodicals] . . . were anonymous; all our evidence about their values lies wholly within the texts themselves” (30). For these reasons, I attempt to remain consistent to the way that the *Penny Post*’s authors and editors refer to class and the way the Tractarians appeared to have understood class. In particular, they seemed to comprehend a “working class,” which I refer to as “working classes” to remain consistent with scholars’ understanding. I also refer to “upper classes” because of the “us/them” assumptions of the magazine; this also parallels what scholars have suggested about the development of class consciousness (Cannadine 61). Of course, I also show the slipperiness of the terms the

magazine uses with its understanding of class, and this is an important aspect of my argument about the *Penny Post*.

Understanding the Oxford Movement

The Oxford Movement is just as complex as the Victorian class structure, and there is a similar scholarly avoidance of consensus surrounding even the basic people and ideas of this movement. However, below I provide a basic outline of the foundations of the movement and the opposition to it, which led, in part, to the formation of periodicals like the *Penny Post*.

The Oxford Movement “began” in about 1833 with a sermon by John Keble, “National Apostasy,” which attacked Parliament for attempting to do away with the official status of the Anglican Church of Ireland. Following this, he and several others, including John Henry Newman and Edward Pusey, published the 90 famous *Tracts for the Times*. These tracts, written for clergymen and laymen, described how the Church of England could address various “weaknesses” in its theology and practice.

As a High Church movement, the Oxford Movement was a conservative force that defined itself in opposition to other groups within the church, including the Low Church (evangelicalism) and Broad Church (“liberal” Protestantism) movements. The High Church movement in the Church of England traces its genealogy to the sixteenth century, with the Archbishop William Laud being a key figure of how the High Church developed. The Oxford Movement was an attempt to restore the church to the ideals established during this “medieval” period, which held the pure church as established by the original twelve apostles. The Tractarians traced their authority not to scripture, as some other Anglican movements did, but to the primitive church and apostles. The Tractarians emphasized the importance of ritual practices in the church and the importance of the physical state of the church, from a

more formal dress to ornate architecture, all of which have symbolic meaning in worship. They attempted to restore the “pure” church that met all the needs of its parishioners, spiritually, physically, and aesthetically. Another important element of the movement, suggested by Keble’s founding sermon, was the way Tractarians attempted to define the church independent of the government and state policy.

Many Victorians saw the Oxford Movement as a “Popish” movement, and it was largely condemned because of its alignments with the Roman Catholic Church. These things were only verified when Newman converted to Catholicism in 1845 and published the famous Tract 90, which suggests that the Thirty-Nine Articles do not necessarily disagree with basic Roman Catholic doctrines. Much of the discussion and literature surrounding the Oxford Movement attempted to defend the ideals of the Oxford Movement against the Low and Broad church movements and Newman’s claims to Roman Catholicism. As I argue, the *Penny Post* emerges from these ideas and from the desire to teach working-class parishioners the ideals of the Oxford Movement (see Herring, *What Was*; Mayor; Elliott-Binns, Reed).

Introduction: The Tractarian *Penny Post*

The Oxford Movement, primarily known as an upper-class movement emphasizing ritual and apostolic authority, found itself in a pivotal position in 1845, when John Henry Newman converted to Roman Catholicism. Though some scholars have suggested that the movement “ended” at this time, other scholars argue that the Oxford Movement broadened beyond the scholastic environment of Oxford and positioned itself more firmly in Victorian society in the years immediately before and long after Newman’s conversion. In particular, the mostly upper-class Tractarians made impressive efforts to understand and reach the poorer, working classes of society. George Herring, who has studied the Oxford Movement extensively, observes that “it was mainly a small army of largely known parochial clergy who laboured to realize that vision of Anglicanism that Newman and his friends first conceived in Oxford” (What Was 3). These clergymen applied Tractarian ideas to parish life, particularly between 1830 and 1870 (75–76). Other scholars, such as John Reed, point out the efforts of Anglo-Catholic clergymen in the slums of East London during the middle of the century (148; see also Mayor 43), and L. E. Elliot-Binns has examined how Tractarian print media flourished after the initial 90 tracts were published, attempting to extend the ideas of the Oxford Movement to a broader audience (332; see also Mayor 31).

These efforts were in partial response to the teachings of John Keble and Newman, who both had a particular interest in the relationship between the upper and working classes (Rowlands 29). Though it is unclear whether the Tractarians had a clear “policy” concerning working-class parishioners, Keble, in particular,

did not see the toil of the poor man as an utilitarian exercise in merely tilling the land and gaining his daily livelihood. Keble asked his parishioners,

“He that is poorest and lives hardest among you, has he not many spare hours in every week, which he is too apt to fill up with idleness or mischief? Has he not, even when he is doing his work, leisure to think on what he has read and heard of the promises and threatenings of God, of the state and hopes of man, of the forgiveness of sins, of death, judgment, heaven and hell?” (Rowlands 30–31)

Keble felt that the life of the working classes was particularly well suited to understanding and living true religion. The Tractarians were unafraid to put forth the “missionary zeal” necessary to instruct and persuade the working classes (Strong 441).

However, as Tractarians developed and disseminated their beliefs, they encountered obstacles because their religious ideals were not always reflected in practice, or because they contradicted important class-based beliefs, alienating working-class parishioners. For example, despite sermons by Keble and Newman and efforts by other Tractarian clergymen to teach otherwise, there was a certain “respectability” associated with religious worship, suggesting that only the well-to-do were privileged or worthy enough to attend religious services (Herring, *What Was* 84). This, in turn, alienated many poorer parishioners because some clergymen focused on the wealthier parishioners (Herring, *What Was* 84; see also Mayor 43). A notorious example of this is the renting of pews, which separated the working classes from the upper classes (Herring, *What Was* 120). The 1851 religious census provides further insight into the disparity between classes. Horace Mann, the Anglican barrister who wrote the report on the census, estimated that of the about 12.5 million *potential* worshippers (excluding the elderly, children, the invalid, and others who could not attend worship services), about 5.3 million chose not to attend church services (qtd. in *English* 78). Mann further comments that “the masses of our working population . . . are never or but seldom

seen in our religious congregations” (qtd. in English 79). He suggests the main reasons why the working classes did not attend church regularly were because of the social divisions between the working classes and upper classes (McLeod 13–14). Though the census took place after the initial efforts of Tractarians, they seemed to anticipate the results of the census, seeing a critical need to show the working classes that religious worship superseded social divisions.

Tractarian clergymen and their followers attempted to address these and other problems through producing and distributing periodical literature that tried to reconcile and alleviate the alienation of the working classes. Of this process, Altholz argues that, “written in a condescendingly preachy style, bought in bulk by their ‘betters’ for free distribution, these publications were unlikely to effect any real contact with their readers’ minds” (136; see also Webb 27–28). Instead, scholars argue that the working classes created their own religious (and secular) cultures and literature separate from and (in some cases) in opposition to these upper-class efforts. E. P. Thompson speaks of “class consciousness” in terms of relationships: the “working class” is such because it defined itself separate from something else (the upper class) (132–133). Jonathan Rose argues that the “primary objective” of the “masses” was “intellectual independence,” and the working classes “resisted ideologies imposed from above in order to discover for themselves the word of God, standards of beauty, philosophical truth, the definition of a just society” (12–13). R. K. Webb, focusing on the way the middle and upper classes bombarded the working classes with literary propaganda in the 1830s and 1840s, suggests that “the working classes generally were to hammer out their own society, their own culture, and not to take it by impregnation or battering from above” (162). Thompson, Rose, and Webb focus more on the general cultural development of the working classes. Paul Murphy focuses on (mainly secular)

periodical literature and suggests that there were “several ways in which the working class created its own literary aesthetic” through that literature (2). The wealth of research on this subject tends to dismiss most religious working-class periodicals because these magazines, as some argue, did not succeed at affecting the working classes and also at times complicate scholars’ arguments about the rise of working-class culture. However, these scholars tend to ignore what these periodicals can reveal about how the upper classes understood, tried to relate to, attempted to persuade, and responded to the working classes as the classes dealt with a continually shifting societal structure.

The *Penny Post* (1851–1896) is such a periodical that provides a glimpse into how the upper classes used literature in an effort to reach and respond to a group of people alienated from, disregarded by, and often ignored by portions of society. The *Penny Post*, produced by Tractarian followers and clergymen, claims to be one attempt to solve these class problems and address the concerns of the working classes. However, even contemporary reviewers felt the *Penny Post* failed to adequately address these concerns. For example, one reviewer in the *English Review* (1852), after a several-page attack on the “Romanizing” aspects of the Oxford Movement, declares that the *Penny Post* does not understand the “intellectual and spiritual” needs of its working-class audience (“Notices of” 192). The “failure” of the *Penny Post* (and other such magazines) could be that the upper-class writers and editors of the magazine simply did not understand the working classes, and their notorious means of “talking down” to the working classes, as I mention above, added to their challenges. It should be kept in mind, however, that the *English Review* was an Evangelical magazine and the rivalry between the different groups within the Church of England was reflected in these groups’ efforts to appeal to the working classes (Altholz 141). I will argue that this reviewer’s and scholarship’s

general neglect of the *Penny Post* prevents them from seeing how ideologically complex this magazine is.

An analysis of the *Penny Post* shows how its creators understood the concerns of the working classes and attempted to provide solutions to those problems while also remaining true to Tractarian upper-class beliefs. However, as I will argue, the creators of the *Penny Post*, ultimately, could not reconcile the discrepancies between working-class ideologies and upper-class ideologies; the *Penny Post*, in the end, undermined its own intended purposes, though this does not suggest failure. The elements of the magazine that attempted to address working-class concerns are overshadowed by other elements that, while appearing to address working-class concerns, directly targeted an upper-class audience. This dichotomy of purpose—simultaneously addressing different classes with different, often contradictory, beliefs—reveals the multifaceted nature of the *Penny Post*'s efforts to successfully reach their audience. Ultimately, I will show that the audience of the *Penny Post* was more complex and socially diverse than its editors claimed.

I will focus on the first two volumes of the *Penny Post* (1851–1852) because they introduce the ideological foundations of the magazine and most clearly embody the complexities and contradictions of its purposes. After these first years, the targeted audience of the magazine changes; by 1854 the size of the *Penny Post* increases, and it becomes an illustrated magazine with the added subtitle: “An Illustrated Magazine for All Readers.” The 1853 volume also includes more secular literature (to appeal to more readers, the preface reveals). The first two years of the *Penny Post* introduce why the magazine made these changes, and, as I will show, those reasons include the contradictions the dual audience of the first two volumes created.

A study of the *Penny Post* reveals that most of scholarship's neglect of such periodicals is perhaps premature, and I will show that this magazine can bring insight into how the upper classes attempted to respond to the ideological and practical differences between the classes. Recently, there has been scholarly interest in how the ideas of the Oxford Movement impacted authors and literature produced during the Victorian period (see Knight and Mason). As mentioned above, there is a continuing interest in the relationship between the working classes and the upper classes; however, few studies have examined how class issues are addressed in Oxford Movement literature. The *Penny Post* and similar periodicals show us how the upper classes understood and responded to questions of religious belief and class issues as expressed by the working classes. Though these magazines may not have been judged "successful" by scholarship's standards, they provide an important glimpse into how class and religious culture interacted in a complex and dynamic genre. Studying these magazines provides a compelling way to better understand how periodical literature was used to achieve religious and social ends.

To understand how the *Penny Post* presented itself as part of the solution to the class-based challenges the Oxford Movement faced, I will begin by outlining what the *Penny Post's* creators saw as the purposes of the magazine and how they expected their magazine to function among their intended audience. I will also examine external data that reveal how the *Penny Post* fared in a complex periodical market, especially in relation to what this data shows about the magazine's audience. I will next demonstrate how the literature of the *Penny Post* complicates the magazine's purposes by addressing a second, upper-class audience; the stories that seem to appropriately appeal to the working classes are accompanied by stories and essays that contradict the magazine's goals through directly appealing to that second audience and reinforcing class-based negative stereotypes Tractarian leaders were attempting

to overcome. In order to more fully comprehend the magazine's complex response to its (dual) audience and to complicate the *Penny Post's* intent to reinforce upper-class values, I will examine how the class-based themes of the longer stories fail to sufficiently address working-class concerns and also undermine upper-class values in an effort to reach both audiences. In the end, I will show that class dynamics in the magazine reveal how seriously Tractarians took working-class concerns and attempted to address those concerns through periodical literature. Scholars' quick dismissal of magazines like the *Penny Post* fails to acknowledge the richness of culture, religion, and thought that these magazines contain and the insight the dynamic complexity of the magazines' existence can bring to periodical scholarship.

The *Penny Post* in Context

The *Penny Post* came from those who edited and authored religious periodicals in an effort to reach a broader audience, particularly a working-class audience. The magazine was published monthly by John Henry Parker¹ between January 1851 and December 1896 in London. Parker was a key publisher of Tractarian literature, including Keble's *The Christian Year* (1827) and many of the *Tracts for the Times* (1834–1841), and a great friend of Newman and Keble. He evidently enlisted Tractarian clergymen to found and edit the magazine, and it appears the magazine accepted contributions from readers, including clergymen and amateur authors. The *Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals, 1800–1900* lists possible editors and authors, though most of the authors listed there appear in later volumes and much of the information on the editors is incomplete or incorrect.² The *Penny Post* contained

¹ The *Penny Post* was later printed under the names J. H. Parker and James Parker, J. H. Parker and Son, and finally James Parker and Co.

² There are two entries listed for the *Penny Post* in the *Waterloo Directory*; however, the entries are referring to the same periodical. The entry that cites the *Penny Post* as having started in 1849 has the more correct and complete information (except for the beginning date of the magazine and the subtitle). The authors mentioned include Phoebe Allen (1896), Madeleine Worsley (1896), Anna Kingsford (1868–1872), and John Mason Neale (1851–

a miscellany of nonfiction essays, short stories, serialized stories (both fiction and nonfiction), poetry, quotes from well-known figures, and doctrinal essays. It began as a text-only magazine but transitioned into an illustrated magazine by 1854.

The important goals of the magazine are explicitly explained in the prefaces to the *Penny Post*. These prefaces were included only at the end of each year, when the magazine was published as a bound volume. The editors claim, “We trust that, notwithstanding all its defects, it has supplied a body of *sound and useful* reading to those persons for whose especial benefit it was designed . . . , that its teaching has been in entire agreement with that of Holy Scripture and the Church” (Preface 1851, ii; emphasis added). This preface provides insight into exactly what this penny-a-number periodical hoped to accomplish and how it sought to function to its readers. This audience is clarified by the preface to the second volume: “The Penny Post was established to make, under God, the Church to triumph in the *Working Man’s home* . . . and to vindicate the position of the English Church against the assumptions of Popery, and the virulence of Dissent” (Preface 1852, v, emphasis added). The *Penny Post* was designed to be a *useful* publication intended to defend and define the Church of England to the working classes.

As a magazine invested in class issues and in responding to them, the *Penny Post* reflected the larger issues of class in both Victorian society and the Oxford Movement. As David Cannadine and other historians have observed, the Victorian class structure was complicated and fluid, which the Victorians themselves often admitted (62; see also Joyce 324). Despite the complexities of the Victorian social structure, there was a clear discrepancy

1853). Neale’s specific contributions have not been identified; however, he was a clergyman and invited to contribute at the invitation of Parker (Drain). The editors mentioned are Frederick George Lee and Joseph Whitaker, who, according to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, supposedly began the *Penny Post*. However, how long Whitaker stayed with the magazine is unclear, though he was a bookselling agent for Parker for a brief time (Tedder). The only information on Lee that relates is that he contributed to many periodicals during his undergraduate years (early 1850s); his relationship to the *Penny Post* is uncertain (Prawley).

in this structure, distinguishing between a privileged “class” and unprivileged “class” (see Thompson 131–133). The *Penny Post* represented efforts of the privileged (in this case, primarily upper-class Tractarian clergymen and other followers) as they sought to understand and connect with the underprivileged (those they term as the “working man”). As many scholars have noted, these Tractarians were very concerned about helping the working classes of society feel comfortable worshipping in the Church of England parishes (Inglis 21–23; Herring, *What Was* 81–84). Yet, as the Tractarians themselves seemed to notice (though they were perhaps reluctant to admit it), the discrepancies persisted, creating irony between practice and doctrine.

The Tractarians were not the only religious group struggling to reconcile doctrine and practice while attempting to reach the working classes; the *Penny Post* was not alone in efforts to provide useful, religious literature for those classes. The *Penny Post* emerged with more than 500 religious working-class periodicals between 1850 and 1860, such as the *Working Man’s Friend* (1850–1853), the *British Workman* (1855–1921), and the *Cottager’s Monthly Visitor* (1821–1856) (*Waterloo*, “*Penny Post*”). These magazines “addressed to the lower classes, seemingly designed to redeem the unchurched, had political motives of heading off social discontent or were designed as a defense ‘in the hope of stemming the torrent of moral poison with which the Penny Press is inundating the land’” (Altholz 141). Subsequently, most of these periodicals were either produced by the upper classes for this purpose (such as the *Cottager’s Monthly Visitor*) or produced by well educated working-class people (such as the *Working Man’s Friend*, edited by John Cassell) (Boos 263). These magazines could also be either closely connected to a religious persuasion—Dissenters, Evangelical, Nonconformist, Catholic, etcetera—or more general magazines intended to provide moral instruction (Maidment, “Magazines” 83). Many working-class magazines were

illustrated, such as the *British Workman* (Mountjoy, “Thomas” 51). Though circulation figures for this type of magazine as a whole are not available, the *British Workman* had a circulation of at least 200,000 by 1860 (Mounjoy, “Thomas” 49). As these examples suggest, the life of a religious periodical varied greatly, and most religious working-class periodicals lasted only a few years (Altholz 136). However, this did not prevent periodicals such as the *Penny Post* from attempting to reach a working-class audience.

The society into which these magazines entered, to persuade the working classes of their religious beliefs, was one fraught with reform and revolution. The 1832 Reform Bill changed many things in England, especially the status of the “middle classes,” allowing them to be more closely aligned with the upper classes, perhaps creating or contributing to the “us/them” dichotomy so common with Victorian class distinctions (Strong 422). This time saw other reforms that both attempted to continue what the Reform Bill had begun and also responded to certain backlashes, including the Poor Law Amendment Act (1834), the Corn Laws and Anti-Corn Law League (1839), public health acts, and education acts. In 1848 the Chartist movement finally dwindled enough that, according to one historian, “after its failure radicalism was to move north to the industrial cities, where the strong egalitarian legacy of the Chartists was to pass into the labour-based politics of the working man” (Strong 422). The result of these and many other important events during the first half of the nineteenth century (and even before) was a weakening of conservative, Anglican (High Church, specifically), traditional, aristocratic values. Most alarming to many in the government and Church of England was the growing strength and position of Dissenters, radicals, and others (Briggs 228). As an ideologically conservative magazine (or so it intends to be), the *Penny Post* claims to be a force to retaliate against these forces and reinforce the traditional values of

society and a magazine unique enough to compete against the many magazines among which it found itself.

Since the *Penny Post* survived for forty-six years, its editors and authors evidently appealed to some readership. What evidence there is suggests that it had a long, vibrant life, though it did at times flounder in the tumultuous periodical market. Existing circulation numbers range from “many thousand readers,” as mentioned in one of the prefaces to the magazine, to 30,000 issues sold between February and May 1851, as suggested in an advertisement/review that evidently found the number impressive, though it is unclear whether the review meant 30,000 in one month or 30,000 in four months (Preface 1856, vi; “Notices to” 399; see also “Rev. of” 15 and “Notices of” 192). However, these numbers are not completely trustworthy because they come from an advertisement and a self-advertisement in the preface, both of which attempted to gain more readers for the magazine by showing that the magazine was already very popular. There is also evidence that the magazine was shared among readers, suggesting that the readership of the *Penny Post* was much greater than these numbers suggest (L. 196; see also Altick 324–348). Though the magazine does not suggest this itself, many scholars have pointed out that working-class periodicals were often designed for the literate of their audience, who would read them aloud to fellow illiterate workers (Murphy 11–12; see also Rose 58). It is obvious that the *Penny Post* is directing itself to a *literate* audience, since it contains quotes and poems from literary figures (such as Longfellow and Wordsworth), and an audience well versed in the Bible, since there are many religious and scriptural allusions. Of course, these elements could suggest efforts to educate a working-class audience.

Even though the positive circulation figures mentioned above suggest otherwise, the magazine appeared to struggle on many accounts, despite various methods of distribution,

and it found a need to call on wealthier “friends” to remain profitable. The *Penny Post* was primarily distributed by subscription through booksellers, and the editor at one point makes clear that the *Penny Post* was not meant for circulating libraries (Preface 1852, v). Readers often reported buying several issues to distribute to friends and acquaintances (L. 196), and certainly clergymen, particularly in the country, bought several issues to distribute to parishioners, which is suggested in the magazine itself and was a common practice, as Josef Altholz mentions (136). The prefaces of the *Penny Post* (which were most likely written for an audience other than the intended audience since they were only published with the more expensive bound volumes of the magazine) continually call on wealthier readers to buy and distribute the magazine as part of their Christian duty: they plead to “each good Churchman” to do his best to spread the good word of the *Penny Post* abroad: “We will do our utmost, to combine instruction with amusement. We enter on a new Year,—our last unless our circulation is increased to a great extent. In faith we work; ‘For God, and His Church,’ our Motto; to do good unto all men, our end and aim” (Preface 1852, v). This evidence suggests that the *Penny Post* struggled to maintain a steady readership, especially in its early years, and one suspects that it relied on donations from wealthier “friends.” The editors continually make a distinction between “readers” and “friends,” and this distinction may be in reference to how these groups of people supported the magazine: one by reading, the other by funding.

Further evidence that the magazine was also directing itself to an upper-class audience comes from Charlotte Mary Yonge, a disciple of Keble and editor of the Tractarian *Monthly Packet* (1851–1899), a periodical for upper-class young women. Yonge mentions the *Penny Post* in an 1852 letter to a contributor to the *Monthly Packet*: “I was provoked last month to find that the ‘Penny Post’ had forestalled us with the Angel of death and Sleep in

prose, not half so pretty as yours, but I suppose we ought to wait a little, as the two magazines have a good deal the same kind of circulation” (100). This suggests that by 1852 the *Penny Post* seemed to be circulated among an audience similar to that of the *Monthly Packet*, an upper-class audience of *young women*. I will return later to how this particular audience is addressed by the stories of the *Penny Post*.

Even in the prefaces the issue of class emerges, and this becomes a dominant aspect of the *Penny Post*. The editors and authors were very concerned about the class to which they were writing, and they were concerned about their ideas reaching the appropriate audience. However, it appears that even in these initial years the audience also contained readers from the upper classes, though the exact relationship between the purposes of the magazine and the upper classes is complex. These appeals to “friends” to support the magazine suggest that people of the upper classes actually read the magazine; that does not necessarily suggest that the upper classes were part of the intended audience. Yet, the fact that the editors of the *Penny Post* would make appeals to the upper classes suggests that there may be something of value in the magazine for them. Whether that be simply helping to spread the ideals of the Church of England or finding value in the content of the magazine the prefaces do not suggest; what can be drawn from these prefaces is an awareness of market forces and audience needs (or perceived needs), with subtle suggestions that perhaps the creators of the magazine were not completely confident in their proposed purposes to “vindicate the position of the English Church” to the working classes.

“Thomas Hooper”: The Place of Parsons and Confession

As the prefaces of the *Penny Post* suggest, this magazine is very much invested in resolving class tensions and providing an example of the appropriate relationship between the working classes and the upper classes. One of the main challenges the Oxford

Movement encountered was the relationship between the working classes and generally upper-class (or at least well-educated) clergymen, and the *Penny Post* places a prominent focus on discussing and overcoming some of the related issues. As Herring has noted, the “association between Dissent, opposition and particular social groups, combined with the paternalistic social attitude that the Tractarians shared with the majority of their fellow clergy, led them to take a particular interest in their local farmers and tradesmen” (*What Was* 81). However, as many scholars have noted, the working classes were resistant to this concern for many reasons (James, *Fiction* 114; Mayor 45), and the Tractarian clergymen faced two particular challenges. As was noted earlier, working-class parishioners felt alienated from religious worship (Herring, *What Was* 84), and further estrangement between clergymen and poor parishioners came from misunderstanding relating to the reintroduction of the official or formal confession to a church leader (Herring, *What Was* 41–42).

The *Penny Post* provides answers to these dilemmas through literature that appeals directly to these issues and that seems to meet the mission set forth in the prefaces. The proper relationship between a working-class parishioner and his clergyman is the primary theme of many of the *Penny Post*'s stories. For example, “Thomas Hooper. *A Portrait*” (1851), which was a serialized story and presented as a fictional story, follows the physical and spiritual recovery of a young man, Thomas Hooper. Thomas has led a life of unrighteousness, culminating with disgraceful behavior in the town, after which he is fired from his factory job and scorned by his fellow workmen and parishioners. He returns to his former evil ways until an illness brings him to his deathbed. After the faithful prayers of his clergyman, Mr. Pearson, Thomas makes a full physical recovery. Mr. Pearson then teaches him the proper way to make amends for his numerous sins.

Thomas represents the working man (of the *Penny Post's* audience), and his misconceptions about the appropriate relationship between the clergy and their (working-class) parishioners reflects the attitudes of that class. Thomas is surprised when Mr. Pearson speaks to him “as to an old friend, saying how thankful he was, both on his own and his parents’ account, that he [Thomas] had pleased God so far to raise him up again” (41). Thomas believes that the place of the clergy is to condemn, and it is for this reason that he has avoided Mr. Pearson. Thomas becomes one author’s understanding of the working man and the working man’s understanding of the place of the clergy in his life. Though the story is titled “Thomas Hooper,” the clear hero is Mr. Pearson. He has the main voice of the story (indeed, much of the story is his discourses to Thomas), and when he leaves to carry on his other duties, Thomas encounters further difficulties.

However, before Thomas encounters further complications to his understanding of the role of his clergyman, Mr. Pearson shows the dedication and love of a pastor. Herring has noted that much Tractarian literature of the 1850s deals with the proper role of clergymen (*What Was* 89), and with the focus of this story on a working-class individual, this story shows a working-class audience how pastors behave and interact with individuals of the working classes. It also shows such an audience an awareness for the concerns (or what it sees as the concerns) of that class. The story is clear on the position of Mr. Pearson: he is a loving shepherd who only seeks for health and prosperity among those whom he serves. Mr. Pearson declares to Thomas’s mother, Mrs. Hooper, “I pray God that [Thomas] may be raised up again, so that I may have an opportunity of shewing that I would not reprove him, but try to lead him on from shame and sorrow to thorough repentance” (12). The parson himself reveals that his purpose is to help Thomas repent, not condemn him, as Thomas believes. Even though Thomas’s fellow workers reject him from their society because of his

actions, Mr. Pearson embraces him. The story is aware of the “class consciousness” of the working classes, but it suggests that class alliances or distinctions or groups eventually fail the individual. E. P. Thompson has analyzed “class consciousness” in great detail. He suggests that class is a relationship, a relationship between people who have common interests (creating a “class”) or a relationship between these groups of individuals with common interests and other such groups of individuals with different interests (thus “working class” and “upper class”). Quoting R. Dahrendorf, Thompson argues that “An individual . . . belongs to a class because he occupies a position in a social organization” (132). Thomas Hooper is part of his social “class” of workers until he violates the relationship he has with his fellow workers; then he no longer belongs, his class position is jeopardized. However, Mr. Pearson does not reject him; Mr. Pearson, the upper-class clergyman, teaches Thomas that there is another group to which he should belong: the God-fearing penitent. This allows Mr. Pearson to show Thomas (and a working-class audience) that the upper classes are aware of the “class consciousness” of the working classes and that the most important group to belong to is the church.

After Thomas recovers and begins his repentant relationship with Mr. Pearson, he encounters another issue that emerged in Tractarian parishes: the place of confession. Thomas feels he should confess his sins, yet he can “not make up his mind to the effort and shame of such a confession” (97). During this dilemma, Thomas’s aunt comes to visit and warns him about confessing to the pastor, afraid that the pastor will make Thomas a “self-righteous Pharisee as he is himself” (97). Her suggestion is that those who confess are like the Pharisees of the New Testament, known for their public displays of worship and inward/secret corruption. She sees confession as *works*, when repentance is only concerned with *faith*. It is possible that Thomas’s aunt represents the Evangelical, low church or even

dissenting ideology within (or without) the Church of England. One of the *Penny Post's* purposes is to guard against dissent, and here is dissent in sheep's clothing: the voice of Thomas's aunt. Thomas is thoroughly confused until he approaches his pastor. Mr. Pearson provides this justification for the importance of confession (to a clergyman) in the church: "for what is repentance but seeking to know our sins, and to despise and loathe ourselves on account of them?" (99). Mr. Pearson leaves Thomas to ponder his words. This also ends the final installment of the story. Does Thomas eventually confess all his sins and become more holy? This is unclear, but the answer to the issue of confession is clearer: confession to a well-meaning parson is important to Thomas's, and therefore any (working-class) parishioner's, full repentance.

Thomas Hooper represents those of the working classes who have misconceptions about the place of the working classes in the church. His concerns about clergymen and confession reflect actual concerns of the working classes (as understood by the authors/editors), which the Tractarians were attempting to alleviate. This story suggests an awareness of the issues important to the working classes, the intended audience for the magazine, and fits well into the purposes of the editors and authors. "Thomas Hooper" provides a "portrait" of the penitent working-class sinner and carefully paints the proper relationship between a working-class parishioner and his upper-class clergyman, becoming a piece of literature reinforcing the "sound and useful" reading the editors were attempting to provide the *Penny Post's* working-class readership.

"The Model Gallery" and the Ideal Class Relationship: Medieval Paternalism

However, the *Penny Post* does not continue with literature that consistently upholds the soundness of "Thomas Hooper. *A Portrait*." The metaphor of stories as a "portrait" or "model" of something is common in the *Penny Post*, and "Thomas Hooper" represents this

type. Yet not all of the models of upper- and working-class people consistently uphold Tractarian teachings, and this is where the magazine's dual audience is suggested, complicating the magazine's claim to be directing itself only to the working classes. In the "Model Gallery" of the first volume (1851), accounts from the lives of two men, Bernard Gilpin (d. 1583) and Bishop Ken (d. 1710), are summarized. Both stories provide examples of the upper classes and represent a Tractarian ideal. For Keble, the ideal relationship between the wealthier members of society and those poorer was one of a common goal and mutual dependence: the rich were to provide for the poor, as paternalistic caretakers and teachers, and the poor were to be humble, obedient examples and servants to the rich, with both worshipping side-by-side as equals before God. Keble declared that "in the Holy Catholic Church 'the rich and the poor' are indeed 'met together,' in the Name of the Lord, Whom they know to be not only 'the Maker,' but also the Redeemer and Regenerator 'of them all' " (13–14). Keble wanted to maintain class hierarchies and show that all classes in society had a purpose and place in the church. Yet his vision was unrealized in the parishes. Many working-class parishioners felt distanced from wealthy parishioners because of the attitude the wealthy had towards them; for upper-class Tractarians, the ideal relationship was that of paternalism. However, the upper classes did not attend appropriately to the poor, and the social and class division grew wider (Herring, *What Was* 81). The widening social chasm concerned the Tractarian leaders, and they did all within their power to convince the wealthy to serve the poor. These concerns are reflected in the "Model Gallery" of the *Penny Post*, and these short stories address both a working-class and an upper-class audience in the way they provide models *of* and *for* the upper classes.

As a "real" model *of* and *for* the upper classes, Gilpin connects the upper classes to the golden medieval age. For doctrinal and social reasons, especially, the Tractarians looked

back to medieval times, which tied the church's authority more closely to the original apostles and the purity of the primitive gospel. Gilpin is the "model" of the upper classes: Gilpin is a country squire, who, as the story reports, is riding past a husbandman one day. The husbandman's horse dies as he is taking it to plow his field. Gilpin dismounts his steed, takes off the saddle, and gives his horse to the poor husbandman. The narrator declares, "Yea, and many a time as he travailed was he accustomed thus to help poore men" (17). As an example of the upper classes, Gilpin is a benevolent caretaker of the poor and distressed around him. He represents the all-important medieval past, where the poor and working classes were cared for by a paternalistic sire, showing the proper and true relationship between the working classes and their upper-class benefactors. Gilpin's example shows a working-class audience that the upper classes are truly benevolent and care about the daily challenges the poor face, enough that he (and they) is willing to make sacrifices to help the working man succeed in his livelihood.

Gilpin is also an example of how country gentlemen are to interact with the working poor. He, evidently, sees that his need for the horse is not more important than a working-class man's livelihood. His actions and "sacrifice" represent to upper-class readers the suitable relationship between the upper and working classes, that Tractarian paternalist ideal, which becomes more realistic because of its nonfictional element and ties to the medieval past. Gilpin's death date after his name suggests that he was a real person who truly acted the part of a paternal, feudal lord, and as he was "accustomed" to helping poor men in this way, he becomes a true "model" of how the upper classes should live with and act towards the working classes.

Bishop Ken's story, likewise, is a model *for* the upper classes in the way that they should determine the needs of the working classes and how they should interact with that

class. The story begins with a passage of how he, when poor people come to him, asks the poor to say the Lord's Prayer and the Creed: "He found so much deplorable ignorance among the grown poor people, that he feared little good was to be done upon them." Yet he feels that something should be done to help the children, thus he establishes the charity schools (18). The needs of the poor are only apparent to the bishop because of his interaction with them, and he is very concerned with their intellectual wellbeing—not just their physical health. Gilpin provides physical necessities, but Bishop Ken provides education, intellectual and spiritual enlightenment, to counter the deplorable ignorance, beginning, of course, with the children. His model suggests that interaction is the only way to determine the needs of the poor; for the upper classes to understand the needs of the working classes, it is essential to go among them and view them in their own circumstances. Again, the "real" aspects of this story and its setting in more religiously "pure" times connects this good bishop with the ideals and goodness of the past paternalist relationship between the upper and lower classes, both appealing to the upper classes to look to the past and the lower classes to see a model of this ideal relationship. This story seeks to provide an important model for upper-class readers and their own efforts to help the poorer working classes.

However, as a model *of* the upper classes, Bishop Ken can be seen in a more negative light. Considering the *Penny Post's* working-class audience, the story becomes a less than positive portrayal of the working classes because Bishop Ken continues upper-class prejudices. His statement about the "deplorable ignorance" among the working classes suggests upper-class distaste for the poorer members of society as well as prejudice against their ability to be helped or educated; this implication repudiates what Keble taught about the working classes and what he saw as their ability to understand and learn. The children are

the only ones who could escape the tragedy of ignorance, and it is they whom he seeks to help, not the adults. It is almost as if the adults are beyond the benefits of a sound religious education; their ignorance is so “deplorable” that it would never allow them to rise from impoverishment. The story’s upper-class character reinforces class assumptions about the inability of the working classes to improve their current conditions, contradicting the important Tractarian ideal of class unity in a paternalistic relationship; the supposed ignorance of the working classes prevented the bishop from fulfilling his responsibilities of caring for the adults of the working classes. Though Bishop Ken’s example attempts to create a connection between the upper classes, the important ideals of medieval times, and the benevolence of the upper classes to the poor, this story also points out the disparity between the upper and lower classes in education and potential. The implications of the way the stories discuss the working classes and their relationship with the upper classes more clearly reveals the distance between the classes.

Though Gilpin and Bishop Ken provide benevolent, paternalistic models *of* the upper classes for working-class readers and provide medieval feudalist models *for* upper-class readers, the model of Ken contradicts Tractarian ideals by reinforcing negative class stereotypes. This, in turn, suggests certain attitudes or assumptions the *Penny Post*’s editors and authors were making about their working-class audience. The editors see that the working classes need a more positive portrayal of the upper classes in order to draw them more fully into a place in the church, and though they claim to be only addressing working-class readers, the models of Bishop Ken and Gilpin suggest that they are models *for*, not just *of* the upper classes. The editors, in seeking examples of the medieval past for and of the upper classes, also are unable to escape from the class prejudices and stereotypes of the futility of helping the working classes. Here tensions of audience and purpose arise from

these stories as they both reinforce and attempt to overcome upper-class prejudices toward the working classes.

The prejudices of these stories also parallel the positive example of “Thomas Hooper.” Though Thomas is carefully guided by his clergyman as to what to believe and how to repent, Mr. Pearson leaves Thomas to think for himself about what he says. Thomas is an intelligent working-class young man that has the ability to think and learn the principles that will save him spiritually. “Thomas Hooper” leaves little doubt that working-class adults are capable of changing and becoming more educated, at least spiritually. There are several other stories within the *Penny Post* that reinforce the idea that the working classes are responsible for being educated in religious and temporal things; the very existence of the magazine itself suggests that a working-class audience is capable of learning and becoming more educated.

The models of Bishop Ken and Gilpin, however, contradict the suggestions of the *Penny Post* that the working classes are capable of improving. If the purpose of the magazine was to “triumph” in the lives of the working classes and to “do good” to those for whom it was intended, the portrayal of the working classes and negative stereotypes that dominate much of the literature counter such positive assumptions made in the prefaces and elsewhere throughout the magazine.

“What Is the Use of Our Cathedrals”: Working-Class “Taste” and Class Unity

The upper-class prejudice that the working classes were too poor or uneducated to truly appreciate and understand anything of culture or higher learning is one that is quite evident in the *Penny Post*'s essays and stories even though many stories actively attempt to show the verity of working-class intelligence as Keble himself taught. As he worked with the poor, Keble saw their ability to understand and respond properly to the evils of the world

while also understanding deep doctrines of the church. He wrote often of his satisfaction with their intellectual aptitude (Rowlands 31). The way that authors in the *Penny Post* attempt to reinforce Keble's observations, however, contradicts the purposes of the magazine in appealing to upper-class readers, instead of remembering a working-class audience.

The author/narrator of an essay "What Is the Use of Our Cathedrals?" explores the place of the poor in the Church and the way members of the upper classes should treat those of lower status. The narrator, who identifies herself as a woman, relates the following story:

It was one glorious summer evening, as I was passing through the Nave to attend prayers in one of our Cathedrals, that I noticed a very poor, but very happy looking young woman, with two little black-eyed girls at her side, who was peering at the old monuments with all the unmistakable wonderment of a stranger. Now I am sorry to say that I did not at that time give the poor credit for that *good taste* in Church matters which they really possess. (122)

Because of the way the narrator refers to the "very poor" young woman and children and the lack of credit she gives "the poor," the narrator defines herself as one who is not poor. For her, the poorer classes do not have the "taste" required to fully appreciate and find enjoyment in "Church matters." However, this initial observation is soon corrected as the narrator learns more about the young woman, Martha. She visits Martha in her terrible little home, where sheep live in the living room, twenty families live together, there is little light from outside, and there is "no fresh country air, nothing rural or pleasant to look out upon, such as one usually associates with the cottages of the English poor" (124); Martha lives in the middle of an industrial city. The narrator is devastated at the living conditions of the working classes, but she sees a humility and acceptance in the life of Martha, who without

complaint lives in such terrible conditions. Martha's humility and acceptance of her humble working life convinces the narrator that there is something akin to holiness in the lives of the devout lower classes. The narrator's growth throughout the story allows for her to see the poor not as ignorant and uncultured, but as humble, devout, faithful, and spiritually sensitive. She discovers that the working classes have a different kind of taste—one that perhaps the upper classes would do well to imitate—a taste that is more holy and Christian than the upper classes'.

The narrator's attempts to show the unique taste of the working classes could also appeal to a working-class audience. Keble himself preached that the working classes had fewer temptations and were more spiritually stable than the wealthy upper classes because they did not have the temptations associated with wealth (Rowlands 29). The narrator of this story seems to be drawing on the same ideas. It is *because* of Martha's circumstances that she has the "proper" taste, and Martha becomes an ideal of how the working classes should be. The working classes should be content and humble in their poverty and lack, because this taste will take them further spiritually than seeking for and having wealth.

The narrator's eventual discovery of the "taste" of the working classes helps to overcome class prejudices and misunderstandings in the story; however, when the magazine's working-class readership is considered, the narrator's words become more problematic. The narrator emphasizes the fact that the poor know the difference between their situation and the upper classes':

Oh, we need not teach the poor the difference that there is between our earthly lot and theirs! They feel that too well already, and sometimes our unkindness or selfishness makes the sense of it enter like iron into their very soul: rather let us teach them, having first learnt it ourselves, that in the sight

of our One Father, which is in Heaven, in the eyes of our one Mother, the Church on earth, we not only shall one day be,—we are even now, equals,—only like servants, or like children at school, we have different tasks, different services to perform, for that One Master and Father. This is no poetic dream, it is simple reality; for what saith Holy Scripture:—“As the Body is one, and hath many members, and all the members, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.” (122)

Her words hearken to Keble’s words of equality and oneness in the church, and she tries to show her upper-class readers the conditions of the poor and remind them of their mutual relationship, the “different tasks” of the wealthy and poor: the ideal paternalistic relationship. Her language in this passage and the one quoted above, however, creates a divide between the classes, rather than a bridge. The narrator suggests that the upper classes not point out the differences between the “earthly lots” of the classes, yet she does just that in her description of the ornate and beautiful cathedral next to the shabby look of Martha and her children and the terrible condition of the working-class family’s home. The narrator compares the difference between Martha’s home and the traditional upper-class view of the country poor, offering not only a contradiction for her upper-class audience but also another illustration of what the urban poor do not and perhaps cannot obtain. Attempting to address an upper-class audience with certain ideologies of class hierarchy and paternalism, the narrator struggles to interpret how biblical and church teachings can coexist with those ideologies. The upper classes and working classes are “equals,” yet they cannot be so in every sense of the word. The tensions of class hierarchy and Tractarian teachings emerge from this narrator’s words, and as she attempts to suggest they may be resolved by considering the

classes as having different tasks to perform, she also acknowledges the disparity between the classes and their understanding of one another, contradicting her intent to create unity.

The narrator attempts to define the roles of the upper classes and working classes while speaking to an upper-class audience in a magazine intended for the working classes. She attempts to point out and overcome the upper-class prejudices that prevent an “equal” relationship between the upper and working classes; however, in showing and explaining that disparity, she continues class prejudices and contradicts her own claims. This type of reasoning is common throughout the *Penny Post*; the editors and authors consistently attempt to overcome upper-class prejudices and teach Tractarian ideals of unity and paternalism, yet they further those prejudices when they address upper-class readers and ignore their own claims to be writing to and for the working classes. This is where the dual audience emerges in this magazine; there is a clear attempt to both address the working classes (as stories such as “Thomas Hooper” suggest) and provide instruction for an upper-class audience about the true plight of the working classes, as this essay suggests.

Class and Societal Structure in the *Penny Post*'s Longer Stories

The contradictions within the *Penny Post* continue in the longer, serialized, stories of the magazine, and they reveal yet another element that complicates the *Penny Post*'s purposes. The second volume features two serialized stories, one primarily about upper-class characters and the other about working-class ones. “The Heart-Stone” (1852) by F. E. P. and “Marion” (1852) by an anonymous author illustrate the contradictions inherent in the *Penny Post*. Seen next to each other, these stories seem to target different audiences, and as they both reinforce those classes' values, they contradict one another and the magazine's overall claims, complicating how the editors see their purposes and audience.

“The Heart-Stone”: An Upper-Class Tale for Young Women and about Maintaining Social Hierarchy

“The Heart-Stone” is by a Tractarian clergyman, F.E.P., who has been identified as Francis Edward Paget.³ This story is a framed, historical tale (reminiscent of Walter Scott’s historical novels, with extensive quotes and references to Scott dealing with the *Waverley* novels and Jacobite affairs) of a clergyman recounting the events surrounding a mysterious heart-shaped stone positioned in the floor of his parish church. The chapters of “The Heart-Stone” combine historical information about the religious climate of the early 1710s and narratives of events in the lives of the Blythe family: Sir Walter and his sisters, Lettice and Patience, and their mother, Lady Barbara. The plot centers on the family hiding a fugitive at their estate, Blythehurst Hall. The man is a bishop of the Church of Scotland, wanted because of his activities with the Jacobites. The identity of the bishop is leaked to individuals in the local village who are only too willing to betray the Blythe family. However, due to the faith and intelligence of the Blythe family and their loyal servants, the family is not caught, and the bishop makes it safely back to Scotland. The bishop, after his death years later, is buried in the Blythe’s parish church, and a blue heart-stone is placed to mark his grave.

“The Heart-Stone” draws on upper-class interests and values to portray the experiences of an upper-class situation, and one of the main themes of the story considers the proper education of upper-class young women. The narrator observes of Lettice and Patience: “It was the training of their minds, day by day, under the eye of a religious mother, which made them what they were. Self-denial was a reality with them. They had learned to

³ Paget spent much of his life attempting to disseminate the ideas of the Oxford Movement through literature, yet he wrote in a variety of genres, including children’s literature and satire. The following books illustrate this variety: *Tales of Village Children* (1845); *The Curate of Cumbornorth and the Vicar of Roost* (1859), a novel warning of the dangers of advancing parochial reform too quickly; and *Lucretia, or, The Heroine of the Nineteenth Century* (1868), a satire of sensationalist novels (Herring, “Paget, Francis Edward”).

endure hardness, and self-indulgence they despised. So too, their charity was not of the slipshod kind which gives its orders to the housekeepers to do what is right. They either saw that it was done, or did it themselves” (254). These women have been educated to their duties of self-denial and charity; they are unafraid of descending below their station to help those in need. The narrator then describes the terrible conditions in which Lettice is willing to enter to serve one “bedridden sufferer”: a “low, dark, fusty-smelling room, in a dirty, dilapidated hovel” with “a mud floor; walls running down with damp; a few rickety chairs, a three legged table with some dirty dishes upon it, a chest, and beyond that, a dark woolen curtain suspended by a string from one wall to the other” (254). Such circumstances, evidently, were difficult for genteel young women to condescend to enter, and the narrator addresses this very concern:

O delicate young ladies, with complaints on your nerves, and tremors about infection, and fine plausible speeches about your inability to endure cottage-smells, learn a few lessons of self-discipline and self-possession in the school of Patience and Lettice Blythe! Learn wisdom, and truth, and brotherly love, and endurance, and faith, and REALITY, by the bedsides of the sick poor!
(254)

These young ladies learn about the poor and life through education of mind and actual experience among those less fortunate. The Blythe sisters have nothing to do but learn how to nurse and care for those who are ill around them. They have an education that has not indulged their position of wealth but required them to see the “reality” of those around them. They, as women of the upper classes, with the privilege and wealth that accompanies their birth, have taken those things and used them to help those less fortunate. The narrator is clearly suggesting that those with wealth have a responsibility to take their means and help

those not as fortunate; this paternal Christian ideal is then targeted not at the men of the upper classes (as other areas of the *Penny Post* seem to be directed), but the young women, whom the narrator sees as in a unique and important position to help the poor and working classes.

This story does not pretend to address a working-class audience, and the implications of the intended audience of this story complicate the intentions of the *Penny Post*. The upper-class values examined and reinforced in this story depend on the paternal attitude the Tractarians embraced, and the clear direction to an upper-class audience of *young women* counters the preface's claim to be for the *working man*. This story, because it so clearly targets an upper-class audience, cannot address working-class concerns adequately; its basis is that young women *should* act a certain way, and they currently *do not*. So though the story attempts to show how paternalism should work, it instead suggests that there is a discrepancy between belief and practice. Young women live in an *ideal* world, but they fail to see the *reality* of the society around them. In a way, this idea parallels the ideas in "What Are the Use of Our Cathedrals" and indicates further an upper-class audience, defining it more specifically as upper-class young women.

Since this story is targeted at the upper classes, it is not surprising that it reinforces class distinctions and hierarchies. However, as it reinforces these hierarchies, it not only further reveals the disparity between the wealthy and working classes but also portrays some working-class characters in a negative light, beginning to address but then frankly ignoring working-class concerns. These complex attributes of this story surround the subplots of two working-class characters, Will Blackwell, one of the Blythe's servants, and Tabbitha, the local "witch" and busybody.

Will participates in saving the life of the bishop and afterward gossips about the bishop in town, revealing that that bishop is running from the law and has a blue riding cloak (which evidently suggests the bishop's identity). After being reprimanded by Lady Barbara, he seeks a way to repent for his loose tongue. His opportunity comes when he obtains the warrant for the bishop's arrest, which reveals the bishop's true identity. Will, instead of turning the bishop in, gives the warrant to the bishop, who promptly destroys it; Will promises to keep the secret. The narrator remarks: "Well done, Lad! There are hopes of you now. You have gone far to atone for that slip of the tongue about the blue riding cloak!" (181).

Will is the obedient servant, who, when he does make a mistake, "atones" for his betrayal of the upper-class Blythe family by hiding their secrets, right or wrong (though, clearly, the Blythes are in the right). He sees his position as inferior to (or at least under that of) his masters, the Blythes, and he tries to be the obedient servant. Will also upholds the ultimate paternal authority: the "true" king of England. As Jacobites, the bishop and the Blythes are attempting to restore the Stuart monarchy and the societal hierarchy that has been disrupted since others have seized control of the government (the narrator implies Parliament's control over English and Scottish affairs). Will represents the working-class man that encourages and sustains the paternal class hierarchies by his obedience to those above him.

As a foil for Will, Tabbitha represents the disobedient part of the working classes. After being offended by Sir Walter, Tabbitha seeks for opportunities to ruin him. A government official arrives in town, looking for the bishop, and Tabbitha readily agrees to help him capture the fugitive. When she searches for the bishop in a garden maze at

Blythehurst, she becomes trapped there during a winter storm, and because no one can hear her cries above the storm's wind, she freezes to death.

Tabbitha, in comparison to Will, is also reprimanded by the Blythes but seeks revenge by claiming equality between the classes and by undermining Jacobite efforts. She complains to the government official that "if great folks are law-breakers . . . there should be no more shelter for them under the Squire's roof, than under the labourer's." The man replies, "There is no more shelter . . . but great folks are harder to take, than poor ones. And so the Government offers a reward for the apprehension of great offenders" (257). Tabbitha and the official are reacting against the privilege of the upper classes, suggesting that there should be more equality between those "great" and those who are simple laborers, especially in relation to things of the law. This aspect of the story suggests an awareness of such a problem in society; Tabbitha and the official imply that the solution to the problem of "great folks" succeeding at legal activity is a better defined equality between the classes. Tabbitha's death, however, (and the official's failure to capture the bishop) suggests that such "equality" does not solve society's ill; rather, a return to the paternalistic ideals represented by the Blythe family does. Tabbitha is not only betraying her baronet and a bishop, but she is also betraying Jacobites, those attempting to restore the proper order society. The narrator, in an earlier chapter, describes the condition of the government and suggests that the current Queen Ann is being coerced and forced to obey her ministers and Parliament. The proper order of government and paternalism are disrupted because of the ministers, and it is the Jacobite heroes, such as the Scottish bishop, who seek to restore the true king and true societal hierarchy. Tabbitha attempts to disrupt the efforts of the Jacobites, and because of her interest in subverting the ideals of paternalism, she comes to a timely death.

The comparison between Will and Tabitha presents another way for the *Penny Post* to reinforce the upper-class values of its creators and of its complex audience. This story directly addresses an upper-class audience of young women; however, it would be simplifying it to suggest that they were their *only* audience. Will, with Tabitha as a foil, provides an example for the working classes of how they can participate in maintaining social order and reinforcing the upper-class ideals of the Oxford Movement. However, at the same time, the almost sinister way in which Tabitha is portrayed creates a negative impression of all that she represents, including her concern about the equality of the upper and working classes before the law. This working-class concern is hardly reconciled, complicating the seemingly sincere way in which the *Penny Post* attempts to address other such concerns elsewhere in the magazine. This story's complex themes illustrate that its audience and the *Penny Post's* audience are not as simple as the editors claim.

“Marion”: A Working-Class Tale of Social Mobility

Serialized at the same time as the “Heart-Stone,” “Marion” is a story dealing more directly with working-class issues, and juxtaposed with the “Heart-Stone” it offers a parallel concern with reinforcing class hierarchies. However, it deals with this concern from a working-class perspective, and in the process of attempting to support societal structure while maintaining the working-class perspective, it undermines the upper-class ideals of class status. Marion is the daughter of Mrs. Ray, a sickly widow, and she has one sister, Jessie. Because of costs associated with her mother's illness, what Marion makes as the local parish schoolteacher is not enough to sustain them. She petitions their clergyman, Mr. Lee, for a higher paying position, and he recommends her to work as a nursery maid for the local gentry family, the Spencers. She moves to London to live with the family, where she is put in charge of a spoiled child named Alice, who constantly gets into mischief and blames her

problems on Marion. Marion is also disliked by the other servants and framed for the indiscretions of the other nursery maid, Betsy, who is in charge of the Spencers' baby son. After the baby is injured and Marion framed, she is dismissed from service. However, Mr. Lee clears Marion's good name, and she is hired as head nurse by Mr. Spencer's brother.

The inconsistencies surrounding paternalism and class hierarchy are the main issues dealt with in the story. Marion finds class distinctions very complicated when she begins working for the Spencers, and, as found in "The Heart-Stone," Betsy provides a foil for Marion, who remains the obedient servant, interested in keeping the counsel of Mr. Lee and remembering her Christian education. When Marion is telling Mrs. Baker (the head nurse) about her religious education from the Lees and their good example, Betsy comments, "I don't understand how that can be . . . How can a lady and gentleman set an example to poor folks? They may talk to them about the Bible and all that. But as for doing anything that they can follow, when they lead such different lives and have all they want; to my mind it is an impossibility" (208). Betsy's concern reflects a challenge the Tractarians faced as they sought to bridge the gap between the working classes and the upper classes, a concern the *Penny Post* is clearly attempting to address as well. The narrator of "What Is the Use of Our Cathedrals?" attempts to answer this problem by suggesting that the upper classes and working classes have different roles in the church and society, and the ideal model is a paternalistic one. However, as I have argued, the narrator's answer falls short because she speaks with the voice of a member of the upper classes to the upper classes (not the working classes) and contradicts her very suggestion of avoiding the discrepancies and simply helping one another by pointing out those discrepancies in very vivid language. "Marion" is in a better position of providing the answer to this important question, and it does so through the voice of Marion, a working-class young woman. In reply to Betsy's misunderstanding

about the relationship between the poor and wealthy, Marion says, “Mr. Lee said . . . that charity did not consist in giving away money only, but that we can all be charitable in different ways, according to our stations, and there is one charity we can all practice” (209). Marion proceeds by explaining that the Lees are so selfless that they think of all the needs of everyone in the parish before their own, and they constantly serve those around them; they are very much like Thomas Hooper’s Mr. Pearson. Marion’s words echo the words of Keble and reiterate the important ideals of paternalism, where the upper classes not only take care of the working classes but also provide a Christian example. The working classes follow this example by serving and helping in their own station in life. This reinforces class hierarchies and also Tractarian teachings by encouraging a working-class audience to live charitably in the station in life they find themselves.

“Marion” appears to be another story, directed at the working classes, that reinforces the important class and Tractarian values of paternalism and addresses working-class concerns with the contradictions between those values and their own. However, there is one brief scene of the story that, I would argue, complicates the thematic intention of providing a story consistent with upper-class Tractarian values. When Marion returns home after being shamefully dismissed from the Spencers’ service, Mr. Lee investigates the situation, and he reveals to the Spencers the true nature of Betsy and Alice (who both play a part in the false accusations against Marion). Mr. Spencer is ashamed at the conduct of his daughter and his own inability to teach her to be honest (her main fault), and he is embarrassed that he could not distinguish a true character from a false one in regards to Marion and Betsy. He goes with Mr. Lee to visit Marion. There, in Marion’s country cottage home, he apologizes for his daughter’s lies and his own inability to judge Marion’s true nature. This scene is fraught with irony and tension, so much that Mr. Spencer escapes the cottage as soon as Marion frankly

forgives him. Mr. Spencer, as the country squire, is supposed to represent the noble nature of the paternalistic upper classes; he should be a better judge of character, especially of those who care for his children (as Mr. Lee not unkindly reminds him). He, ashamed of his imperfections, allows himself to “descend” to meet Marion and apologize; he is humbled. Marion, for a brief moment, is elevated. She becomes a shining example of Christian endurance through trials and false accusations. She is a representative of a truly virtuous Christian, who rises beyond those considered her betters. The scene is brief, yet the lingering suggestion is that Marion has proven herself worthy of being part of a different type of society, one better than the level of Betsy, one even better than the Spencers, who are easily manipulated. Marion does, indeed, rise to better society, a better social position. The Arthur Spencers, Arthur being the brother of Mr. Spencer, know Marion from before her service with the Spencers, since she sewed some clothing for them; they never doubt her honesty. It is only because they had to leave the city that they were not there to defend her to the Spencers. The Arthur Spencers are the society of which Marion is worthy, and they offer her a position as head nurse, a position superior to that which she held with the Spencers. The story, at the end, becomes one of limited social mobility, where the honest and faithful are rewarded.

This scene, one of the final scenes of the story, challenges the very careful constructions of class hierarchy and upper-class ideologies that the *Penny Post* attempts to create through its prefaces and literature. Though, in the end, Marion is still a servant (an “upper” servant, that is) and Mr. Spencer is still the squire, the story suggests there is something other than social distinction and birth which elevate and make one “superior” to another. That something is Christian endurance, which Mr. Lee foreshadows at the beginning of the story when he admonishes Marion to be obedient and faithful no matter

what she should encounter. This story seems desperate to address working-class concerns and values in a way that will both reinforce Tractarian beliefs and appease the working classes. However, because of the competing and contrary nature of the values of the different classes, the story ends by almost subverting its own attempts to reinforce class structure.

Especially when viewed next to “The Heart-Stone,” the themes of the stories show the intricate way the *Penny Post* attempts to address a working-class audience and, evidently, an upper-class audience. “The Heart-Stone” directs itself towards an upper-class audience of *young women* and examines the importance of maintaining class and society hierarchies. Though “Marion,” by contrast, suggests the importance of servants remaining obedient and loyal in their positions, it also provides a counterexample of one working-class young woman who becomes superior to someone of the upper classes, even if for just a moment.

One final attribute of both these stories that needs mentioning is the “level” of prose (the diction, syntax, etc.) both assumed and used in these stories. As scholars have suggested, literature for the working classes was often simplified to appeal to an uneducated audience (Altholz 136; James 114). These two stories, and the magazine in general, suggest otherwise. Even “Thomas Hooper,” “Marion,” and the other stories that seem to directly appeal to the working classes make assumptions about their working-class audience. Though these stories contain few literary allusions and the syntax is rarely complex, they contain many religious allusions and discussions of religious doctrines that suggest an audience educated enough to know them or at least be able to quickly understand them. In “Thomas Hooper,” for example, the parson goes into great detail explaining the principle of true repentance. Much as Keble preached, he saw that Thomas Hooper (and by extension a working-class audience) had the ability to understand and reflect on complex doctrinal issues. In Marion, there are

several religious allusions to faith and persecution, and Marion, in a way becomes a saint in the way she “does all to the Lord Jesus” and patiently endures the false accusations massed against her (208). As these examples suggest, the mark of most of the literature of the *Penny Post* is its didacticism, and as I have mentioned above with “The Heart-Stone,” the narrator is not afraid to address an upper-class audience and explain exactly what the purpose of the story is and what his upper-class audience should understand. Though this could suggest that the *Penny Post* was directing itself only at a working-class audience, these stories are both for the working classes and the upper classes, as the stories that directly appeal to an upper-class audience reveal. “The Heart-Stone” and “Marion” and the audiences they are directed at represent the dual nature of the magazine: how it both attempts to appeal to the working classes and at the same time it finds itself addressing the upper classes as well, in an attempt to reinforce upper-class Tractarian beliefs.

Conclusion: The *Penny Post* as a Case Study

As I have argued, the *Penny Post* claims to establish itself as a magazine for a working-class audience, to provide “sound and useful reading” to defend and define the Church of England according to the ideals of the Oxford Movement. Yet even in its own prefaces it complicates this claim by asking another audience, an audience of “friends” to aid in the magazine’s survival. Some of the stories of the *Penny Post*, however, do indeed address and reconcile challenges the Tractarian clergymen encountered as they spread the ideas of the Oxford Movement in local parishes, such as the ideals of confession and the pastor-parishioner relationship in “Thomas Hooper.” However, this story is accompanied by other stories and essays that seem to target an upper-class audience, namely the “Model Gallery” and “What Are the Uses of Our Cathedrals?,” which reinforce class-based stereotypes of the working classes and directly address an upper-class audience. These stories and essays show

the complexity of the *Penny Post's* mission to reach the working classes and demonstrate that the magazine, by trying to reinforce upper-class values and address working-class concerns, created a dual audience of both classes. This duality, as I have argued, becomes most clear in the juxtaposition of two longer, serialized stories, "The Heart-Stone" and "Marion," which shows the complexity of how the *Penny Post* addresses two different audiences and its inability to reconcile the competing needs of both of those audiences.

The *Penny Post* claims to be for the working classes, and it at times appears to successfully both reinforce the conservative values of upper-class Tractarians and address concerns and needs of a working-class audience, yet it consistently loses sight of this audience, undermining and contradicting Tractarian teachings about the capabilities of the working classes and the need for a type of unity (or at least a friendly relationship) between the classes. From this prejudice against the working classes, emerges the evidence of an upper-class audience, which is accompanied by sincere efforts to teach an upper-class audience the appropriate manner to interact with the working classes. Though it is difficult to explain the reasoning behind the complexity of how the *Penny Post* addresses and responds to its assumed audience (without evidence from the editors and authors themselves), I would suggest that the creators of the *Penny Post*, as upper-class clergymen and Tractarian followers, were unable to escape from their own upper-class values and found themselves working through the complicated relationship between the classes from both perspectives: the working-class perspective, which it would often succeed at understanding, and the upper-class perspective, from which it would often bring contradictory prejudices. The creators of the *Penny Post* were responding to important societal and religious challenges, and they attempted to do so from multiple perspectives, which created contradictions and perhaps undermined their original goals, yet shows the sincerity with which they approached their

task. The *Penny Post* becomes a place of discussion of these issues as it attempted to reconcile the differences in ideology and values between the privileged and the unprivileged.

The distinctive position of the *Penny Post* in relation to the Oxford Movement and its efforts to reach a working-class audience allows this magazine to bring insight into discussions of religious and class issues within the Church of England. It shows us that the Tractarians were very much interested in the working classes and in understanding and responding to their needs as both readers and parishioners. The literary nature of the magazine suggests that it considered periodical literature a prime means to discuss and attempt to reconcile the challenges and complexities of the class system and the ways the class system and its ideologies prevented Christian ideals from being implemented in the parishes. Yet it is the complexity of how the magazine deals with these social issues that becomes most fascinating. The *Penny Post's* frank obsession with founding itself on upper-class values of paternalism and class hierarchy reveals that Tractarians saw themselves as the caregivers of the less fortunate. However, the magazine's inability to stay true to these values while also addressing working-class concerns and its ability to at times sincerely consider and resolve religious concerns shows the complexities of class structure and religious issues and suggests that it was just as complex and difficult to address those concerns. The *Penny Post* allows us to see the Tractarians differently: they did care about society's concerns, and they attempted to respond to those concerns through literature.

My intent has been to present the *Penny Post* as a type of case study to show what insight working-class religious periodicals can bring into our understanding of class and religion and also how periodical literature functioned in Victorian society. These periodicals have been largely ignored by scholars, despite what they may offer: a complex and dynamic understanding of issues just as complex and another way in which Victorian authors and

audiences attempted to understand and respond to their world. The way these periodicals have been undervalued denies us the opportunity to see what they can offer our understanding of Victorian periodicals and culture and what they can reveal about *our* obsession with the Victorian period.

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