New Blackfriars

DOI:10.1111/nbfr.12520

Pusey and Scripture: Dead End or Fertile Ground?

Brian Douglas

Abstract

Pusey is often characterised as obscurantist and conservative in his rejection of the higher literary criticism of the Bible in the later part of the nineteenth century. Much of the criticism of Pusey has focused on a limited assessment of Pusey as a scriptural scholar and on unfair psychological analysis. This article examines Pusey's epistemology more deeply and concludes that he had a breadth of vision which commends itself to the modern world as a critique of reason rather than a rejection of reason. Pusey's role as a biblical scholar is reassessed within the broad context of the Oxford Movement.

Keywords

Pusey, Scripture, epistemology, critique of reason, Oxford University, Germany

Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800-1882) was an English clergyman and academic who became the Professor of Hebrew at Oxford University in 1828 and remained in that position until his death in 1882. Pusey was distinguished by his biblical scholarship, not only in Hebrew but also other biblical languages,[1] and in theology more generally, including eucharistic theology.[2] Pusey was critical and controversial in his many written works and both hated and loved in nineteenth century Britain. Even in modern times very negative views of Pusey

[1] Timothy Larsen, 'Anglo-Catholics: E.B. Pusey and Holy Scripture', in T. Larsen, *A People of One Book: The Bible and the Victorians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[2] See Brian Douglas, *The Eucharistic Theology of Edward Bouverie Pusey: Sources, Context and Doctrine within the Oxford Movement and Beyond* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015).

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers

https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

continue to be expressed[3] while others see him as consistent and wise.[4]

Matthew in his criticisms of Pusey, accuses him of abandoning the supposed more liberal and broad church vision of his early years and adopting instead 'a strict, dogmatic, and closed view of faith and scholarship'[5] which left behind his professional, scholarly and intellectual interests and substituted a 'dogma' that was 'incompatible with the liberal Anglican view of history'.[6] For Pusey, says Matthew, 'any approach not wholly committed to doctrinal catholicity became dangerous' and so he spent the rest of his life 'devoted to the construction of a vast anti-modernist edifice',[7] which included, in Matthew's view, a retreat from Protestantism since he argued, perhaps correctly, that Pusey saw Protestantism as too open to individual self-analysis and so untrustworthy. In Matthew's assessment, Pusey attempted to embrace the ancient way of uncorrupted Catholic piety in a partisan and unscholarly manner. This assessment continues into modern times in Daniel Inman's book on modern English theology at Oxford. In commenting on Pusey's studies in Germany Inman notes Matthew's belief that Pusey embraced historicist techniques in relation to Scripture and in so doing became 'a forerunner of later liberal Anglican historical enquiry'[8] but that he later developed a 'growing distaste of historical-critical method' with the result that Pusey 'buried' he earlier views and 'retreated into dogma.'[9] Inman believes that this retreat was so powerful that Pusey developed a 'subsequent determination to deliver Oxford from the godless professorial system of Germany.'[10]

Matthew saw Pusey's dogmatism as explicit[11] in his 1864 lectures on the book of *Daniel*, entitled *Daniel the Prophet*,[12] where Pusey specifically rejected the emerging higher criticism of the Bible in the nineteenth century expressed in contemporary works such as *Essays and Reviews.*[13] Inman agrees with this assessment.[14] Pusey described

[3] See H.G.G. Matthew, 'Edward Bouverie Pusey: From Scholar to Tractarian', *The Journal of Theological Studies*, XXXII (1981), pp. 101-124.

[4] David Brown, 'Pusey as consistent and wise: Some comparisons with Newman', *Anglican and Episcopal History,* 71 (2002), 3, pp. 328-349.

[5] Matthew, 'Edward Bouverie Pusey', p. 115.

[6] Matthew, 'Edward Bouverie Pusey', p. 118.

[7] Matthew, 'Edward Bouverie Pusey', p. 118.

[8] Daniel Inman, *The Making of Modern English Theology: God and the Academy at Oxford 1833-1945* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), p. 47.

[9] Inman, *The Making of Modern English Theology*, p. 48.

[10] Inman, *The Making of Modern English Theology*, p. 49.

[11] Matthew, 'Edward Bouverie Pusey', p. 115.

[12] Edward Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet: Nine Lectures delivered in the Divinity School of the University of Oxford* (London: Parker, 1868).

[13] *Essays and Reviews* (London: Parker, 1860).

[14] Inman, *The Making of Modern English Theology*, pp. 109-111.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers

https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Essays and Reviews as 'that tide of scepticism … let loose upon the young and uninstructed'.[15] For Pusey, *Essays and Reviews* had taken the position that 'the old faith was no longer tenable'[16] and in so doing had undermined people's faith. This set of essays was a collection by seven authors, including Mark Pattison and Benjamin Jowett, who believed in free enquiry in religious matters, including a liberal interpretation of Scripture.[17] Pattison pointed to 'the growth and gradual diffusion through all religious thinking of the supremacy of reason'.[18] Pattison took a view of human reason suggesting that it was 'a system opposed to revealed religion' and that 'a person … who surveys the course of English theology during the eighteenth century will have no difficulty in recognising that throughout all discussions, underneath all controversies, and common to all parties, lies the assumption of the supremacy of reason in matters of religion'.[19] Pusey rejected this thinking and had many years earlier objected to it in his *Lectures on Types and Prophecies* and dismissed 'the treatment of prophecy as a kind of evidence' where there is a 'superficial rationalizing character'.[20] Pusey in *Daniel the Prophet* denied the view 'that God should reveal Himself to His creature man, in any other way than by operation of man's natural reason'.[21] What Pusey rejected 'is the type of thinking that combines confidence in autonomous reason with the empiricist view that knowledge is limited to the experience of the senses and reflection on it'.[22] For Pusey this type of thinking resulted in too much emphasis on the rational and empirical where science can easily become 'as if our faith were to depend upon *our* knowing the answer'[23] or where people were 'laying down the laws upon which it beseems their Maker to act' and that when this happens 'they forget that He *is* their Maker'.[24] Pusey saw reason as much more than this and so rejected any epistemology that defines reason narrowly as scientism or mere sensual evidence. For Pusey reason involved

[15] Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet*, p. iii.

[16] Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet*, p. iv.

[17] Benjamin Jowett, 'On the Interpretation of Scripture', in *Essays and Reviews* (London: Parker, 1860), pp. 330-433.

[18] See Mark Pattison, 'Tendencies of Religious Thought in England 1688-1750', in *Essays and* Reviews (London: Parker, 1860), p. 257.

[19] Pattison, 'Tendencies of Religious Thought in England', p. 257.

[20] Edward Pusey, *Lectures on Types and Prophecies*, Unpublished manuscript in the Library of Pusey House, Oxford, 1836, p. 9. See also Brian Douglas, 'Pusey's *"Lectures on Types and Prophecies of the Old Testament"*: Implications for Eucharistic Theology', *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 14 (2012), 2, pp. 194-216.

[21] Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet*, p. xiv.

[22] See George Westhaver, *The Living Body of the Lord: E.B. Pusey's 'Types and Prophecies of the Old Testament*, PhD Thesis, Durham University, 2012. Available in Durham E-Theses Online: http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/6373, p. 33.

[23] Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet*, p. xxiv.

[24] Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet*, p. xvi.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers

https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

participation in the divine life, operating as character and perception where there are matters 'which human reason cannot explain'.[25] This is why in the *Lectures on Types and Prophecies* he is able to say that 'our highest knowledge of God must be our indistinctest'.[26] Matthew sees none of this in coming to the conclusion that intellectually and theologically Pusey 'led Anglo-Catholicism, which he did so much to establish, into a dead end'[27] by failing to be open to new ideas and more liberal agendas. In reality Pusey was exploring ideas of epistemology in a way that prefigured modern reflection and leading Anglo-Catholicism into new and fertile ground, as will be discussed later in this article. Pusey was presenting a critique of reason that allowed for the supernatural as a way of knowing. For Pusey, 'the study of Scripture requires not simply certain analytical tools and extensive knowledge, but a character which displays likeness with God'.[28] This suggests that 'the Christian seeks understanding by acting on what is grasped only imperfectly and by faith, and by this response of the whole person, the eye of intellect is turned toward the divine light'[29] rather than mere human intellectual contemplation.

Paul Avis in his assessment of Pusey refers to him as not the most appealing of churchmen or thinkers but nonetheless concedes that he is intriguing and enigmatic. Avis's opinion is based on what he sees as a clear-cut *volte-face* which saw Pusey move from what Avis describes, seemingly in agreement with Matthew, as liberal Protestantism to reactionary Anglo-Catholicism.[30] For Avis there is a decisive break in Pusey's thinking, a *caesura*, between the early and the later Pusey. Avis argues that in his early years Pusey admired Luther and Luther's understanding of Scripture, that he praised the Reformers and the Reformation and even called Calvin a saint.[31] Avis also argues that in Pusey's first book, *An Historical Enquiry into the Probable Causes of the Rationalist Character lately Predominant in the Theology of Germany. Part I Theology of Germany*,[32] subsequently known here as *Theology of Germany*, he espoused theology 'as a genuine Liberal Anglican'[33] and that such a position was tempered by the Enlightenment

[25] Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet*, p. xxiv.

[26] Pusey, *Lectures on Types and Prophecies*, p. 2.

[27] Matthew, 'Edward Bouverie Pusey', p. 123.

[28] Westhaver, *The Living Body of the Lord*, p. 87.

[29] Westhaver, *The Living Body of the Lord*, p. 88.

[30] Paul Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church*, (London: T&T Clark, 2002), p. 224.

[31] Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church*, p. 226.

[32] Edward Pusey, *An Historical Enquiry into the Probable Causes of the Rationalist Character lately Predominant in the Theology of Germany. Part I* (London: Rivington, 1828).

[33] Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church*, p. 229.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers

https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and tinged with Romanticism. Avis dismisses the suggestion made by Frappell that Pusey's move from liberal thinking to Anglo-Catholicism was less clear-cut and that there was continuity between the earlier and later periods.[34] Avis describes Frappell's argument as 'special pleading'.[35] In Frappell's defence it needs to be noted that at the early stage of Pusey's life 'his liberalism was entirely at the service of his orthodoxy'[36] thereby suggesting that Pusey was exposed to the influence of liberal ideas but committed at the same time to orthodoxy. Frappell calls this a 'mediating position'[37] where Pusey was prepared to accept aspects of what he had seen in Germany, particularly the scholarship and piety, alongside his commitment to orthodoxy. Westhaver agrees with Frappell, arguing that the differences between Pusey's views before and after his visits to Germany are no where near as great as some would argue.[38] This conclusion seems lost on both Matthew and Inman and they seem too quick to dismiss Pusey as a conservative who retreated into a dead-end. For Westhaver there is a need to be clearer about the distinction between what Pusey saw as knowledge, since religious knowledge was not merely intellectual knowledge, related to a move from liberalism to Anglo-Catholicism, but participation in the divine life.[39]

This mediating position was something Pusey carried into later life since he sought to maintain balance between biblical and patristic orthodoxy and catholic truth while at the same time valuing knowledge gained through experience. Pusey seems to have been greatly influenced by Tholuck, while studying in Germany in the late 1820s, who adopted a mediating position between stale orthodoxy, rationality and pietistic enthusiasm, not as a compromise between different positions but as a theology.[40] Pusey was impressed by Tholuck and this mediating position and as Frappell argues it was Tholuck's linguistic ability that reassured Pusey's concerns that pietism was not incompatible with reverence for the word of God.[41]

Pusey certainly rejected modern historical-critical thinking, especially in his lectures entitled *Daniel the Prophet*, although care is needed here since Pusey's objections to historical criticism were more about epistemology than biblical theology. It is this nuanced view that Matthew and Inman fail to appreciate. Pusey's concern was to reject

[34] Leighton Frappell, '"Science" in the Service of Orthodoxy', in Perry Butler (ed.) *Pusey Rediscovered* (London: SPCK, 1983), pp. 1-33.
[35] Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church*, p. 225.
[36] Frappell, '"Science" in the Service of Orthodoxy', p. 12.
[37] Frappell, '"Science" in the Service of Orthodoxy', p. 12.
[38] Westhaver, *The Living Body of the Lord*, p. 43, Note 59.
[39] Westhaver, *The Living Body of the Lord*, p. 81.
[40] Frappell, '"Science" in the Service of Orthodoxy', p. 11.
[41] Frappell, '"Science" in the Service of Orthodoxy', p. 11.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers
https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

an over-reliance on science and empirical method and to place science in right relationship to faith, rather than to reject science *per se.* Nockles confirms that this was the Tractarian attitude to science and in fact the Tractarians saw scientific discovery as positive and having little or nothing to do with negative reactions to science by the Evangelicals.[42] According to Nockles 'it was not science as such, but the new breed of "gentlemen of science" represented by the activities of the British Association, and the new and radical definition of the meaning and realm of science that they propagated, which the Tractarians repudiated', since the British Association presented 'claims to absolute intellectual authority, without regard to the claims of Revelation'.[43] At the Church Congress in Norwich in 1865 Pusey explained the Tractarian view and delivered a paper related to Scripture and science.[44] Here Pusey argued that:

> Physical science and faith are not commensurate. Faith relates to that which is supernatural; science, to things natural; faith *rests* upon the supernatural; science, upon man's natural powers of observation, induction, combination, inference, deduction; faith has to do chiefly with the invisible; science, with this visible order of things. Science relates to causes and effects, the laws by which God upholds His material creation, or its past history. It is purely material. Faith relates to God, His Revelation, His Word. Faith has the certainty of a Divine gift; science has the certainty of human reasoning. Faith is one Divine, God-given, habit of mind.[45]

Pusey does not reject science out of hand, rather he distinguished science from faith and noted that faith is based on the supernatural whereas science is based on the natural. Pusey did not reject human reason but made the point that human reason is not the means by which people come to faith and know the revelation of God. While science and faith were not commensurate in Pusey's view, each was also seen as a legitimate way of knowing. Pusey's concern here was about epistemology, that is, with the different ways of knowing for both faith and science, not some conservative rant dismissing science and scientific method altogether. Pusey's fear was that science, narrowly and exclusively applied, in the form of higher criticism,

[42] Peter Nockles, 'An Academic Counter-Revolution: Newman and Tractarian Oxford's Idea of a University', *History of Universities*, 10 (1991), p. 161.

[43] Nockles, 'An Academic Counter-Revolution', p. 163. The British Association was a symbol of a rationalizing and liberalizing spirit which the Tractarians rejected.

[44] Edward Pusey, 'The Spirit in which the researches of learning and science should be applied to the study of the Bible', in *Authorized Report of the Church Congress held at Norwich on the 3rd, 4th and 5th October, 1865* (Norwich: Cundall and Miller, 1866), pp. 181-198.

[45] Pusey, 'The Spirit in which the researches of learning and science should be applied to the study of the Bible', p. 189.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers

https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

as it was expressed in *Essays and Reviews*, would 'supplant historic Christianity by a new religion of science'.[46]

Pusey's Anglo-Catholic successors dismissed his views and worked to embrace the historical-critical approaches to Scripture. Charles Gore in his 1889 book *Lux Mundi* for example saw science as the ally of Christianity in an attempt to align the doctrine of the incarnation with scientific views of his day.[47] As Seitz points out: 'Where Pusey was persuaded there was danger, Gore was persuaded there was promise'.[48] Pusey was more cautious than conservative and prepared to take the issues of epistemology seriously. He was less conservative and more cautious about the type of science that is applied to higher criticism of Scripture.

Frappell's position is that Pusey cannot be so easily classified as Protestant at one point of time and then suddenly Anglo-Catholic at another. Frappell, in a newer work not used by Avis, argues that the Oxford Movement involved not only a recovery of the catholic tradition of Anglicanism but that it was 'also a movement of Protestant regeneration'[49] since it always stood for the all-sufficiency of Scripture but at the same time took the mediating position of acknowledging the teaching authority of the Church and renewing the connections between credal formularies and the inspired Word of God. In all this Frappell argues that Pusey was 'the most Protestant' since for Pusey it was always important 'to prove the ancient credal foundations of the faith against scripture'.[50] Pusey took the view that the single witness of the Apostolic and Reformed Anglican Church based its authentic expression on scriptural faith. Such a Protestant reverence for Scripture never left Pusey in his later years and so he moved from a liberal to a more conservative or perhaps more accurately, to a more cautious position, in relation to higher criticism. Indeed 'Scripture exegesis was … at the heart of Pusey's divinity'[51] over his whole scholarly career. This suggests that 'on inspection Pusey's "liberalism" often turns out to be a conservative tactic to spike the guns of liberal and evangelical opponents'[52] since it was the balancing of a seemingly Protestant respect for Scripture with

[46] Nockles, 'An Academic Counter-Revolution', p. 163.

[47] Charles Gore, *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation* (London: John Murray, 1889).

[48] Christopher Seitz, *Figured Out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture* (Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), p. 54.

[49] Leighton Frappell, 'Protestant and Catholic in the Oxford Fathers', in John A. Moses (ed.) *From Oxford to the Bush. Essays on Catholic Anglicanism in Australia* (Adelaide: SPCKA, 1997), p. 263.

[50] Frappell, 'Protestant and Catholic in the Oxford Fathers', p. 268.

[51] Frappell, 'Protestant and Catholic in the Oxford Fathers', p. 269.

[52] Frappell, 'Protestant and Catholic in the Oxford Fathers', p. 269.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers

https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Catholic respect for tradition which involved him in a harmony of Scripture, creed and holiness of life.

More recently Robert Knetsch also argues against the idea of a sudden change in Pusey, stating that 'it would be too strong to suggest that there was a conversion of sorts [in Pusey] from the early, German-influenced Pusey to the hard-nosed and sometimes off-putting conservative who was the visible leader of the Oxford Movement'.[53] Knetsch's work suggests that the hatred of Pusey by some and the failure to appreciate the depth of Pusey's thought resulted in a rather caricatured assessment which led to presuppositions of rapid change rather than the adoption of a more mediating style.

The impact of Pusey's studies in Germany in the 1820s in the development of a mediating style between rationalism and experience was not simple, such that he clearly rejected its influence at a point in time and became reactionary. It was more multi-layered, with the Bible and the early church Fathers being sown as seeds in Pusey during his time in Germany and growing in his subsequent writings. The influence of Neander and his respect for history in these matters influenced Pusey and this seems to have been lasting. It is sometimes suggested that Pusey's later rejection of his two editions of his *Theology of Germany* is evidence that there was discontinuity between the German period of Protestant liberalism and his later Anglo-Catholic period. While it is true that Pusey did distance himself from his *Theology of Germany*[54] the reasons are less clear. Perhaps he saw the books as aligning him too clearly with the type of thinking he experienced in Germany and which he himself rejected because of its over-reliance on intellectual activity alone. Pusey's more mediating style acknowledged that the intellect was never enough in a life of faith. This is why Frappell suggests that any liberalism on the part of Pusey was in fact a conservative tactic to establish his mediating position more firmly. What seems to be commented on less is that through the whole German period and into his later life Pusey maintained a continuity with his commitment to the Fathers of the early Church.[55] Any discontinuity in Pusey's thinking may not be as clear cut as some might suggest.

It also seems that as late of 1845 and 1846 Pusey was employing the methods of Germany in his lectures on the Old Testament at

[53] Robert Knetsch, *A Darkened Reading: A Reception History of the Book of Isaiah in a Divided Church* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2014), p. 127

[54] Pusey left instructions in his will that they were not to be reprinted.

[55] William Franklin, 'The Impact of Germany on the Anglican Catholic Revival in the Nineteenth Century', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, LXI (1992), 4 December, p. 442.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers

https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Oxford[56] and so mediating his style between the liberalism he had found in Germany and the Anglo-Catholicism he had adopted. All this of course is in the face of Pusey's stated earlier decision not to employ the methods of Germany at Oxford as he communicated this intention to Newman.[57] If any clear-cut *volte-face* occurred it seems to be exactly the opposite of what Avis suggests. Instead of decisively leaving his liberalism behind, Pusey actually adopted it long after his early years. Pusey's transition from liberal Protestantism to Anglo-Catholicism seems less related to moving from a liberal position to a conservative one and more to the development of a cautious mediating style. Pusey was conservative, but, as Frappell suggests, he exchanged the source of liberalism, its commitment to the authority of the 'science' found in the theology of Germany, and perhaps even the initial enthusiasm for it, for the authority of Scripture and the early church Fathers. It was the study of the Fathers that convinced Pusey of 'catholic truth', since for Pusey this encompassed a reverence for Scripture free of modern dependence on reason alone. This did not mean that Pusey became uncritical but rather it meant that he embraced a wider epistemology and rejected intellectual reason alone as a source of knowledge.

The Tractarian or Oxford Movement rejected the human system of Rome which functioned as the prime example of orthodoxy while at the same time rejecting the propositionalism of Protestantism.[58] It was Pusey's acceptance of the authority of the early church Fathers which was used in the service of orthodoxy and which in its reverence for Scripture drove Pusey back to his earlier Protestant position rather than thrusting him into reactionary Anglo-Catholicism. As Rowell observes, 'the theological vision of the Oxford Movement was in large measure a rediscovery and reinterpretation of patristic theology. The typological exegesis of Scripture and the strong sacramentalism of the Fathers commended themselves to men who already had begun to criticize the evidence theology of the eighteenth century'.[59] Pusey adopted all these positions in his thinking and it was these different epistemological frameworks that undergirded his thinking on ways of knowing. Even as early as 1836 Pusey was taking this mediating position in his *Lectures on Types and Prophecies of the Old Testament*

[56] See the evidence of Stanley, quoted in Edward Bill, *University Reform on Nineteenth-Century Oxford: A Study of Henry Halford Vaughan, 1811-1885* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 252. This is discussed in Chapter 1 of this book.

[57] Letter of Edward Pusey to John Newman, Berlin, 25 November, 1826, quoted in Henry Liddon (J.O. Johnston and R. Wilson, eds.), *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey: Doctor of Divinity, Canon of Christ Church, Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1893), I, p. 102.

[58] Frappell, '"Science" in the Service of Orthodoxy', p. 22.

[59] Geoffrey Rowell, *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities in the Catholic Revival of Anglicanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 9.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers
https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

where he used the Scriptures, the analogical approach of the Fathers, the insights of the Romantic poets and the creative assumption of moderate realism to argue for a rediscovery of sacramental realism, while at the same time taking the account of the Old Testament seriously as a type of the New Testament. Frappell picks this up as he comments that for Pusey the incarnation was the centre of this work, 'expressing his sense of mystery and awe at God's condescension in a developed sacramentalism'.[60] For Pusey therefore, it could be argued that the move from the Protestant science he encountered in Germany to Tractarianism is more a matter of continuity than a *volte-face* such that Pusey adopted a mediating position of orthodoxy, harmonising both Protestant and Catholic thinking. For Pusey this seems to be re-appraisal or perhaps a development in theological understanding and epistemology rather than a clear-cut change.

Those who see Pusey only through the lens of obscurantism and conservatism, such as Matthew, Inman and Avis, will usually cite Pusey's lectures on the book of *Daniel*, entitled *Daniel the Prophet,* as evidence to support such a view, since it is here that Pusey distances himself from any higher criticism of the biblical text.[61] Avis argues that *Daniel the Prophet* was a witness to 'the betrayal of the light' Pusey had seen as a young scholar in Germany and that the work is an 'acceptance of a life-rejecting spirituality and theological defensiveness'.[62] Livesley says that Pusey's *Daniel the Prophet* had 'become almost a byword in some quarters for an unscholarly and unbudging conservatism'.[63] Forrester refers to these lectures as 'monumentally conservative',[64] but for Pusey the choice of the book of *Daniel* as the subject of a biblical commentary was a test case, since the emerging higher critics saw the book of *Daniel* as a vindication for their views against conservative views.[65] Pusey himself admitted this when speaking of 'unbelieving critics' who 'considered their attacks upon it [The Book of Daniel] to be one of their greatest triumphs'.[66] Pusey, however, set out 'to meet the pseudo-criticism on its own grounds'[67] taking the words of Jesus on Daniel as recorded

[60] Frappell, '"Science" in the Service of Orthodoxy', p. 25.

[61] Matthew, 'Edward Bouverie Pusey', p. 115 and Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church*, p. 213.

[62] Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church*, p. 233.

[63] A.G. Livesley, 'E.B. Pusey as Hebrew Scholar', *Expository Times*, 94 (1982), 2, pp. 43-47.

[64] David Forrester, *Young Doctor Pusey: A Study in Development* (London: Mowbray, 1989), p. 50.

[65] Jowett, 'On the Interpretation of Scripture', p. 371.

[66] Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet*, p. vi.

[67] Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet*, p. xii.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers

https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in the Gospels[68] as the end of the matter. In Pusey's view if these words of Jesus were dismissed, then this is no true prophecy, since Jesus could not have said something erroneous. Pusey believed that the modern critics had questioned the prophecies of the book of *Daniel* on historical grounds but this was no argument for Pusey since the historical portions of the book of *Daniel* were for him 'no history'[69] and 'the Book of Daniel has nothing to do with secular history'[70] but is rather a record of God's supernatural events where 'whatever details are given, the prophecies are neither chronology nor history'.[71]

In defence of his position and in opposition to the higher critics, Pusey methodically works through every objection and mounts arguments against them in the lectures on the book of *Daniel*. His command of the linguistic material is apparent, so much so that it has been described as unanswerable.[72] Christopher Seitz, in an attempt to see the relevance of typological approaches to Scripture in the modern world, puts the view that Pusey's work on *Daniel* is so liberal that it is 'filled with almost impenetrable rationalism',[73] suggesting the very opposite of the change to conservatism that others see occurring in Pusey from early to latter years. The fact that he had to some extent been pushed into rationalism to defend his position on the book of *Daniel* makes a case for a mediating position where aspects of the more liberal position were adopted by Pusey as late as the 1860s and clearly not abandoned in a dramatic change or conversion to an Anglo-Catholic dogmatism. Pusey's successor as the Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford University, Samuel Rolles Driver, described Pusey's work in his commentary on the *Book of Daniel*, and despite taking a different view to Pusey, he saw it as 'extremely learned and thorough',[74] again suggesting a more mediating style in Pusey late in his life. More recent Iman admits that Pusey's work on *Daniel* was so significant that it has not been adequately challenged.[75] Pusey's typological notion of prophecy is indicative of this mediating style which drove him forward and so his great achievement is being able

[68] Matthew 24: 15 – 'So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand)' and Mark 13: 14 – 'But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains'.

[69] Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet*, p. viii.

[70] Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet*, p. ix.

[71] Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet*, p. x.

[72] Larsen, 'E. B. Pusey and Holy Scripture', p. 513.

[73] Christopher Seitz, *Figured Out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture* (Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), p. 17.

[74] Samuel Driver, *The Book of Daniel. With Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), pp. ciii-civ.

[75] Inman, *The Making of English Theology*, p. 110.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers

https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to see the Old Testament in its own right and pointing as a type to the New Testament. Seitz admits that 'there has been a lively and, for the most part, genuinely illuminating reappraisal of typology and allegory'[76] in modern times, thereby suggesting that Pusey's work is helpful in pointing to how the two testaments of Scripture can be reconnected in order to find a two-testament witness to God in the modern day. This is an indication of fertile ground rather than a dead end in interpreting Scripture. Pusey's commitment to typology in the biblical criticism was taken up by other traditions. The later Roman Catholic movement called *nouvelle théologie* emerging in Europe from the time of Möhler[77] in the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century with the work of theologians such as Daniélou[78] and de Lubac,[79] championed the typological approach as well as valuing the work of the early church Fathers. The *nouvelle théologie* argued for a recovery of the mystery of sacramental ontology based on realist theology. The work of these Roman Catholic theologians resonates with and was anticipated by Pusey's views of Scripture and the sacraments[80] and has been taken up by the modern Reformed theologian, Hans Boersma, who advocates the important place of typology in Scriptural criticism and sacramental ontology.[81]

For Seitz, and indeed for Pusey, 'the Old Testament is not to be heard apart from the New, or the New apart from the Old'.[82] Like Pusey, Seitz is interested in being faithful to both testaments such that 'it would be simply inconceivable to speak of a "development" from one testament to the next that avoids, rejects, or minimizes the ongoing role of the Old Testament as first-order theological talk'.[83] The role of both testaments is to reveal 'God as he is and as he has disclosed his identity in Israel and Jesus.'[84] It is perhaps too easy to dismiss Pusey's *Daniel the Prophet* as flawed by conservatism, by judging it outside its own time and with simplistic analyses of Pusey

[76] Seitz, *Figured Out*, p. vii.

[77] Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838) was a German Roman Catholic historian and theologian who interestingly was study at the University of Tübingen at the same time Pusey was a student there in the 1820s.

[78] Jean Daniélou (1905-1974) was a French Roman Catholic Cardinal, theologian and historian.

[79] Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) was a French Roman Catholic Cardinal and theologian.

[80] See Alf Härdelin, 'The Sacraments in the Tractarian Universe', in G. Rowell (ed.) *Tradition Renewed: The Oxford Movement Conference Papers* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986), p. 79 who argues that Pusey anticipated de Lubac in his *Lectures on Types and Prophecies of the Old Testament.*

[81] See Hans Boersma, *Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology: A Return to Mystery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) and Hans Boersma, *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2011).

[82] Seitz, *Figured Out*, p. 6.

[83] Seitz, *Figured Out*, p. 7.

[84] Seitz, *Figured Out*, p. 5.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers

https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and his thinking and without considering the place of typological approaches in the modern day.

Larsen argues that Pusey in *Daniel the Prophet* puts the case for the date of this book as early (around the sixth century BCE). Modern scholars reject this traditional date and argue for a later date (around the second century BCE).[85] Pusey however took the view that the stories in *Daniel* were divinely inspired prophecy and so raised the question of conflict between criticism and faith.[86] This in itself suggests a mediating position where there is balance between scholarship and experience and the idea that for Pusey there is a moral question about how Scripture functions in the church and the lives of people and about the relationship between the two testaments and the nature of prophecy and how that works. Pusey, as Seitz observes, is therefore concerned about the text, the church and the world[87] and these allow us to see his concern for the whole text of Scripture operating in the church and the world, without making any judgments about whether Pusey was right or wrong about matters of dating. Pusey was convinced the book of *Daniel* was either divine or an imposture and so believed that the position adopted by the higher critics must rest on a dogmatic, reasoned denial of the possibility of predictive prophecy.[88] This meant for Pusey that the 'Christian faith, insofar as it is reliant on Scripture's two-testament presentation, is under massive and unprecedented assault, and Pusey is standing on a fault line of enormous proportions'.[89] Pusey's earlier criticism of the theology of Germany and his belief in the typological approach to the Old Testament therefore led him to reject the higher criticism and to affirm the book of *Daniel* as a prophetic work with the traditional date, but did not lead him to reject a mediating style. Larsen argues that it is not sufficient to dismiss Pusey's *Daniel the Prophet* as obscurantist simply because it is conservative in its dating and instead argues that what is needed is an examination of this work, as cogent biblical analysis, and with its contents in context.[90] This meant that 'for Pusey, the scriptures in their entirety required a consistent view of prophecy and miracle, on the one hand, and on the other, the record of the second testament was used as a guide to the proper interpretation of the first'.[91] The wisdom of Pusey's

[85] See John Goldingay, *Daniel: World Biblical Commentary. Volume 30* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1989) and John J. Collins, *Daniel. A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

[86] Goldingay, *Daniel*, p. xxxvi and p. xxxix.

[87] Seitz, *Figured Out*, p. 17.

[88] Collins, *Daniel*, p. 26.

[89] Seitz, *Figured Out*, p. 18.

[90] Larsen, 'E. B. Pusey and Holy Scripture', p. 507.

[91] Seitz, *Figured Out*, p. 19.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers

https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

work relates more to the consistency of his position and the quality of his linguistic work than to his aversion to higher criticism and its overly intellectual approach. As Knetsch concludes: 'What remains constant in Pusey's thought is a rigid rejection of the "orthodoxism" that simplifies the Christian faith into a purely propositional form'.[92] For Pusey it was a question of degree rather than complete rejection of liberalism and reason and it was this preparedness to embrace a mediation between reason and a more conservative view that distinguishes him and his method and prevents a too simplistic analysis of rapid change or conversion during his early years from a liberal to a more conservative view in subsequent and later years. A sole reliance on the propositional nature of the intellect was never sufficient for Pusey, since mystery and the supernatural were not dependent on empirical methods which inevitably focused on physicality in relation to the sacraments.

Pusey's mature theology was based on an epistemology emphasising biblical and patristic models of typology, as well as catholic and Anglican tradition. Pusey's epistemological commitments also valued the mystical experience beyond scientific methodology. An examination of these epistemological commitments is an important way of reassessing Pusey as theologian since it was here that Pusey employed creative thought in exploring ways of knowing and it is also here that Pusey's work has much in common with modern thinking. These epistemological commitments hold out the hope of assessing the depth of Pusey's theological output in ways that move past the psychological caricatures of Pusey which seem to divert the study of Pusey's work into character assessment alone.

Pusey was part of a dynamic movement, the Oxford Movement, that emphasised new ways of knowing where the formation of moral character was emphasised as a reaction to the power of the intellect alone. The belief in a sacramental principle led Pusey and others within the Oxford Movement to adopt and rediscover ways of knowing the presence of God and to be drawn up into the life of God. Peter Nockles argues that the Tractarians reacted against the 'presumptuous turn of mind, the reliance on intellectual ability, supposed to result from instruction addressing itself to the intellect alone'. Instead they emphasised the 'formation of moral character by habit'[93] which involved living in the experience of the mystical, the spiritual and the moral as well as the intellectual. As Nockles argues, 'one of the insights which the Tractarians drew from Aristotle's teaching was that mere "head-knowledge" alone was not enough, that "heart-knowledge" was essential'.[94] Some have misinterpreted these

[92] Knetsch, *A Darkened Reading*, p. 130.
[93] Nockles, 'An Academic Counter-Revolution', p. 156.
[94] Nockles, 'An Academic Counter-Revolution', p. 146.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers
https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

commitments. Matthew, for example, sees Pusey's embrace of ways of knowing other than the purely intellectual,[95] to suggest that Pusey was turning his back on genuine intellectual scholarship and leading Anglo-Catholicism into a dead end. Inman seems to support this conclusion in his belief that Pusey was intent on preserving Oxford from godless German theological method.[96] Nockles however suggests that such an assessment is less than fair since for Pusey intense intellectual activity alone was never enough.[97] For Pusey, George Westhaver observes, there was a vital 'distinction between a higher kind of reason which offers an intuitive vision of spiritual and supra-sensual realities and a lower form of discursive or analytical reason'.[98] It was this spiritual and supra-sensual higher kind of reason that underlay Pusey's epistemological commitment to the sacramental principle and at the same time his rejection of empiricist methodologies, such as those current in the eighteenth century and emerging in the higher biblical criticism in works such as *Essays and Reviews*. Pusey, in his rejection of the higher criticism of the Bible was rejecting the emphasis on the empirical – both evidence and method in the study of theology, but not reason *per se*. He was objecting to the type of epistemology that focussed on the intellect alone and so undervalued the spiritual, the supernatural and the mystical to be found in a sacramental ontology.

For Pusey there was much more at stake than mere intellectual activity. The epistemology that he adopted in his rejection of higher criticism displayed a deep dissatisfaction with the Enlightenment appeal to reason alone, narrowly defined, and in fact what Pusey creatively demonstrated was a critique of reason which inspired a mediating position where he pointed to 'the inadequacy of speculative reason in matters uncognizable by sense'.[99] Speculative reason and empirical methods were not sufficient for Pusey, since, he argued, they could never understand how the Scriptures and the sacraments worked in a supernatural, mystical or spiritual way. Rather for Pusey what was necessary was to listen 'to the voice of nature, the revelation of God within them, and to seek as the direct result of consciousness, the truths which speculation was unable scientifically to justify'.[100]

This is why Pusey in his writings spoke of much more than the exclusive power of speculative reason but instead of 'awe, wonder, the absorbing sense of infinity, of purity, and of holiness' which

[95] Matthew, 'Edward Bouverie Pusey', p. 115.
[96] Inman, *The Making of English Theology*, p. 49.
[97] Nockles, 'An Academic Counter-Revolution', p. 178.
[98] Westhaver, *The Living Body of the Lord,* p. 113.
[99] Pusey, *Theology of Germany,* I, p. 164.
[100] Pusey, *Theology of Germany,* I, p. 164.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers
https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

could 'infuse conviction more directly than reasoning'.[101] In was in so speaking that Pusey perceived God in the natural world by the use of faculties other than the intellect alone. For Pusey, God could not be reduced to concepts alone and to a matter of mind alone. For Pusey, knowing God involved a 'frame of mind'[102] that involved not only the intellect but also the will, affections, conscience and imagination. 'This frame of mind ... impress the feeling of God upon the soul more than any artificial reasoning from final causes' such that this impression is 'made upon us incidentally' in the sense of 'wondering awe'[103] rather than any search for evidence or strategies which 'make conviction their professed object, and recall our minds from the contemplation of these works to reflect on their own convincingness'.[104] So for Pusey:

> We are not formed to seek conviction but to have it. It is brought to us in the way of duty. In all practical matters we live in belief and through acting on belief, believe in the things of God, and thereby attain a higher kind of belief and an insight into our belief. To make a business of obtaining conviction or of providing truth to oneself is, at best, but going out of our way.[105]

Westhaver helpfully observes that Pusey 'describes prophecy as appealing to "feelings" rather than "reasons"'.[106] For Pusey this is 'feeling and following after the Infinite'[107] and in his discussion of the life of ancient Israel he believed that this can apply to the rites and institutions as 'feelings which were to them as sense'.[108] Pusey had earlier confirmed the same in his *Theology of Germany I* where in a critique of reason and seemingly, with influence from the Romantic poets he said: 'the original seat of religion is in the feeling, not in the understanding'.[109] Coleridge spoke about this as 'imagination' saying that the imagination is 'the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception' and 'a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM'.[110] For Coleridge, through the imagination of the human mind, there is participation

[101] Pusey, *Lectures on Types and Prophecies,* p. 6.
[102] Pusey, *Lectures on Types and Prophecies,* p. 6.
[103] Pusey, *Lectures on Types and Prophecies,* p. 6.
[104] Pusey, *Lectures on Types and Prophecies,* p. 6.
[105] Pusey, *Lectures on Types and Prophecies,* p. 6.
[106] Westhaver, *The Living Body of the Lord',* p. 124.
[107] Pusey, *Lectures on Types and Prophecies,* p. 16. There is great similarity here to the work of the modern theologian Catherine Pickstock who also speaks of the 'the presence of the infinite in the finite' and of how 'infinity *does* paradoxically invade the finite'. Pickstock, *After Writing*, p. 62 and p. 66.
[108] Pusey, *Theology of Germany*, I, p. 31.
[109] Pusey, *Theology of Germany*, I, p. 52, note 3.
[110] S. T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria,* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), I, p. 304. See also Brian Douglas and Jane Douglas, 'Pusey and the Romantic Poets:

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers
https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in the divine creative activity, where the finite is engaged with the infinite by sacramental means. This is confirmed by Pusey in supplemental material to the *Lectures on Types and Prophecies* entitled 'Emblematic Language' held at Pusey House, Oxford and cited by George Westhaver. Here Pusey says: 'And thus our very words are two-fold; they are taken from material things, have a material substance, yet act invisibly, have an immaterial meaning, as they are received by the eyes and ears but act on the soul'.[111]

For Pusey, knowledge of God was something to be found and into which to grow, through the grace of God in the Scriptures, in the tradition and in the sacraments, rather than something built on the basis of scientific evidence and intellectual activity. The influence of Bishop Butler in his 1736 book *The Analogy of Religion* was important for Pusey in coming to this realisation. Bishop Joseph Butler (1692-1752) significantly influenced the Tractarians with the distinction between sensation and reflection. For Butler:

> Our external organs of sense are necessary for conveying in ideas to our reflecting powers, yet when these ideas are brought in, we are capable of reflecting in the most intense degree, and of enjoying the great pleasure, and feeling the greatest pain, by means of that reflection, without any assistance from our senses'.[112]

Further Butler observed that 'it does not appear then, that the relation of this gross body to the reflecting being is, in any degree, necessary to thinking; to our intellectual enjoyments and suffering; nor, consequently, that the dissolution or alienation of the former by death, will be the destruction of those present powers, which render us capable of this state of reflection'.[113]

This was not lost on the Tractarians, including Pusey, who saw the relationship between sensations experienced and the ideas of reflection in the implications for the sacramental, where the experience of the sensual or mystical leads the individual to God but where reflection was not dependent on what was within the body. This analysis puts a new light on Pusey's so-called conservatism and places his thought firmly within an ontological framework where there is a preparedness to mediate between intellect and experience. Pusey's epistemology was prepared to accept that knowledge came to people through a variety of sources. This was not to deny the value of science or even higher criticism, but rather in a mediating fashion,

Some Links to Eucharistic Theology', *New Blackfriars,* 98, 1077, September (2017), pp. 539-554.

[111] Edward Pusey, 'Emblematic Language', Supplemental Material to the *Lectures on Types and Prophecies.* Loose papers held at Pusey House, Oxford.

[112] Joseph Butler, *The Analogy of Religion: Natural and Revealed* (London: Dent, 1936), p. 16.

[113] Butler, *The Analogy of Religion*, pp. 16-17.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers

https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press

to argue that these were not the only ways that humans come to know. Clearly for Pusey, the knowledge of God gained experientially through Scripture and the sacraments was just as important as any knowledge gained by scientific endeavour, or through the senses, and there was no purpose in Pusey's mind to deny the spiritual, supernatural and mystical and to affirm only that which could be known through empirical methods.[114]

Pusey questions the place of an exclusive empirical approach and the conceptual foundations on which it is based in any form of Scriptural criticism. This is most noticeable in his 1868 lectures on the biblical book of *Daniel* entitled *Daniel the Prophet*. Pusey questions the conceptual foundations of higher criticism in its seeking after empirical truth alone and denial of tradition. Pusey does not abandon reason but rather seeks a critique of reason. Pusey does this in his mediating style, where he embraces the hermeneutic of Catholic truth, valuing the experience of the individual seeking God through Scripture and the sacraments within the hermeneutic of the catholic tradition he valued. Pusey had a place for the supernatural and the mystical in coming to know God and refused to exclude these ways of knowing in the pursuit of empirical purity. In so doing Pusey's work and legacy is far from a dead end and in fact fertile ground as part of a chain of knowing in the continuing critique of reason in the modern world.

Brian Douglas
The Centre for Public and Contextual Theology (PaCT),
Charles Sturt University
15 Blackall Street
Barton
Australian Capital Territory
2600
Australia

brian.douglas@mac.com

[114] Edward Pusey, *The Spiritual Letters* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1901) and Edward Pusey, *Private Prayers* (Henry Liddon, ed.) (London: Rivington, 1883) together with many of his sermons express an ecstatic joy in the knowledge and experience of God that was beyond any empirical investigation.

© 2019 Provincial Council of the English Province of the Order of Preachers
https://doi.org/10.1111/nbfr.12520 Published online by Cambridge University Press