

TRACTARIANISM THEN AND NOW

ECUMENISM

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By

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OVER the past four weeks my colleagues and I have attempted to adumbrate Tractarianism as it broke on the Church of England in 1833 and developed to 1845 and beyond and to offer an assessment of where the Catholic influence and heritage that it asserted stands today in the contemporary Church. We have looked at the underpinning principles of Tractarianism, its mind and its spirit, in its assertion that the Church of England was both catholic and apostolic. We have considered the doctrine of development particularly associated with John Henry Newman. Father Orford looked at the spirituality of the Oxford Movement and its call to the holiness of living and the contribution that Dr Pusey made to the spiritual ethos of the Movement. Last week the Principal looked at the nature of Catholic priesthood and how the Tractarian understanding transformed the ministerial priesthood of the Church of England, or at least a significant part of it. This evening, in this last lecture, I have been asked to speak about the ecumenical dimension of Tractarianism.

The greatest change from Tractarianism then to Tractarianism now is to be found in the field of ecumenism. Because the Tractarians based their arguments on the Catholic and Apostolic nature of the Church of England, they needed to distance themselves and to distinguish the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church on the continent and its attenuated recusant form in England where, despite emancipatory reforms, it was still under legal constraints and disabilities. There was a distinct strain of anti-catholic polemic in Tractarian writing, as well as anti-protestantism. The criticism of the early Oxford Movement that it was a fifth column for Roman Catholicism and its adherents crypto-papists, is not borne out by the evidence. It hardly entered the head of any Tractarian in the first years of the Movement that it would be interpreted as a Romanising movement. The spark which ignited the Movement was, after all, to do with the proposal to suppress Irish sees and to use the alienated endowments to fund Catholic education. Keble's sermon attacked the government for providing relief to Roman Catholics. The early Tractarians, while asserting the continuity of the Church as Catholic and Apostolic, were equally clear that there was a need to resist the progress of Romanism and to protest against the claims of

the Roman Church: “nothing but these neglected doctrines, faithfully preached, will repress the extension of Popery,” said Newman.¹

One of the early Tractarians, William Palmer, of the old High Church school of theology, thoroughly disapproved of Catholic Emancipation and although he maintained, where some did not, that the Roman Church continued to be part of Christ’s Church up to the Reformation and that the post-Reformation Roman Catholic Church was still part of the true Church because she had not erred on fundamental matters, he believed that she had fallen into grave errors and said that “few things can appear more absurd than the air of triumph with which modern Roman theologians vaunt the unity of their Church in faith, its sole and exclusive possession of authority for the determination of religious controversies, and its freedom from all heresy.”² The Romanising tendency that had been identified by opponents of Tractarianism was, Palmer said, “foreign to the original aims of the Movement” and “a candid examination of the greater parts of the *Tracts for the Times* and of the writings of their authors will sufficiently prove that ... there is throughout a continued avowal of opposition to Rome in general.”³

In one of his early Tractarian sermons Dr Pusey was, uncharacteristically, pithy in his view that the Church of Rome “the Apostolic Church of the West, consecrated by Apostolic blood, showed herself ... the descendant of them who slew the Apostles. There is not an enormity which has been practised against people or kings by miscreants in the name of God but the divines of that unhappy Church have abetted and justified.”⁴ Later and elsewhere Pusey said that the Roman Church had “corrupted and marred the Apostolic doctrine [of the Eucharistic Sacrifice] ... by the error of transubstantiation.”⁵ And the priest-poet John Keble said that the Church of England was “the only Church in this realm which has a right to be quite sure that she has the Lord’s Body to give to His people.”⁶ Yet Dr Pusey and Keble were mild in their criticisms in comparison with John Henry Newman who, in the early days of the Movement, expressed the most vigorous anti-Roman sentiments of the Tractarians. Against his Evangelical background, Newman regarded the Church of Rome and the Papacy as, if not the anti-Christ, certainly fully infected with the spirit of the anti-Christ.⁷ For Newman God “has wonderfully preserved our Church as a true branch of the Church Universal, yet withal preserved free from doctrinal error. It is Catholic and Apostolic, yet not Papistical.”⁸

As early as *Tract 38* in 1834 Newman is rebutting charges of Romanism. He argued that “the theology of the [seventeenth century] divines of the English Church was substantially the same as ours is; and it experienced the full hostility of the Papacy.”

¹ Quoted in F. L. Cross, *Tractarianism and Roman Catholicism*. London, SPCK, [1933] Oxford Movement Centenary Series p. 26

² *Ibid* p. 13

³ *Ibid* p. 14

⁴ E. B. Pusey, *Patience and Confidence, the Strength of the Church*. November 1837

⁵ *Op cit* Cross p. 30

⁶ *Ibid* p. 31

⁷ *Op cit* Cross p. 22. Also, Geoffrey Rowell, *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities of the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism*. Oxford, UP [1983] p. 190

⁸ *Op cit* Cross p. 28

It was in negotiating between the Scylla of Geneva and the Charybdis of Rome, between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, that Newman trod and developed his ideas of the *Via Media*,¹ “free from Roman errors on one side and protestant excesses on the other,”² between the two which “Rome sought to block up the way as fiercely as the Puritans,” he said.³ Newman’s theology of the Anglican *Via Media* was based on the maintenance in the Church of England of continuity and the consent of the Early Church while remaining free from what was regarded as later Roman distortions; the usurpation of the Petrine authority, an overly schematic and legalistic view of doctrine, and of rejection of the protestant doctrinal importations of the Reformation. There were more affinities between the Church of Rome and the Church of England than there were with protestant sects, they shared the same fundamentals of faith and order, notwithstanding Roman corruptions. The Church of England had emerged from the upheavals of the Reformation as Catholic but as reformed.

In *Tract 90* Newman wrote that “[t]he Papacy began in the exertions and passions of man; and what man can make, man can destroy” which was not how Rome saw Christ’s commission to Peter at Caesarea Philippi. “There is nothing,” he wrote, “in the Apostolic system, such as it does not give a bishop.” The Petrine ministry was an ecclesiastical arrangement, it was not a matter *de fide*, of the essence of the Faith, it had developed as a matter of experience, custom and piety and “[t]he whole temper of Romanism, with its over-definition of dogmas is rooted in the misguided belief that the Church has the power to answer every problem in heaven and on earth.” At this stage Newman said that “religion is mysterious, a supernatural gift, originating in the unseen world and only extending into this,” and against this Rome “professes to be a complete theology ... [i]t arranges, adjusts, explains, exhausts every part of the Divine Economy. It [leaves] no region unexplored, no heights unattempted, rounding off its doctrines with a neatness and finish which is destructive of many of the most noble and most salutary exercises of the mind in the individual Christian. The feeling of awe and piety which the mysteriousness of the Gospel should excite fades away under this fictitious illumination.”⁴ He articulated the difference between a religion which is rooted in mystery and awe, and a religion which is rooted in exact dogmatic definition; and a distinction between Rome as an ideal and Rome as he found it in fact. He had little affection, at this stage, for Rome as an existing institution.

Despite this evidence and Dr Pusey’s explicit rejection of Roman claims in a public letter to the Bishop of Oxford, the opponents of the Tractarians were not convinced. In the House of Lords, Lord Morpeth spoke for a large body of popular opinion when he said that “a sect of damnable and detestable heretics of late [has] sprung up in Oxford, a sect which evidently affects popery and merits the heartiest condemnation of all true Christians.”⁵ Thomas Arnold, Arnold of Rugby School,

¹ John Henry Newman, *Lectures on the Philosophical Office of the Church, viewed relatively to Romanism and Popular Protestantism*

² Bernard and Margaret Pawley, *Rome and Canterbury Through Four Centuries: A study of the relations between the Church of Rome and the Anglican Churches 1530 – 1973*. London, Mowbray [1974] p. 121

³ *Op cit* Cross p. 31

⁴ *Ibid* p. 41

⁵ *Ibid* p. 51

denounced the Tractarians as “Oxford malignants” and accused them of undermining and subverting the National Church, believing them to be sectarian and partisan, and of limiting the comprehensiveness of the Church of England: it was a comprehensiveness that evidently did not include Anglo-Catholics: which all sounds horribly familiar.

Both Newman, who abandoned his understanding of the Church articulated in his early Tracts and sermons, and Pusey move from their early positions and in so doing illustrate the two trajectories that have been characteristic of Anglo-Catholicism and its ecumenical dimension. Newman had a mind of greater imaginative scope than Pusey or Keble, a more quick-silver and subtle philosophical character which is caught in the best of his prose. There was a greater solidity and stability about Pusey, also characteristics to be seen in his prose. They personify the differences of ecumenical response in the Movement.

Newman’s attitude to Rome altered considerably between 1833 and 1845. He was greatly influenced by younger adherents to the Movement, not least Richard Hurrell Froude and William Ward, a “precursor of Anglo-Papalism.”¹ Newman later commented that “a new school of thought was arising, as is usual in such movements, and was sweeping the original party of the Movement aside, and was taking its place.”² Froude was the iconoclastic figure of the Movement and was scornful of the protestant Reformation and its revered protestant heroes. His influence on Newman’s thought was important but he died young and perhaps Ward’s influence was more immediate. Ward was convinced that the contemporary Church of Rome was the pattern for all churches and that the Reformation in England had to be undone to enable the ideal of holiness to be restored. He believed that the English churchman was able to hold the whole corpus of official Roman Catholic doctrine as an ideal. As he said, “Rome has preserved in the main, and we have not, what is so inestimably precious, the high and true idea of a church.”³ He argued that the reintroduction of a Catholic spirituality into the Church of England, as it would be cultivated and preached, would be followed by the recovery of Roman doctrine. He set out his vision in *The Ideal of a Christian Church* in 1844 that the establishment of a Catholic ethos in the Church of England would be the way in which union between Anglicanism and the Church of Rome would best be effected.

Newman also changed his mind as a result of his study. The path of his conversion is well-documented and is accessible in the many biographies and studies of his life and thought.⁴ In his early Tractarian phase Newman was concerned to distinguish what was Catholic from what was Roman and to make Anglicans view the Roman question with more objectivity than had previously been evidenced, to try to go behind the anti-catholic rhetoric of the mob and popular prejudice and to deal with serious theological and ecclesiological objections to the Roman claims. As he did so and demonstrated the weakness of the case for Petrine Infallibility, some thirty four years

¹ *Op cit* Rowell p. 192

² John Henry Newman, *Apologia per vita sua* ed 1931 p. 259

³ *Op cit* Cross p. 64

⁴ The sympathetic biography by Ian Ker is important and exhaustive; that of Sheridan Gilley is more vivid and engaging; that of Frank Turner, dealing with Newman the Anglican, is markedly less sympathetic.

before its dogmatic definition in 1870, he was not unaware of the weakness of Anglican claims to authority.

In 1839 he began a study of the Monophysite heresy which denied the Divine Son-ship of Christ and the way in which the question of authority in such doctrinal disputes was conducted and settled. This unnerved his position on Anglican authority. It was further shaken by an article by Nicholas Wiseman, later Archbishop of Westminster, in which he dealt with the Donatist heresy.¹ Newman's final crisis was precipitated by his writing and publication of *Tract 90*. In this *Tract* he sought to show that the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion were patient of a Catholic interpretation, even if on their face they seemed unassailably protestant and that Rome had not deviated in its doctrine from the Catholic faith in its deliberations and in the outcome of the Council of Trent. And, in significant measure, he had intended the *Tract* to dissuade secession to Rome by his young associates. This seemed to be the evidence that the opponents of the Tractarians had been waiting for and a huge furore was unleashed which shook Newman and the other Tractarians. Newman suffered episcopal displeasure and censure; he narrowly avoided censure by the institution he revered most, the University of Oxford and as a result he undertook to discontinue the *Tracts* and he withdrew from the University Church to Littlemore. Here he studied Athanasius, worked out his views on the development of doctrine of which Father Jonathan spoke in detail a few weeks ago, and edged towards the parting of friends that occurred in 1845. In that period, Newman subsequently considered that he had been holding on, as a sort of penance, in a church which was separated from the centre of Catholic communion but he was preparing the ground for a wider reformed Catholicism so that in due and opportune time the Church of England could return from whence it came, from the rock from which it was hewn. However, that period did not extend beyond 1845 when he made his submission to the Holy See and marked out one distinct trajectory for Anglo-Catholics.

Pusey remained, reluctantly assumed the leadership of the Movement, and his stasis marked out another distinct trajectory for Anglo-Catholics. Pusey's position towards Rome had softened and he could look with sympathy, if not agreement, on Newman's decision and maintain a friendship and admiration which was to last until

¹ The primary disagreement between Donatists and the rest of the early Church was the treatment of those who renounced their faith during the persecution of Diocletian that had implications for the Church's understanding of the Sacrament of Penance and of the other sacraments. The rest of the Church was far more forgiving. The Donatists refused to accept the sacraments and authority of the priests and bishops who had fallen away from the faith during the persecution, some had handed over religious texts to authorities to be burned. They were called traditors who had returned to positions of authority under Constantine I, and the Donatists said that sacraments celebrated by these priests and bishops were invalid. The first question was whether the Sacrament of Penance can effect a reconciliation whereby the apostate may be returned to full communion. The orthodox position was that the sacrament was for such cases. The Donatists held that such a crime, after the forgiveness of Baptism, disqualified one for leadership in the Church. The second question was the validity of sacraments celebrated by priests and bishops who had been apostates under the persecution. The Donatists held that such sacraments were invalid (*ex opere operantis*, *from the work of the one doing the working*, that is, that the validity of the sacrament depends upon the worthiness and holiness of the minister.) The Catholic position has always been *ex opere operato* (*from the work having been worked*; validity of the sacrament depends upon the holiness of God, the minister being an instrument of God's work, so that any priest or bishop, even one in a state of mortal sin, who speaks the formula of the sacrament with valid matter and the intent of causing the sacrament to occur acts validly.

the end of his life. While others saw only a perversion, Pusey saw Newman's conversion as "a mysterious act of divine providence" which transplanted Newman to another part of the Church where his energies and talents would be better and more fruitfully employed for the good of the whole Church Catholic. Pusey could foresee from Newman's conversion a better understanding among Catholics of the Church of England, which had formed Newman, with a consequent removal of some, if not all, prejudice.¹ He supported Newman in the row over *Tract 90* and he too spoke more favourably of Rome than he had allowed himself before: "the Church of Rome has, amid her corruptions, continued to be a faithful witness to the saving truths as to the Blessed Trinity, which were denied by the heretics of the early centuries."² In a pamphlet he published in 1842 "for the first time in Pusey's writings, there loomed on the horizon the vision of corporate reunion with Rome."³ He said that "our severed members are being drawn to ourselves, as a Church and knit into one in us; as a Church, we are being drawn to other churches that, in God's good time, the whole body may be knit together under its One Head ... our severed state is a maimed and imperfect condition ... to feel what the Church should be is to long that it be so."⁴ However, he continued to maintain that the Roman Church had added to the primitive faith of the Apostles and could not subscribe to some of its later doctrines. He also valued the churches of the East and sought a wider unity of all the baptised in the one Body of Christ. He saw the Church as obviously divided but not fundamentally disunited in its common baptism: "holding ... one faith, united by the same sacraments, administered by the successors of the Apostles."⁵ Another leading Tractarian, William Dodsworth,⁶ wrote, with a degree of prescience, that "we agree in desiring to see the Christian world united. We, with you, wish to have communion with the See of Rome ... and though we demur to the claims of the Pope's supremacy in the sense which Romanists contend for it, we do not object to the idea ... that in a united Church, the occupant of S. Peter's Chair would be a symbol of the Church's centre of unity."⁷

The Movement suffered two further hammer-blows. Pusey was suspended from preaching by the University for two years following his sermon *The Holy Eucharist a comfort to the penitent* in which he spoke approvingly of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The support of bishops in the Church of England for the establishment of a bishopric in Jerusalem which would be held alternately by Anglicans and Lutherans outraged Anglo-Catholics as undermining the Apostolic character of the episcopacy. The Movement was also undercut by the restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales. This was seen by the protestant state as Papal aggression, made less acceptable by Cardinal Wiseman's flamboyant Pastoral Letter, *From Out the Flaminian Gate*. "Catholic England has been restored to its orbit in the ecclesiastical firmament, from which its light had long vanished," and anti-catholic sentiment moved Parliament

¹ James Pereiro, *Ethos and the Oxford Movement: At the Heart of Tractarianism*. Oxford, UP [2008] pp 221 – 222

² *Op cit* Cross p. 75

³ *Op cit* Cross p. 77

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ Quoted *Op cit* Rowell p. 192

⁶ in a letter to R. W. Sibthorpe

⁷ *Op cit* Cross pp 62 – 63

to pass the Ecclesiastical Titles Act to prevent the new Roman Catholic sees from using the historic designations held by the bishops of the Established Church. The newly restored bishops, the organisation of a parochial system, the establishment of English seminaries, the return of monastics from continental exile, the building of churches and, thanks to Pugin among others, the building of striking cathedrals, meant that here was visible and tangible evidence of the presence of the Catholic Church in the land that was not the Church of England. There was a built-in rivalry that was to frustrate moves to unity and the presence of the Roman Catholic Church made it more difficult for Anglo-Catholics to persuade their fellows that the Church of England was the Catholic Church in this land. That it was able to do so may have been because the Papal aggression was not that aggressive and rather than establish a comprehensive and universal ministry to the nation, the Roman Church evidenced a more modest ministry to its adherents but it did shift the centre of gravity of the Catholic community from the old English Catholic families to Rome, this ultramontanism suiting the temper of converts and immigrants from the Catholic diaspora.

The dogmatic definition of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady did not aid ecumenical congruence. Pius IX had a particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and was sympathetic to requests to proclaim the dogma. He consulted his bishops and there was a large majority in favour, but not unanimity. The dogma was proclaimed on 8 December 1854 and stated that "from the first moment of her conception the Blessed Virgin Mary was, by the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of Mankind, kept free from all stain of original sin."¹ The Conception of Mary was celebrated as a liturgical feast in England from the ninth century, and it appears in the Calendar of the Book of Common Prayer but without specific liturgical provision. The doctrine of her "holy" or "immaculate" conception was first formulated in a tract by Eadmer, companion and biographer of S. Anselm. Although suppressed by the Normans, it survived in the popular mind. It did not find favour with S. Bernard of Clairvaux, S. Bonaventure nor with S. Thomas Aquinas. But it was defended by John Duns Scotus who proposed a solution to the theological problem involved of being able to reconcile the doctrine with that of universal redemption in Christ, by arguing that Mary's immaculate conception did not remove her from redemption by Christ; rather it was the result of a more perfect redemption that was given to her on account of her special role in history.

While the doctrine was not an invention of the nineteenth century Church, it did not accord with the approach of Anglican theology as it was not explicit in Scripture, nor could be deduced from Scripture, nor had it been defined by a General Council of the Church but rather prescribed by Papal fiat. Its impact on Tractarian ecumenism was less in the doctrine itself than in its method and process of definition. As Richard Church, first and greatest historian of the Oxford Movement and Dean of S. Paul's commented: "The dogma is itself an opinion which any one might hold ... In itself there is not much to object to it, except its ground ... and its end, which is to give a new

¹ *Ineffabilis Deus*

stimulus to a devotion which wanted none. It is the mode of establishing it, and the system of which it is the central feature, which make it so important.”¹

Ten years later, to the day, Pius IX issued the Syllabus of Errors² which was a comprehensive condemnation of pantheism, nationalism, absolute rationalism, moderate rationalism, indifferentism, latitudinarianism, socialism, communism, secret societies, liberal clerical societies ... It was summed up in Proposition 80: “whosoever teaches that the Roman Pontiff can and ought to reconcile and adjust himself with progress, liberalism and modern civilisation ... let him be anathema.” The same could, of course, be said of the Priest Librarians of Pusey House. There was undoubtedly much in the Syllabus with which Anglo-Catholics could agree but it was, again, its unilateral promulgation solely on Papal authority that was a further stumbling block to ecumenical progress. This was further to be exacerbated by the dogmatic assertion of Papal Infallibility in 1870 and the condemnation of Anglican Orders in *Apostolicae Curae* in 1896.

Despite these setbacks, despite much of the rhetoric and many of the reservations “there is no doubt that the vision of unity with the Church of Rome, however impracticable it might be thought, became and remained part of the aspirations of the Catholic Movement within Anglicanism, however much doctrinal definitions of the Immaculate Conception, Papal Infallibility, the condemnation of Anglican Orders ... might seem to make it a ‘dream dissipated by facts’.”³ A Catholic layman, Ambrose Phillipps de Lisle founded the Association for Promoting the Unity of Christendom in 1857 with membership, some eight thousand by 1863, drawn from Roman, Orthodox and Anglican Churches. If there were no direct and tangible results, there were indirect benefits in understanding, appreciation if not agreement with differing views, a sense of having much in common while there still being much that separated.

One of the co-founders of the Association was Frederick George Lee,⁴ an Anglican priest, within the Catholic tradition.⁵ He served in the Episcopal Church in Scotland in Aberdeen, falling out with his bishop over ritualistic and ceremonial practices (the usual offences) and became Vicar of All Saints’ Lambeth. He founded, what was and remains a slightly murky society, the Order of Corporate Reunion. It was a clandestine society and Anglo-Papalist in character which sought to restore the Apostolic Succession through ordinations as a means to reunion. Lee, with a few others, was ordained a bishop, apparently in a boat off Venice by some Roman Catholic prelates whose names were kept secret. He was received into the Catholic Church shortly before his death.

The development of Pusey’s mind is seen in his publication between 1865 and 1869 of a series of three works to demonstrate that the Church of England had a special function to perform in restoring visible unity. He had written the first volume of the

¹ Mary Church (Ed), *Occasional Papers Volume I*. London [1867]. Originally a review in *The Times* of Pusey’s *Eirenicon* 12 December 1865

² *Syllabus Errorum* in the Bull *Quanta Cura*

³ *Op cit* Rowell p. 194

⁴ B. 6 January 1832 in *Thame*, Oxfordshire; D. 22 January 1902 at Lambeth, London

⁵ Trained at Cuddesdon Theological College and ordained by Bishop Samuel Wilberforce in 1856.

Eirenican to refute a pamphlet by Cardinal Manning. This was a public letter to Pusey rejecting his assertion that the Church of England was “the great bulwark against infidelity in this land.” Manning had said, “The Church of England, so far from being a barrier against infidelity, must be regarded as the mother of all intellectual and spiritual aberrations which now cover the face of England.”¹ Pusey said that it was not the authorised teaching of the Roman Church that kept Rome and Canterbury apart but the unauthorised, though permitted, devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the teaching on indulgences and purgatory. In part the book is an onslaught on Roman Catholicism for teaching or permitting without censure Ultramontane extravagances and an appeal to an older English Catholic tradition. Yet it was also a moving, passionate, enthusiastic plea for reunion with Rome.² Newman replied in his first *Letter to Pusey*. He described the *Eirenicon* as a rhetorical and an unfair book and complained, that “you discharge your olive branch as from a catapult.”³

Pusey’s aim was to find out which Roman Catholic beliefs were dogmatic and which were not, what was authentic authorised devotion and what was not His more pressing purpose, perhaps unconsciously held, was to defend Anglo-Catholicism against protestant charges that it was merely covert Roman Catholicism. The weapon he chose was to describe the corruptions in Roman Catholicism as normative and to maintain the English Church, as the true defender of ancient Christian teachings. Central to Newman’s defence was the patristic writing that regarded Our Lady as the Second Eve, and the Mother of God, the very title *Theotokos* revered and used by Pusey. Dr Pusey’s understanding of Our Lady was most obviously exemplified by his advocacy of the use of that title which means God-bearer, but is more usually translated as Mother of God. With this description, he also praised her for being “a moral instrument of our common redemption.”⁴ These exchanges were brought to an end when Papal Infallibility was proclaimed which “seemed to empty the project of all hope.”⁵

There was one by-product of Papal Infallibility in that it was not accepted by all Catholics and a number split into the Old Catholics and maintained their apostolic succession and validity of orders. From their inception the Old Catholics and Anglo-Catholics enjoyed friendly relations. Bishop Christopher Wordsworth of Lincoln and Bishop Harold Browne of Ely attended meetings in the years after 1870. In 1925 there was a recognition of Anglican Orders by the Old Catholics and in 1931 intercommunion was agreed and in the late Thirties there was the participation of Old Catholic Bishops in the consecrations of English bishops, what is sometimes referred to as the “Dutch Touch” and their stated intention (the Protocol is kept in Pusey House) was to confer the fullness of Catholic Orders.

¹ H. E. Manning, *A Letter to the Revd E. B. Pusey*. London, Longmans [1864]

² Sheridan Gilley, *Newman and his age* London, Darton, Longman and Todd [1990] p 339

³ *Letter to Pusey* p 361

⁴ E. B. Pusey, *First Letter to the Very Rev J. H. Newman DD in Explanation Chiefly in Regard to the Reverential Love Due to the Ever-Blessed Virgin Theotokos, and the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, with an analysis of Cardinal de Turrecremata’s work on the Immaculate Conception* Oxford, James Parker. London, Rivingtons [1869] p 23. Quoted in Carol Marie Engelhardt: *Victorian Masculinity and the Virgin Mary*. In Andrew Bradstock, Sean Gill, Anne Hogan, Sue Morgan (Edd), *Masculinity and Spirituality in Victorian Culture* London, Macmillan [2000] p 50.

⁵ *Op cit* Pawley p. 133

Well before that development, the question of Anglican Orders had been addressed after a process initiated by a son of Bourne Street, Viscount Halifax, for many years churchwarden here. A chance meeting in 1889 with the Abbé Portal and a warm friendship led to more formal conversations which had the guarded encouragement of the new Pope Leo XIII and the Archbishop of Canterbury Edward Benson. The exploration of Anglican Orders was part of an ecumenical vision of two individuals, one a Catholic Anglican, President of the English Church Union, and one a Roman Catholic willing to engage and explore. Their friendship and their conversations were to have wider ramifications. In 1895 Leo XIII issued a letter *Ad Anglos* in which he said that he was longing for reunion but he did not mention the Church of England by name. Nevertheless a commission was established to consider the question of Anglican orders in which politics played as important a part as theological enquiry, with the English Catholic hierarchy being opposed to any recognition of Anglican Orders. Two significant and scholarly Anglo-Catholics made themselves available in Rome to answer any questions that the commission might pose, Father Puller SSJE and the Revd T. A. Lacey. Neither their erudition nor Lacey's graceful Latin, commended by the Pope, could prevent the Bull declaring Anglican Orders "absolutely null and utterly void."

Halifax wrote to Portal: "May something be done to put an end to the divisions among those who love our Lord Jesus Christ ... so that those who love each other, communicating at the same altars, may love each other more; in short, so that the essential unity of the Church of Jesus Christ may be recognised by everyone. To bring that about we must come together in a spirit of love and charity, in a spirit also of penitence for all the faults committed on both sides; with a view to dispelling misunderstandings; to distinguishing what is of faith and what is merely a matter of opinion; to dispelling prejudice and ... to seeking the will of God."¹

Halifax had another opportunity to advance understanding between Rome and Canterbury when, in 1921, he entered into conversations with Cardinal Mercier.² The conversations had quasi-official sanction from both the Vatican and Lambeth and went on until 1925. The Malines conversations took place at the beginning of a period that has been regarded as the high watermark of Anglo-Catholicism.³ The talks resulted in an acknowledgement of the position of the Pope as head on earth of the Catholic Church, of the Anglican communion as a body linked with the Papal See and with Archbishop of Canterbury receiving the pallium. Any union would recognise that the English Church would determine the rite and that it would be in the vernacular, would administer communion in both kinds, and accept married clergy. The existing Roman hierarchy would remain and would not be under the jurisdiction of Canterbury but be responsible directly to the Holy See. One of the papers given envisaged a Uniate model of reunion in

¹ J. G. Lockhart, *Charles Lindley Wood, Viscount Halifax* [1935] pp 79 – 81

² They were later joined on the Anglican side by Walter Frere, the Superior of the Community of the Resurrection and Armitage Robinson, Dean of Wells, and later still by B. J. Kidd, the Warden of Keble and Charles Gore.

³ The Twenties and Thirties saw the triumph of the Anglo-Catholic Congresses and the influence of Anglo-Papalism. At one of the Congresses on the initiative of the charismatic Bishop Frank Weston "16,000 Anglo-Catholics, in congress assembled, offer respectful greetings to the Holy Father, humbly praying that the day of peace may quickly break."

which the Anglican Church would be united to Rome but not absorbed by it, preserving its own liturgy, its customs and canons, its patrimony, you might say.

These conclusions had no authority beyond those who agreed them.¹ Cardinal Mercier's death in 1926 effectively brought an end to the conversations. The Anglican participants were all Anglo-Catholics of one shade or another and could not be regarded as representative of the Church of England as a whole. The English Roman Catholic hierarchy was cool and the Archbishop of Canterbury cautious but a sense of understanding of differences and conversations conducted in charity and mutual respect set foundation stones for later building. This is evidenced by the institution of the Church Unity Octave by an Anglo-Catholic priest Fr Spencer Jones of the Confraternity of Unity,² and Fr Paul Wattson, an American Franciscan, which grew into the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity inspired by the Abbé Paul Couturier, the visits of Geoffrey Fisher and Michael Ramsey to visit Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI respectively, and eventually the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission of more recent times and the high degree of theological congruity that is set out in the several reports.

Anglo-Catholic ecumenical eyes were clearly on Rome but that could not be said of the Church of England as a whole and although I am concerned here with ecumenical developments with Rome from an Anglo-Catholic perspective, it should not be forgotten that other parts of the Church of England were more interested in pan-protestant alliances. There was a divergence of ecumenical priorities. There was a steady involvement of the Anglican Churches in the ecumenical movement, which had a distinct protestant character, inevitably so since Rome remained opposed to any official involvement in ecumenical discussions. Pope Pius XI provided more adamant opposition than his immediate predecessors. Lambeth Conferences set an ecumenical agenda that resulted in the formation of the World Council of Churches. Anglo-Catholics feared that in the absence of the full participation of the Roman Church it would be a pan-protestant alliance.

There were, however, signs of hope for Anglo-Catholics. During the Second World War Cardinal Hinsley's Sword and Spirit Movement gained the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council. This was seen as a "first essential step in restoring mutual understanding, [and] the ability to take common action on matters of social concern"³ but that did not extend to common acts of public worship. *Apostolicae Curae* had been decided partly on the absence in the Book of Common Prayer Ordinal of the handing over the instruments, the *porrectio instrumentorum*, among them the paten and chalice to the ordained but in the Apostolic Constitution *Sacramentum Ordinis* Pope Pius XII pronounced: "We do declare by our Apostolic Authority, and even though it was once rightly determined differently, we ordain that at least in the future the delivery of the instruments shall not be necessary for the validity of the Holy Orders of the Diaconate, the Presbyterate and the Episcopate."⁴ However, Anglican anxieties were renewed when Pius XII declared *ex cathedra* and *de*

¹ Of the participants, Gore was a stumbling block and was the least prepared to be open to arguments.

² The papers of the Confraternity are at Pusey House.

³ *Op cit* Pawley p. 307

⁴ *Ibid* p. 309

fide the mind of the Church that the Blessed Virgin Mary had been by divine dispensation spared the corruption of death and had been assumed body and soul into the glory of heaven. As with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception this was not new or invented doctrine in 1950 but one with ancient provenance and much popular devotion. Again it was the process that caused concern for Anglicans, or some Anglicans. There was not widespread consultation, there was voiced opposition from distinguished theologians, and the definition acknowledged that the doctrine lacked Scriptural authority and was not part of the universal deposit of the primitive church but was an exercise of the Petrine Office sole and unfettered and irreformable.

The election of Pope John XXIII “entirely changed the ecclesiastical scene.”¹ His calling of the Second Vatican Council included “an invitation to the separated communities to search for that unity towards which so many souls aspire.”² The Council had far-reaching effects not only on the Roman Church but on the Catholic Movement in the Church of England. If you look at the Vatican documents with the eye of the hermeneutic of continuity, as it is called, they can be read in large measure as a re-statement of doctrine and moral policy but presented afresh for a new generation. However, the ethos of Vatican II, the popular perception, was of an opening of doors, a more positive engagement with society and responses to its needs, a new flexibility in liturgical celebrations, not least with the introduction of the vernacular. There was certainly a new willingness to engage in ecumenical relations and to seek new ways of co-operation and reunion.

In the Church of England the 150th Anniversary of the Oxford Movement inspired a Catholic Renewal movement that was concerned not only with the re-invigoration of the Catholic wing of the Church of England but with a greater engagement in ecumenical relations with the Roman Catholic Church and with the Orthodox churches and with liturgical reform that opened the way for a more Catholic authorised public liturgy. A generation of young Anglo-Catholics was enthused by the work of Vatican II and sought to bring its insights into the context in which they found themselves. There developed a good deal of local co-operation as well as the formal, official commissions that examined matters of doctrine and ecclesiology. Nor should we underestimate the influence that Cardinal Hume exercised on the national consciousness and the attraction of reunion.

Many Anglo-Catholics were persuaded by remarks made by the Orthodox Archbishop Athenagorus who had argued that the Church of England needed to reunite with Rome before it joined with the Orthodox on the principle that you heal the later breach first. The Church Union was prominent in responding to that suggestion, particularly under its General Secretary in the 1980s, Father Peter Geldard, who did not think that the Pope would be prepared “to sacrifice primary unity for secondary unity [and that] we in the Church Union have said there is only one unity for us – the one which looks to the bulk of Christendom, for they are the ones who really matter.”³

¹ *Ibid* p. 330

² *Ibid* p. 333

³ Church Times 7 December 1979

Negotiations towards Anglican-Methodist reunion, which had eventually failed, were regarded by many Anglo-Catholics as a time-wasting distraction of minimal significance. Anglo-Catholics consistently stressed the damage that they saw being done to Anglican-Roman Catholic relations if the Methodist-Anglican Covenant had succeeded. The visit of Pope John Paul II to the British Isles in 1982, occurred during heady days when reunion with Rome seemed a real possibility, well within the grasp of both churches. There was a spirit not only of a renewal of Catholic confidence but of ecumenical optimism encapsulated, heightened and given impetus as the successor of S. Gregory and the successor of S. Augustine met one spring day in Canterbury Cathedral. It was recognized by Anglo-Catholics that unity would come at a price, that it would very likely cause a split in Anglicanism and probably occasion the loss of Evangelicals. But that was a price that many Anglo-Catholics indicated that they would be prepared to pay. The split, however, was to come from elsewhere but with a seismic effect on ecumenical relations.

“The Catholic Religion is ‘woven without seam’ ... to destroy the Catholic ministry in its historic form and meaning would be to destroy for ever any hope of visible union”¹ and, with the highly divisive issue of the ordination of women to the presbyterate and now the episcopate, as one historian has noted, the Catholic Revival brought about “not a unification of Anglicanism [as an expression of Catholic unity] but ... an intensification of those very divisions they sought to eradicate.”²

As we come to the end of this series, it is neither possible nor desirable to rehearse the arguments for and against the ordination of women that have wracked, and for some, wrecked the Church of England over the last twenty or thirty years but, whatever view you take, there can be no doubt whatsoever that the decisions taken in the General Synod have substantially altered and derailed ecumenical progress. The Roman Church said that such changes would constitute grave obstacles. Cardinal Kasper, the most irenic of ecumenists, gave the clearest indication to the House of Bishops that the ordination of women to the episcopate would have the most profoundly deleterious effects. And he, in effect, invited the House and the Synod, as he did at the Lambeth Conference in 2008 to decide whether the Church of England was Catholic or a protestant sect: “We would see the Anglican Communion as moving a considerable distance closer to the side of the protestant churches of the 16th century, and to a position they adopted only during the second half of the 20th century.”³ He also suggested that the Church of England needed a new Oxford Movement. If you read his speech to the House of Bishops you will see how infused it is with the witness of the Oxford Movement. It can be read as a defence of classic Anglicanism as argued by the Tractarians. Similarly, you will find a congruent vindication of Tractarianism in the Roman Catholic Conference of Bishops response to the Archbishops’ consultation about women bishops. It was also instructive that when the General Synod came to debate the ARCIC documents, it was as if the Oxford Movement had never happened. There

¹ C. S. Gillett, *The Ministry of the Church*. London, CLA [1933] The Church Tracts No 6 np

² George Herring, *What Was the Oxford Movement?* London, Continuum [2003] p. 94

³ Cardinal Walter Kasper, Address to the House of Bishops June 2006. Quoted in a statement from the Catholic League, December 2009. See *New Directions* March 2010 (Supplement)

seemed to be different presuppositions at work. Roman Catholics and Anglo-Catholics have worked on the presupposition that ecumenism is “integral to the consciousness that the Catholic Church is the body in which the Universal Church of Christ perfectly subsists” and that reunion means entering into full communion one with another. But that impulse for unity is not shared by a wider body of Anglicans, if the General Synod and the House of Bishops is anything to go by. That view seems to be that ecumenical co-operation, joint services of prayer and praise, jointly addressing social and political issues where there is a degree of consensus, is as far as we have come and as far as they wish to go. Communion is seen as part of the road to reunion while for Rome and Anglo-Catholics it is the destination.

The card which trumps all others in this ecumenical debate was played a few months ago with the publication of the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus*. Here, on its face, is the outcome for which Anglo-Catholics have striven, a mechanism for corporate reunion and full communion with full acknowledgement and integration of the patrimony proper to the Church of England. In theory the Constitution could apply to the whole of the Church of England, the whole of the Anglican Communion but in reality it is far from that. That a complete reconciliation may not be realised must be a matter of regret and lost opportunity and failure. We may have to say with John Henry Newman, “I do not ask to see the distant scene, one step enough for me.”¹

Not quite the last word. I hope that my colleagues and I have said enough, and said it clearly enough, in this Lent course to show what it was and what it is that makes Pusey House and S. Mary’s part of a great tradition: Oxford and of Pimlico. That we have located us in the History of the Oxford Movement, its origins, its catholicity and apostolicity, its development, its mind and its spirit, its holiness and the nature of its priesthood, its ecumenical dimension and based on that history to say something about the state of the Oxford Movement today, as we see it from our perspective and where we stand at this point of crisis.

“What if” is the most pointless question in history. Counter-factual history can illuminate what happened but it cannot change what happened. It is as it is: it is as it was. So it would be historically crass and naïve to say that Dr Pusey, were he alive at this hour, would be against the ordination of women to the presbyterate and the episcopate but what can be said is that Tractarian thought and principles about the nature of the Church Catholic, its Apostolic tradition, its spiritual ethos, its understanding of doctrine, its ecumenical imperative, would not accept the view that the Church of England, or the General Synod the Church of England, could determine and conclude this matter under its own presumed authority. At the very least the Oxford Movement Fathers would have argued for a protected place within the doctrinal and ecclesiological economy of the Church of England. And if we cannot obtain that we may have to conclude that the Anglo-Catholic adventure is over, its crusade has run its course and where then does the future lie? “It is not too late to seek a newer world ... to

¹ *Lead kindly light* EH 425

sail beyond the sunset ... We are ... strong in will to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield."¹

¹ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Ulysses*