



The Relevance of Pusey's *Eirenicon* Today: Intercommunion between Anglicans and Roman Catholics

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Abstract

This paper investigates how Edward Pusey, a nineteenth century Anglican clergy and scholar responded to Edward Manning's claim that the Church of England is not an authentic church. This led the former to write his *Eirenicon*, as an intellectual justification and a response to apostolicity and catholicity of the Anglican faith. *Eirenicon* is an example in rigorous dialogue on religious faith claims. The ecumenical rapprochement suggested by Pusey is very insightful: emphasis on the elements that unites Roman Catholics and Anglicans as rooted in traditions of the Apostolic Church. After more than 152 years, this work seeks for the relevance of Pusey's *Eirenicon* in contemporary Roman Catholic–Anglican faith relationship.

Keywords: Apostolicity, Church of England, Oxford Movement, *Eirenicon*

Introductory Remarks

Victorian sages took seriously historical developments in knowledge: profane or sacred. This aided them towards a better understanding of knowledge precisely as contextual yet reference point for truth claims¹. In the midst of the nineteenth Anglican crises, some clergymen returned to the historicity of the church Universal, its doctrines, traditions, and practices developed in the thought of the Fathers of the church Catholic as grounds for anchoring the orthodoxy of Christian belief and ecclesial unity. Edward Pusey's *Eirenicon* is an example of such enterprise: sustaining Anglican faith claims on Patristic traditions. More than hundred and twenty years after this publication, it pertinent to ask: did Pusey's work on unity of faith help Christians of his time and could it be relevant today? Thus this work is divided into five sections: (i) A Brief on Edward Pusey, (ii) the Oxford Movement, (iii) Henry Manning's Position on the Anglican Church, (iv) Pusey's *Eirenicon*, and (v) Evaluation and

¹ Denis Robinson, "A Dimly Legible Palimpsest: Victorian Sages and Gerundial Historiography," in Mathijis Lamberigts, Lieven Boeve, and Terrence Merrigan, eds., *Theology and Quest for Truth* (Leuven: University Press), 95

Conclusion. The leitmotif of this work is the assessment of Pusey's *Eirenicon* for contemporary intra-ecclesial dialogue between Roman Catholics and Anglicans.

A Brief on Edward Pusey

Pusey was drawn to Oriel College in Oxford because of its intellectual prominence. It is also true that his presence at Oriel added colour to Oxford renewal movement.

Pusey was educated at the prestigious Eton College for boys before going up to Christ Church College, Oxford, for undergraduate studies in January, 1819². In 1825 he went to Göttingen in Germany to deepen his understanding of rationalistic biblical criticism and German theology. On his return to England in 1826, he became "a Semitic scholar of note and familiar with the history of modern Protestant speculation on religious topic"³. His association with the Oxford Movement gave an intellectual boost and public recognition to what Keble, Newman, and Froude were already doing. Newman acknowledged this in his *Apologia* when he commented on the new perspectives that Pusey brought to the Oxford Movement.

I had known him [Pusey] well since 1827-8, and had felt for him an enthusiastic admiration. I used to call him ὁ μέγας. His great learning, his immense diligence, his scholarlike mind, his simple devotion to the cause of religion, overcame me; and great of course was my joy, when in the last days of 1833 he showed a disposition to make common cause with us.... Such was the benefit which he conferred on the Movement externally; nor were the internal advantages at all inferior to it. He was a man of large designs; he had a hopeful, sanguine mind; he had no fear of others; he was haunted by no intellectual perplexities.... Dr. Pusey's influence was

²Cfr. Kenneth. Hylson-Smith, *High Churchmanship in the Church Of England from the Sixteenth Century to the Late Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark), 142.

³ Hylson-Smith, *High Churchmanship in the Church of England*, 143.

felt at once. He saw that there ought to be more sobriety, more gravity, more careful pains, more sense of responsibility in the Tracts and in the whole Movement. It was through him that the character of the Tracts was changed⁴.

Newman, in the above account, explains how the timely arrival of Pusey immensely enhanced the cause of the Oxford Movement as well as transformed the Tracts' character.

When Newman went over to Rome in 1845, Pusey considered it a divine dispensation. Robert Greenfield points out that Pusey was convinced: "that Newman was being called to play a unique role in the Roman Catholic Church, [he] gradually came to look upon the reunion of the two Churches as part of this special dispensation and saw it as his responsibility to help prepare the Church of England for the reunion to come"⁵. Having known Newman personally, Pusey was unsettled by Newman's breakaway from Anglicanism. Nevertheless, Pusey believed that "his duty was to remain in the Church of England and work for her as God enabled him"⁶. Pusey assumed the leadership of the Anglo-Catholic revival after Newman left the Anglican Church. This was because his qualifications and endowments were very crucial to the future of the renewal movement, though Pusey did not have any desire to act as such⁷. This important Victorian sage died on 16 September, 1882, and was buried at Christ Church, Oxford, where he spent fifty-four years as a Canon.

The Oxford Movement

This was a voluntary association of Anglican clergymen from mainly lecturers at Oxford University who took exception to government control of the spiritual affairs of the Church of England. It began in 1833 with John Henry Newman, John Keble and Edward Pusey as leaders. The Anglo-Catholic revival was also called the Tractarian Movement because its spread was facilitated by the Tracts published by the leaders of the revival. Later on, the intellectual prestige of the Tractarian Movement was heightened when the Regius Professor of Hebrew, Edward Bouverie Pusey joined the movement,

⁴ John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2005), 40-41.

⁵ Robert Greenfield, "Such a Friend to the Pope!" In *Pusey Rediscovered*, Perry Butler, ed. (Oxford: Alden Press, 1983), 171.

⁶ Greenfield, "Such a Friend to the Pope", 172.

⁷ Cfr. Peter Cobb, "Leader of the Anglo-Catholics?" in Peter Butler, ed. *Pusey Rediscovered* (Oxford: SPCK, 1983), 349.

who also published a couple of the Tracts.⁸ The presence of Pusey would later be crucial for the survival of the Anglo-Catholic renewal after the conversion of many Anglicans to Catholicism and that of Newman in 1845. Indeed Newman's conversion to the Catholic Church marked the end of the first phase of the Oxford movement and its 'Tractarian' character because after the controversy that ensued as a result of his publication of Tract no. 90 in 1841, many Anglican bishops and traditional high churchmen who were favourably inclined to the Tractarians developed cold feet towards Tractarianism. Thus the criticism and indignation against Tract no. 90 marked the end of the publication of the Tracts.⁹ Thomas Arnold (June 13, 1795 – June 12, 1842), a firm opponent of the movement nicknamed the movement: 'Newmanites' because Newman was considered the prime mover of the Tracts.¹⁰

After Newman's conversion to Catholicism in 1845, Pusey became the leader of the Anglo-Catholic movement. His overwhelming influence in the post-1845 revival movement within the Church of England made many to associate the Anglo-Catholic, movement with him – so much that it was called Puseyism. Indeed, his brilliance so shaped the second phase of the Oxford Movement to the extent that "the name 'Puseyite' became the equivalent of 'Jesuit', within the Church of England"¹¹. During this phase, the complaints of some bishops and high churchmen on Tract no. 90 as well as the loss of some prominent churchmen by their crossing over to the Roman Catholic Church made the Puseyites to refrain from expatiating the basic doctrinal teaching of the Oxford movement: the doctrine of Apostolic succession.¹² This was because of its apparent logical sequence; the exodus of Anglicans to the Roman Church as evident in numerous conversions from

⁸ Perry Butler, "From Early Eighteenth Century to the Present Day." In Stephen Sykes and John Booty, eds., *The Study of Anglicanism*(Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1988), 33-34

⁹ George Herring, *What Was the Oxford Movement?* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2002), 65.

¹⁰ Cfr. Georgina Battiscombe, *John Keble: A Study in Laminations* (New York, NY: Knof, 1964), 190.

¹¹ Geoffrey. Rowell, *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities of the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism*, Oxford: University Press, 1983), 71. In addition, those whom Pusey led were called 'the Puseyites'.

¹² Cfr. John Griffin, *The Oxford Movement: A Revision* (Front Royal, VA: Christendom Publications, 1980),71.

Tractarianism to Catholicism.¹³ The prominence of the movement in its second phase diminished with the death of Pusey in 1882.

Henry Manning's Position on the Anglican Experiment

Henry Edward Manning (1808-92) was Anglican clergyman and an active member of the Oxford movement. Manning's Anglican experiment ended in 1850 because of the Gorham Judgement. It happened that the Rev. Henry Phillpotts (1778-1869), the Bishop of Exeter took exception to the opinion of Reverend George Gorham (1787-1857) on the objective efficacy of the sacrament of baptism. Bishop Phillpotts argues that such teaching was contrary to Anglican doctrine. According to the Bishop, Gorham expressed disbelief in baptismal regeneration. As a result of this, Phillpotts removed Gorham from the pastoral care of St. Peter's Church, Brampford Speke. Gorham appealed to the Privy Council – a non-ecclesiastical board. The Council revoked the Bishop's judgement and ordered him to reinstate Gorham at Brampford Speke. After a failed protest against the Gorham judgement, Manning argued that the acceptance of the said judgement by the Church of England demonstrates a departure from the basic principles of the Anglican Church as a branch of the Church Universal.

Consequently, Manning resigned from his archdeaconry on 20 November 1850, dissociated himself from the Anglo-Catholic revival, and began to prepare for his reception into the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁴ He was received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1851 and was ordained a Catholic. He was consecrated a bishop and appointed the Archbishop of Westminster in 1865.

After Manning's reception into the Catholic Church, he dissociated himself from his closed colleagues at Oxford who were still members of the Anglican Church. He called this dissociation from his Anglican friends: 'silence' in his letter to Pusey.¹⁵ With Manning's movement to Westminster, the most important Catholic See in England, the silence was broken in *The Workings of*

¹³ Cfr. Herring presents statistical data of the conversions of Tractarians to Rome. Cfr. Herring, 72 - 74. It is worthy of note that many Anglicans were not happy with exodus of 1840s to the Roman Church. Henry Matthew, a prominent Anglican scholar, considers Newman conversion to Catholicism an apostasy. Cfr. Henry Matthew. 'Edward Bouverie Pusey: From Scholar to Tractarian.' *Journal of Theological Studies* 32 (1981): 101.

¹⁴ Cfr. J. PEREIRO, *Cardinal Manning: An Intellectual Biography*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 111-113; 116.

¹⁵ Edward Manning, *The Workings of the Holy Spirit in the Church of England: A Letter to the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D.* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green, 1868), 4.

the Holy Spirit in the Church of England: A Letter to the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D. In this work, Manning speaks like a Roman Catholic luminary who affirms the workings of the Holy Spirit in the Church of England but avers that this ecclesial community cannot be called 'church' in validly. He argues:

1. That I rejoice with all my heart in all the workings of the Holy Ghost in the Church of England.

2. That I lament whensoever what remains of truth in it gives way before unbelief.

3. That I rejoice whensoever what is imperfect in it unfolded into a more perfect truth.

4. But that I cannot regard the Church of England as 'the great bulwark against infidelity in this land,' for the reasons I will give in their place.....

1 That in denying the Church of England to be the Catholic Church, or any part of it, or in any divine and true sense a Church at all, and in denying the validity of its absolutions, and its orders no Catholic ever claims the workings of the Spirit of God or the operations of grace in it.

2 That in affirming the workings of grace in the Church of England no Catholic ever thereby affirms that it possesses the character of a Church.¹⁶

Manning's position in the above citation denies the Anglican Church to be 'in any divine and true sense a Church at all.' Pusey read Manning's *The Workings of the Holy Spirit in the Church of England*; but rather chose to give a response to it by writing *A Eirenicon* (Vol. 1) addressed to John Keble, the author of *the Christian Year*. He was created a Cardinal-Priest of Ss. Andrea e Gregorio al Monte Celio in 1875 and died in 1892.

Pusey's Eirenicon: From Antiquity to Ecumenical Option

Pusey's views on the catholicity of the Church of England are illustrated in his *An Eirenicon* (1865). This text is Pusey's response to Manning's letter, in which the latter had accused the Church of England of departing from the truths of the Christian religion. In the first volume of his *An Eirenicon*, Pusey refutes Manning's charges against the Church of England and the latter's claim on where the true Church of Christ is.

¹⁶ Ibid., 6-8.

The title, *An Eirenicon*, is suggestive of Pusey's quest for a reunion between the Anglican and the Roman Catholic Churches. *Eirenicon* is derived from the Greek word Ειρήνη (*eirēnē*) which means peace or Ειρήνικος (*eirēnikos*) concerning peace. In writing *An Eirenicon*, Pusey strived to defend the Church of England as a true Church of Christ. Furthermore, he raised questions on reunion or intercommunion between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England. He suggested that this could be done through bilateral dialogue that will distinguish between matters that are essential to Christian doctrine and those that were not. According to Pusey, the Church of England believes in the fundamentals of the Christian faith as handed down by the apostles. In this volume, Pusey indirectly demonstrates to Manning, in his writing to Keble, that the Church of England is a portion of Christ's one holy Church which also serves as a means of restoring visible unity¹⁷.

Pusey's mind was focused on the catholicity of the Christian faith – its nature and content. So the charges levelled against the Church of England in Manning's letter to Pusey gave him an opportunity to lay bare his thought on the catholicity of the Christian faith especially in relation to the Church of England. Furthermore, Roderick Strange notes that "Pusey felt the need to write not only because of Manning's attack. He nurtured a longstanding desire to promote the reunion of the Christian Church. He did not presume that the goal could be achieved in his lifetime, but he insisted that it should be pursued"¹⁸.

In his *An Eirenicon*, which this article is considering, Pusey expounded the following themes: (i) the Church of England in relation to the catholic faith, (ii) the oneness of the Church in Christ, (iii) apostolic ministry and the Anglicans' difficulty with the Petrine ministry, and (iv) reunion between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church.

The Church of England in Relation to the Catholic Faith

Concerning the Church of England and its relation to the catholic faith, Pusey maintains that, contrary to Manning's claim, the Anglican Church had always believed the fundamentals of the Catholic faith handed down by the primitive Church through its creed. Pusey asserts:

¹⁷ Cfr. Edward Pusey, *An Eirenicon in a Letter to the Author of "The Christian Year"* (London: Rivingtons, 1865), 2-3.

¹⁸ Strange, Roderick. "Reflections on a Controversy: Newman and Pusey's 'Eirenicon'." In *Pusey Rediscovered*, Perry Butler, ed. (London: SPCK, 1983.334

For the “Catholic Faith” can plainly mean nothing else than the faith held by the Catholic Church, which in our creeds we equally confess. It is a body of faith set before us on authority; confessed by us now, as it was centuries ago; immutable; which we own that they who have received would incur the loss of their souls by willfully casting it away, and, in it, rejecting God Who gave it¹⁹.

By this declaration, Pusey meant to put to rest Manning’s attack on the authenticity of the faith professed by Anglicans and to calm the anxiety of those who read the latter’s *The Workings of the Holy Spirit in the Church of England*. He went on to say that the Apostles’ Creed which the Church Universal professes contains the fundamentals of Christian beliefs laid down in the Scriptures. Furthermore, Pusey remarks that this argument does not contradict the Anglican belief in the sufficiency of the sacred scripture for salvation.

“Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is *not* read therein, *nor* may be proved thereby, *is not to be required* to any man, *that it should be believed* as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation”. The Church of England would not have said, that certain things are “*not to be required* of any man that they should be believed”, unless it held that other things, which *are* read in Holy Scriptures, and which *may* be proved thereby, *may be so required*. So the Article which sets forth the sufficiency of Holy Scriptures, agrees with that which declares, that “the Church hath the authority in matters of faith”. It implies the authority of the Church, while it lays down certain limits to it²⁰.

¹⁹ Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 38.

²⁰ Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 38-39.

Pusey's reference to the limits of ecclesiastical authority as regards the interpretation of what constitutes the requisites of the catholic faith led him to the question of Tradition. According to him, the Catholic Fathers had, through their writings and homilies, set the limits to the interpretation of the requisites of the catholic faith in the Tradition. He also affirmed that there is no contrast between the Tradition and the Scriptures²¹. He added that in relation to Anglican deference to the Tradition, reference should only be made to that which was established by the Fathers of the undivided Church before the Western and Eastern schisms²².

The Oneness of the Church in Christ: Anglican and Roman Catholic

Pusey paid attention to the question of oneness of the Church in Christ. For him, despite the visible discord among Christian Churches, the unity of the Church is a gift from God which should be nurtured by mutual love among its members. The intrinsic unity of the Church, he continues, "is a spiritual oneness wrought by God the Holy Ghost; ... it is a grace, to be exercised by man, a consequence and fruit of that gift"²³. He also noted that Christ is the source of organic unity of the Church.

Christ our Lord, God and Man, binds us to Him by the indwelling of His Spirit, by the gift of His Sacraments, administered by those to whom He gave the commission so to do, by the right faith in Himself. We are bound together, in that we are members of Him, and by the love which He sheds abroad in our hearts through the Spirit He giveth us, and by common acts of worship and intercommunion.²⁴

From the aforementioned quotation, it is observed that Pusey promotes an idea that the organic unity of the Church, brought about by God, is imparted through sacramental grace and sustained by the profession of right faith. Concerning the profession of the right faith as a means of nurturing the mystical unity that God was infused into the Church he maintains:

²¹ Cfr. Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 39.

²² Cfr. Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 40.

²³ Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 45.

²⁴ Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 46.

But it is for man to retain the faith which he has received. They have not the same Lord, who do not believe the same truth as to Him. The heretics of old who did not believe that the Son was Con-substantial, Co-Eternal, and Co-Equal with the Father, or that, when Incarnate, He had a human soul or true flesh truly taken of the Virgin Mary, or that the Blessed Virgin bore Him who was God....²⁵

From the preceding arguments, it is evident that Pusey considers the profession of the Apostolic Creed as the means of enduring in the unity of faith as well as having fellowship with Christ and his Body the Church. Furthermore, Pusey's emphasis on the oneness in sacraments: baptism and Eucharist, shows the sacramental nature of the Christian faith which binds all the members of the Church together.

This unity, derived from our Blessed Lord as Head of the Church, is imparted primarily through the sacraments. S. Paul says, that "all, baptized into Christ, have put on Christ", and, having put Him on, are one in Christ. And of the Holy Eucharist, "We, being many, are one body; for we are all partakers of that Bread". By Baptism we are ingrafted into the mystical body of Christ; by partaking of His Body, we continue to be members of His body²⁶.

Pusey was aware of the disunity among various Churches and the difficulties that stand in the way of inter-communion among them; yet, he insisted that the suspension of intercommunion does not destroy the organic unity of the Church in Christ. He argues, "But is all unity forfeited, where the unity of intercommunion is suspended? No one, in the face of Church-history, can or does maintain that all interruptions of intercommunion destroy unity"²⁷. In this way, Pusey's insight on imperfect communion among the Churches is brought to the fore.

²⁵ Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 53.

²⁶ Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 54.

²⁷ Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 59.

The Apostolic Ministry and Anglicans' View on Petrine Mandate

Pusey reflected on apostolic ministry and Anglicans' difficulty with Petrine ministry. He acknowledges that through sacramental grace God infused organic unity into the Church: this unity is to be concretely sustained through the sacred ministry.

Christ himself worketh all things in all, He baptizeth invisibly, He consecrateth, He strengtheneth those who stand, he restoreth those who fall; het to signify to us that He doeth it, He useth the ministry of men, appointed in succession, from the day when He breathed on the Apostles and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained". Such organization as essential to the transmission of grace from Christ our Head... Certainly, the Apostolic ministry was to continue to the end of the world. "Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers", or those in their stead, He set in the Church, "for edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come, in unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"²⁸.

By emphasizing that 'Christ himself worketh all things in all', it seems that Pusey intended to bring home to his readers that Christ is not only the source of organic unity of the Church but also the person who nurtures ecclesial unity through the sacramental actions of the ordained ministers.

After narrating the historical contexts that led to the separation between the Latin and the Greek Churches, Pusey expressed the Anglicans' misgivings about how Petrine authority is being exercised. He suggests that domination over temporal and spiritual affairs on the part of the Supreme Pontiffs as well as the extension of their sovereignty engendered incessant rancor and

²⁸ Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 54-55.

discord that led to the great schism of the Western Church²⁹. In spite of all this, Pusey states that the Church of England would *only* accept the functions of the Bishop of Rome as it was exercised in Antiquity, especially during the time of St. Augustine. Pusey expresses these functions as follows:

There are only three conceivable ways in which the Bishop of one Church could interfere in the internal regulations of another. They are, the Confirmation of its Bishops, or its Canons or Ecclesiastical laws, or the reviewing of judicial sentences of its Bishops. These would control its judicial functions in detail, or the selection of those whom the legislative and judicial functions are vested. Of these three, it is confessed by Roman Catholic writers too, that the confirmation of Bishops lay with the Primate, as in other countries with Metropolitan, and that the Pallium never sent to Africa. The African Canons stood on their own authority, as did those of all other Churches; the Greek, the Spanish, the Gallican, the British³⁰.

For the want of space, this work will only make allusion to Pusey's awareness of developments in doctrine and ecclesial governance in the course of the Church's history. He notes, "there is difference between the teaching of the Apostles and that of the Church after them, that what the Apostles taught as the original and Fountain-head, *that* the Church only transmitted"³¹. Hence, he contested Manning's claim that only the Roman Church is infallible based on the belief that the Roman Church is only the living Church on earth – to the exclusion of the Greek Churches and the Church of England. Pusey argued that, *first*; the Church is one Body of Christ. *Secondly*, infallibility is God's gift to the Church Universal. And *thirdly*, in so far as all the Churches teach the same faith which was held from beginning by the primitive Church,

²⁹ Cfr. Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 63-64.

³⁰ Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 66-67.

³¹ Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 84.

the above charge levelled against the Anglican Church remains an unfounded conclusion.³² He declares:

We ourselves have, equally with those in the Roman Church, infallible truth, a resting on infallible authority. We do not need the present agency of an infallible Church to assure us of the truth of what has been ruled infallibly. Nor, in fact, have Roman Catholics any more infallible authority for what they hold than we, seeing that it was ruled by the Church in past ages, to whom, so far, the present Church submits³³.

Pusey went on to mention two means through which God the Holy Spirit preserves the post-apostolic Church in the truth namely – ordinary and extraordinary.

Ordinarily He upholds and maintains that the body of faith, once declared, which without His continual presence and inspiration, would be lost. He operates also in sacraments; He ordains the succession of pastors, doctors, bishops through whom He continually propagates the truth.... Through His continued operation and inspiration the Church everywhere, in East and West, North and South, confesseth, maintaineth, teacheth, propagateth the one faith,– that “which was once for all delivered to the saints”. Extraordinary operations of this same teaching of God the Holy Ghost have been on those occasions, when the Church has had to state, explicitly and formally, in correction of emerging heresies, the truth which God the Holy Ghost ever taught by her I call these “extraordinary” because

³² Cfr. Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 84.

³³ Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 96.

such occasions have been comparatively rare in the history of the Church³⁴.

From the above argument, Pusey avers that Anglicanism has been preserved in the true faith through the help of the Holy Spirit who is still with the church Catholic in England. He mentions the Word, sacraments, and ministry as the ordinary means through which the Holy sustains the Church in the teachings of the apostles on daily basis. It is very striking to observe that Pusey affirms ecumenical councils as an extra-ordinary instrument through which the Holy Spirit keeps the Church in the true faith especially in the time of doctrinal crises.

Ecumenical future of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church

Pusey acknowledges that disunity is not a normal state of the one Church of Christ because of its organic unity in Christ through the operations of the Holy Spirit. With hindsight, one can say that Pusey was prophetic when he said: 'I have never expected to see that external unity of intercommunion restored in my own day; but I have felt it to be an end to be wished for, and prayed for'³⁵. It is not possible to doubt that the history of ecumenical movement has vindicated him.

Pusey suggests that the ecumenical future of the Church that will lead to intercommunion between the Church of England and the Roman Church consist in *agreement on the essentials of the Christian faith and liberty over the non-essentials*. According to him, the essentials are those truths actually defined and the non-essentials are the devotional practices, which in the course of time, became part of the Roman system. He avers: "I doubt not that the Roman Church and ourselves are kept apart much more by vast practical system which lies beyond the letter of the Council of Trent, things which are taught with a quasi-authority in the Roman Church, than by what is actually defined"³⁶.

He concludes by stating that the Church of England's main objection to intercommunion with the Church of Rome and submission to papal authority concerns things that are not *de fide* – the abovementioned non-essentials to the one Catholic faith³⁷. Discerning what is non-essential to the one Catholic faith is an important search for common grounds of faith among churches.

³⁴ Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 87-88.

³⁵ Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 98.

³⁶ Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 98.

³⁷ Cfr. Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 99.

This resonates with the teachings of Vatican II Council as regards the bond of faith and the conviction that what unites Christians is greater than things that separate them³⁸.

In addition, the point that Pusey raised on essential and non-essential aspects of the faith reverberates with the 'hierarchy of truths' a term used in *Unitatis redintegratio* within the context of ecumenical dialogue. "Furthermore, in ecumenical dialogue, when catholic theologians join with other Christians in common study of the divine mysteries, while standing fast by the teaching of the church, they should pursue the work with love for the truth, with charity, and with humility. When comparing doctrines with one another, they should remember that in catholic doctrine there exists an order or <hierarchy> of truths, since they vary in their connection with the foundation of the Christian faith".³⁹

This work illustrates Pusey's thought concerning the fellowship of the Church of England with the ancient Church precisely. It is worth pointing out that Pusey's main interest remains the communion between the Anglican Church and the Church of the Apostles on the common ground of ecclesial faith and praxis. The catholicity of the Anglican faith and praxis was the aim of Pusey's major and important writings because he wanted to defend the credibility of the Church of England as a true Church of Christ. Pusey's contribution has great significance for ecclesiology because of its appraisal of the difficult questions related with ecclesial communion namely: the unity of faith, the legitimate diversity in doctrinal teachings, the Petrine primacy, and the demands of ecumenical future of the Church.

Evaluation and Conclusion

From the foregoing, one can observe that Edward Pusey had something to say to his audience and he still speaks to contemporary scholars on inter-ecclesial communion among churches. He turns Manning's apologetics to an opportunity for ecumenical dialogue by proposing: inter-ecclesial dialogue as an option for inter-ecclesial communion among the churches rather than ecumenism of return. Pusey's *Eirenicon* has a lot of implications for contemporary ecumenical discourse. The antagonistic climate of Victorian England as regards Anglican-Roman Catholic relationship seemed not to have beclouded his

³⁸ Second Vatican Council, "Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*," in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Council: From Trent to Vatican II*, eds. Norman Tanner and Giuseppe Alberigo (London: Sheed and Ward/Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 908.

³⁹ Second Vatican Council, "Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, No. 11, 915.

vision of ecclesial unity enriched by historical insights drawn from Patristic heritage.

First, one of such unfriendly expressions came from Edward Manning who claimed that the Roman Church was the only Church and that the Anglican faith betrayed apostolic faith and traditions. In response to this, Pusey affirms that the Apostles' Creed which the church Universal professes is the benchmark for the fundamentals of Christian beliefs laid down in the Scriptures⁴⁰. With this, Pusey defends the Anglican faith as an authentic expression of the apostolic faith in England. The writer of *Eirenicon* saw the future of ecumenical relationship among Christian communities as closeness to apostolic traditions in matters orthodoxy or orthopraxis; this still remains crucial in contemporary ecumenical dialogue.

In Pusey's argument, inter-ecclesial communion of faith is preferred to ecumenism of return. Many years after Pusey, Anglican and other Reformed churches say the same thing:

Although our predecessors took different paths at the time of the Reformation, they had a common concern to restore "the face of the ancient Catholic church" (Calvin), through a return to scripture and the fathers. Today both our communions acknowledge our dependence on the credal and liturgical formulations of the earliest centuries.⁴¹

This does not mean that there are no specific obstacles that the Reformed traditions must overcome together as regards unity of faith. Even more need be surmounted in Anglican-Roman Catholic relations.

Secondly, Pusey argues in his *Eirenicon* that ecclesial unity is organic and consequent upon what God has done in Christ through the operations of the Holy Spirit⁴². This understanding of ecclesial unity as an organic reality means

⁴⁰ Cfr., Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 38

⁴¹ "Anglican-Reformed Dialogue: God's Reign and Unity," in Jeffrey Gros, Harding Meyer, and William Rusch, eds., *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level*, 1982-1998 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2000), 126.

⁴² Cfr., Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 46.

that it can never be completely destroyed by human inactions or actions. The 1989 *Common Declaration between Pope John Paul II and Robert A. K. Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury* connotes the above idea:

We also urge our clergy and faithful not to neglect or undervalue that certain yet imperfect communion we already share. This communion already shared is grounded in baptism in God our Father, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit; our common Creed; the Chalcedonian definition and the teaching of the fathers; our common Christian heritage for many centuries.⁴³

The organic understanding of ecclesial communion as explained by Pusey as well as the *Common Declaration* cited above exclude ecumenism of return. The ideas of Pusey in the text under consideration encouraged inter-ecclesial communion rather than a return to the Roman Catholic Church.

Finally, Pusey does not reject the authority of the Pope. In the spirit of inter-ecclesial communion, he states that Anglican Church would *only* accept the functions of the Bishop of Rome as it was exercised in Antiquity, especially during the time of St. Augustine⁴⁴. A lot has happened since Pusey's *Eirenicon* was written. For example, admission of women into the rank of ordained priest in the Anglican Church, doctrinal disagreements among churches that constituted the Anglican Communion. Thus John Paul II and Archbishop Robert Runcie admit that the above condition (Pusey's vision of ecclesial unity) might not be easy to meet.

On the other hand, the question and practice of the admission of women to ministerial priesthood in some provinces of the Anglican Communion prevents reconciliation between us even where there is otherwise progress towards

⁴³ "*Common Declaration: Pope John Paul II and Robert A. K. Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury*," Jeffrey Gros, Harding Meyer, and William Rusch, eds., *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2000), 327.

⁴⁴ Cfr., Pusey, *Eirenicon*, 66-67.

agreement in faith on the meaning of the Eucharist and ordained ministry. These difference in faith reflect important ecclesiological differences and we urge the members of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission and all others to in prayer and work for visible unity to minimize these difference. At the same time we also urge them not to abandon either their hope or work for unity.⁴⁵

The overwhelming significance of Pusey's *Eirenicon* is a call to ecumenical rapprochement. A work written 152 years ago foreshadowed inter-ecclesial dialogue and communion rather than ecumenism of return. How far can we learn from it?

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⁴⁵ "Common Declaration: Pope-Archbishop of Canterbury, 327.

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