CHAPTER 3

Pusey’s Eucharistic Theology up to 1843

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines Pusey’s eucharistic theology, up to the year 1843. This was a pivotal year for Pusey in which he preached a sermon in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, entitled The Holy Eucharist: A Comfort to the Penitent.1 The reaction to this sermon was extreme and as a result Pusey was prohibited from preaching before the University of Oxford for two years. Those who judged him considered the eucharistic theology expressed by Pusey in the sermon not to be in harmony with Anglican teaching. Pusey was greatly distressed by this prohibition and 1843 marks an important time in Pusey’s life, writing and position within the Church of England, even though it seems that Pusey ‘accepted his punishment with humility and an absence of bitterness’.2

Various sources were at work in Pusey as he wrote on the Eucharist, including the influence of Scripture, the early church Fathers, philosophy, writers and poets and Anglican divines and Anglican formularies, and these sources, apparent in Pusey’s writing in the period to 1843, will be examined below.

3.2 Scripture and Philosophy

3.2.1 Lectures on Types and Prophecies of the Old Testament – 1836
In August, 1836 Pusey delivered a series of lectures at Oxford University entitled Lectures on Types and Prophecies of the Old Testament.3 These Lectures remain unpublished but are, nonetheless, important in assessing Pusey’s eucharistic theology prior to his sermon of 1843, since they contain significant matters concerning scripture and philosophy, which influenced the development of Pusey’s eucharistic theology and his belief in the sacramental. It is

2 Reed, Glorious Battle, p. 21.
3 Pusey, Lectures on Types and Prophecies, handwritten manuscript held in the Library of Pusey House, Oxford. For additional information on these Lectures see Douglas, ‘Pusey’s “Lectures on Types and Prophecies of the Old Testament”’, pp. 194–216. The Lectures were accessed by the author for study at Pusey House in Oxford in May, 2011. The author also acknowledges the generosity of The Rev’d Dr George Westhaver (Principal of Pusey House, Oxford) who shared his transcription of the Lectures with the author of this book.
surprising that a recent assessment of Pusey’s eucharistic doctrine does not refer to these Lectures or note their importance. This is even more surprising since the Lectures draw heavily on scriptural and philosophical material and interpretation and were earlier acknowledged as important in the overall development of Pusey’s eucharistic theology. Pusey’s Lectures made the crucial realist point that ‘everything in this world can be a type or symbol of heavenly realities’ and presented ‘an understanding of typology and prophecy which pointed towards a principle of divine unity in the Church and an approach to sacramental theology which was of profound importance for Tractarians and Catholic-minded Anglicans in the nineteenth century.

Pusey argued in the Lectures that prophecy is an important scriptural concept and that when viewed in its widest sense it is ‘a signification of some future dispensation of God, whether in word or in act’ and that as such, prophecies are dynamic ‘miracles of Divine wisdom’ and not just a mere foretelling of the future. Pusey argued that prophecy is more than an accumulation of facts or the application of scientific method or intuitive reason, since these ignore the more powerful ways of understanding divine realities: what he describes as ‘types’ of the divine ‘archetype’. Prophecy then, for Pusey, has within it a depth far beyond intuitive reason or individual talent. It is rather an understanding of the type participating in the archetype that leads Pusey to the development of a sacramental theology dependent on moderate realism and the realization that God works through things of this world in order to convey spiritual truth.

The types and typical language of the Old Testament are seen by Pusey as examples of what is conveyed as spiritual truth. The words and acts surrounding the Passover and the Jewish sacrifices in the Temple for example, as types or particulars, harmonise with the moderate realism of sacramental theology in both Pusey’s thinking and that of the modern day, assisting in understanding the more universal action of God in salvation history. God, suggests Pusey, has previously acted through these types, and these now help in the understanding of sacramental types in the Christian context as figures in under-

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6 Jasper, ‘Pusey’s Lectures’, p. 56.
7 Jasper, ‘Pusey’s Lectures’, p. 68.
8 Pusey, Lectures on Types and Prophecies, p. 33.
9 Pusey, Lectures on Types and Prophecies, p. 1.
10 Pusey, Lectures on Types and Prophecies, p. 30.