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Edward Bouverie Pusey and the Oxford Movement, edited by Rowan Strong and Carol Engelhardt Herringer; pp. x + 164. London and New York: Anthem Press, 2012, £60.00, £25.00 paper, \$99.00, \$40.00 paper.

In 1865, three of the leaders of the Oxford Movement met for the first time in over twenty years. Among them was Edward Bouverie Pusey, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford University, canon of Christ Church Cathedral, and the embodiment of Anglo-Catholicism as then practiced within the Church of England. Along with him on that nostalgic afternoon were John Keble—just a year prior to his death—and John Henry Newman, by then England's most (in)famous Roman Catholic convert who would later be elevated to Rome's College of Cardinals. The atmosphere of the meeting, which took place in Keble's parsonage at Hursley in Hampshire, was both somewhat tense and necessarily elegiac. Victorian custom demanded that even highly intimate friends—such as the Tractarian triumvirate had been in the 1830s when the Movement was at its height—must separate socially in the starkest of ways if no longer in theological or religious harmony. Famously, at Newman's semi-monastic retreat of Littlemore near Oxford, such a separation or estrangement had taken place in 1843: the "parting of friends," as it came to be called. Such was the power of Victorian religious convention that twenty-two years would elapse before the Oxford band of brothers would meet again, if only briefly, in (strained) fraternal comity.

At this meeting, and in the years both before and after it, Pusey is understood to have been a dour and severe churchman. Humorless and eccentric, Pusey was a patrician killjoy, the epitome of the Tractarians' doctrine of reserve in all things—including his social and family life. Yet, if his life is probed even a little, it becomes clear that he lived as full and complicated an existence as any of his contemporaries. We ultra-moderns do him a disservice if we remain trapped in the prevailing view of Pusey's supposedly hermetic life at Christ Church.

To that end, Rowan Strong and Carol Engelhardt Herringer's *Edward Bouverie Pusey and the Oxford Movement* does much to dispel some of the fustiness that has long clung to Pusey's reputation for well over a century since his death in 1882. In some ways—and certainly for today's readership—Pusey's arcane medieval practices of personal discipline and rarified holiness come across as wholly strange. What can one say in the twenty-first century, for example, about self-flagellation in the service of religious faith? But the eight contributors to this volume manage to humanize Pusey, reviving him as a figure of considerable power and insight into the Church of England and wider Victorian society during one of the most robust and controversial periods in the Church's history.

Certainly, Pusey's reputation suffered an almost debilitating blow at the hands of Colin Matthew in "Edward Bouverie Pusey: From Scholar to Tractarian" (1981), which appeared in *The Journal of Theological Studies*. Matthew argues that Pusey's foray into German theology in the 1820s during an extended sojourn to the European continent had set him against emergent rationalist currents in the field and pushed him to become an establishment reactionary. The result for Pusey, Matthew contends, was a retreat: both in location, to the reassuring precincts of Oxford and Christ Church, and in doctrine, to the ranks of the nascent Tractarians and their unrelenting campaign to revive the traditionally catholic heritage of the Church of England. Ian McCormack's essay, in particular, takes exception to what he justifiably sees as Matthew's monochromatic interpretation of

Pusey, which relies substantially on the “partial and one-sided” account of his life offered by David A. R. Forrester in his doctoral thesis, which was published later as *Young Doctor Pusey* (1989) (17). McCormack succeeds at countering many of the caricatures of Pusey—especially his relationship with his wife and children—that have developed over the years. Along with the volume’s other contributors, he successfully re-positions Pusey as a more complex and sympathetic Victorian figure.

That said, attempting to rehabilitate Pusey completely is something of a Sisyphean task. He was indeed an Anglican churchman of great solemnity and gravitas. His politics and theology were archly conservative, and his parenting habits overly severe. Yet even in these characteristics he does not stand out very sharply in relation to his peers and what modern readers might consider the Victorians’ harsh mode of raising children. The early death of his wife Maria in 1839 devastated him, and from which a full recovery was likely never made. Of course, little or no allowance was made in mid-Victorian society for what a later age would valorize as the single parent. The psychic burden of raising his children alone in an age in which the role of the mother in British society was apotheosized could only have been a difficult task.

This carefully edited volume successfully covers the ground trod by its subject, although its omission of Pusey’s rather well-developed thinking on poor relief, its relationship to Eucharistic communitarianism, and the place in his thinking on the poor accorded to Tractarian “slum” priests and revived Anglican women’s orders is a weakness. This omission is surprising because it could have been easily addressed with reference, for example, to S. A. Skinner’s work on these and other similar questions in his excellent monograph, *Tractarians and the “Condition of England”: The Social and Political Thought of the Oxford Movement* (2004).

Unlike his former Tractarian colleagues with whom subsequent generations have engaged much more fully, Pusey’s apparent antiquarian oddity has been resistant to revision. Even the mercurial, Protestant Reformation-bashing Hurrell Froude, who died in 1836 during the very early stages of the Movement, has been treated more thoroughly by scholars than has his long-lived co-religionist Pusey. In this way, Strong and Herringer’s volume on the man is a welcome, learned, and balanced exposition of his life, thought, and churchmanship. Taken as a whole, it should dispel many of the misapprehensions of Pusey’s reputation, engendering a much fuller appreciation of the complexities of a life lived at the center of the Victorian church for half a century. No view of Pusey henceforth—especially in direct relation to the Oxford Movement—will be properly held without reference to this book.

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