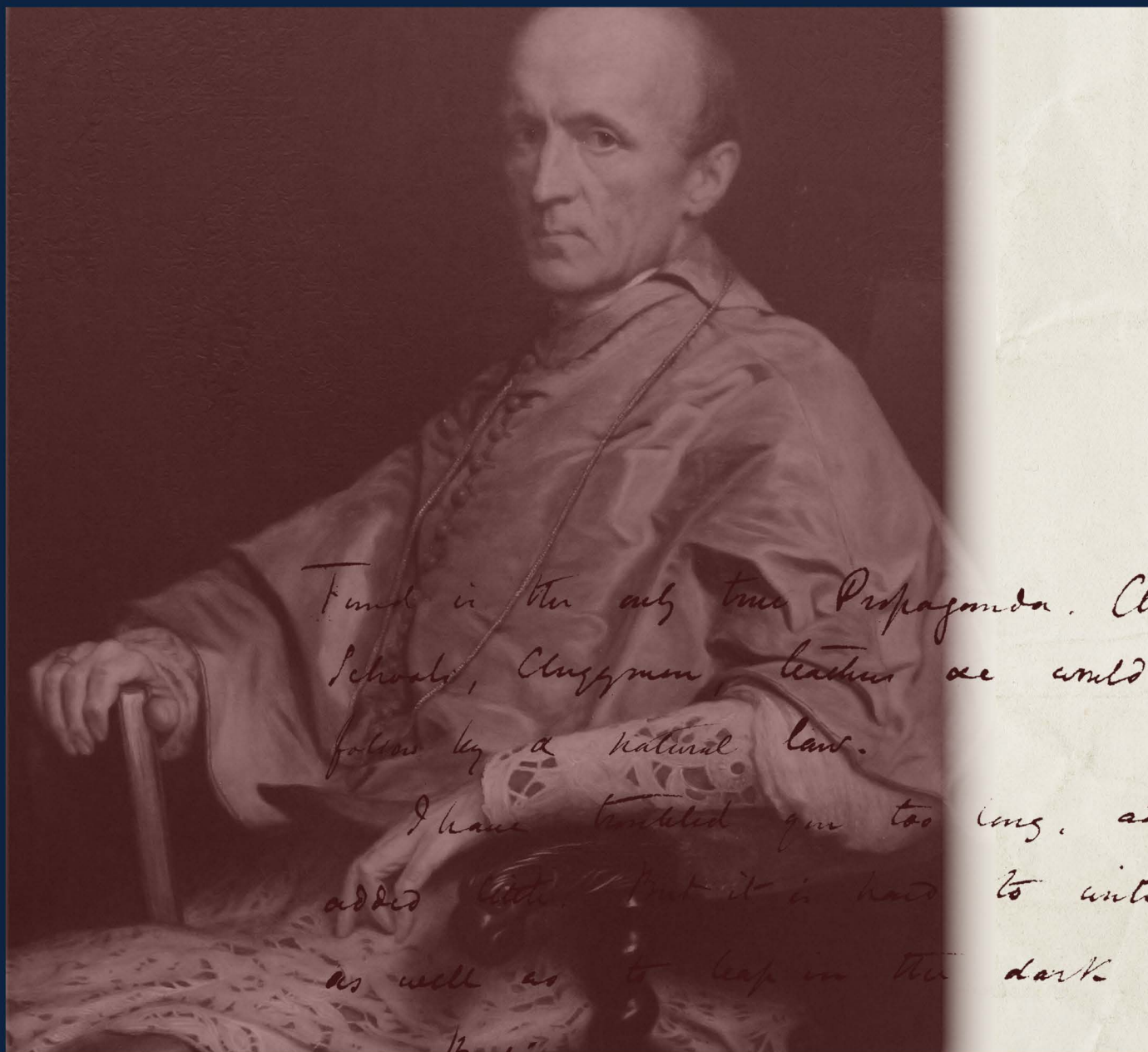


A Question of Sovereignty: The Politics of Manning's Conversion

Thomas Aquinas Lecture, 1995



Peter C. Erb

A Pitts Theology Library Publication

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Cardinal Manning Portrait



Oil portrait of Cardinal Manning, 1867, held by Pitts Theology Library

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Editor's Preface

M. Patrick Graham

This public lecture was presented on the afternoon of December 4, 1995, at White Hall (Emory University) as the Second Annual Thomas Aquinas Lecture and was sponsored by the Aquinas Center of Theology at Emory University. Exhibited in conjunction with the lecture were select pieces from the 2,100 manuscript items and 4,600 books and pamphlets of the Cardinal Manning Collection of the Pitts Theology Library.

Prof. Peter C. Erb was trained at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, and since 1971 has served on the faculty of Wilfrid Laurier University, currently in the Department of Religion and Culture. His publications include *Pietists, Protestants, and Mysticism: The Use of the Late Medieval Spiritual Texts in the Work of Gottfried Arnold (1666-1714)* (Scarecrow Press, 1989) and *Unity in the Church*, by Johann Adam Möhler (translation with introduction and notes; Catholic University of America Press, 1996). This lecture grew out of Prof. Erb's current work on a critical edition of the correspondence between Henry Edward Manning and William E. Gladstone. It has been a source of great satisfaction to follow the work of such a careful and insightful scholar as he brought to life the library's collections in his splendid presentation.

Finally, thanks are due to Prof. P. Lyndon Reynolds, director of the Aquinas Center of Theology, and to the staff of the Emory Publications Office. The first invited Prof. Erb to deliver the annual Thomas Aquinas Lecture and offered helpful editorial advice for the preparation of this publication. The second lent considerable artistic and technical talents to the design of the poster for the lecture and to the preparation of this pamphlet. More congenial and capable colleagues could not have been found.

M. Patrick Graham

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The Politics of Manning's Conversion

The subject of this lecture,¹ Henry Edward Manning, is perhaps best known as he is depicted in the 1867 portrait now in the Pitts Theology Library. In it he sits as the reigning Archbishop of Westminster and future Cardinal, aloof, ascetic, autocratic-obedient to his papal superior and, in turn, awaiting obedience from his inferiors. At least such is generally the depiction. In a recent novel, for example, Manning is pictured as “a small, ascetic-looking prelate ‘the devil of the [Vatican] Council’ because of his intrigues, and indeed he had the look of a spider, being thin as a whip, with clenched jaw and a mouth like a slit.”² Nor has this caricature been left to stand on its own strength alone. A foil was always readily available in Manning’s fellow Cardinal, the venerable John Henry Newman, who continues to play the role admirably.³ Thus, Roy Jenkins’ popular new biography of Gladstone describes Manning as “the future leader of the authoritarian populist tendency, largely Irish supported, in British Catholicism” and Newman as “the future patron of a gentler, older, more educated, more English approach to an apostolic and universal church.”⁴

The negative portrayal of Manning this year celebrates its centenary. In 1895 Edmund Sheridan Purcell published his biography of the Cardinal in which he traced Manning’s life from his birth in 1808, his education at Harrow and Oxford, his work as an Anglican priest and Archdeacon in Lavington, Sussex from 1833 to his conversion in 1851, and his later career as a Roman Catholic priest and Archbishop until his death in 1892.⁵

Two volumes in length and venomous in intent, Purcell’s biography established the basis on which most later treatments of Manning were formed: Manning’s actions, it was understood, were those of a highly ambitious and authoritarian individual. When a few years later Lytton Strachey in his *Eminent Victorians*⁶ inimitably condensed and sharpened this characterization, there was no gainsaying it, and thereafter, any defense of Manning⁷ was forced to begin by accepting the opponent’s portrait. One of Bruce Marshall’s fictional characters, as a result, is made to exclaim: “[Strachey] erred ... in two respects. As a clever man he ought to have known that the surprising thing is not that a Cardinal Manning should be on occasion an ambitious and an unscrupulous man, but that an ambitious and an unscrupulous man should ever have been Cardinal Manning.”⁸

Not every centenary need be celebrated and that of Purcell’s biography is one of them, but whatever their merit, anniversaries do direct us back to an earlier time and require some reflection on the past. Much more than a century, however, separates us from Manning’s day, and the distance between a North American republic and British parliamentary traditions is far greater than the few miles that can be traversed so quickly—some of us may twice toast the arrival of a third millennium within five Concord hours. Obsessed with individual rights, we no longer look first to our obligations or grasp our identities, as our forbears once did, primarily in the context of a social whole. Sovereignty now rests in a people, not in the Crown, and supremacy, royal or other, arises with individual and majoritarian concerns. We dwell now in a different world than Manning’s and find it difficult to step beyond our voluntaristic view of the individual and our understanding of social and political units as merely contractual. In such a region of dissimilitude, earlier times appear as foreign places, and the way to understanding them “is guarded by a more than usual number of ambiguities.”⁹ In the light of the Purcell heritage, wedded as it is to our modern worldview, these ambiguities surrounding the study of Manning increase. At times we are, as it were, “lost in a wilderness, where every pine and rock and bay appears to us as both known and unknown, and therefore as uncertain pointers on the way back to human habitation.”¹⁰ Yet, whether uncertain or not, pointers there are, and on the centenary of a particularly unloving description of Manning, it will be well for us to return to his conversion, the central event of his life, and to attend to it with care.

NOTES

¹ The lecture is dedicated to my former teacher and colleague, Dr. Flora Roy, with thanks.

² Julia O'Faolain, *The Judas Cloth* (London: Sinclair Stevenson, 1992), 402. Lacer, one of the novel's characters comments: "The Jesuits are encouraging priests to take an oath to fight for the dogma [of papal infallibility] 'even unto bloodshed' It seems that two bishops already have. Manning of Westminster is one. Converts ... like that sort of thing. Having turned coat once, they feel a need to put themselves under restraint." (445) With the Pope he hopes, it is said, "to arrest movement and conquer history." (511) Even more unlikely depictions are found in Robert Player [Robert Furneaux Jordan], *Let's Talk of Worms, of Graves, and Epitaphs* (London: Gollanz, 1975).

³ As early as 1912, J.E.C. Bodley questioned the appropriateness of the dichotomy. "It has always been incomprehensible to me," he wrote, "why Manning's hostility to Newman should be imputed to him as a sin, while Newman's hostility to Manning is held to be a virtue." (J.E.C. Bodley, "Cardinal Manning," in his *Cardinal Manning. The Decay of Idealism in France*. The Institute of France [London: Longmans, Green, 1912], 15; see 15-28 for full discussion). For a more recent evaluation of the differences between the two men, see Sheridan Gilley, *Newman and His Age* (London: Darron, Longman and Todd, 1990), 352-53; and above all, David Newsome, *The Convert Cardinals: John Henry Newman and Henry Edward Manning* (London: John Murray, 1993).

⁴ Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1995), 49. See also John Harlow, "Jenkins Accused of Using Sex Slurs to Sell Gladstone Book," *The Sunday Times* (Oct. 8, 1995), 3; and the review by Anthony Howard, "Most Eminent Victorian," *ibid.*, Book Review Section, 3.

⁵ Edmund S. Purcell, *Life of Cardinal Manning, Archbishop of Westminster* (2 vols.; London: Macmillan, 1895); and note Sheridan Gilley, "New Light on an Old Scandal: Purcell's Life of Cardinal Manning," in D.A. Bellenger (ed.), *Opening the Scrolls: Essays in Catholic History in Honour of Godfrey Anstruther* (Stratton on the Fosse: Downside Abbey, 1987), 166-98. Note, as well, Maisie Ward, *The Wilfrid Wards and the Transition* (2 vols.; New York: Sheed and Ward, 1934-37), 1:205ff. and 411ff. On Manning's life see V. Alan McClelland, *Cardinal Manning: His Public Life and Influence, 1865-1892* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962); David Newsome, *The Parting of Friends: The Wilberforces and Henry Manning* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993; first published, London: John Murray, 1966); David Newsome, *The Convert Cardinals: Newman and Manning*, the 1992 Manning Centenary issues of *Recusant History*, *The Allen Review*, and *The Chesterton Review*, and V. Alan McClelland (ed.), *By Whose Authority? Newman, Manning and the Magisterium* (Stratton on the Fosse, Bath: Downside Abbey, 1995). Less satisfactory is Robert Gray, *Cardinal Manning: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1985). For the period as a whole, see Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church* (2 vols.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1966). On the Oxford Movement, note especially Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship, 1760-1857* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) as well as Geoffrey Rowell (ed.), *Tradition Renewed: The Oxford Movement Conference Papers* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986), and Rowell's *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities of the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983; pb. 1991). For further details on Manning and topics treated in this paper see my forthcoming edition of the Manning-Gladstone correspondence. An earlier transcription of a part of the correspondence was made by Alphonse Chapeau in the appendix to his Sorbonne doctorate, "La vie anglicaine de Manning" (doctoral dissertation, Paris, Sorbonne, 1955; 1900 pp. + 280 pp.). See as well his "Manning and Gladstone," in *La parole et les voix: Ecriture et mémoire. Mélanges offerts à André Bordeaux* (Tours: Publications de l'Université de Tours, 1989), 113-28. A useful review of the Manning-Gladstone relationship can be found in Professor McClelland's, "Gladstone and Manning: A Question of Authority," in Peter J. Jagger (ed.), *Gladstone, Politics, and Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1985), 148-70. I remain indebted to James Pereiro for his many helpful comments in our conversations on Manning, reflective of his published work in *Recusant History* ("'Truth before Peace': Manning and Infallibility," *Recusant History*, 21 [1993], 218-51) and McClelland, *By Whose Authority?* and for the opportunity of reading early drafts of his doctoral thesis, "Henry Edward Manning and the Teaching Office of the Church" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hull, 1995).

⁶ *Eminent Victorians: Cardinal Manning, Florence Nightingale, Dr. Arnold, General Gordon* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1918).

⁷ Above all, see Shane Leslie, *Henry Edward Manning: His Life and Labours* (New York: P.J. Kennedy, 1921).

⁸ Bruce Marshall, *All Glorious Within* (London: Constable, 1944), 124.

⁹ Throughout this paper citations for quotations are not given when they appear on the same page and publication as the quotation following.

¹⁰ George P. Grant, *Time as History* (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1969), 52.

Contrasts, Changes, and Manning's Conversion

On the eve of Passion Sunday in 1851, Manning posted a brief note to a friend, William Gladstone. It was the shortest of all the near-450 letters that had passed between them in the previous decade and a half. "Bear me in mind in your prayers tomorrow," he wrote. "And may God be with you always."¹¹ Manning's request stands with the force of a command; for friends as close as these, any rhetorical entreaty, a "Please" or "I beg you," would be disingenuous and overshadow their very real accord. Nevertheless, the accord is over. Manning's benediction marks its end, and so well is he aware of this that he shifts his customary closing of the previous fifteen years— "Believe me, Always yours affectionately"—to a simple statement of loyalty: "Ever your attached Friend." On the following day, April 6, Manning was received into the Roman Catholic Church at Farm Street in London. "(A)fter Sacramental Confession, Profession of Faith, conditional Baptism, and absolution," Manning wrote shortly after the event, "I went to High Mass. [James] Hope was received about 3 o'clock the same afternoon." One week later, on Palin Sunday, both were "confirmed, and communicated in the Cardinal's [Wiseman's] private chapel." Anxious as always to indicate that significant turns in his career were directed by powers other than his own, he continued: "[B]y his desire I received the tonsure. He has expressed his wish and intention to proceed without delay, and at Whitsuntide to admit me to the Priesthood. He said that it was his decision and act on his own responsibility, not at mine or my seeking."¹²

How Gladstone prayed on April 6 we do not know. He wrote Manning immediately "in answer to his note showing that the blow was to fall tomorrow,"¹³ but on the blow itself, he could only comment: "A day of pain! Manning & Hope!" and on Monday, April 7: "Hope too is gone. They were my two props. Their going may be to me a sign that my work is gone with them. God give us daily light with daily bread. One blessing I have: total freedom from doubts. These dismal events have smitten but not shaken." The following day, Tuesday, April 8, before leaving for Paris, Gladstone "[e]xecuted a codicil to my will striking out Hope as Ex[ecuto]r."¹⁴

There is something in Gladstone's reactions and in the melancholy of Manning's note that strikes a modern reader as melodramatic. "Surely," an average citizen of the 1990s might comment, "this was far too extreme a response to what was, after all, even in the nineteenth century a private decision. No one was really any worse off: Gladstone could continue as a Member of Parliament, and Hope as a legal consultant. Manning no longer carried the prestige of an Anglican Archdeacon and had to give up an assured income, but even in his case the results were not calamitous: only a week after his conversion he was pressed by the reigning English Cardinal to become a Catholic priest, and with such encouragement he could not have despaired over his future. Indeed," our contemporary reporter might add, "there has always been much to attract one in Catholicism. In Great Britain today, for example, it is a fashionable option. In the past two years alone, the Dutchess of Kent has 'gone over'¹⁵ and after her, Princess Diana's mother,¹⁶ amidst rumors that the Princess herself is receiving instruction.¹⁷ Could one not imagine that the same excitement swirled about Manning in the 'second spring' conversions of 1851 and that the same psychological and social-political pressures drew him in."¹⁸

One could, indeed, so imagine—and many have. Post-modern we may be, but our explanations of conversion and religious experience generally remain dependent on modern presuppositions such as those of our hypothetical commentator. Particularly is this the case with those central and self-contradictory contemporary commitments to the primacy and sovereignty of the free individual will and to a therapeutic model of that will, as shaped by its socioeconomic and political environment. Not surprisingly, as a result, models chosen for understanding conversion are in large part appropriated from the social sciences, which in turn direct our attention to individual personality traits, developmental psychology, and family and social systems theories.¹⁹ However kindly intended, the results of such a

program are not unexpected: religious behavior is described as but another social activity, and spirituality a stylish descriptive term for a group's or individual's willed idiosyncrasies.

Manning himself pointed out the danger of interpreting religious change by external character traits and within a modern framework of the sovereign will. In his sermons²⁰ published the year before his conversion, he spoke at some length about "late conversions," and his comments provide ample warnings for those treating his own. Some conversions are "begun too late, and with greater obstructions." (S4, 9) From the external world, these receive special attention, since that world marks in them the "contrasts" between what was earlier and what came after. What the external world misses, however, are "changes": "changes are objects of *faith alone*" according to "the power of ... constraining love which bends the will of those who, after baptism, fall, and yet repent." (S4, 11; italics mine)

By his distinction between "contrasts" and "changes," Manning is able to oppose interpretations of conversion according to the methods of objective history. Social, or even intellectual, history can describe only the most obvious "objective" turn and is incapable of distinguishing between those conversions formed by the power of love and those that are the result of an individual's private judgment.²¹ Indeed, as Manning describes self-willed conversions, one can almost sense him defending his later actions, insisting that whatever the appearance, his is not a life that can be so described: "There is always a glare, heat, and noise about such characters, a restless, eager sharpness in their tone and way, which betrays the source of the fire from which they are kindled to be not in heaven but earth." (S4, 12) What counts for Manning is the heavenly kindling.

An initial and ongoing process, conversion marks "not only the change which comes in afterlife upon the sinful and the careless, ... but also the whole life-long penetrating change of heart which must pass on every regenerate soul." It makes little difference "whether [or not] it begin with our earliest consciousness[;] as dawn lightens into noon, it is all one. Time is nothing." What does count, however, is the motive, and that is not the free act of the isolated individual. The motive power lies elsewhere: "[T]he only true motive of this change is a sense of the love of Christ." (S4, 9) Throughout his life, Manning opposed any understanding of conversion as the result of human will, acting primarily and solely on its own initiative and power. "The soul in man was so created," he wrote, "that no other power could satisfy or sway it altogether; no other can touch its life to the very quick, and awaken all its affections. The love of Christ felt in the heart is the only principle of perfect conversion to God." (S4, 8)²²

Such a state is not open to the external eye of a twentieth century historian attempting to grasp a nineteenth-century writer's thought or personality. Manning's implied reader is the individual Christian working out salvation with "fear and trembling." To this individual he directs his call, knowing that the mystery of divine love in each human soul is operative in so secret a manner that it is not for anyone other than that soul to make judgments upon it. A contemporary historian or theologian may listen to the conversation, but "changes," worked by this love in such a soul, are found in the register of God, not in the record of humankind.

According to Manning, then, in assessing such matters as an individual's conversion, the human voice finally must be silent. In Manning's own case, however, the possibility of reaching an intermediate judgment may be possible. Although a fine theologian, Manning published his sermons with pastoral concerns primarily in mind. As such he intended them as aids in spiritual guidance, composed on the basis of his personal growth in holiness, a growth that he understood as initiated by the Divine and changing his moral nature daily. In this way Manning's sermons provide pointers to his own religious changes as he understood them, and allow one, if attending not to the external contrasts of his life alone but to his pastoral voice, insights into the nature of his conversion and the dynamic of his life as a whole.

NOTES

¹¹ Pitts MS 510405mg. Reference throughout to manuscripts in Pitts Theology Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Ga. are to correspondence, dated by year (in the nineteenth century), month, and day, in this case April 5, 1851. Other abbreviations used are to the British Library, London (BL), the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Bodleian), St. Deiniol's Library, Hawarden (St. Deiniol's), and the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh (NLS).

¹² Manning to Robert I. Wilberforce, Bodleian MS Eng. lett. c. 656, 185-86.

¹³ *The Gladstone Diaries* edited by M.R.D. Foot and H.C.G. Matthew (14 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968-1995), 4:320; letter unlocated. Hereafter *The Gladstone Diaries* are referred to as GD with volume and page number.

¹⁴ GD 4:323.

¹⁵ See Piers Paul Read, "The Suffering that Led the Duchess to Rome," *The Daily Telegraph* (Jan. 12, 1994), 9.

¹⁶ On Lady Frances Shand Kydd, see Christina Odone, "Di's Mother to Build Catholic Centre on Iona," *Catholic Herald* (Oct. 13, 1995), 1; and Hugh Farmer, "Crossing Over the Bridge from Iona to Tiber," *Catholic Herald* (Oct. 27, 1995), 5.

¹⁷ The Royals are not alone. Two members of the Cabinet and the former Anglican Bishop of London are marching with a most unlikely crew. An egalitarian socialist, Tony Blair, sends his children to Catholic schools and mouths the rhetoric of papal encyclicals; the arch Tory, Alan Clarke, not to be outdone, (*The Times* [May 30, 1995]) appears willing to stand as an equal alongside former women priests, (as in the case of Phyllis Fleury, ordained in the Church of Ireland; see *Catholic Herald* [Oct. 27, 1995], 5) Estée Lauder models, (on Liz Hurley and Catholicism, see Sue Reid, "Mass Appeal," *The Sunday Times* [Oct. 15, 1995], 10-11; and Frances Kennedy, "Catholic Tastes," *ibid.*, 11) and other converts such as the feminist, Sarah Maitland, and the antifeminist, Alice Thomas Ellis. So well-known have Catholic and convert authors, in fact, become that some in the Church of England perceive a Catholic conspiracy to control the British Press. (See Tim Bradshaw, "Anglicans Fear the Catholics who Conspire," *The Times* [Jan. 29, 1994], 9-10; Ferdinand Mount, "No Pontification in this Realm of England," *The Spectator* [Jan. 29, 1994], 9-10; and the responses by Damian Thompson, "The Best of Frenemies," *Ibid.*, 10-11; and Paul Johnson, "We Papists Don't Want to Fight, But by Jingo If We Do ..." [*ibid.* (Feb. 5, 1994), 22]. Note Eamon Duffy's earlier viewpoint, "A Premature Triumphalism," in *The Tablet* [Jan. 22, 1994], 66; and the comment by Stuart Reid, "What Rite Have They," in *The Sunday Telegraph* [Feb. 27, 1994]. See also the recent article by Desmond Albrow, "Not a Time for the Faine of Heart," *Catholic Herald* [Oct. 27, 1995], 5, on the appointment of the convert, Charles Moore, as editor of *The Daily Telegraph*.

¹⁸ How much a contemporary "second spring" is based in reality is questionable. Paul Johnson's "The Strong Scene of a Second Spring," *Catholic Herald* (Christmas, 1995) is certainly overwritten.

¹⁹ See, for example, Walter E. Conn, *Christian Conversion: A Developmental Interpretation of Autonomy and Surrender* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986); and Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

²⁰ Hereafter, all citations of Manning's sermons are referred to in the text with the following sigla and page numbers:

S1: Henry Edward Manning, *Sermons* (London: James Burns, 1842)

S2: Henry Edward Manning, *Sermons* (London: James Burns, 1844)

SU: Henry Edward Manning, *Sermons, Preached before the University of Oxford* (Oxford and London: John Henry Parker and G. F. and J. Rivington, 1844)

S3: Henry Edward Manning, *Sermons* (London: William Barnes, 1848)

S4: Henry Edward Manning, *Sermons. Volume the Fourth* (London: William Pickering, 1850)

All of Manning's Anglican sermon notes and texts are preserved in Pitts Theology Library.

²¹ The topic was widely discussed among members of the Oxford Movement. On Newman and private judgment see Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988; pb 1990), 227-30; and Newman's essay, "Private Judgement," in his *Essays* (2 vols.; London: Basil Montagu, 1871), 2:336-74.

²² By placing the emphasis on "changes" as the "objects of faith alone" Manning maintains traditional catholic concern with growth in holiness in the context of a catholic view of justification, while articulating a Protestant emphasis on the sovereignty of divine grace. When he emphasizes the will's passivity beneath divine grace, he is concerned with opposing modern Enlightenment views of individual human freedom and the resulting stimulus to human pride and presumption; he is not in any way denying catholic emphasis on the dignity of human freedom as understood in the traditional Christian mystery of grace and free will. A full treatment of Manning's theological position on this mystery and the related issue regarding faith and reason, so important throughout nineteenth-century Catholicism and discussed extensively at the First Vatican Council, awaits a full study. During his Anglican period Manning saw the issue as closely related to the problem of the analogy of nature and the far-reaching influence of Joseph Butler, *The Analogy of Religion* (see *The Works of Joseph Butler*, ed. by W.E. Gladstone, 3 vols. [Oxford: Clarendon, 1896], vol. I). With his emphasis on the sovereignty of divine grace, compare the following from his sermon on the analogy of nature: "What, then, is this proper evidence on which revelation, or, as we shall better say henceforth, the Church and the Faith, repose? Plainly, upon no presumptions or probabilities deduced before the fact, that is, upon no a priori reasoning. We are not able to say before the fact whether any revelation shall be given or not; or, if given, to what extent, to what end, on what evidence, or how secured, and the like. In this, nature is silent as death. Analogies have no existence. All our proofs are after the event. The fact attests itself, and reveals its own outline, character, and conditions. In the beginning, God revealed Himself to the patriarchs by visions and token of His Divine presence." (S4, 164) For details, see James Pereiro's doctoral dissertation. For

general background, see Gerald A. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century: The Quest for a Unitary Method* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977) and Joseph Fitzer (ed.), *Romance and the Rock: Nineteenth Century Catholics on Faith and Reason* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989). A useful survey of patristic and medieval positions on grace and free will, helpful for understanding Manning both as an Anglican and Roman Catholic, remains Harry J. McSorely, *Luther: Right or Wrong? An Ecumenical-Theologic Study of Luther's Major Work, The Bondage of the Will* (New York: Newman, 1969).

The Sovereign Will of God - Manning's Earliest Pastoral Directives

Already in his earliest sermons in 1842 Manning initiated a discussion of the human will,²³ and on the first page of that collection he strikes the keynote of his position: the will is passive, and even its activity is the result of its passive nature. Sin “listens at our heart, floats through all our thoughts, draws our will under its sway, and ourselves under its dominion.” (S1, 1) Certainly the will chooses, but in a fallen human creature it is sin that is dominant, and its dominance is spoken of as the human will itself,²⁴ just as before the Fall the will “wielded an absolute power over [the individual’s] own nature ... [s]o long as he was subject to the Divine will.” (S1, 4)

The love of God, thus, invariably comes first in time and place according to Manning. Divine will works in a person before that person wills and obeys. Manning knows this in his own life: “I have been almost passive, while He has been working out His will in me: He has chosen, and gone before me, and guided me by the rod of His chastisement.... I have learned obedience by the things which I have suffered.” (S1, 299) Properly understood, the new will in a fallen creature is the result of loving divine election acting through the sacraments, initially in baptismal regeneration:

[W]e are made new creatures by a present change working in our moral nature; that is to say, through our regeneration in holy baptism. By the love of God electing us to a new birth of the Spirit, and by the Holy Ghost working through that visible sacrament, we are translated from wrath to grace. (S1, 20)

Our moral nature, Manning goes on to insist, is singular and can be referred to as either the heart, the conscience, or the will. (S1, 24) Considered in this light, the will is not a faculty. As it is coextensive with heart and conscience,²⁵ so is it with spirit,²⁶ and consciousness and the individual’s choices are one with the individual’s growth in holiness or lack thereof. “As the will chooses, so the man is. Our will is ourself; and as it takes up into itself, and, as it were, incorporates with itself, the powers and the bias of good or ill—such we become.” (S1, 53) Wills that incorporate within themselves the “bias” of the good, Manning wrote in language that appropriates mystical vocabulary for ecclesiological and eschatological ends, “walk with God, and God dwells in them with a growing nearness day by day; they are ever more and more one with Him, and partake more fully of the Divine nature, and are filled with the will of God: they abide in God, and God in them.” (S1, 53)

On such a basis Manning works out his soteriology. “The spiritual life is perpetually replenished by the “powers of the world to come,” he tells his readers, (S1, 74) powers that are intended for all human beings, (S1, 77) as “they ... absolutely submit their will to be changed and subdued to His will.” (S1, 80) Submission of will is not an action of will but a denial of self-will, “the absolute condition of His service,” (S1, 90)²⁷ a condition fulfilled, however, by the divine itself: “There must pass on each a deep and searching change. And this change, though it be wrought in us of God, is wrought through our striving.” (S1, 84)

To emphasize the centrality of the divine action, Manning more regularly turns to ecclesiological themes and highlights the role of the church: “Christ is in the midst of His Church. His eye and His hand have been upon us from the hour of our baptism. He is ever drawing us by His unseen virtues: we are all around Him, some nearer, some further off; some approaching, some receding from Him.” (S1, 276) In the regenerate there is an active function of the will, enacting self-denial, that is, a denial of self-will without which “there can be no real cleaving of the moral nature to the will of God.” This use of the term “real,” Manning proceeds to point out, is intended “to distinguish between the passive and seeming attachment of most baptized men, and the conscious, energetic grasp of will by which Christ’s true disciples cleave to their Master’s service,” (S1, 96)²⁸ the end of which is “release from the causes of our disquiet, or rest for the deep cravings of an immortal being.” (S1, 111) Full satisfaction of such cravings shall be made manifest at the end of time but is present already in the church, “the root of the new creation, which shall be raised

in its fullness at the last day.” (S1, 379) With this resurrection will come “the restoration of the whole man, in spirit, and soul, and body; a restoration of all in which consists the integrity of our nature and the identity of our person,” (S1, 367) and as such, full union between the will of the human person and that of the divine.

Obedience to the will of God is a work of direct and simple consciousness. It is to be wrought in us by its own self-confirming power. It is by doing the will of God; by recognising it in all the changes of life; by reading the expression of the Divine mind in the course of this troubled world; by bowing ourselves down before it, under whatsoever guise it may reveal itself; by yielding ourselves in gladness of mind both to do and suffer it, counting it a holy discipline and a loving correction of our own wilfulness, and by praying Him never to stay His hand till the power and will of self be abolished from our regenerate being;—by these means it is that we are changed from the shadows of a fleeting life to the abiding realities of the eternal world, being made partakers of the will of God. (S1, 140-41)

NOTES

²³ The topic was not novel with him or his High Church and Tractarian associates. Newman’s essay on private judgment, for example, appeared in the *British Critic* in 1841, focusing a discussion that had gone on for some time earlier.

²⁴ S1, 2; see also 5-6, 66; S2, 6-7 and 87: “the act of the whole inward man.”

²⁵ Cf. S4, 31.

²⁶ Cf. S1, 226.

²⁷ See S1, 93; S2, 146-47, and 151.

²⁸ See also S1, 97, 215.

The Sovereign Word Incarnate - Manning on the Visible Church

Manning's teaching as set forth in the first volume of his sermons in 1842 was continued in his sermons over the next several years, although in them he developed more explicitly his doctrines of the visible and invisible church, the unity of the church, and the church as the mystical body of Christ. All these he linked directly with his reflections on the human will. A concern with ecclesiology had been with him from the beginning of his career. In 1835, two years after moving to Lavington, he preached and published his sermon, *The English Church, Its Succession and Witness for Christ*.²⁹ In 1837 his *Catena parum* appeared,³⁰ and shortly after the death of his wife on July 24 of that year, Manning was busily engaged opposing the proposals of the previous year's Ecclesiastical Commissioners for Church Reform and the Cathedral Act, which (as Manning and his High Church colleagues interpreted them) subordinated the sovereignty of Christ's body, the church, to the secular political expedients. In 1838 he published *The Rule of Faith*.³¹ Practical and theoretical questions concerning the nature of the church would remain foremost in his mind from then until his conversion in 1851. By 1837 he had taken up regular correspondence with Gladstone, the bulk of which treated ecclesiastical and ecclesiological matters and was the catalyse for Gladstone's *The State in Its Relations with the Church* (the first edition of which was composed in 1838, the fourth, a two-volume expansion of the first, in 1841 [London: John Murray]), Gladstone's *Church Principles Considered in Their Results* (London: John Murray, 1840), and Manning's own *The Unity of the Church* (London: John Murray, 1842)

It is not surprising then that already in the second volume of his sermons, published in 1844, Manning should have expanded on the ecclesiological themes he initiated earlier³² and that these were developed in the university sermons he preached from 1842 through 1844. In a sermon, "The Probation of the Church, November 20, 1842," for example, he emphasizes the visible church's role in regenerating the sinful will and thus allowing the newborn, regenerated will to act freely. (SU, 24)³³ The process is not mechanical; it is enacted in the visible church without doubt, but through its living Spirit. In its regeneration the will is passive; as regenerate it is responsible and acts freely.³⁴ And by baptismal grace it is present in each member of Christ's body:

There is in every living soul, born again of the Holy Ghost, a gift of enlightening. The great truths and laws of God's kingdom are as a germ implanted in the conscience; latent, indeed, and undeveloped, but there in virtue and in power. For this cause, baptism is called our illumination. (Heb. x.32) It is impossible to say what it may bestow upon the spiritual capacities of the soul; what faculties and perceptions, what passive and subtil [sic] qualities may be infused into us by our regeneration. (S3, 23)

The problem of such passivity is worked out in detail in the last of Manning's university sermons, his "Gift of Illumination," preached on Trinity Sunday, 1844. (SU, 151-81)

[T]he most perfect knowledge of Divine truth is that which we receive by the passive perceptions of the reason. By the reason, I mean that power of intellectual sight whereby we see or perceive the ideas and relations of truth. By passive perception, is not intended a lifeless and inert condition of the mind, which is contradictory to the plain meaning of the word: for to perceive presupposes life, and the activity of living powers in the subject. The words passive perception may be used to express the act of perceiving such truths as discover themselves to us by their own light, as opposed to those perceptions which are the consequence and conclusions of reasoning and investigation. It is not necessary to raise any question as to the kind or degree of light which may be in us by nature, in respect to particular truths. Whatsoever it be, it is still a gift passively received, to which we bring nothing but the simple capacity and consciousness of perceiving. (SU, 157-58)

“[T]he deepest insights into Divine truth are obtained not by controversy,” then, “but by contemplation,” Manning states, again using mystical language to support his approach.³⁵ Contemplation he defines as “the act of the reason, consciously and of our own will, with faith and love, dwelling upon truth received by the gift of God.” (SU, 162) There is never a suggestion, however, that such contemplation is bequeathed to the isolated individual. It comes solely within the church. Citing St. Thomas, Manning makes the link explicit. Contemplation of truth is a communal act, pursued primarily in the worship and adoration of the church as a whole. In no way is the ground here being laid for sterile scholastic rationalism which simplistically set down “truths” to be accepted in humble obediential piety and which Manning is sometimes later in his life accused of supporting:

The contemplation of truth is so nearly allied to worship, that they continually blend. In meditating upon it, the Church adores the presence of her Lord; and from it she gains insights into the Divine will, mind, wisdom, and love, which issue not in definition and speech, but in affections and emotions; they can find no vent in figures and arguments, but in silence and sanctity, in love, obedience, adoration.... It is by this devout reflection of the mind on the objects of faith, that the reason pierces into the causes and relation of truth, and finds the perfect harmony of its own light with the lights of nature and of faith. (S. Thomas Aquinas, [Summa] contra Gentiles, lib. i.c.vii.) (SU, 166-67)

By the “reconstituting of a new order in the creation of God, ... by gathering from the ages of the world the fellowship of His elect; and bringing them, through probation, to perfection of holiness, and to eternal life,” the visible church, enlivened by the Holy Spirit, serves that “the mediatorial office of Christ shall be fulfilled.” (SU, 68-69) The church is thus “the ordained means of effectuating and fulfilling the ultimate design and aim of His kingdom in the gathering and salvation of the elect.” (SU, 69)

It was with the church’s high calling firmly in mind that Manning preached perhaps his most controversial Anglican sermon, “Christ’s Kingdom Is Not of this World.” Manning took up the theme on Guy Fawkes Day, 1843 in St. Mary’s at Oxford, and because of his open criticism of the Roman Catholic Church in the sermon, he offended many of his High Church colleagues. Nevertheless, the sermon set forth a central principle that would eventually lead Manning into visible unity with the Roman Church. Because of the importance of the church’s “ultimate design” in “supporting the powers of a regenerate will,” it has an “absolute spiritual commission from its unseen Head,” which “admitted no principles of secularity when its canons were embodied with the public laws” (SU, 74) in the Constantinian era and later. The absolute nature of the calling must be maintained:

[I]t is an act of the highest unfaithfulness, and a direct contradiction of the first laws of its own existence, for the Church, as such, to admit into itself the principles, or to assume the temporal powers, of the world. In proportion as it becomes conformed to the kingdoms of the earth, it loses the stamp of its heavenly origin: it ceases to testify for Christ, and to rule in His name: it thereby abdicates its commission, and denies in act that Christ has upon earth any kingdom at all. (SU, 75)

Manning was convinced that the church as a whole, both in its invisible and visible forms, could not abdicate its commission. But branches of it certainly could. As he would insist four years later, the Good Shepherd “has provided, first of all, in the external foundation and visible perpetuity of His Church” for “the perpetual exercise of His unseen pastoral care to give us all that is needed for our salvation.” (S3, 8) This he has “secured” by visible means: the apostolic succession, the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit, “the revelation of all truth, ... the universal tradition of the faith in all the world, ... [and] the universal delivery of the holy Sacraments to the Church planted in all lands. “Therefore,” Manning continues, “as the Church is indefectible, though particular members of it may fail of life eternal, so it can never lose the truth, though particular branches of it may err.” (S3, 9)

With this statement the scene was set for Manning’s eventual decision on April 6, 1851. Because a branch of the church could err, Christians must be ever on guard personally and politically, against self-deception,³⁶ a form of deceit “very much aggravated by the growth of religious knowledge and religious practices,” (S3, 104) and self-flattery. “[E]ven where there is outward obedience, there may yet be no true inward participation in the life and freedom of the heavenly city,” but by 1848 Manning’s words are no longer directed against the Roman Church or an interpretation of that “branch’s” fall from grace. He now looks homeward: “This is a warning specially needed in these latter times for there is much seeming and false Christianity in the world.” (S3, 192)

At the heart of Christian civilization Manning saw those patterns of thought and life, summarized by Newman twenty years later in his *Apologia pro Vita Sua* as “liberalism,”³⁷ and reflecting for both men the corrupting core principles of post-Enlightenment modernity:

The powers of the world, though professing to be Christian, have grown weary of Christ's yoke, and are divorcing themselves, one by one, from Him. We have new ideas, new theories, new forces at work. Education now is the regenerator of individuals; and civilisation is the modern city of God. We hear of individual and social development; individual and social progress; of the destiny of mankind, and of the golden age yet to come, when all shall be loyal, moral, intellectual; Christian, but not sectarian; religious, though unable to unite; one with God, though divided from each other.

Here was everything he opposed: the triumph of voluntarism in private and public will, a reduction of all transcendent ideals into the essential rights of individual liberty, the secularization of Christian eschatology into a myth of progress, the remaking of religion into the culture of the day. And the danger, as he saw it now, resided not in foreign rationalism nor in continental “Romish” corruptions, but in the English nation itself, where the sovereignty of divine, gracious love was moulded into activities of a supreme human will, concerns with the common good considered merely as the possibilities of political compromise, and “the Crown” read as a cipher for “We the People.” The nation at large had apparently forgotten “that, for the development of individual perfection, there is needed a principle above nature; and for the development of society, an unity above national institutions.” (S3, 193)³⁸

NOTES

²⁹ *The English Church, Its Succession and Witness for Christ. A Sermon Preached in the Cathedral Church, July 7, 1835 At the Visitation of the Ven. The Archdeacon of Chichester* (London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1835).

³⁰ “Catena patrum. no. III. Testimony of writers in the later English church to the duty of maintaining quod semper ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum est,” *Tracts for the Times, No. 78* (London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1837); reprinted in John Keble, *Primitive Tradition Recognized in Holy Scripture: A Sermon Preached in the Cathedral Church of Winchester, at the Visitation of the Worshipful and Reverend William Dealtry ... September 27, 1836* (3rd. ed.; London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1837).

³¹ *The Rule of Faith: A Sermon Preached in the Cathedral Church of Chichester, June 13, 1838, at the Primary Visitation of the Right Reverend William, Lord Bishop of Chichester* (London: J. G. F. & J. Rivington, 1838).

³² See S2, 250-51, 253, 266.

³³ See also SU, 37-38.

³⁴ On the nature of “The Freedom of the Regenerate Will,” see Manning’s sermon on the topic (S3, 114-33), and particularly his summation: “[T]he great gift of the Gospel in our regeneration is spiritual liberty, that is, the true freedom of the will.” (S3, 121) Compare S3, 174.

³⁵ Compare as well Manning’s later description of the union of the divine and human wills in S4, 41-42.

³⁶ Note in particular his sermon “Self-Deceit.” (S3, 92-113)

³⁷ See John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua: Being a History of his Religious Opinions*, ed. by Martin J. Svaglic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), Note A. Liberalism, 254-62.

³⁸ Compare S4, 29.

A Question of Sovereignty - Christ or Crown?

Late in the 1840s a number of incidents coincided to focus Manning's attention on the problem before him. Early in 1847 he suffered a serious decline in his health and was advised to take a rest cure on the continent. Following a brief stay at Homburg for the waters, he went to Rome and remained there until April of the following year. In Rome he met and conversed with Gioacchino Ventura di Raulica, whose political theology, although eventually leading in directions opposed to Manning's own, initially stimulated the direction of the Archdeacon's thought. At the same time, he received word that Renn Dixon Hampden, who from as early as 1836 was considered by members of the Oxford Movement to hold heretical views, had been appointed Bishop of Hereford, with relatively little protest on the part of the Church of England at large.

In the midst of the Hampden debate an even greater storm was growing. In 1847 the Rev. George Cornelius Gorham, an Anglican clergyman of thirty years experience, was offered a living in the diocese of the Highchurchman, Bishop Henry Phillpots of Exeter.³⁹ Phillpots had been earlier angered when Gorham advertised for a curate "free from Tractarian error," and he refused to endorse the appointment. Gorham was examined in November 1847 and again for three days in March 1848. At the center of the debate was Gorham's position on baptismal regeneration, in which, the bishop held, Gorham did not believe. The bishop continued to refuse to institute Gorham, and the case was appealed to the highest ecclesiastical court, the Court of Arches, in February 1849. When that court found for the bishop, Gorham appealed to Her Majesty in Council, and the case came before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on December 11, 1849. In the decision of March 8, 1850, the committee found for Gorham, and thus on the orders of a secular court, he was instituted in his living against the protests of his bishop.

In January of 1850, Manning's fourth volume of Anglican sermons appeared. The volume opens with a touching portrayal of Paul's conversion in words that only a year later could be read as a description of Manning's own turn. The description is consistent with his earlier writings. Conversion is not an act of individual will: "A power the world knew not of had fallen upon [Paul]; an attraction had fastened on his inmost will, and drew him to a world unseen." (S4, 2) Christ's love is the law of the Christian's life, according to the theme of this first sermon (S4, 1-16), and in large part, of the volume as a whole: "It 'constrains'; that is, it lays a force upon us, as a strong hand draws us whithersoever it will." (S4, 6) Only those who have been moved by a "divine motive" will continue in the faith. That divine motive "is the only principle of an enduring perseverance." (S4, 14)

We do Manning a great disservice if we interpret his concerns throughout the late 1840s and 1850s as those of an individual who was attempting to work out rationally which of the various available religious options he was to follow. Human rationality did not have primacy in his theological system: it followed out of faith, was an activity of faith, and in no sense an independent instrument by which one freely reached rational conclusions (deduced either logically or on the basis of probability) and then acted upon them with an equally independent will. And what was true of the individual applied to the larger group as well. Manning's understanding of the individual Christian and the Christian corporate body was of organic entities growing and maturing over time under the direction of the divine spirit, not of mechanistic structures operating by instrumental and legalistic norms.

What is the Church but Christ's invisible presence openly manifested by a visible organization? The Church is Christ mystical, —the presence of Christ, by the creative power of His incarnation, produced and prolonged on earth [S4, 93] It stands in its fullness even until now, and we are partakers of its presence and its power. Therefore the Church is one, because He is one; holy, because He is holy; catholic, because His presence is local no more; apostolic, because He still sends His own servants; indefectible, because He is the Truth. And to perfect this mystery of grace, it was needful that He should go away. (S4, 103)

In this context Manning believed that there were two primary questions before the baptized Christian: (1) "Am I wilfully indulging in my conscience any sin which He hates 1" (S4, 20) and (2) "Am I striving to be all

that He loves?” (S4, 21) The questions retained their primary meaning as directed to the individual's growth in holiness, but by 1850 Manning's view of the life of holiness was framed more immediately by questions of his corporate activity as a priest in a branch of the church catholic. The problem of a proper standard by which to have security from self-deception now faced him directly.

Manning had taken up the issue of a standard some years earlier in his third volume of sermons. As he saw it, the difficulty was that once modern individuals had posited the primacy of the individual free will, there was nothing to constrain or direct that will, and thus nothing to protect it from what it was in its essence, namely, self-deception. “[W]e have no perception of any higher spiritual condition even by way of idea, than either our own as it is, or by advancing in degree, as it may become. The want of such a standard makes us to be a standard to ourselves,” (S3, 103) he wrote in 1848, three years before his conversion. But if the lack of a standard is as outlined, where is one to turn? “If this be so,” he asked,

If we be our own deceivers, what security shall we take against our own hearts? Out of many we can now take only two.

1. The greatest security against deceiving ourselves by trusting our own hearts, is a careful information of conscience.... (S3, 108)
2. The other security is the only one which remains to those who have never enjoyed the first; and that is, to take the judgment of some other person, instead of trusting in themselves. (S3, 111)

The way in which Manning puts the question and the answers he provides for it together focus the problem. If one considers them from a Purcellian modernist perspective, one must consider Manning's solutions as trajectories—here already firmly established—that would necessarily lead him to an ultramontanist view of papal infallibility in its most rigorous form. According to this interpretation Manning was early seeking a secure foundation for both personal and institutional decisions, the first in a conscience properly and carefully informed by pure doctrine, the second in a legitimately established and authoritative priesthood transferring certitude through apostolic succession. The difficulty with this approach is that it not only mistakes Manning's earliest reaching but forces upon him in a later day a much more rigid and brittle doctrine of infallibility.

The “careful information of conscience” with which Manning was concerned had little to do with factual material or personal choice. All the terms in the phrase he understood etymologically and as organic terms. “Conscience” was “with-knowledge” (*cum-scientia*), faith's knowing with the active regenerating love of Christ infused into a person at baptism, forming itself in the believer through his or her life; the genitive was understood as both objective and subjective, that is, information as formed in the conscience, heart, and will, and as that conscience in-forming the believer thereafter. For baptized individuals who did not fully “enjoy” the devotional possibilities in a life of holiness as here proposed, there was “only one” security that remained, “and that is, to take the judgment of some other person, instead of trusting in themselves.” (S3, 111) Ultimately and finally, that other person is Christ; immediately, it is Christ's representative, those persons fulfilling Christ's pastoral office across the whole earth and throughout time in an organic succession from the apostles themselves.

By March 1850 the content of Manning's conscientious “information” included, among others, the premises (1) that a branch of the church catholic could err (as he believed in 1843 that the Roman branch had), and (2) that the Anglican branch had installed a heretic as a bishop (in the case of Hampden) and was about to accept without full corporate opposition a declared heretic (Gorham) as a priest on the insistence of a secular authority, thus ascribing greater sovereignty to the state than to God's grace manifest in the visible body of His church. If both premises were true, it must follow that the Anglican branch erred and that Manning's continuation as a priest in that branch was a “wilful indulg[ence in] his conscience.” The question before him was one of sovereignty.

Manning's own position remained consistent with the direction of his earlier thought, and he clarified this in his *Appellate Jurisdiction of the Crown in Matters Spiritual*, the preface of which is dated July 2, 1850.⁴⁰ What was at stake for him was the location of sovereignty, a term he had used throughout his sermons and other theological writing solely with reference to divine grace.⁴¹ And when speaking of governmental authority he put forward the same position early in 1840, when he wrote to Gladstone: “The perfect idea of

Government is the Sovereignty of God. He makes, preserves, governs, changes, renews all things at His will by a supreme power to create, & dispose in the material, or to persuade & control in the Spirirual world.” Sovereignty rests with God; when speaking of “[t]he primary form of human government or authority of man over man,” one speaks of supremacy, that is, “a supreme power under God & within his laws.”⁴²

Thus Manning opens his *Appellate Jurisdiction* with a description of “the Church of Christ [as] a Divine Kingdom; ... governed by its Divine Head through the Pastors whom He has lineally commissioned to feed His flock; ... with full spiritual power to administer and to rule in all things pertaining to the salvation of souls, by His authority and in His Name.” (AJ, 4)⁴³ This divine kingdom “in England” (he deliberately distinguishes this body from the Church of England, nor does he refer to it as a branch, but “as a member or province” of Christ’s Kingdom) “possesses, ‘*in solidum*,’ by inherence and participation in the whole church, the inheritance of the Divine Tradition of Faith, with a share in this full and supreme custody of doctrine, and power of discipline, partaking for support and perpetuity, in its measure and sphere, the same guidance as the whole church at large, of which, by our Baptism, we have been made members.” (AJ, 4)

As a result “[t]he Ecclesiastical Law is not a function of the Civil Power, but a body organized and Sovereign within its own sphere.... [It] is a living system, namely, the Church.” Indeed, over against the Royal Supremacy even “[e]very particular Church speaks to the local Sovereignty with the voice and authority of the universal Church; and no supremacy may be given to the Crown over a particular Church inconsistent with the Divine Sovereignty of the Church Universal.... The Royal Supremacy terminates where the Divine Office begins.” (AJ, 21-22)

If the Gorham decision were accepted, Manning had no doubt that the Church of England would be in schism. And if the church were in schism, it was necessary for him as a Christian in the universal church to withdraw from the schismatic body. By June 25 when he completed his draft treatise on the *Appellate Jurisdiction*, he expressed his conviction that “the later R[oyal] S[upremacy] is a violation of the Divine Office of the Church: and both a cause and a perpetrator of Schism.”

Holding firmly to his principles, however, he did not leave. He wrote and met regularly on the subject with Gladstone and in great anxiety and unwillingness to leave his work, continued to hope that a protest of the church as a whole could be initiated. He therefore remained active in the London and the Metropolitan Church Unions, who met on July 23.⁴⁴ At that meeting Manning proposed a vote of thanks to the chair of the meeting and used the opportunity to express his hope that the meeting would result in an action of the whole church to respond to the decision.⁴⁵

The Bishop of London then introduced a bill in the House of Lords to deal with the matter, but it did not satisfy Manning, and the discussion surrounding it only made matters worse.⁴⁶ By August 17 he felt it necessary to announce publicly, with as many others who wished, his understanding of the Oath of Subscription. Only two other members of the clergy joined with him.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, he remained concerned about those who were considering conversion and was troubled by those who did convert. If he went solely by the intellect alone, he admitted, “I should feel that the Anglican system has little it can maintain against the Roman Church. *But I misgive my own spiritual discernment and fear to go by intellect alone lest truths should be hid from me which are revealed unto babes*” (italics mine). The active and free rational will, after all, he had always insisted, was not to be followed in making spiritual decisions.⁴⁸

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³⁹ On the debate, see Chadwick, *Victorian Church*, 1:250-70.

⁴⁰ *The Appellate Jurisdiction of the Crown in Matters Spiritual: A Letter to the Right Rev. Ashhurst-Turner, Lord Bishop of Chichester* (London: John Murray, 1850).

⁴¹ See above all S4, 27, 32-33, 219, 220, 255, 324. Compare note 23 above.

⁴² Pitts MS 400806mg.

⁴³ Manning’s position as put forward in his *Appellate Jurisdiction* was remarkably consistent with his earlier work on the subject, particularly in his later charges. See his *A Charge Delivered at the Ordinary Visitation of the Archdeaconry of Chichester in July, 1845* (London: John Murray, 1845), 19-24; *A Charge Delivered at the Ordinary Visitation of the*

Archdeaconry of Chichester in July, 1846 (London: John Murray, 1846), 16-23; *A Charge Delivered at the Ordinary Visitation of the Archdeaconry of Chichester in July, 1848* (London: John Murray, 1848); and *A Charge Delivered at the Ordinary Visitation of the Archdeaconry of Chichester in July, 1845* (London: John Murray, 1849), passim.

⁴⁴ See printed letter of invitation from B. Hughes, G. J. Ottaway, and R. N. Wood. (BL Add. MS 44566, 205-8)

⁴⁵ *The Guardian*, July 24, 1850 (Extra Number), 337-38.

⁴⁶ See Pitts MS 500725mg.

⁴⁷ The Declaration was printed in *The Guardian* on Aug. 21, 1850, 602: Purcell, *Life of Cardinal Manning*, 1:540-41.

⁴⁸ Pitts MS 500901mg.

Sovereignty and Visible Unity

By September 5 Manning was reconsidering the importance of another theological element, raised for him in his reflections on the unity of the church. According to his reading of Ephesians 4, he was convinced “that indivisibleness of communion was held to be by a Divine necessity, so that any person or portion falling off, or being in fact separate ceased to be of the Church; & yet the indivisible remainder was the Church as fully as before.” If this is the case, “*indivisibleness is of the essence of indefectibility*—except so far as a living body may lose members.” Once any members are lost, however, they “are no longer of the body. They *were*, but *are* not.” The body is one, a whole and outside of its unity they have no life; “*indivisible unity is essential to the functions of life, intelligence, & love*,” a point better made, Manning states, in the work of the German theologian, Johann Adam Möhler, on the unity of the church.⁴⁹

That Manning was “lost” by this time was evident to Samuel Wilberforce, who was visiting his brother-in-law at Lavington in the late summer,⁵⁰ and it is apparent from a letter of Gladstone’s shortly afterwards that he too was well aware of Manning’s position. What is striking in Gladstone’s comments is the clarity with which he understood his friend’s situation. After the Gorham Judgment, Gladstone states, Manning “might have been kept, had the Church of England, had her Bishops as a body, declared themselves plainly and manfully for the faith.” Even since that time, Manning has been consistent in his argument, Gladstone insists. Manning’s was not a “Romeward” journey; it was that of a man open to his state in the world as providentially ordained. As Gladstone saw it, the crisis was clearly one of faith and not the result of an individual struggling with intellectual or social options, a sort of consumer in a religious supermarket:

I grant that even some time ago he saw in the Church of Rome many things holier and more Catholic than with us; but that I think he was willing to accept as the dispensation of Providence: I do not think he had allowed his affections to become estranged. I do not think he was in the state, or anything like it, in which Newman passed his last years of Anglican profession. He had a firm faith in the mission & authority of the Church of England, because in her law she taught the faith, taught it as the faith.

For Manning, according to Gladstone, the Gorham Judgment “has not simply made practical what was in Manning’s mind before, but it has thrown his convictions on the side where a larger part of his sympathies stood indeed already, but were effectually neutralized by a sense of duty, not abstract and cold, but strong, commanding, & warm with life and action.”⁵¹

By December 6 Manning had clearly decided to turn to Rome when he wrote to Gladstone in Italy,⁵² and in a letter to Hope on December 11 he indicates that he will take the step, one that he designates “as an act of the Will,” although he proceeds immediately to point out that he is “helped by the fact that to remain under our changed or revealed circumstances would also be an act of the Will.” He is not acting on his own. The man of will, as modern interpreters so delight in describing him, is not the Manning of December 1850. He is one who is turning to the will of God and is formed passively by it:

*And that not in conformity with but in opposition to intellectual convictions: and the intellect is God’s gift, & our instrument in attaining to knowledge of His Will.
It would be a great solace if any event were to give the momentum. And so it may be, as it was with my resignation. I seem to have been passively carried through it.*

Passive, Manning will remain throughout the process. Gladstone is in Italy and out of a concern for the latter’s well-being, he has “a sort of desire to see Gladstone once more before any final act.” Not surprisingly he refers to Ephesians 4 on the indivisibility of the church and to Johann Adam Möhler, the irenic apologist for the Catholic faith whose great *Symbolik* influenced Gladstone many years earlier.⁵³ Anything other than Rome now is “licence of thought & will,”⁵⁴ a sin against truth that is no longer invincible for him, albeit, he is willing to accept, in Gladstone’s and others’ cases there may exist prejudices so deep and rooted so closely to the central truths of faith itself that they bind the will to them in such a way that sin cannot be ascribed to it.⁵⁵

But this is not the case for Manning. For him truth demands self-denial. To leave home and occupation is not in any way simple. As he writes to Gladstone on January 3, 1851: “This day eighteen years I went to Lavington. You have never seen it, and if you had seen it you could not know what the consciousness of those eighteen years sustains like the consciousness of the present hour. It has been my only home, flock, & altar.” Finally on Sunday, March 30, after a final attempt on the part of the bishops came to nothing, he met for a last time with Gladstone. Shortly before his death, in a recollection to Purcell, Manning described the meeting as follows:

Shall I tell you where I performed my last act of worship in the Church of England? It was in that little chapel off the Buckingham Palace Road. I was kneeling by the side of Mr. Gladstone. Just before the Communion Service commenced, I said to him, “I can no longer take the Communion in the Church of England.” I rose up— “St. Paul is standing by his side”—and laying my hand on Mr. Gladstone’s shoulder, said, “Come.” It was the parting of the ways. Mr. Gladstone remained; and I went my way. Mr. Gladstone still remains where I left him.⁵⁶

There is no venom or triumphalism in Manning’s late recollection. The statement, “Mr. Gladstone remains where I left him,” was not sarcastic in intention: Mr. Gladstone remains where Manning left him, that is, Mr. Gladstone remains in prayer. Should Manning have remained he recognizes he would have been lost; yet he makes no such judgment regarding his friend Gladstone. After all, the decision was not made by Gladstone; it was not an isolated act of will on his part. Some two years after the meeting, on April 5, 1853, Manning wrote to Gladstone from Rome, reflecting on the time:

When the Will of God required of me to withdraw from that which I had through sin and error believed to be a part of His Church & to submit myself to that which I had never intended to obey and to serve, I felt that the change in my relations to others was made not by him but by me, or more truly by Him who required so great a cost from me.

Often not noted is Manning’s recognition that the same principle is operative in his friend Gladstone, and others, who, albeit perhaps invincibly ignorant, are turned to the mysterious operations of divine love in their lives:

My meaning in saying that I make no advance to anyone is this. Both you & I feel that we have some duties which arise from great laws & truths over which we have no authority. They govern us, not we them: & cost what it may of public or private gain they must be obeyed.⁵⁷

In an important sense nothing has changed. As Manning reminds his friend, the position now held regarding the human will is the same one as he held when he walked in Rome with Gladstone in the winter of 1838.

It would need another walk from the Vatican to say all I would about the certainty & reality to be found only in the Catholic Church. And I believe that if your duties required of you verify Theology among the people of England we should not be far apart. My meaning is fully contained in two old Sermons you may remember in the IV vol. One on [Chris]t preached every way—and the other the Analogy of Nature.⁵⁸ God in His mercy has shewn me where they alone are verified.⁵⁹

Central to both these sermons were themes he held consistently throughout his life.⁶⁰ The conclusion on which Manning acted in April of 1851 was not one at which he arrived by his own rational processes, but which “God in His mercy ... alone” had shown him. Thus, in the first of these sermons, he insisted on the priority of divine action in the human pursuit of holiness: “As knowledge rises towards the perfect faith, every such advance is so much more of union between the spirit of man and the character and will of God. I am now speaking of knowledge only as a means of illumination and obedience, not as imposing the responsibility of attaining the perfect truth.” (S4, 67-68) What is operative in the process are not sterile dogmatic principles, but the living, unifying love of God, and “[e]very light which reveals God’s love leads on towards conversion.” (S4, 68) To an external eye, the path along which that love leads may appear erratic, perhaps wilful, but underlying it all is “[t]he knowledge of God’s love and of Christ’s passion work[ing] mightily in softening or breaking the hearts of men, be they who they may.... The powers of truth are not bound.” (S4, 70) They are not constrained by the decisions of individual wills nor in finely honed dogmas or mighty institutions. The powers of truth are at one with divine love, itself a sovereign life working passionately in the individual and corporate body.

NOTES

⁴⁹ In all likelihood Manning had a French translation of Möhler's work available to him. See Johann Adam Moehler, *De l'unité de l'église, ou du principe du catholicisme d'après l'esprit des pères des trois premiers siècles, traduit de l'allemand par Ph[ilippe] Bernard* (Tournai: Castermann, 1835). The translation was reprinted in Brussels by H. Remy in 1839 and again in the same year in Paris by Sagnier et Bray. For details see my introduction to Johann Adam Möhler, *The Unity of the Church* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996). For parallels with Möhler's *Unity*, see S4, 95-97. Note, for example: "The Holy Ghost came, revealing both the Father and the Son. The inward illumination of His own invisible presence united the consciousness of man with the Spirit of God. There is a language above all speech, —a teaching which needs neither voice nor vision, which passes neither eye nor ear." (S4, 95)

⁵⁰ Wilberforce to Gladstone, Sept. 14, 1850, BL Add. MS 44343, 119; A. R. Ashwell, *Life of the Right Reverend Samuel Wilberforce D.D.* (3 vols.; London: John Murray, 1880-82), 2:47-48.

⁵¹ Gladstone to Wilberforce, Sept. 14, 1850, Bodleian MS Wilberforce d. 35, 82-85; cf. Purcell 1:568.

⁵² Pitts MS 501206mg; BL Add. Ms 44248, 113-14.

⁵³ For details, see my edition and translation of Möhler's *Unity*, 61-66.

⁵⁴ NLS MS 3675, 98-101.

⁵⁵ For a detailed treatment of invincible ignorance, see S4, 77.

⁵⁶ Purcell 1:617.

⁵⁷ BL Add. MS 44248, 141-42.

⁵⁸ See "Christ Preached in any [sic] Way a Cause of Joy" and "The Analogy of Nature" in S4, 60-85, 152-75.

⁵⁹ BL Add. MS 44248, 141-42.

⁶⁰ See above, n. 23.

Conclusion

Manning was ever one to apply directives that he offered to others to himself first, and his Anglican sermons therefore serve an autobiographical function. This is especially true with the fourth volume in which his comments often take on the appearance of inner dialogue and at times an apologia for present struggle and future action. Once having recognized this it may be useful to take up again the Manning-Newman contrast. We have grown accustomed to thinking of Newman's works as intensely personal, "heart speaking to heart," and therefore providing us with objective data for a biography of his inner life. But Newman chose the autobiographical voice and his life so developed that he was increasingly able to strengthen it. Manning had ever before him the duties of a pastor and archbishop, and was actively engaged throughout his life in the cure of souls, with whose care that of his own was inextricably bound. He had little time to indulge in Oxford or Birmingham "self-reflection," and, thus, when he does consciously take up autobiography, his work is strikingly inept.⁶¹

Like Newman's, Manning's was a life lived as both Anglican and Roman Catholic, and like Newman's, Manning's life has been read backwards, the Roman Catholic period being used to interpret the Anglican. For Newman this has tended to mean that his early, more rigorist and dogmatic character is revisioned in light of a later "liberal" Catholic period. Manning has not been so fortunate, necessarily committed as he was to the intense debates over ecclesiastical structures and infallibility in a period of major political and ideological upheaval. Unlike Newman, Manning is primarily remembered through the screen of his later conservative period and interpreted in light of intense modern debates over the heritage of that conservatism. As a result, the underlying spiritual dynamic that formed his Anglican career, required his departure from it in 1851 and continued to shape him thereafter is all but forgotten. In his case, therefore, it may be useful to read his life "forward" and to focus on the integrating spirit that motivated him during his whole life. Perhaps only in this way can the accomplishments of his later period be evaluated properly and their relevance for present debates be realized.

This is not to deny any aspect of his personality. He himself regularly admitted his own ambition and willfulness. He knew within himself the tendencies so simply caricatured as those of an austere ascetic who judges and acts decisively, a doctrinaire patriarch who sets decrees before less formidable wills to accept or reject at their eternal peril, and an authoritarian bureaucrat who inflexibly defends his institution as that in which alone incontrovertible truth can be known. That such tendencies existed in him, no one need deny. But personal tendencies are not determinations, nor are they intentions, and we do Manning an injustice if we interpret his actions aside from the foundational principles of his theology and life, principles that might well provide novel insights for us, as we struggle with theological and ecclesiological formulae, perhaps too literally and simplistically received by modern minds as remnants of a pre-modern era.

"I have troubled you too long, and added little," Manning once wrote to Gladstone, "But it is hard to write as well as to leap in the dark."⁶² In the dark, Manning's character, like his episcopal portrait preserved in Pitts Theology Library, waits to meet us. In the shadow of that portrait (as reproduced on the title page above) there are few contrasts; here are marked no changes. Sovereign light strikes from above on open forehead and gentle hands, in part hiding his gaze. He sits too rigidly, knowing perhaps his vulnerability. His head is slightly bowed. The eye is not assured. He looks out upon the London poor as he once did prior to his elevation as archbishop.⁶³ This is not the portrayal of a man who was described in 1870 as "a little grey man, looking as if encompassed by cobwebs."⁶⁴ Here his eyelid droops, and if one looks carefully, compassion is seen upon his cheek and sadness in his sight, these together turning down the corner of his lips, set firm against injustice and determined that it shall not last.

NOTES

⁶¹ See, for example, his *Why I became a Catholic; or, Religio viatoris* (London, Burns & Oates, 1888).

⁶² Pitts 430123mg.

⁶³ See Purcell 2:168 for details.

⁶⁴ *The Roman Journals of Ferdinand Gregorovius, 1852-1874*, ed. by Friedrich Althaus and trans. by Mrs. Gustavus W. Hamilton (London: G. Bell, 1911), 354.

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