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NEWMAN AND THE ENGLISH THEOLOGICIANS

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THE YEAR 1983 MARKED THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OXFORD MOVEMENT. On July 14, 1833, John Keble preached the Assize Sermon on “National Apostasy” in the University pulpit. Looking back on that event, thirty-one years later, John Henry Newman wrote: “I have ever considered and kept that day, as the start of the religious movement of 1833.”¹ What I propose to do is to look at the first eight years of that Movement, the period of Newman’s most intense personal involvement, and to focus in particular on his study and assimilation of the Anglican Divines who flourished, broadly speaking, in the seventeenth century.

While little substantive or sustained scholarship in the twentieth century has been devoted to these writers of the Anglican tradition,² men who flourished between the death of Edward VI and the accession of William of Orange, they captured the interest and attention of both Samuel Taylor Coleridge and John Henry Newman in the early nineteenth century and of T. S. Eliot in the twentieth. What these three men found in the group of writers loosely defined as “Caroline” is, in fact, part of what I want to explore today.

Since even very few Newman scholars return to the Anglican tradition from which he emerged, I would like first of all to sketch in bold strokes the large outlines of Anglican thought between the installment of Thomas Cranmer as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1533 and the beginning of the Oxford Movement in 1833 - a period of some 300 years. This is important, because there are still writers who, on one side, see him as an outsider to the Anglican tradition and those who, on the other side, fail to see how he fits into the Roman Catholic tradition. Secondly, I would like to present representative Caroline Divines and describe the issues to which they addressed themselves. Thirdly, I would like to trace, insofar as possible, Newman’s use of these writers between 1833 and 1841. Lastly, I would like to ask what he ultimately found lacking in them and how this turned him in the direction of his theory of development.

The first major period of Anglo-Catholic thought extends from 1533 to approximately 1600. This is the era of reformation theology. In March, 1533, Henry VIII, with the Pope’s hesitant approval, appointed Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury. During the period from 1552 to 1554 Henry saw through Parliament seven bills which one by one severed the ties that bound together England and Rome. The theological enterprise of this period focused largely on the corruptions of Rome and the legitimacy of England’s ecclesiastical position based on the historical precedent of the several statutes of *Praemunire*. “It was, of course,” according to John Booty, “to the issue of papal supremacy that the religious controversies of the sixteenth century continually returned.”³ Perhaps the most representative figure of this period is John Jewel whose *An Apology of the Church of England*, written in Latin in 1552 and translated into

English two years later by Francis Bacon’s mother, Lady Ann Bacon, addressed itself to the question of how the English Church related itself to the Council of Trent and to the Catholic world at large. Jewel was steeped in knowledge of the early Church fathers and accuses Rome of flaunting history. “As for their religion,” he asks, “if it

be of so long continuance as they would have men ween it is, why do they not prove it by examples of the primitive church and by the fathers and councils of old times? Why lieth so ancient a cause thus long in the dust destitute of an advocate?"⁴ Two hundred years later this same question would be asked again by the leaders of the Oxford Movement. Whereas acrimony characterized much of the popular anti-Roman literature of this period, Jewel's appeal to antiquity set the tone for what would become a more irenic, mainline Anglo-Catholic tradition. One other figure from this period deserves notice here. As John Jewel's *Apology* was directed against the excesses of Rome, so Richard Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastic Polity* was directed against the excesses of Puritanism. In these two men, as the sixteenth century drew to a close, we see appearing the outlines of the "via media," the doctrine that shows the English Church standing between the Scylla and Charybdis of Geneva and Rome.

Richard Hooker, his lesser known but equally brilliant contemporary Richard Field, and Lancelot Andrewes are important transitional figures - moving out of and away from the reformation spirit of controversial theology and laying the ground work for a more positive, systematic theology in the seventeenth century. If the Church of the sixteenth century could be comfortable with the denomination "Protestant," the Church in the seventeenth century began to prefer the denomination "Catholic" or "Anglo-Catholic." That openminded, ecumenical Puritan Richard Baxter did not mind being called a "plain Catholick" and in 1654 John Bramhall wrote "I like the name of Catholic well, but the addition of Roman is in truth a diminution."⁵

The second period of Anglo-Catholic theology extends from these late scholastic thinkers, Hooker and Field, to Bishop Edward Stillingfleet who died in 1699. The writers who flourished during this period of roughly a century were less concerned with Rome and Geneva and more with what the Anglo-Catholic Church was in itself. Perhaps the outstanding characteristic of the period is its reverent and scholarly study of the patristic tradition - the search for the true church of primitive antiquity. The period began with an enormous burst of spiritual energy, producing some of the greatest religious poetry in our language. There was a renewed interest in mysticism and the life of the Spirit. All true theology was to be directed not to discourse or debate but to the upbuilding of the spiritual life of church members. The Puritan, Richard Baxter, dissatisfied with traditional

theological method, wrote his own *Methodus Theologicae* in 1681. In another work, Gildas Silvianus, he says "It was never the will of God that bare *speculation* should be the end of his Revelations, or of our *belief*. Divinity is an *Affective practical Science*." In his Practical Catechism, Henry Hammond says approvingly: "Gerson, a very learned and pious man, hath defined divinity, of all others to be an affective, not only a speculative, knowledge ..."⁶ One may recognize an echo of this attitude expressed two centuries later in Newman's borrowing from St. Ambrose for the title page of the *Grammar of Assent*: "Non in dialectica complacuit Deo salvum facere populum suum" [It did not please God to save his people by means of logic]. By way of anticipating what I will deal with again in discussing this period in itself, we find here, I think, not only in the realm of literature but also of theology, that integration of thought and feeling the disintegration of which T. S. Eliot capsulized in the phrase "the dissociation of sensibility."⁷ Whether it was in the preaching of Hooker, Andrewes, and Bramhall, the poetry of Donne, Herbert, and Vaughan, or the devotional writings of Taylor, Law, and Baxter, doctrine and devotion were thoroughly integrated. The Cambridge Platonists, who will not be considered here, went so far as to assert that if a person is to apprehend the truth his life must be pure and holy - a thought that would be quite acceptable to both Newman and his predecessor Coleridge.

The transitional figure between this period, which ends around the time of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and the age of rationalism which followed, would be Edward Stillingfleet. In his writings we see the movement from consolidation to a growing concern with the impact of rational inquiry, especially as it manifested itself in writers of John Locke's stature. Again, in words that anticipate the argument of Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, Stillingfleet asserts that "as he is an unreasonable Man who requires a stronger Assent to his Conclusion than his Argument deserves; so I conceive him a forward and undisciplined Scholar, who desires stronger Arguments for a Conclusion than the Matter will bear."⁸ The thrust of his and other divines' writings marks a turn from the dimension of the sacred in religion to the ability of religion to justify itself at the bar of reason.

The third period, extending roughly from 1688 to 1833, is, from the viewpoint of writers like Coleridge and Newman at least, a dark age theologically speaking, however much it may have deserved the title of The Enlightenment or The Age of Reason in the minds of oth-

ers. While not everything that happened during this period was theologically bad, Newman for one had little respect for it. With youthful vigor and confidence he tells his brother Charles in 1824 that “Descartes has brought lasting ridicule on himself by attempting to prove to himself mathematically his own existence; that is, he attempted to apply demonstrative proof to a proposition which could only be proved by what metaphysicians call intuition.”⁹ To his friend Robert Wilberforce he describes one eighteenth-century group as “a more respectable school, but inferior to that of the seventeenth century, deficient in depth and fervour.”¹⁰ To Wilberforce’s brother Samuel he speaks of “the lowminded School of Burnet and Hoadley [who] have robbed the Church of all her more beautiful characteristics.”¹¹ James Stephen had asked Newman in 1835 to expatiate on the characteristics of the various historical schools of English theology. In reply Newman wrote with typical vigor: “The fashionable high Church (so to call it!) divinity of the last century was the divinity of the Revolution - of which the greatest masters range from the latitudinarians Tilloston and Burnet down to the Socinianizing or Socinian Hoadley – a chilling, meagre, uncompassionate, secular divinity indeed – of which Paley’s shallowness, Warburton’s coarse ingenuity, and the present Bishop of Peterborough’s deadness are representatives in the three provinces of Argument, Philosophy, and Orthodoxy. That there should have been so much real piety and soundness of faith in this school, only shows the vigour of the Truth and the innate life and power of reproduction in the Church, which will bud forth into leaves even in prison.”¹²

Thus of the three distinct trends in English theology that surfaced during the three centuries prior to the Oxford Movement Newman and his friends chose not the first period of controversial theology nor the third period of rationalistic theology but, rather, the second which might almost be described as a period of doing theology lovingly. In a more restrained language than appears in his letters, Newman makes this point in the *Apologia* in describing the beginning of the Oxford Movement:

I had a supreme confidence in our course; we were upholding that primitive Christianity which was delivered for all time by the early teachers of the Church, and which was registered and attested in the Anglican formularies and by the Anglican divines. That ancient religion had well nigh faded out in the land, through the political changes of the last 150 years, and it must be restored. It would

be in fact a second Reformation - a better reformation, for it would be a return not to the sixteenth century but to the seventeenth.¹³

It might be well to point out here that the general period to which Newman and his companions returned was one that captured the interest of most of the English Romantic writers who flourished between 1798 and 1830. In the *Apologia*, discussing an article he had written in 1839, Newman acknowledges the influence of Walter Scott, William Wordsworth, Robert Southey, and Samuel Coleridge on the religious sensibility of the age. He writes that:

After stating the philosophy of the time, as it presented itself to those who did not sympathize in it, the Article proceeds to account for it; and this it does by considering it as a reaction from the dry and superficial character of the religious teaching and the literature of the last generation, or century, and as a result of the need which was felt by both the hearts and the intellects of the nation for a deeper philosophy, and as the evidence and the partial fulfilment of that need, to which even the chief authors of the then generation bore witness.¹⁴



I am increasingly convinced that to understand fully the larger significance of Newman’s return to the writers of the seventeenth century we must see it as a specific example of a general return, in the first decades of the nineteenth century, to the cultural and religious thought of the English Renaissance. A generation before Newman, Samuel Taylor Coleridge led the way in this leap across the period of roughly 150 years separating the Renaissance from the early nineteenth century. In her pioneering edition of Coleridge’s writings, published and unpublished, on the seventeenth century, Roberta F. Brinkley points out that “by both his theories and tastes [Coleridge] was predisposed to prefer the seventeenth century to the eighteenth.”

“Throughout his comment,” Brinkley continues, “there is an assumption of a distinct period of English culture extending from the reign of Edward VI to the Revolution of 1688 ...”¹⁵ She further points out that un-

like subsequent generations of literary scholars and historians Coleridge “did not distinguish the [seventeenth century] sharply, in the modern manner, from the Elizabethan age.”¹⁶ Thus, like Newman after him, Coleridge focused on the post-controversial, pre-rational English theological writers. More than a century before T. S. Eliot, Coleridge recognized what Eliot called the “dissociation of sensibility.” In his *Biographia Literaria* he writes:

Our faulty elder poets sacrificed the passion and passionate flow of poetry, to the subtleties of intellect, and to the starts of wit; the moderns to the glare and glitter of a perpetual, yet broken and heterogeneous imagery, or rather to an amphibious something, made up, half of image, and half of abstract meaning. The one sacrificed the heart to the head; the other both heart and head to point and drapery.¹⁷

Newman makes the same point in a theological context. Writing to Maria Giberne in 1835 he says:

A rationalist is intelligible though very offensive - so is a Roman Catholic - so is a Catholic - but the piebald system, which at present is thought so delightful and promising, “is neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring,” and cannot stand the sifting of controversy. Nothing but the State, i.e., the secular interests of men, expediency acting through force, keeps it up - it is based upon no harmonious principle in the heart, no perspicuous doctrine of the reason. How different from the system which nourished our great divines of the seventeenth century, Taylor and the rest!¹⁸

Both men, then, and many of their contemporaries were looking for a theological basis for a religion that avoided the excesses of a dry, unfeeling rationalism and the contrary excesses of sheer feeling and enthusiasm.

I would now like to turn specifically to these Anglo-Catholic writers of the seventeenth century and try to bring before you however briefly a group of writers who are, I fear, once again forgotten and neglected on the library shelves even in the divinity schools of their own Anglican tradition.

We are talking about a surprisingly large group of writers whose published works extend over a period of one hundred years. The number of writers and the volume of their sermons, devotional writings, and theological essays give clear evidence to the enormous religious

energy of the age. The standard source of their works is the *Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology*, which is itself a result of the interest rekindled by the Tractarians. Of fifty-three writers whose works were to be edited only twenty found their way into print, and their works fill ninety-five volumes. The body of religious prose written during this era has no rival in the whole history of English literary or religious thought. In order to contain such a potentially vast topic I shall limit myself to a brief description of eight of these divines, six of whom are explicitly singled out by Newman.

In a letter of 1837 to Dr. Martin Joseph Routh, to whom he had dedicated the *Prophetical Office of the Church*, Newman writes: “I cannot venture to hope that there is nothing in my volume of private and questionable opinion; but I have tried, as far as may be, to follow the line of doctrine marked out by our great divines, of whom perhaps I have chiefly followed Bramhall, then Laud, Hammond, Field, Stillingfleet, Beveridge, and others of the same school.”¹⁹ I will add only the names of Richard Hooker, whom Newman cites frequently, and Lancelot Andrewes whose *Preces Privatae* he used daily and which he translated into English.

Hooker, Andrewes and Field, born within seven years of one another in the early years of Elizabeth’s reign, represent both continuity with the past and an opening onto a new era in English theology. *Hooker’s Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593-7) and *Field’s Of the Church* (1606-10) remained for almost three centuries the major treatises on the nature of the Church. Hooker, a disciple and protege of John Newel, and Field, an intimate friend of Hooker, represent the last voices of scholasticism in England. In them and in their writings theological method was in transition from the middle ages to the Renaissance. One significant change in theological discourse from this point on will be a shift from a non-personal to a personal authorial voice. No longer will a writer’s life disappear behind his work. The impersonality of scholasticism is somewhat whimsically witnessed by the 1847 editor of Field’s treatise who, hard put to produce a biographical sketch, dryly confesses that “the life of a scholastic theologian as it contains, generally, but little incident, so it provides few materials for an interesting memoir.”²⁰

In the 1920s T. S. Eliot brought to the attention of English readers a series of seventeenth-century figures. Two of these were Lancelot Andrewes and Joseph Bramhall. Andrewes, the founder of the Cambridge

Movement during the reign of Elizabeth I, represents a move away from the rigidity of Puritanism. He was the driving force behind the formation of a distinctive Anglican theology which was “reasonable in outlook and catholic in tone.”²¹ The master of fifteen languages, a gifted preacher in the metaphysical tradition, a man of deep piety and devotion, he wielded a personal influence over his contemporaries and disciples and showed in his own person the blending of devotion and doctrine. In Andrewes, Eliot observes, “intellect and sensibility were in harmony.”²² Commenting on his sermon style, Eliot says, “one is reminded of the words of Arnold about the preaching of Newman. Andrewes’s emotion is purely contemplative; it is not personal, it is wholly evoked by the object of contemplation, to which it is adequate; his emotion is wholly contained in and explained by its object.”²³ No wonder Newman admired this kindred spirit in learning and holiness.

Joseph Bramhall, the other divine, Eliot characterizes as “the stoutest inheritor of Andrewes and Laud.”²⁴ Even in a controversial work like *A Just Vindication of The Church of England from the Unjust Aspersion of Criminal Schism* there is a strongly irenic and ecumenical tone, as, for example, when he addresses himself “to all moderate Christians, who love the peace of the Church, and long for the reunion thereof.”²⁵ In *A Replication to the Bishop of Chalcedon* he asserts, “we reform ourselves, but we condemn no others.”²⁶ This was the very spirit in which the Oxford Movement began. One of Bramhall’s major enterprises was locking horns with Thomas Hobbes. In Hobbes he was an enemy of free will, the denial of which was fatal to a genuine revealed religion in which human beings respond freely to a divine call. T. S. Eliot points out, quite perceptively, that “there is quite naturally no place in Hobbes’s universe for the human will; what he had failed to see is that there is no place in it for consciousness either, or for human beings.”²⁷ Coleridge and Newman would return to the attack two centuries later. First Coleridge, then Newman, each tried to develop a distinctive philosophic basis for religion by showing the relationship between, first, consciousness and conscience and, then, between conscience and the existence of a personal God.

William Laud, in the words of W. H. Hutton, “was the great ecclesiastic figure of Charles’s reign, overpowering all others by the breadth of his aims and the firmness of his determination.”²⁸ He was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1633 until his impeachment in 1641.

During that time he opposed the Puritans and promoted a return to the original liturgical forms of the Reformation. Trying to move between Puritanism and Popery, he was, as W. H. Frere observes, “a lineal successor to Andrewes; his resistance to the Calvinist theology at Oxford was the counterpart of Andrewes’s quiet rebellion at Cambridge.”²⁹ The man, more than his writings, influenced his own and succeeding ages. For high-churchmen of a later era he was a saint and a martyr to the cause of Anglo-Catholic tradition.

William Beveridge is a lesser known Caroline, but his writings typify the tradition I am describing. His *Synodikon* of 1672, a sometimes misguided collection of Greek canons, represents the Caroline concern with antiquity. His other major work, *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles* is a learned work which remained a standard commentary on into the nineteenth century.

Henry Hammond was a learned patristic scholar and a man of great personal piety. His erudition was instrumental in establishing the genuinity of the Ignatian Epistles and he used them in defending the principle of the episcopacy against the Puritans. While it is always dangerous, when dealing with a mind as subtle and original as Newman’s, to suggest direct influence, there are ideas and statements in Hammond’s works that clearly must have found a warm reception from the burgeoning high-churchman in the 1830s. In anticipation of Newman’s Tract 90, for example, we find Hammond saying that “in this matter it were very well worthy of our consideration how far the articles of the Church proceed in accord with the present Roman doctrines and practices, and in what particulars *epechomen*, we cannot persuade ourselves to consent to them.”³⁰ His *Practical Catechism* and his learned apology for the Anglican Church, *The Reasonableness of Christian Religion*, remain classics of Christian theology.

Edward Stillingfleet who died in 1699 is the last of this great line of Caroline Divines. He was a prolific writer but time has not been kind to him. His name appears in the prospectus of authors for the *Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology* but nothing ever appeared. Even his greatest work, *Origines Sacrae*, was republished only once and that was in 1817. In Stillingfleet we see the scene of battle change away from a struggle to avoid the extremes of Calvinism and Roman Catholicism to an all-out effort to confront the new enemy - rationalism. He seems to have become unwittingly a victim of the very adversary he attacked. A recent commentator sums him up well.

In Stillingfleet's controversial works, however, there is little appeal to grace, or the spirit of the Idea of Christianity that he spoke of before King Charles. In their dry rigor, his religious writings generally seem spiritless in comparison to something like Pascal's *Pensees*, or to the writings of the Cambridge Platonists. One finds in Stillingfleet's writings not insights into religion or religious faith, but simply one argument after another, attempting to establish his case for Christianity beyond a reasonable doubt.³¹

Perhaps, after these admittedly brief but necessary profiles of some of the Caroline Divines, I can now sum up the principal lines of their theological tradition. First of all, they represent a break from the reformation theology of the sixteenth century. While quite able controversialists when the occasion arose, their instincts were more contemplative and their tendencies toward renewal and reform within the Church. From their theological reflections on the nature of the Church came the specifically Anglo-Catholic doctrine of the "via media." Secondly, they represent a break with the more philosophically and systematically oriented schools of medieval scholasticism. They are specific examples in the development of English prose in the seventeenth century and move from the treatise to the essay as a mode of theological discourse. Thirdly, their affection for and learned familiarity with the early fathers of the Church led them to put extraordinary emphasis on the essential character of two truths of the Christian religion: First of all, the divinity of Christ and, second, the divinization of the individual human being through baptism and the subsequent presence of grace within the soul. That is, justification is no mere extrinsic title. This leads to a further assertion that Christianity is not primarily an ethical religion - as the Christian rationalists of the eighteenth century would begin to stress - but one in which an ontological change - holiness - is effected in individuals. Thus personal holiness, not duty, is the primary if not the exclusive purpose of religion. A final basic belief growing out of the patristic tradition is that the Church is not only visible but also episcopal in nature; growing out of the doctrine of episcopacy is the nature of the Church's teaching role in relation to Scripture.

In the letter to James Stephen already cited Newman, early in the Movement, sums up all that he longed for and found lacking in the Church of his own day:

I wish heartily there was more Catechising and Exposition - and again I earnestly desire that the Sacrament was now such as it was in the Primitive Church, as Ridley managed to keep it, as Andrewes and Laud maintained it, and as the Non-jurors enjoyed it - the presence of Christ in the Church for doctrine and grace - a continual revelation of the Incarnation. When the last mentioned was expelled from the Church, the natural consequence followed. *Naturam expellas furcâ* etc. They took away with them all the rich furniture of the Sanctuary, and the spiritual principle of Christianity, unable to live off the husks of Kennett, Hoadley, Clarke, and the rest, burst forth first into Methodism, then into the Evangelical School, which had the ardour and some of the depth of the Old Catholic Doctors, without their reverence, sanctity, and majesty. And at this day I am persuaded that the only way to arrest fanaticism, check profaneness, and take away the persuasiveness and influence of Popery, is to recur to this primitive Catholicism on which happily our services are based. I have lately been greatly surprised in reading some similar remarks in Knox on the Prospects of the Established Church - if independent witnesses are wanting now, after that of the Primitive Church, of the school of Laud, of the Nonjurors, and of Butler.³²

Against this backdrop of the Caroline Divines and their principal doctrines, we can now look at Newman and where he stood, theologically speaking, in the summer of 1833 at the dawn of the Oxford Movement. His pilgrimage to Rome was a journey from Calvinism through Anglo-Catholicism to Roman Catholicism. Even his preparation for ordination left his old evangelical leanings untouched. In a memo appended to a letter of June, 1829, to his sister Jemima, commenting on the death of Bishop Charles Lloyd with whom he read for Orders, Newman comments: "I have not mentioned him in my *Apologia* - for I was there concerned in tracing the course of my religious opinions, and the persons who contributed to form them. In this point of view I am not aware I owed anything to Dr. Lloyd. I left his lecture room in 1824, as I entered it in 1822, a Calvinist."³³ Another annotation, on a letter to his mother in 1826, points out "that as early as 1826 I was thinking of studying the Fathers."³⁴ Raised an Evangelical, untouched by Lloyd's high-church teachings, Newman came to the Fathers of the early Church through his reading at sixteen

of Joseph Milner's *History of the Church of Christ*.³⁵ And his interest was more historical than theological up to the time of the Movement itself.

When did Newman first come in contact with the mainline Anglo-Catholic tradition described above? Thomas Parker has shown convincingly that Newman's serious and extended study of the Caroline Divines followed upon rather than preceded his reading of the early Church Fathers. And while Parker is correct in stating that Newman's major introduction to the Anglo-Catholic tradition was probably through personal contact with high-church colleagues and friends like E. B. Pusey, Hurrell Froude, and John Keble, he is less correct when he says that "there seems to be no evidence at all that Newman had read the Carolines before he became involved in the Oxford Movement.

Among non-Evangelical Anglicans his reading was in Paley, and Butler and William Law."³⁶ This statement must be modified by evidence in the letters and diaries (which at the time of his writing in 1966 may not have been available to Parker).

Certainly by the time he came to write the *Arians of the Fourth Century* Newman had Catholic leanings that surprised the editors of the series for which he had been commissioned to write the book. In October, 1832, after reading the manuscript of *Arians*, one of the editors, William Rowe Lyall wrote to Hugh James Rose:

If Mr. Newman's work shall be published in the Theological Library, there are several parts that will require consideration - particularly in those places where he speaks of the *disciplina arcani* - I do not pretend to make my opinion the rule - but Mr. Newman's notions about tradition appear to me directly adverse to that which Protestant writers of our own church have contended for - according to them a "secret tradition" is no tradition at all - *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, is the very definition of authentic tradition. Mr. Newman's views seem to me more favourable to the Roman writers, than I should like to put forward in the *Theological Library* - There are several other passages and expressions which made my hyper-orthodox nerves wince - a little - and which we must talk about hereafter if Mr. Newman's book is published with our names appended - but if I were in his case, I should much prefer putting the book forth as a separate publication....³⁷

Which, of course, was the case. The young Evangelical had begun to turn Catholic through his immersion in history, not through the reading of theology.

As early as 1829, however, we do find Newman writing to Pusey and discussing a dozen of the Caroline theologians. He gives detailed volume and page references to writers such as Andrewes, Hammond, Beveridge, Bull, Chillingworth and Laud.³⁸ Near the end of that year he writes to John William Bowden that "King Charles and his bishop seemed to rise before us along the old road which leads from Oxford to Cuddesden. We have been paying a good deal of attention to the history of those times, and I am as confirmed as a dull staid Tory unfit for these smart times."³⁹ In a diary entry for 1831, while he was composing the *Arians of the Fourth Century*, he mentions taking "to Bull again, consulting many fathers and authors in the Library."⁴⁰ The next month he wrote to Samuel Rickard: "The standard Divines are magnificent fellows, but then they were Antiquarians or Doctrinists, not Ecclesiastical historians - Bull, Waterland, Petavius, Baronius and the rest."⁴¹ From a letter of Hurrell Froude to Newman, written in September, 1833, it is clear that all the young men of the Movement were suddenly returning to their Anglo-Catholic origins.⁴²



Also clear from this and other correspondence is the fact that these authors were not available in great abundance. Most of them had not been republished or re-edited since the first editions in the late sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. This very lack of current editions gives witness to the fact that a century of rationalistic theology had buried them in oblivion. To remedy this, efforts were made to re-edit the Carolines and others. In 1836 Newman wrote to J. W. Bowden that "Pusey and I are thinking of giving our names as joint Editors to a library of the Catholic Fathers."⁴³ Their names, along with those of R. W. Jelf, John Keble, William Palmer, and W. J. Copeland, eventually did appear among a committee of editors of the *Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology*, ninety-five volumes of which were published between 1841 and 1863. The works of other important writers, like Richard Field, began to appear at the same time in a series sponsored by the Ecclesiastic History Society. Thus, one of the first fruits of the Oxford Movement was to put into

the hands of clergy and concerned laity the texts that would be the basis for ecclesiastical reform and renewal.

Why did Newman and others return to these apparently forgotten and neglected writers? In the *Apologia* he writes:

I have said already that, though the object of the Movement was to withstand the Liberalism of the day, I found and felt that this could not be done by mere negatives. It was necessary for us to have a positive Church theory erected as a definite basis. This took me to the great Anglican Divines; and then of course I found at once that it was impossible to form any such theory, without cutting across the teaching of Rome. Thus came in the Roman controversy.⁴⁴

Newman's enthusiasm and delight in reading these works is evident from his letters. He writes to Keble of "the glorious Laud."⁴⁵ To Froude he writes: "I reflect with some pleasure that some of our most learned men have lived and acted in most troublesome times - as Usher, Hammond, Taylor; and in primitive times, Clement of Alexandria - Dionysius and Origen."⁴⁶ In 1835 he read Bull's *Harmonia Apostolica* for the first time. A year later he tells Henry Wilberforce: "I am glad you are reading Bull's *Defensio*. I think it is one of the most delightful works I have ever read" and adds with a typical swipe at the eighteenth century: "Ever since the 'Glorious' we of the Church have been in an unutterable stupor."⁴⁷ To Samuel Rickard he wrote "*sit anima mea cum Hammondo* and such like."⁴⁸ Finally, to James Bliss, in 1836 he writes:

I have been going through Bramhall lately, and am astonished how far he goes and how clearly he lays down his lines. What pleases me most perhaps is his agreement with Laud, Taylor, etc. - for it seems to make it a more helpful project to systematize their writings, which is what we ought to aim at doing. At present the Romanists say "What does your Church hold?" etc. - I trust we shall be able to produce a Consensus Doctorum.⁴⁹

The vigor, enthusiasm, and delight expressed in these letters make a poignant and telling commentary on his later confession in the *Apologia* that he became "sore about the great Anglican divines, as if they had taken me in, and made me say strong things, which facts did not justify."⁵⁰ But I shall return to that point later.

Having briefly sketched Newman's attitude and

theological stance as he moved from his private reading of the early church fathers to his initial readings in the Anglo-Catholic writers, I would now like to focus on his very active involvement in the Oxford Movement and describe his contribution to the Movement between 1833 and 1841 and how he used the Carolines. These were years of almost unbelievable personal activity and scholarly productivity on Newman's part. He was active in pastoral work and in preaching sermons - the most important of which were the University Sermons (which were published in 1843). He was a general editor and frequent contributor to the *Tracts of the Times*. His diaries suggest that breakfast and other meals during these years were used as planning sessions for Tractarian activities. The sheer volume of his publications staggers the imagination. He wrote about one third of the Tracts. He edited for publication six volumes of his *Plain and Parochial Sermons*. He wrote two major book-length studies: *The Prophectical Office of the Church* and the *Lectures on Justification*. Then there are the dozens of review articles, essays, and monographs - and approximately five thick volumes of letters in the recent edition of the Letters and Diaries. In these eight years alone, between the age of thirty-two and forty, Newman had produced what many scholars would be pleased to call a lifetime's work. Looking at his total output of forty volumes of published writings and thirty-one volumes of correspondence I cannot resist, at this point, sharing with you a lament he made to his friend William Froude in 1860 when he was fifty-nine years old: "It is a cause of great sadness to me, when I look back on my life to consider how my time had been frittered away, and how much I might have done, had I pursued one subject. Had not each year brought its own duties, I should have turned to the subject which I spoke of long ago - but it is not one to be taken up by halves, and now, how many years have I"⁵¹ *The Apologia*, of course, was still to be written in 1864. And in 1870 the subject, "one not to be taken up by halves," would appear as the *Grammar of Assent*.

In the present context I cannot spell out in any detail Newman's actual use of the Caroline Divines and, in the final analysis, I think it impossible to establish many specific points of influence. Most commentators on Newman would agree with that statement and here I would single out only Thomas Sheridan's caveat in his work on the *Lectures on Justification* and Edward Sillem's magisterial commentary on *The Philosophical Notebook*.⁵² But there are some obvious uses the Tractarians made of the Carolines. They began, first of all, to draw their

seventeenth-century predecessors into their ranks, thus adding the authority of a golden age of theology to this modern reformation. Excerpts from Beveridge, Wilson, Cosin, and Bull began to appear as *Tracts of the Times*. The implication was clear: the Tractarians were not only making these sources available, they were also suggesting that the past and the present were speaking as one authoritative voice. From their correspondence it is clear that this was an explicit ploy on the part of the Tractarians - if you accept or really knew your own Anglo-Catholic tradition, you would accept and join us in our work of renewal and reform. These writers were, of course, cited in other tracts by Newman and his friends as authoritative and authentic witnesses to genuine Catholic doctrine and worship.

Newman's two principal works during the period, aside from the University Sermons, were the essay on the *Prophetical Office of the Church* and the *Lectures on Justification*. They are both attempts to use the Carolines systematically in presenting the "via media" of the Anglican Church. Briefly, the *Prophetical Office* establishes the nature of the teaching authority of the Church. Between the Protestant extreme of *sola scriptura* and the Roman Catholic reliance on infallibility Newman finds a middle ground, what he calls the Prophetical tradition, saying "it was rather what St. Paul calls 'the mind of the Spirit,' the thought and principle which breathed in the Church, her accustomed and unconscious mode of viewing things, and the body of her received notions, than any definite and systematic collection of dogmas elaborated by the intellect."⁵³ This essay, perhaps more than any other single piece from this period, relies heavily on the English writers. Dozens of authors are cited or quoted. Having established his point he addresses himself, quite obviously, to the evangelical wing of the Church saying:

It *will* perhaps be questioned whether the foregoing view of Catholic tradition and the fundamentals of the Church, is consistent with the supremacy of the Holy Scripture in questions of faith. That it is not consistent with present popular notions on the subject I am quite aware; but it may be that those notions are wrong, and the foregoing view, which is taken from our great Divines, is right.⁵⁴

In his preface to the 1877 edition of this and other related writings, titled the *Via Media*, he made little apology for what he had written in 1837 pointing out that these lectures were not an attack on the Roman Catholic

Church and "only indirectly comes into collision with the theology of Rome."⁵⁵ The very fact that he republished the text unchanged, adding only a lengthy preface and occasional footnotes, is proof of his confidence about the substance of what he said about the Prophetical Tradition.

The *Lectures on Justification* establish a middle ground between the Protestant extreme of *sola fide*, which falls short of the truth, and the Roman Catholic emphasis on good works, which lies beside the truth. When he came to republish the lectures in 1874 he wrote: "unless the author held in substance in 1874 what he published in 1838, he would not at this time be reprinting what he wrote as an Anglican."⁵⁶ In this essay he works largely with patristic sources, using the Carolines as confirmation of what he sees as Traditional Catholic tradition. Thus, with the exception of the whole question of infallibility he drew his major teachings on the nature of the Church and the nature of grace and justification from his Anglo-Catholic tradition and, ultimately of course, from the early fathers of the Church.

Even when he found himself more Catholic than his companions in the Movement, something, we have seen, William Rowe Lyall early recognized, he continued to rely on the authority of the "great Divines." In 1840 he wrote an article on "The Catholicity of the Anglican Church" in which he mustered writers like Stillingfleet, Dodwell, Hickes, and Barrow in confirmation of the fact of Apostolic Succession and the validity of English Orders. In a later note appended to a republished version of the essay he writes: "If the arguments used in the foregoing essay did not retain me in the Anglican Church, I do not see what could keep me in it; yet the time came, when I wrote to Mr. Keble, 'I seem almost to have shot my last arrow [against Rome], in the article on English Catholicity.'⁵⁷

Newman's last effort to be Catholic without capitulating to that adjective Roman which Bramhall had called a "diminution" was Tract 90, "Remarks on Certain Passages of the Thirty-Nine Articles." Here he tried to show, again using dozens of Caroline authors, that the Articles allowed of a Catholic interpretation. The rejection of Newman's thesis by the English Bishops marked the turning point for him. In the *Apologia* he says: "From the end of 1841, I was on my death bed, as regards my membership with the Anglican Church, though at the time I became aware of it only by degrees."⁵⁸

Two issues, it seems to me, finally tore Newman away from his religious home and directed him toward Rome. And while I do not deny, as others have suggested, that there may have been political motives and psychological needs involved in his move, I think two points - one of doctrine and the other about church life - can explain Newman's "collapse" which shocked and disappointed so many of his contemporaries.

First of all, even while much energy within the Church was focused on internal reform in teaching, liturgy and pastoral care, the greater concern on the horizon, for Newman at least, was Liberalism; and he did not see the Church of his day adequately witnessing the sacred mystery which lay at its core as a remedy to the sterile rationalism of the age. In a letter published on the occasion of Tract 90 he wrote: "The age is moving toward something; and most unhappily the one religious community among us, which has of late years been practically in possession of something, is the Church of Rome. She alone, amid all the errors and evils of her practical system, has given free scope to the feelings of awe, mystery, tenderness, reverence, devotedness, and other feelings which may be especially called Catholic. The question then is, whether we shall give them up to the Roman Church or claim them for ourselves."⁵⁹ Thus, the holiness so dear to the Carolines was not being cultivated fully in the Church of the nineteenth century.

Secondly, while he revered that very respect for holiness and fidelity to doctrine in the Carolines, he eventually came to see them and the whole idea of the "via media" as essentially unhistorical. There was a hint of this attitude expressed earlier in his letter to Samuel Rickard, already quoted, where he says "the standard Divines are great fellows, but . . . they were Antiquarians or Doctrinists, not Ecclesiastical historians."⁶⁰ What Newman means, I think, is that they were collectors of the data of antiquity, not interpreters of its meaning. Their fidelity to the larger, central truths of Christianity - the

Incarnation, the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ - and the piety and devotion that fidelity bred was most commendable; but there was a static quality, an inflexibility, in their comprehension of the living reality of the Church that could not satisfy Newman's profound sense of history. All living organisms, and by analogy all living organizations, change or die. In the *Essay on Development* Newman expresses this insight with disarming simplicity: A great idea - Christianity is a real or realized idea in Newman's parlance - "changes ... in order to remain the same. In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."⁶¹

Thus in Caroline divines he found holiness and a profound and pious respect for the past as past. But holiness was not enough. Change is obvious and the question remained: Is that change corruption or legitimate development? The Carolines had no answer for that since they had not understood or formulated the question. Through his own original insight, elaborated in the *Essay on Development*, Newman was able to show how the past, changed though it be, could live on in the present. He had discovered in the area of history what Coleridge's contemporary, William Wordsworth, had discovered in the area of human growth and development: "The Child is Father of the Man" and one's days could indeed be "Bound each to each by natural piety." In the *Essay* of 1845 he showed how the consciousness of the Church, that "mind of the Spirit" as St. Paul calls it, changes - grows - over the centuries and is in fact an organic, continuous realization in space and time of the central reality of the Incarnation. Thus Newman's theory of development is in the final analysis profoundly Christological. Almost twenty years later in the *Apologia* he would show how his own personal growth from evangelicalism through Anglo-Catholicism on to Roman Catholicism was a continuous process the moments of which were "bound each to each" not by a natural piety but by life in the Spirit.



NOTES

- 1 *Apologia pro vita sua*, ed. David J. De Laura (New York: Norton, 1968), p. 41.
- 2 There is, for example, no modern history of the period. As of 1983 three volumes have been published in *An Ecclesiastical History of England* under the general editorship of J. C. Dickinson (London: Adam & Charles Black). Volumes III and IV have never appeared.
- 3 J. E. Booty, ed., *An Apology for the Church of England* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1963), p. xv.
- 4 *An Apology of the Church of England*, p. 85. "The Discourses Against the Romanists," in *Works* [LACTI] (Oxford: Parker, 1842), I, 109.
- 6 *Richard Baxter: Puritan Man of Letters*, by N. H. Keeble (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), p. 29. "A Practical Catechism," in *Works* [LACT] (Oxford: Parker, 1847), I, 1.
- 7 *Selected Essays of T. S. Eliot* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932), p. 247.
- 8 Quoted in Robert T. Carroll, *The Common Sense Philosophy of Bishop Edward Stillingfleet* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), p. 8.
- 9 *Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman* (London: Thomas Nelson; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961 -), edited by C. Stephen Dessain and Thomas Gornall, I, 240. Cited hereafter as LD.
- 10 LD, V, 363.
- 11 LD, V, 21.
- 12 LD, V, 45-6.
- 13 *Apologia*, p. 47.
- 14 *Apologia*, p. 84.
- 15 *Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1955), p. xxiii.
- 16 *Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century*, p. xxiii.
- 17 *Biographia Literaria*, ed. James Engell and W. J. Bate (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), I, 23-4.
- 18 LD, V, 135.
- 19 Quoted in R. D. Middleton, *Dr. Routh* (London: 1938), p. 139.
- 20 *Of the Church* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1847), I, iii.
- 21 *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. F. L. Cross (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1958), p. 50.
- 22 *For Lancelot Andrewes: Essays on Style and Order* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1929), p. 10.
- 23 *Ibid* p. 21.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 25 *Works* [LACT], I, 279.
- 26 *Works* [LACT], II, 97.
- 27 *For Lancelot Andrewes*, p. 31.
- 28 *The English Church: From the Accession of Charles I to the Death of Anne* (London: Macmillan, 1903), p. 4.
- 29 *The English Church: In the Reign of Elizabeth and James I* (London: Macmillan, 1904), p. 387.
- 30 *Works* [LACT], II, 284.
- 31 *The Common Sense Philosophy of Bishop Edward Stillingfleet*, p. 55.
- 32 LD, V, 47-8.
- 33 LD, II, 146.
- 34 LD, I, 303.
- 35 *Apologia*, p. 18.
- 36 "The Rediscovery of the Fathers in the Seventeenth-Century Anglican Tradition," in *The Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium*, ed. John Coulson and A. M. Allchin (London: Sheed & Ward, 1967), p. 41.
- 37 LD, III, 105.
- 38 LD, II, 169.
- 39 LD, II, 189.
- 40 LD, II, 346.
- 41 LD, II, 371.
- 42 LD, IV, 50-1.
- 43 LD, V, 345.

- 44 *Apologia*, p. 89.
45LD, IV, 219.
46LD, IV, 274.
47LD, V, 357.
48LD, IV, 314.
49LD, V, 340.
50 *Apologia*, 102.
51LD, XIX, 248.
52 Thomas L. Sheridan, *Newman on Justification* (Staten Island: Alba House, 1969), pp. 203-238; and, Edward J. Sillem, ed., *The Philosophical Note Book* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1969), I, 149-240.
53 *The Via Media of the Anglican Church* (London: Longmans, 1895), 1, 251.
54 *Via Media*, I, 266.
55 *Via Media*, I, xv.
56 *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification* (London: Longmans, 1897), p, ix.
57 *Essays Critical and Historical* (London: Longmans, 1895), II, 74.
58 *Apologia*, p. 121.
59 *Apologia*, p. 135.
60 See note 41 above.
61 *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: Longmans, 1894), p. 40.