

# THEOLOGICAL TRENDS

## THE SPIRITUAL ROOTS OF NEWMAN'S THEOLOGY

THE DEVELOPMENT of Newman's thought reveals a remarkable organic unity. If one were to annotate the *Grammar of Assent* published in 1870 with relevant passages from his earlier writings, one would require a large volume to contain the innumerable references. Hence his thought is best described with the aid of images of growth and development, like those used by Newman himself in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* of 1845. Though no single vital image can do justice to his thought, still, as I hope to show, one can speak in a genuine and valid sense of the spiritual roots of Newman's theology, while recognizing at the same time the inherent limitations of such a phrase.

By way of clarification of terms, it must be affirmed at the outset that Newman never set out to construct a thoroughly systematic theology of revelation, such as can be found perhaps in St Thomas or Karl Rahner. His aim was always pragmatic. Indeed most of his theological writings were polemical, apologetic in character and style, designed often to answer a difficulty, whether scriptural, personal, historical or contemporary.<sup>1</sup> Nor can Newman be said to be a professional theologian, as he described such in a letter to Miss Giberne of 10 February 1869.<sup>2</sup> If, however, we mean by theology what a time-honoured tradition in the Church has taken it to be, namely, *fides quaerens intellectum*, or faith reflecting upon the contents of one's beliefs in order to understand them more fully, then Newman can be called a theologian, and this is the meaning intended in this paper. I should also add that it will not be possible to indicate more than a few of the theological

<sup>1</sup> For example, see the memorandum about his sermon, 'On the Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ': 'It was written to account for a difficulty'. *Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman* (Oxford, 1979), 11, 16. (Hereafter referred to as *LD*.) The *Prophetical Office of the Church* was designed to construct an ecclesial theology for the Oxford Movement; the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* as an hypothesis to solve the difficulty of apparent additions to revelation; *Difficulties of Anglicans*, to help those with problems about joining the Church of Rome, etc.

<sup>2</sup> 'A theologian is one who has mastered theology — who can show how many opinions there are on every point, what authors have taken which, and which is the best — who can discriminate exactly between proposition and proposition, argument and argument, who can pronounce which are safe, which allowable, which dangerous — who can trace the history of doctrines in successive centuries, and apply the principles of former times to the conditions of the present. . . . This is it to be a theologian . . . and this I am not'. *LD*, XXIV, 212-13.

themes — and in broad outline only — that sprang from his preoccupation with personal holiness: the nature of sanctity and its relation to conversion, baptism, faith, the Church, the world, sin, dogma and credal affirmations.

Any consideration of the spiritual roots of Newman's theology must begin with recalling the well-known fundamental spiritual experience of his life, or what he called his first conversion. This was, as we know, a profound and dramatic encounter with God which left him a changed person.<sup>3</sup> As a result of it, he determined that the priority in his life would be holiness, summed up in the words he borrowed from Thomas Scott, 'holiness rather than peace', to which he linked another saying, 'growth is the only evidence of life'. The effects of this conversion, Newman tells us, were that 'I fell under the influences of a definite Creed, and received into my intellect impressions of dogma, which, through God's mercy, have never been effaced or obscured'.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, with the aid of works placed in his hands by his spiritual guide, Mr Walter Mayers, Newman mapped out a programme for growth in sanctity. It consisted first and foremost in daily reading of the Sacred Scriptures, prayer, self-examination, the devout reception of the Eucharist, and abstinence from any sinful amusements. There was another effect, detachment from the world, which I shall examine later.

It would take some years before Newman put into theological perspective the meaning of this experience, but in addition to those effects already mentioned, he was to become, to use a phrase frequently employed in his early sermons, 'a religious inquirer' as well as a pursuer of holiness, for the two were intimately linked. This may be observed in a letter he wrote just after the period of his conversion to thank Mayers for the gift of Beveridge's *Private Thoughts*. He concludes by expressing the hope that the 'Holy Spirit by whom Bishop Beveridge was enabled to establish his articles of faith, to form resolutions upon them, and to put those resolutions into practice . . . may He [the Holy Spirit] steer me safe through the dangers, to which I may be exposed at college'.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, even in this letter, we already perceive the first stirrings of theological inquiry, when he complains that there is a passage in Beveridge which he does not completely understand; and that even before he read it, he had debated with himself 'how it could be that baptized infants, dying in their infancy, could be saved, unless the Spirit of God was given them; which seems to contradict the opinion that *baptism* is not accompanied by the Holy Ghost'. The doctrine of the need for universal conversion with the

<sup>3</sup> 'It is difficult to realize or imagine the identity of the boy before and after August 1816 . . . I can look back at the end of seventy years as if on another person'. *Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman during his Lifetime in the English Church*, edited by Anne Mozley, 2 vols, new edition (London, 1898), 1, 19. 'Thy wonderful grace turned me round when I was more like a devil than a wicked boy': *Autobiographical Writings* (London and New York, 1956), p 250. (Hereafter referred to as *AW*.)

<sup>4</sup> *Apologia pro vita sua* (London and New York, 1889), p 4.

<sup>5</sup> Transcribed by Newman in *AW*, p 152.

concomitant denial of what was called 'baptismal regeneration', had practically become the touchstone of Evangelical orthodoxy. Mayers's explanation evidently satisfied Newman at the time, though later he was to have doubts, and indeed would come to accept baptismal regeneration. His continued concern with the nature of holiness, however, may be discerned in one of his earliest theological papers, entitled 'The nature of essential holiness', and later dated by him as 1822 or 1823.<sup>6</sup> It represents an attempt to synthesize his theological views on holiness and its relation to baptism.

Newman asks, does holiness consist 'in the performance of certain good actions, in being just, charitable, temperate? or in certain religious exercises, in attending the ordinances of grace, in frequenting God's house and table? or in both — or is it something beyond them?' In answer to these questions, he makes four points: (1) that holiness is not mere good living, though it includes this; (2) that it arises from a conviction of the importance of eternal things: that is, a recognition that living in the world and for the world is not primary, that living for God is; (3) that this recognition is not from nature, but implanted by God through the Holy Spirit; lastly, (4) that it is not necessarily connected with baptism. For if holiness is given in baptism, how does it explain that many Christians seem unholy and unspiritual, though they were baptized?

In the paper quoted one easily discerns the influence of the Evangelical writers, who denied that sanctification takes place in baptism. In 1826, after a long period of reflection, Newman rejected this view, as is well known from the *Autobiographical Writings*.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, in another theological paper written when he was ordering, as he says, 'his views against what is called Evangelical Religion', he affirms that 'conversion then is the process, not the commencement of a religious course — the gradual changing, not an initial change . . . and *Baptism* is God's first time — and no other can be definitely named . . . every baptized person is under a process of divine influence and sanctification, a process often interrupted, often given over, then resumed, irregularly carried on, heartily entered into, finally completed as the case may be'.<sup>8</sup> Holiness, therefore, begins in baptism, but admits of development throughout a lifetime.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Oratory Archives, Birmingham, A. 9, 1.

<sup>7</sup> *AW*, pp 77-80.

<sup>8</sup> 'Remarks on the Covenant of Grace, in connection with the Doctrines of Election, Baptism and the Church' (1828), Oratory Archives, A. 9, 1.

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted, however, as Thomas Sheridan, *Newman on Justification* (New York, 1967), has pointed out, that for Newman at this time the difference between natural and supernatural holiness is still merely one of degree, not of kind. The work of the Holy Spirit is one of healing, not of elevating to a supernatural sphere, though the germ of the idea is present in his remarks on the operation of the Holy Spirit and will develop over the years until he ultimately accepts the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the soul which elevates and renders it holy: with a holiness, however, that admits of development throughout a lifetime. Thus Newman remains faithful to his original saying that 'growth is the only evidence of life'.

More important, however, in accepting baptismal sanctification, Newman modifies his understanding of the Church. Although he had spoken of the Church as a body in his Evangelical sermons, and distinguished the visible and the invisible Church, the Church in the truest sense was the invisible Church, whose members could be identified by the holy lives they live.<sup>10</sup> Now he holds that by baptism one is admitted into the visible Church, and, moreover, this Church is not merely a fellowship of believers. It is a society divinely instituted with a God-given structure, a hierarchy of rulers who receive their power and authority from the rite of ordination.<sup>11</sup> Growth in holiness, then, is the result not merely of God operating through the Holy Spirit in the individual soul but rather in and through a visible community of believers, interrelated and hierarchically ordered. It is this ecclesial system that will become the object of his theological reflections during the course of the Oxford Movement, and will find eloquent and moving expression in such sermons as: 'The Communion of Saints', 'The Church, a Home for the Lonely', 'The Visible Church for the sake of the Elect', and 'The Invisible Church'.

Holiness, therefore, cannot be separated from faith, for faith is, according to Newman, the principle of holiness, and the relationship between the two was first explored in a series of sermons delivered at St Clement's in February and March 1825. In these sermons faith is defined as consisting 'in being impressed with the reality of unseen things from confidence in the person who tells us of them'.<sup>12</sup> Newman's concern is not so much with, in scholastic terminology, the formal object of faith as with its material object. The unique character of the main object of religious faith, he says, is the holiness of God and the divine Law, which produces important effects upon the mind if it really believes: that is, impressed by the holiness of God.<sup>13</sup> It will effect a profound *metanoia* in the innermost being of man, for faith 'is the *channel* through which this object [the holiness and mercy of God] operates upon the heart'. Since at this time Newman was still an Evangelical, he separates sanctification from justification, and hence looks at faith in two ways: he views it as knowledge in relation to the process of sanctification, but in relation to justification, as a confession of non-merit, or trust founded on self-condemnation that God has forgiven and justified.<sup>14</sup> Faith as knowledge, however, is not

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, MS sermons, nos 120 and 121, on the Church.

<sup>11</sup> Especially articles 2, 6, 8.

<sup>12</sup> MS sermon, no 57. The series consisted of nos 57, 59, 61, 63, 65 and 67, of which 59, 63, 65 exist in outline only (A. 7, 1).

<sup>13</sup> Outline of sermon, no 59.

<sup>14</sup> Newman would have found this distinction in Thomas Erskine, *An Essay on Faith*, 3rd ed (Edinburgh, 1823), a copy of which is extant in the Oratory Library and annotated by him. See p 10: 'Faith is connected in Scripture . . . with justification and sanctification, according to common language. In its connection with justification, it is opposed to merit, and desert, and works of every description; . . . Faith, as connected with sanctification, "purifieth the heart", "worketh by love", and "overcometh the world", and produces everything which is excellent and holy, as may be seen that bright roll which is given in Heb xi'.

so much notional knowledge but, as he will later use the term, 'real' knowledge, and as such is the instrument of sanctification. Justification he will take up again in his series of sermons on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans, delivered in 1829 at St Mary's, and, of course, in the *Lectures on Justification* in 1836.

In these earlier sermons, when Newman speaks of faith in relation to sanctification, he insists that real faith cannot exist without good works, and hence he affirms that faith is synonymous with obedience, a statement that at first sight seems startling enough to us. For Newman, however, obedience is not so much performing the will of another, executing his commands; though it includes this, it means much more. It is the total submission and surrender of one's being to the purification of the inner man, especially of his affections; so that one grows in a sense of one's unworthiness before God, takes delight in prayer and in the word of God as expressed in Scripture, and recognizes the world as a veil that must be pierced, so that the soul may hold concourse with the invisible world.<sup>15</sup> Good works, on their part, form habits and attitudes of mind, which in turn sever the soul from the world of sense.<sup>16</sup> Faith, therefore, is not static, but, as he proclaims in a later and as yet unpublished sermon, it is grown into. It is impossible, he says, 'to endure and feed upon the gospel-doctrines all at once. . . . The most we can do is to desire to believe them . . . to persevere in obedience, so that little by little our souls may be changed into the abiding image of His Son'.<sup>17</sup>

In the sixth sermon in this series, 'Faith connected with, and confirmed by the inward Witness', Newman enunciates, perhaps for the first time, an apologetic principle, which as a Catholic he felt might be a common ground of ecumenism, at least to the extent that Christians of different persuasions would join forces in opposing what he called 'the infidelity of the day'.<sup>18</sup> A sincere Christian who tries to live an authentic christian life possesses an inward testimony to the truth of his beliefs.<sup>19</sup> This apologetic principle is allied to his view that the ordinary Christian does not need to be able to formulate explicitly the reasons for his faith, though his faith is, nevertheless, rational. This latter idea Newman will explore in the sermons on faith in the

<sup>15</sup> MS sermon, no 67, and more fully developed in 'Faith and Obedience', *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (London and New York, 1889), III, sermon 6. (Hereafter referred to as PPS.) <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>17</sup> MS sermon, no 205.

<sup>18</sup> See letter to David Brown, 11 January 1873, *LD*, XXVI, 232; also to an unknown correspondent, 19 August 1874, in which he writes: 'I should myself consider that this personal hold upon Him is the immediate evidence of divine truth to every consistent Christian; who has no need of having his answer in hand to every one of the multiform, manyheaded objections which from day to day he may hear urged against his faith'. *LD*, XXVII, 109. Since there can be a danger of self-deception in this, Newman adds that God has set up the Catholic Church for the protection of his elect children.

<sup>19</sup> 'The man who believes on Christ, has another witness beyond the word of Scripture. He has an inward testimony, a consciousness within him, which confirms the statements of Holy Scripture in a most convincing manner, and puts the reality of religion beyond the reach of doubt and hesitation'. MS sermon, no 67.

*Oxford University Sermons*, especially in his distinction between explicit and implicit reasoning, and more systematically in the *Grammar of Assent*, where he distinguishes formal and informal inference.

Here I have spoken of faith, as Newman described it in his early sermons, as 'being impressed with the reality of unseen things'; and this leads me back to his initial spiritual experience, in which through the reading of William Romaine he was confirmed in his mistrust of the reality of material phenomena, 'making me rest', as he said, 'in the thought of two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator'.<sup>20</sup> The best commentary on the meaning of this statement, at times misunderstood, is supplied by Newman himself in a sermon in which he uses almost identical words. He remarks that under the influence of God's grace one comes to understand the emptiness of the world, its constant changeableness, its inability to satisfy the deepest longings of the soul, until one's reliance upon it is broken, and 'at length it floats before our eyes merely as some idle veil, which, notwithstanding its many tints, cannot hide the view of what is beyond it — and we begin, by degrees, to perceive that there are but two beings in the whole universe, our own soul, and the God who made it'.<sup>21</sup>

To us the metaphor of a veil is indeed prosaic, but to Newman it was not so. The image reoccurs in his writings and expresses for him a profound truth. By the visible world Newman generally means not so much nature, earth, and the cosmos, but rather human society, the world of men and their activities, their desires and ambitions, their plans for the future, and finally the history of mankind. This world in its social structure comes originally from God, as ordained by him, and as such it is good. 'We naturally love the world . . . its pleasures are dear to us . . . those, for instance, which we derive from our home, our friends, and our prospects, are the first and natural food of the mind'.<sup>22</sup> As a result of Adam's fall, however, this world has become vitiated, and the effects of sin have spread through the entire system. Hence the world as it concretely exists and operates offers a temptation that its objects will draw one's affections away from God. The world then becomes an idol<sup>23</sup> — another frequent Newmanic metaphor. It is in this sense, then, that 'in Scripture, the world is described as opposed to God, to truth, to faith, to heaven, that it is said to be a deceitful veil, misrepresenting things, and keeping the soul from God'.<sup>24</sup> Just as God separated the Jewish nation from the pagans lest they be contaminated by idolatry, and set them apart in order to make them a holy people, so the Christian to be holy must separate himself from the world in this sense.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Apologia*, p 4.

<sup>21</sup> *PPS* I, 20.

<sup>22</sup> 'Duty of Self-Denial', *PPS* VII, 93.

<sup>23</sup> 'The World our Enemy', *PPS* VI, 24; cf *PPS* II, 350, and MS sermon, no 205.

<sup>24</sup> 'Waiting for Christ', *PPS* VI, 247.

<sup>25</sup> For a development of the parallel between the Jewish and the Christian people, that is, the Church, as regards separation from the world, see the end of MS sermon, no 135: 'On the means adopted in separating the Jews from the world'.

Moreover, by reason of original sin, man collaborates with evil. 'Though we cannot keep from approving what is right in our conscience, yet we love and encourage what is wrong; so that when evil was once set up in the world, it was secured in its seat by the unwillingness with which our hearts relinquish it'.<sup>26</sup> Here I can only touch in passing on Newman's view of original sin. He held the corruption of human nature. As is clear from an early unpublished sermon on this subject,<sup>27</sup> somehow or other, though Newman is unable to explain how, 'we are responsible for the corruption which is ours by birth'. In the original draft he makes no distinction between original sin as regards the baptized and the unbaptized, though he does so in a later redaction preached as late as 1842. He claims that in the baptized, original sin is still sinful 'and (as it were) pleaded for . . . sanctified by the principle of grace, by the presence of God, the Holy Ghost in the heart'. Newman makes no distinction, such as traditional Catholic theologians have made, between concupiscence, or the tendency to sin, which is an effect of original sin and as such remains in the baptized, and, on the other hand, original sin itself which is taken away in baptism.

Because of original sin, there ensues within man a conflict between the inward voice of conscience speaking one way within us, and the world speaking another way without us. God has, however, provided a remedy for this conflict. He speaks to us not only in conscience and in heart, but through the sensible world. Beneath the surface of the world whose operations are set in motion and continued by the decisions and free choices of men, there is a supernatural system which the visible one, the less important one, is actually subserving, but this invisible system can only be perceived with the eyes of faith, which behold God's providence working for his own ends, but using even sinful men to achieve his purposes. Moreover, this providence of God is not only general over all men, but particular as well, over the individual soul.<sup>28</sup>

Newman, on the other hand, is sensitively aware of the fundamental and profound paradoxes of an authentic christian life, which he views dynamically, not statically. Hence, he cautions against an opposite tendency. If one can be excessively attached to the life of this world, so too, when one is detached from it, one is apt to undervalue this world's activities, to withdraw from active and social intercourse, to become lethargic, indifferent, or, in his victorian terminology, 'to neglect one's duties in the world'. In those who do so, he says, 'we may be sure there is something wrong and unchristian, not in their thinking of the next world, but in their manner of thinking of it'.<sup>29</sup> The true

<sup>26</sup> *PPS VII*, 34.

<sup>27</sup> MS sermon, no 19: 'On the Corruption of Human Nature'.

<sup>28</sup> *PPS IV*, 213-14. Also, 'A Particular Providence as revealed in the Gospel', *PPS III*, sermon 9.

<sup>29</sup> *PPS VIII*, 158.

Christian on the contrary 'will see Christ revealed to his soul amid the ordinary actions of the day, as by a sort of sacrament. Thus, he will take his worldly business as a gift from him, and will love it as such'.<sup>30</sup> In short, as on a well-balanced scale, he will seek an equilibrium between two truths: 'steadily to contemplate the world to come, yet to act in this'.<sup>31</sup>

Having seen how certain theological themes stem from Newman's preoccupation with holiness, let us now look at the relationship of sanctity to dogma, impressions of which, he said, he received in his first conversion. As an Evangelical, Newman believed that the primary doctrine of revelation was the Atonement, or the death of Christ on the cross. This doctrine is at first presented by Newman in relating to personal and original sin,<sup>32</sup> and to the Christian's release from what was called in biblical language 'the bondage of sin'. In an unpublished sermon, 'Holiness the End of the Gospel', he remarks that the death of Christ, 'while it atones for our sins, and obtains for us the gift of the Spirit, has also a natural tendency to create corresponding feelings in our minds, and, under the grace of the same Spirit actually does make an impression upon us'.<sup>33</sup> In the *Grammar of Assent* he would substitute for impression the term 'real apprehension', with all its power to lead to action. And so he continues: 'let us beware of the error of resting in an orthodox creed for salvation. . . . Doctrines will make us holy, only as they tend directly or remotely to excite in us feelings of humility, love and devotion'. Though this statement was directed against Arminianism, it demonstrates Newman's preoccupation with what might be called the operational dimension of dogma, as manifested, for example, in a manuscript sermon on the Trinity, preached in 1825. In this sermon Newman calls it a fallacy 'to suppose the mystery of the Trinity a bare abstract naked uninteresting dogma which is to be believed indeed, but has no connection with purity of life and comfort of heart'.<sup>34</sup> Newman's approach to the doctrine of the Trinity is not that of a philosophical but of a biblical theologian. For, he remarks, 'the incomprehensible persons of the Trinity are revealed not as they are *in themselves* but as they are *to us*, not as to their *nature* but as to their working — for their nature we could never understand, their works we may. The Father graciously consents to pardon — the Son to atone — the Spirit to purify — The Son consents to be sent by the Father, the Spirit by the Father and the Son. They work a beautiful work — and though each has taken a particular province yet where one works, they work all'.

So also faith in the creeds should not be a cold, naked faith or assent to propositions only. They should have a profound effect upon one's spiritual

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 154-55.

<sup>32</sup> 'This then is the grand and characteristic doctrine of our holy faith, an atonement for sin'; MS sermon, no 27. See also nos 14, 59, 74.

<sup>33</sup> MS sermon, no 103.

<sup>34</sup> MS sermon, no 81.



life. 'A deep sense of these solemn truths can overcome our hardness of heart, rouse us from worldliness, spiritualize us, and make us fit to enjoy the presence of God in heaven'. Indeed, 'nothing but this faith received into the heart can rouse us to obey all God's commandments, to live in the spirit of prayer, and to be holy as God is holy'.<sup>35</sup> In the *Grammar of Assent*, Newman was later to show how one can have 'a real apprehension' of the Trinity by separating the dogma into a number of propositions one by one; and in this way, he affirms, the dogma 'is presented for the imagination, the affections, the devotion, the spiritual life of the Christian to repose upon with a real assent, what stands for things, not for notions only . . . and that not in the case of intellectual and thoughtful minds only, but of all religious minds whatever, in the case of a child, or a peasant, as well as a philosopher'.<sup>36</sup> So too, a credal affirmation, such as is found in the Athanasian Creed, 'is not a mere collection of notions, however momentous. It is a psalm or hymn of praise, of confession, and of profound, self-prostrating homage. . . . It appeals to the imagination quite as much as to the intellect'.<sup>37</sup> Hence dogmas and creeds, to the extent that they present objects of real assent, perform a vital role in the spiritual life of the Christian.

Newman's earliest theology is primarily evangelical and scriptural; later it drew on the Fathers of the Church as well. It is true that he first read scripture in the light of evangelical theology, but that is not the entire scenario. Many of the sermons both published and unpublished of his evangelical period reveal a personal, spiritual and typological understanding of Scripture; and though Newman, in common with his contemporaries, lacked the historical and critical knowledge amassed by modern biblical scholarship, he often displayed a profound understanding of the spirit of the Bible and perceived inner connections between its parts, particularly between the Old and the New Testaments. He likewise could project himself imaginatively into the events related in Scripture, so that they became alive. But here again, his concern is with the relation of scriptural truths and realities to his overriding purpose of expounding Scripture in a way that will be relevant and applicable to the spiritual needs of his congregation, and lead them to holiness.

Moreover, doctrines which he explored as an Evangelical he not only retained but placed in a new and different relationship. The Atonement, for example, which as an Evangelical he considered the central doctrine of Christianity, will cede to the Incarnation as the central doctrine, and the Atonement will be related to the Resurrection and the Descent of the Holy

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *An Essay in aid of a Grammar of Assent* (new ed, London and New York, 1891), pp 129-31.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p 133.

Spirit.<sup>38</sup> He continued to preach holiness as the end of the gospel, but preaching no longer occupies the same place as it did in the evangelical system, where it was often the main function of church attendance, and was used to arouse feelings of sorrow for sin and to convert. Not that he does not continue to preach the need for repentance and sorrow for sin; but these, he affirms, are not the main purpose of church attendance. The shift may be observed in a sermon preached in 1831 on the subject and purpose of preaching, in which he denies that the purpose of coming to Church is primarily to hear the word of God preached, 'Preaching', he says, 'will benefit those who do seek Him, but it will not commonly create a heart to seek Him, where it does not exist — nothing can move us to holiness but God's grace and our will co-operating — and God's grace is promised, not through preaching, but through whatever has a sacramental character, and *public prayer* is of this kind'.<sup>39</sup> Hence the sacraments and prayer, both public and private, assume a primary role in the growth of christian holiness.

### *Conclusion*

Because Newman was preoccupied with growth in sanctity, upon which he insists in sermon after sermon, his theologizing assumes less an abstract than a concrete form, and is expressed in a terminology which utilizes biblical metaphors and images. I have concentrated here on Newman's evangelical period, though using some later sermons as well, for two reasons. First, it is a period of Newman's life which is generally either ignored or passed over rapidly.<sup>40</sup> The second and more important reason is that I have been concerned with the spiritual roots of his theology, which can be more readily studied in this period of his life. May I add that I am not unmindful that roots grow as well. But to trace the development of Newman's spirituality, to say nothing of his own personal sanctity, would require not merely another paper, but a book. If, however, Newman's spirituality is at the root of his theology, as I have attempted to show in a limited fashion, then it would follow that to neglect his spirituality is to run the risk of failing to understand the profound depths of his theology. It would be to fail to understand why Newman proclaimed in the *Grammar of Assent* that there was no opposition between theology and what was called 'vital religion'. Finally, it would be to fail to understand the enormous appeal of Newman to the twentieth-century mind,

<sup>38</sup> See *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, (New York, 1960), ch 1, par 1, no 3, p 59, and par 11, no 10, p 75. Nicholas Lash, *Newman on Development* (London, 1975), p 140, n 47, mistakenly affirms that Newman at one time held regeneration as the leading doctrine; but the letter to Richards, 26 November 1826, to which Professor Lash here refers, is not dealing with the leading idea of Christianity but of the english church system.

<sup>39</sup> See MS sermon, no 290: 'On the object and effects of preaching', 1831.

<sup>40</sup> Except by Louis Bouyer, Thomas Sheridan and David Newsome.

because he theologizes in a biblical and later in a patristic mode. While these modes are not in any way out of harmony with scholastic theology, nevertheless, they are more vivid, more concrete, more literary, and, by the same token, perhaps more capable of reuniting ascetical and dogmatic theology, which have developed in too separatist a fashion since the time of the Renaissance. If such a reunion takes place, and there is evidence that such has already begun in recent years, then surely Newman will go down in history as the forerunner of such a blessed and happy development in Catholic thought.

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