

Chapter 2

Truth and Holiness

Abstract Newman's commitment to truth and holiness constitutes a bedrock foundation for his understanding of religious morality. He was a vigorous controversialist who engaged disputes as they arose throughout his life to advance his ideas and defend religious belief. From his many conflicted endeavors there emerged two substantive concerns that guided his religious quest from the beginning. His conversion in 1845 brought these concerns to the surface: his concern with doctrine led him away from Anglicanism to Catholicism as the champion of orthodoxy; and his concern with his own salvation led him to a sense of urgency to convert. However, he did not resort to faith to deal with these. Rather, he relied on reason to address matters of truth and on conscience to address matters of holiness. His deliberative process towards conversion illustrates his use of the principle of economy that clarified how truth and holiness progress over time. He expressed this progression in his own life as a constant battle against religious liberalism that he perceived to be a form of rationalism. Yet his opposition to liberalism did not prevent him from supporting a new movement of Liberal Catholics that defended a robust role for the faithful as well as for theologians in the Church. His commitment to truth and holiness that inspired his view of the faithful and theology became a leitmotif for his approach to religious morality.

John Henry Newman is widely recognized as being one of the most influential figures in Victorian England. His writings have inspired a very large body of secondary literature on his thought,¹ including contributing to a religious revival in English literature.² One of the topics often discussed in his major works is conscience. Yet surprisingly very little has been written on his general approach to religious morality that includes but is much broader than his discussion of conscience. This chapter begins that broader exploration by discussing his commitment to truth and holiness as a bedrock foundation of religious morality.

High hopes and deep disappointment accompanied Newman throughout his life. He developed a prestigious reputation as a promising young vicar and reputable preacher at Oxford University.³ However, his reputation was challenged by a series

¹ Earnest and Tracy (1984); Blehl (1978).

² Ker (2003).

³ Ward (1948).

of events: his contentious *Tracts* as a leader of the Oxford Movement, his fretful consternation with Anglicanism, and his legendary conversion to Catholicism. His conversion sparked significant anticipation in the Catholic Church, yet disagreements emerged with the Irish bishops over his leadership of the Catholic University in Dublin and with the English bishops over his essay on consulting the faithful.⁴ He eventually settled at the Birmingham Oratory in 1859 (moving to Edgbaston in 1850) and he navigated an astute path of leadership in the Catholic Church, for which he was duly rewarded when elevated to being a Cardinal at the end of his life. Because of his commitment to truth and holiness, reflecting his doctrinal orthodoxy and personal piety, Pope Benedict XVI beatified him in 2010.⁵

With a life that spanned a highly contentious nineteenth century, and having a temperament that tended to engage in disputes, he developed the reputation of being a formidable controversialist.⁶ Late in life he appeared to relish his flair for controversy.⁷ In a private letter to Emily Bowles, dated May 1863, he wrote: “The only reason why I do not *enjoy* the happiness of being out of conflict is, because I feel to myself I could do much in it” (*LD*, XX, 445). His letters provide a treasure of insights into all aspects of his life, not least the fascinating correspondence with his circle of female friends including family, converts, writers, nuns and many other ladies of his time.⁸ Controversy accompanied him as a Catholic even over substantive doctrinal matters. For example, during the debates on Papal Infallibility, he resisted the pending definition, explaining to Sir John Simeon on March 24, 1870: “I am but a convert, a controversialist, a private priest” (*LD*, XXV, 66).

The many debates that he engaged so adroitly were accompanied by recurring anxieties, inspiring his genius and exhausting his energies. From his many conflicted endeavors there emerged two substantive concerns that guided his religious quest from the beginning. These concerns enunciated his most basic principles that provided the basis for his approach to religious belief: the concern with doctrine being an articulation of his dogmatic principle; and the concern with salvation being an articulation of his sacramental principle. By concern is meant his recurring perplexity that led him to deeper insights about the issues identified.

These combined concerns provided the seeds that would foster his growth towards conversion as a commitment to truth and holiness, truth reflecting his concern with doctrine and holiness reflecting his concern with salvation. In turn, his conversion enlightened his commitment to truth and holiness and the related concerns with doctrine and salvation in the development of his religious epistemology. Late in his life he provided an inspired metaphor for his commitment to truth and holiness – “clear heads and holy hearts.” In his 1877 Preface to his *Via Media* he contrasted the “religion of the uneducated classes” with the “critical judgments of

⁴Barr (2003); Walgrave (1985).

⁵Mockler (2010), 169–188; Morgan (2007); Jennings (2005).

⁶Jaki (1999), 1–18.

⁷McIntosh (2014); Ker (1988), 66.

⁸Sugg (1983, 1996, 2001); Tristram (1933).

clear heads and holy hearts” that characterize “formal decrees of Councils and statements of theologians” (*VM*, I, lxxv).⁹

The most pivotal event in Newman’s life was his conversion from Anglicanism to Catholicism in 1845.¹⁰ Its implications as a model for religious commitment and conversion have resonated ever since.¹¹ It is well known that he experienced a series of conversions in his life: his initial moral conversion in 1816 as a teenager to personal evangelical faith; the cognitive conversion in his late twenties from evangelical religion, while at Oxford,¹² to the Anglo-Catholic form of Christianity that would lead to the Tractarian Movement (contributing a volume of sermons to the Tractarian series, *Plain Sermons*)¹³; then, his mid-life ecclesial conversion in October 1845 from Anglicanism to Catholicism.¹⁴ His sermons as an Anglican shed fascinating light on the many issues that he addressed during the long period preceding his conversion.¹⁵

Discussions on the psychological reasons for his conversion to Rome can be historically intriguing.¹⁶ To a reader today the seriousness with which he pursued his heart may appear old fashioned. Yet the relevance of his conversion continues to provide guidance for many.¹⁷ Leaving Anglicanism for Catholicism today might appear more as a denominational shift than as a profoundly personal religious conversion. Yet, nineteenth century England was ridden with bigotry and religious-minded people were highly attuned to the historical animosity between Anglicanism and Catholicism. Converting to Catholicism involved a cultural stigma that was not to be under-estimated.

There is no wonder that his experience has been used to explain different theological understandings of conversion.¹⁸ As he advanced towards Rome his concerns with doctrine and salvation influenced each other. At first glance, having a concern with doctrine is to be expected for such a circumstance. But the concern with his personal salvation is intriguing.¹⁹ As he wrestled with the doctrinal orthodoxy of Anglicanism he gradually came to believe that his soul was at risk if he did not convert to Catholicism. This sense permeates his *Letters and Diaries* throughout his life – though in the final few years of his life, though mentally and intellectually active, his eyesight deteriorated and his physical writing skills diminished, leading him to dictate correspondence.²⁰ His entire life can be construed as a personal

⁹Merrigan (1991).

¹⁰Jaki (2004); Avis (2001); Blehl (2001a); Ker (1997); Blehl and Connolly (1964).

¹¹Sidenvall (2005); Atkin and Tallett (2004); Clark and Kaiser (2003); Ker (2003).

¹²Reynolds (1975).

¹³Murray and Blehl (1991); Poston (2005).

¹⁴Conn (2010).

¹⁵Murray and Blehl (1991, 1993); McGrath and Murray (2010); McGrath (2011).

¹⁶Briel (1998).

¹⁷Dulles (2002); Connolly (2005); Ford (2009).

¹⁸Marlett (1997); Conn (1986); Morrison (1992); Rambo (1993); Schwanke (2011).

¹⁹Chilcott-Monk (2010), ix.

²⁰Martin (1982), 138.

pilgrimage for truth reflecting a life of holiness,²¹ a lifelong quest that was poetically expressed at his death. He was buried in the same grave as Ambrose St. John at Rednal.²² On his memorial tablet these evocative words appear, inspired by Athanasius: *Ex Umbris et Imaginibus in Veritatem* (out of the shadows and images into the truth).²³ To grasp the relation between truth and holiness, and their connection with doctrine and salvation, it can be productive to trace these combined concerns both in the early seeds of his conversion and in his deliberate growth towards conversion.

2.1 Seeds of Conversion

The significance of Newman's concerns emerged from a context of anxieties that absorbed his attention in the years preceding his conversion. Not surprisingly, the causes of his conversion are the source of continued debate today. Scholars do not agree whether he first became dismayed with Anglicanism or was first attracted to Catholicism.²⁴ Some argue that he simply yielded to the evidence that accumulated while writing his essay on the development of doctrine, being persuaded against Anglicanism and deciding to convert.²⁵ Others argue that he really first decided that Roman Catholicism was true and then sought plausible evidence for his discernment.²⁶ Furthermore, there is robust disagreement about the reliability of his own account of his conversion. For example, some biographers interpret his conversion based on his subsequent remarks to present an understanding of events that was apologetic, defending his own perspective.²⁷ From this perspective, his *Apologia* appears as a record of his thinking.²⁸ Others interpret his conversion by offering a critique of his own account, based on other historical documentation of the day, to suggest a more critical historical view.²⁹ Obviously, there were many pressures that influenced his conversion, mentioned in the recently published *Letters and Diaries* for the Anglican years that immediately preceded his conversion. Whatever inspired his conversion the *Apologia* transformed him into a religious, literary, and cultural icon in his day and subsequently.³⁰ This analysis considers his conversion to

²¹ Velocci (2000, 2006); Ker (1977); Merrigan and Ker (2008).

²² Cornwall (2010), 220.

²³ Tolhurst (2008), 166; Cummings (2007), 54, 169; Forte (2004), 83–87; Chadwick (2001); Dessain (1966); Bouyer (1986), 201–205; Chadwick (1983), 78.

²⁴ Merrigan (1986).

²⁵ Walgrave (1960), 37.

²⁶ Lash (1975), 10–11.

²⁷ Ker (1990a).

²⁸ Trevor (1963); Trevor (1962), 307.

²⁹ Turner (2002, 2008).

³⁰ Turner (2008), 36–37.

enlighten the combined concerns with doctrine and salvation that emerged. Typically external pressures can be distinguished from his internal concerns.³¹

2.1.1 External Pressures

Two external events upset Newman intensely in the years prior to his conversion. The first event followed the demise of his celebrated theory of the *via media* between Anglicanism and Catholicism. He acknowledged that his view had never in fact been practiced in history: “the Via Media, viewed as an integral system, has never had existence except on paper” (*VM*, I 16). He also recognized that his suggestion failed: “the theory of the *Via Media* was absolutely pulverized” (*Apo*, 111). He then became embroiled with the Anglican bishops who rejected his argument in *Tract 90*, published in February 1841. He had been one of the leaders of the Tractarian Movement since the 1830s,³² also known as the Oxford Movement.³³ This movement focused upon the principles of Church tradition and authority as well as of apostolic succession.³⁴ In the tract he presented a Catholic interpretation of the Anglican Thirty-nine Articles, arguing that the Articles could be read in a Catholic sense consistent with the Catholic Council of Trent. Here he was exploring institutional ecclesiology as a basis for bringing both Churches together.³⁵ Although he must have understood the shocking nature of his rhetoric, that did not diminish his humiliation upon its rejection. This rejection helped to undermine his confidence in Anglicanism.³⁶

The source of the controversy was straightforward. Previously, the Articles had been interpreted commonly as being in opposition to Catholicism. His approach contested that long tradition, appearing like squaring the circle.³⁷ The Anglican bishops were furious. As a result, they forced him to end the Tracts: he agreed to suspend (which effectively ended) the Tracts but he was not obliged to withdraw his claims. Ever the controversialist, he did not discontinue the distribution of *Tract 90*. In a letter to John Lilley dated November 23, 1842 he remarked sharply: “You are quite right in supposing that I am continuing Tract 90 in circulation, but you are under a mistake in supposing that I ever withdrew it.... Nor did the Bishop of Oxford require the withdrawal of me; ... What he asked, and what I at once promised, was the *discontinuance of the Series* called the Tracts for the Times; and Number 90 has in fact closed it” (*LD*, IX, 156).

³¹ Ffinch (1991), 116–120; Nichols (1990), 21; Zeno (1987), 93–100.

³² Nockles (1994, 2007); Skinner (2004); Faught (2003); Turner (2002); Rowell (1983).

³³ Vaiss (1996); O’Connell (1969); Chadwick (1960); Faber (1954).

³⁴ Gilley (2009), 3.

³⁵ Ker (1993b), 7.

³⁶ Nicholls and Kerr (1991), 2.

³⁷ Gilley (1990), 198; Gilley and Shiels (1994), 298.

Newman's personal offense at this rejection did not dissipate. He remarked pointedly in a letter of April 1842 to his own Bishop of Oxford, Richard Bagot, with whom he retained cordial relations: "I not only stopped the series of Tracts, on which I was engaged, but I withdrew from all public discussion of Church matters of the day, or what may be called ecclesiastical politics" (*LD*, VIII, 504). Over a year later in October 1843, he remarked sharply to Henry Edward Manning: "I could not stand against such an unanimous expression of opinion from the Bishops, ... If ever there was a case in which an individual has been put aside, and virtually put away, by a community, mine is one" (*LD*, IX, 573).³⁸ The misery of rejection pushed him to the very edge of leaving the Anglican Church, observing poignantly in 1864: "The Bishops one after the other began to charge against me.... I wish to keep quiet; but if the Bishops speak, I will speak too. If the view were silenced I could not remain in the Church" (*Apo*, 130–131).

Another event alarmed him, just after the assault on *Tract 90* in summer 1841: the dispute over the Archbishop of Canterbury appointing the Jerusalem Bishopric. Newman negatively connected the controversy over the Jerusalem Bishopric with the censure of his *Tract 90*.³⁹ The circumstance was complicated. The British Parliament had authorized in Jerusalem the establishment of a bishopric alternating between the Anglicans and Lutherans. However, the Lutherans disagreed with central Anglican dogmas, including the apostolic succession of bishops. Newman protested vigorously but unsuccessfully, referring to "My Protest ... against the Jerusalem Bishopric" (*Apo*, 142). Just as the Anglican bishops reprimanded him for drawing too close to Catholicism in *Tract 90*, in turn he perceived the bishops as drawing too close to some protestant (non-Anglican) bodies in Jerusalem. Those non-Anglican protestant groups in Europe had placed themselves under an Anglican bishop without renouncing what Newman perceived as their protestant errors. Later, in 1864, he remarked with exasperation that the affair "finally shattered my faith in the Anglican Church" (*Apo*, 133). He explained further: "As for the project of a Jerusalem Bishopric, ... It brought me on to the beginning of the end" (*Apo*, 136). He was on the precipice of leaving the Anglican Church. However, he did not convert for another 4 years. Over this period his internal concerns over doctrine and salvation increased dramatically.

2.1.2 Doctrine and Salvation

Newman's concern with doctrine revolved around his doubt about Anglicanism. He recalled the summer of 1839 as the occasion of his doubt appearing while studying the history of the Monophysites. His religious doubt surfaced about the doctrinal truth of Anglicanism as the legitimate heir to patristic orthodoxy: "It was during this course of reading that for the first time a doubt came upon me of the tenableness of

³⁸ Miller (2008); Newsome (1993, 1966).

³⁹ Turner (2002), 395, 555.

Anglicanism.... by the end of August I was seriously alarmed” (*Apo*, 108). He compared the experience to seeing the shadow of Christendom in the fifth century upon the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. He perceived the heresies in the early Church “like a spirit rising from the troubled waters of the old world” (*Apo*, 109), seeing in the Anglican Church “the principles and proceedings of heretics then” (*Apo*, 109). He began to recognize the Church of Rome, both in the early Church and in his own time, as the champion of orthodoxy. This conflicted awareness was accompanied by a legacy of loss and sorrow.⁴⁰ Over subsequent years, he continued to struggle with this disconcerting reality, recognizing that he could not dismiss it:

I had seen the shadow of a hand upon a wall.... He who had seen a ghost, cannot be as if he had never seen it. The heavens had opened and closed again. The thought for the moment had been, ‘The Church of Rome will be found right after all’; and then it had vanished. My old convictions remained as before (*Apo*, 111).

One might expect that such doubt might be resolved by recourse to faith. Surprisingly, he opted for a different strategy. He turned to reason. This is evident in his subsequent recollection: to resolve his doubt he “determined to be guided ... by my reason” (*Apo*, 112). This remark discloses a characteristic mind-set that had a substantive impact on the development of his religious epistemology in which he celebrated the place of reason in religious belief. He had no hesitation in tipping his hat to reason to address his concern with religious doctrine.

Newman’s concern with his own salvation had captivated him for several decades. His sermons, his first being in June 1824, were replete with references to salvation, holiness and grace.⁴¹ His life was dedicated in large part to understanding and explaining religious belief as a profoundly personal matter of personal salvation before God. This personal focus was at the heart of his spirituality, as illustrated famously in his motto as a cardinal, adopting a saying of Francis de Sales, *cor ad cor loquitur* (heart speaks to heart).⁴² He emphasized this association of the heart with spirituality as being indispensable for religious conversion⁴³: “when men change their religious opinions really and truly, it is not merely their opinions that they change, but their hearts” (*PS*, viii: 225). He drew upon a rich tradition of spiritual theology in nineteenth century Victorian England, both in the Church of England (Evangelical and High Church) as well as in the Catholic Church.⁴⁴ Between Newman and his contemporaries there were many reciprocal influences.⁴⁵ In particular, he developed his spiritual vision in a manner that enabled his call to holiness to foster his roles as preacher, priest, and spiritual writer.⁴⁶ Perhaps more than any other genre of his writing, his sermons provided the insight that formed

⁴⁰ Schmidt (1984).

⁴¹ Robinson (2009); Tolhurst (2000).

⁴² Wright (2003); Ker (1993a), 110–111.

⁴³ Dessain (1980), 33; Dessain (1968, 1977); Murray (1980); Bouyer (1958).

⁴⁴ Chadwick (1966, 1978); Coulson et al. (1965).

⁴⁵ Short (2011); Reardon (1995).

⁴⁶ Cunningham (2004), 17–25; Blehl (1994), x; Elwood (1979).

and reflected his developing spirituality.⁴⁷ His focus on spirituality throughout his writings provides far-reaching guidance for what it means to be a religious believer, specifically being a Christian today.⁴⁸

His first conversion experience was evangelical and it occurred when he was only 15 years old, in 1816.⁴⁹ He experienced the radical nature of the “reality of conversion” (AW, 172).⁵⁰ He recalled in 1864 that “a great change of thought took place in me” as the cause of the “beginning of divine faith” that arose from his “inward conversion” (Apo, 17). In 1870 he remarked that it was such change “which so often takes place in what is called religious conversion” (GA, 80).⁵¹ The experience lasted over a period of 5 months from the conclusion of the summer term in early August to the conclusion of the Fall term in mid-December (“the autumn of 1816”), and then extended vividly over several years “till the age of twenty-one” (Apo, 17). As an impressionable teenager he had a vivid intuition of standing personally before God’s scrutiny.⁵² Much of that experience can be attributed to his upbringing in biblical Protestantism, what he referred to in 1864 as “Bible-Christianity” (Apo, 219), or what he described in 1870 as “Bible Religion” that consisted “not in rites or creeds, but mainly in having the Bible read in Church, in the family, and in private” (GA, 56). At this time of youthful sensitivity he had “no formed religious convictions” (Apo, 15). Yet, he experienced an “inward conversion” that convinced him he “was elected to eternal glory” – this led to an awareness of self before God that he described as “... making me rest in the thought of two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator; – ... I considered myself predestined to salvation” (Apo, 18).⁵³

This evangelical experience brought into high profile a deep awareness of his soul and his future salvation, a sensitivity that would become increasingly influential in his writings.⁵⁴ In his sermon on “The Individuality of the Soul” in the eight volume series of the *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (six volumes appearing between 1834 and 1842), this alertness is clearly manifest: “Nothing is more difficult than to realize that every man has a distinct soul, ... as if there were no one else in the whole world but he” (PS, iv, 80–83).⁵⁵ This was an extraordinary awareness of self and soul,⁵⁶ reflecting his broader evangelical experience at Oxford University.⁵⁷ The Calvinistic influence of Rev. Walter Mayers of Pembroke College in Oxford (1790–1828) was especially significant. Newman described Mayers as being the “human

⁴⁷ Ford (2004, 2012).

⁴⁸ Connolly and Hughes (2014); Ker (1990b).

⁴⁹ Merrigan (1985).

⁵⁰ Ker (1993b), 4; Tristram (1957).

⁵¹ Ferreira (1993).

⁵² Walgrave (1960), 22–25.

⁵³ Graef (1967).

⁵⁴ Zeno (1987), 253–292.

⁵⁵ Kelly (1994); Udini (1981); Svaglic (1967).

⁵⁶ Nicholls and Kerr (1991), 195–196.

⁵⁷ Lefebvre and Mason (2007a).

means of this beginning of divine faith in me” (*Apo*, 17). He also described another evangelical, Thomas Scott of Aston Sandford (1747–1821), as being “the writer who made a deeper impression on my mind than any other, and to whom (humanly speaking) I almost owe my soul” (*Apo*, 18). Nurtured by this evangelical faith, he opted for celibacy in the same year: “there can be no mistake about the fact; viz. that it would be the will of God that I should lead a single life” (*Apo*, 20). This conversion in 1816 was indicative of a personality in pursuit of perfection.⁵⁸ Later, a similar conviction inspired him to select ordination rather than a secular career in law. Even though he subsequently rejected this evangelical form of Christianity, it had a lasting influence on him.⁵⁹

This experience indicates that Newman developed a keen sense of a divine calling. His budding vocation was to undergo a significant transformation during an illness that nearly killed him when visiting Europe in 1833.⁶⁰ It occurred when he was in Sicily, as part of his extended vacation in Italy including a 5-week trip to Rome that inspired deep theological reflection.⁶¹ This occurred before the commencement of the Oxford Movement. Prior to the onset of illness, his trip afforded him much time to foster his awareness of a calling from God: “Especially when I was left to myself, the thought came upon me that deliverance is wrought, not by the many but by the few, ... I began to think that I had a mission” (*Apo*, 42–43).⁶²

After arriving in Sicily he fell so ill for nearly 3 weeks that his assistant thought he might die. After recovering, on his way to Palermo in late May the emotional stress of the presentiment of his calling caused him “to sob violently,” declaring, “I have a work to do in England” (*Apo*, 43). On his journey home by sea, he was becalmed for a week in the Straits of Boniface in the Mediterranean on the way to Marseilles.⁶³ During that delay on June 16, 1833 his sense of divine calling moved him to write one of his famous literary achievements, “The Pillar of the Cloud,” a poem that would inspire subsequent generations, especially its opening phrase, “Lead Kindly Light” (*Verses*, 152).⁶⁴ The metaphor of divine light had consoled him during the preceding illness. He had assured his assistant: “I shall not die for I have not sinned against light” (*Apo*, 43; see, *LD*, IV, 8). The metaphor of light indicated his recognition of divine providence in the mission he had discerned: “I seem to see, and I saw, a strange providence in it” (*AW*, 121).⁶⁵ This metaphor also resonated with him when pondering about religious belief, as can be seen as early as 1835 in *Tract 73*, “On the Introduction of Rationalistic Principles into Revealed Religion,” where he wrote: “Religious Truth is neither light nor darkness, but both together: it

⁵⁸ Burke (1994), 35–36.

⁵⁹ McClymond (2009).

⁶⁰ Walgrave (2004); Ward (2004a): 5–15.

⁶¹ Ford (2007).

⁶² Charcosset (2006).

⁶³ Tillman, 2006; Velez (2006).

⁶⁴ Massey (2007); Ward (2004a, b); Davies (2001).

⁶⁵ Strange (2008), 109–122; Strange (1990), 151, 157; Merrigan (1990); Frappell (1989), 477–479.

is like the dim view of a country seen in the twilight, with forms half extracted from the darkness" (*Ess*, I: 41–42).⁶⁶

When Newman later reflected on his conversion in his *Apologia*, he acknowledged his profound anxiety about his soul: "My own soul was my first concern, ... I wished to go to my Lord by myself, and in my own way, or rather His way" (*Apo*, 198). In a letter to John Keble in November 21, 1844 his deep stress about dying before conversion is evident: "My sole ascertainable reason for moving is a feeling of indefinite *risk* to my soul in staying ... I don't think I *could* die in our communion" (*LD*, X, 427). The thought of dying before conversion haunted him, as he voiced to his sister Jemima in March 15, 1845: "I cannot at all make out *why* I should determine on moving except as thinking I should offend God by not doing so.... Suppose I were suddenly dying ... I think I should directly send for a Priest.... Ought I to live where I could not bear to die?" (*LD*, X, 595–596). His overwhelming concern with salvation had brought him to the cusp of conversion, an experience that required the integration of his reason (dealing with his concern with doctrine) and his conscience (dealing with his concern with salvation).

2.1.3 Reason and Conscience

In March 1843 Newman retired from practice as an Anglican vicar, entering lay communion to struggle with his decision to leave Anglicanism altogether. Just as he turned to reason to resolve his concern with doubt, to resolve his concern with salvation he relied upon conscience. His confidence in conscience, as the personal capacity to effectively address the matters pertaining to his soul, is evident in his correspondence at the time. In a letter to Mrs. Froude in November 1844 he wrote: "I am conscious of no motive but that of obeying an urgent imperative call of duty" (*LD*, X, 399).⁶⁷ In a letter on January 8, 1845 to Miss Maria Rosina Giberne, a family friend and participant in the Oxford Movement,⁶⁸ he again indicated his concern with salvation in terms of conscience (the call of duty):

This I am sure of, that nothing but a simple, direct call of duty is a warrant for any one leaving our Church; ... The simple question is, Can *I* (it is personal, not whether another, but can *I*) be saved in the English Church? am *I* in safety, were I to die tonight? Is it a mortal sin in *me*, not joining another communion? (*Apo*, 208)

Just a few lines later he explained this call of duty as a function of conscience. In this important passage he contrasted the role of conscience with the role of reason that he relied upon to address his concern with doctrine.

My own convictions are as strong as I suppose they can become: only it is so difficult to know whether it is a call of *reason* or of conscience. I cannot make it out, if I am impelled

⁶⁶ Velez (2012), xvii–xviii.

⁶⁷ Harper (1933).

⁶⁸ Athié (2005).

by what seems *clear*, or by a sense of *duty*. You can understand how painful this doubt is (*Apo*, 208).

He perceived his soul as related to a sense of duty in conscience. Also, the passage highlights the role of reason, guiding him by what is rationally clear. He assigned a role for reason and conscience in resolving his doubt in the sense that reason engaged his concern with doctrine and conscience addressed his concern with salvation. This role of conscience in monitoring matters of the soul before God was a continuing solace for him.⁶⁹ For example, as early as 1830 he wrote in a University Sermon delivered at Oxford⁷⁰: “Conscience is the essential principle and sanction of Religion in the mind. Conscience implies a relation between the soul and a something exterior, and that, moreover, superior to itself” (*US*, 18). In old age he adopted the same insight for his religious epistemology in 1870: “conscience is a connecting principle between the creature and his Creator” (*GA*, 117). To comprehend the mounting influence of these concerns in his path to conversion, his concerns with doctrine and salvation need to be understood in connection with his dogmatic principle and sacramental principle.

2.2 Growth to Conversion

The complex journey of his conversion required time, requiring patience and tenacity. As early as 1832 he remarked on the need for individuals to seek religious truth at their own pace: “the strong hour of Truth, which, though unheard and unseen by men as a body, approaches each one of that body in his own turn, though at a different time” (*US*, 94). He was acutely aware of the slow pace of his own progress when writing to his sister Jemima in a letter on February 11, 1845: “change of opinion is, commonly speaking, the work of a long time” (*LD*, X, 549).⁷¹ In this process, he increasingly recognized that his concerns with doctrine and salvation were closely connected. Without resolving his concern about doctrine, his concern about his salvation may not have arisen so urgently. Without settling his concern about his salvation, his conversion to Catholicism may not have occurred so dramatically. But it was only when he clearly grasped the integration of these concerns that he recognized the inevitability of his conversion. In a letter to Henry Edward Manning on November 16, 1844, a year before his conversion, this integration is apparent. He explained “that our Church is in schism and that my salvation depends on my joining the Church of Rome” (*LD*, X, 412).

⁶⁹ Attard (2008), xix–xxi, 183–188, 219–221.

⁷⁰ MacKinnon and Holmes (1970).

⁷¹ Svaglic (1967), 581.

2.2.1 *Dogmatic and Sacramental Principles*

This connection between doctrine and salvation provided a foundation for his belief system as an articulation of his dogmatic principle and sacramental principle. He remarked in 1864: “I had no longer a distinctive plea for Anglicanism, unless I would be a Monophysite. I had, most painfully, to fall back upon my three original points of belief, ... – the principle of dogma, the sacramental system, and anti-Romanism. Of these three, the first two were better secured in Rome than in the Anglican Church” (*Apo*, 113).

His dedication to doctrinal truth constituted an articulation of his dogmatic principle in which he articulated his fundamental belief that Christianity was a religion of doctrines based on revelation.⁷² He explained his stance in this manner: “From the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion... What I held in 1816, I held in 1833, and I hold in 1864. Please God, I shall hold it to the end” (*Apo*, 54). He added a few pages later: “I am now as clear in my acceptance of the principle of dogma, as I was in 1833 and 1816” (*Apo*, 57). The dogmatic principle was at the core of his study of doctrinal development that he was writing in the months preceding his conversion in 1845: “The principle of *dogma*, that is, supernatural truths irrevocably committed to human language, imperfect because it is human, but definitive and necessary because given from above” (*Dev*, 325). The sacramental principle encapsulated two complementary concepts: the mystery of God’s grace working through the limitations of human reality; and the gradual dispensing of divine providence in the human condition. The sacramental principle acknowledges God’s grace as permeating our world and also recognizes doctrines as gradually unveiling God’s providence.⁷³

The sacramental principle sheds light on his concern with salvation during his conversion process. First, the sacramental principle celebrates God’s transcendence in our world⁷⁴: “... the Sacramental system; that is, the doctrine that material phenomena are both the types and the instruments of real things unseen” (*Apo*, 29). Referring to the teachings of early Christianity, he explained: “These were based on the mystical or sacramental principle, and spoke of the various Economies or Dispensations of the Eternal... the exterior world, physical and historical, was but the manifestation to our senses of realities greater than itself” (*Apo*, 36).⁷⁵ Second, the sacramental principle acknowledges the measured dispensing of providence that allowed for “the anticipation of further and deeper disclosures” (*Apo*, 37).⁷⁶ This second aspect has become known as his principle of economy, being central for his understanding of the progressive unfolding of truth in doctrinal development,⁷⁷ and

⁷² Norris (2010); Norris (2004); Norris (1996); Norris (1977), 136–164.

⁷³ Whalen (1994), 205–225.

⁷⁴ Selby (1975), 3–12.

⁷⁵ Zeno (1987), 270–271; Zeno (1957), 60–61.

⁷⁶ Selby (1975), 22–43, 48.

⁷⁷ Wainright (2004), 146–156; Norris (1977), 176–195; Sillem (1969–1970) II, 107–109.

supporting the role of analogy in his writings. In this regard, he acknowledged his indebtedness to Joseph Butler's *Analogy* and to Joseph Milner's argument from *Analogy* (*Apo*, 33).⁷⁸

2.2.2 *Principle of Economy*

Newman's conversion process represented an application or realization of the principle of the economy in his life. The following passage presents the principle of economy, also known as the principle of reserve,⁷⁹ as a perspective about the staged (economic) development of religious doctrine. Naturally, the text has to be read within the restricted perspective of Christian dominance in nineteenth century Victorian England:

In the fullness of time both Judaism and Paganism had come to nought; the outward framework, which concealed yet suggested the Living Truth, had never been intended to last, ... The process of change had been slow; it had been done not rashly, but by rule and measure, ... first one disclosure and then another, till the whole evangelical doctrine was brought into full manifestation. And thus room was made for the anticipation of further and deeper disclosures, of truths still under the veil of the letter, and in their season to be revealed.... Mysteries are but the expressions in human language of truths to which the human mind is unequal. (*Apo*, 36–37)

This passage relates his sacramental principle with his dogmatic principle insofar as deeper disclosures of religious truth increasingly reveal God's providence. The passage sets up a rationale for his conversion process as an example of the principle of economy. A few pages later in the *Apologia*, he explained: "I am but giving a history of my opinions, and ... that I have come by them through intelligible processes of thought" that he compared with the "doctrine indeed of the Economy" (*Apo*, 39).

Also, the pastoral sensitivity that he demonstrated to not harming the Anglican faithful is a good illustration of the principle of economy. For example, after the debacle of *Tract 90*, he explained to his friend H. A. Woodgate on November 8, 1841 that he did not want to unsettle his friends further than had occurred by the bishops' action: "These charges of the Bishops are *very* serious things. I do not expect anything at this time among any friends of mine, but the charges are *unsettling* men's minds, and I fear laying the seeds of something deplorable in time to come" (*LD*, VIII, 322). Just 1 month later, in a letter to Samuel Rickards on December 1, 1841 he reiterated concern for his parishioners: "looking on my position here, I seemed to be a sort of schismatic or demagogue supporting a party against the religious authorities of the place. I have uniformly kept my parishioners before my mind – and wished to act *for them*" (*LD*, VIII, 359). Such was his anxiety for the Anglican faithful that he considered forgoing preaching, as suggested in a letter to

⁷⁸ Johnson (2001).

⁷⁹ Selby (1975), 4.

his friend R. I. Wilberforce on January 26, 1842: “My present purpose is from sheer despondency lest I should be doing harm, to give over, at least for the present, preaching at St. Mary’s” (*LD*, VIII, 441). As he progressed towards Catholicism he was dismayed at what his conversion would concede to his opponents: “The most oppressive thought, in the whole process of my change of opinion, was the clear anticipation, verified by the event, that it would issue in the triumph of Liberalism” (*Apo*, 184). He painfully made the same point in a personal letter to his sister Jemima Mozley on March 15, 1845: “I am fulfilling all their worst wishes and giving them their most coveted triumph – I am distressing all I love, unsettling all I have instructed or aided” (*LD*, X, 595).

Despite efforts to avoid unsettling the Anglican faithful, he was compelled to balance that pastoral sensitivity of reserve with his developing concern over his own salvation. He explained to Mrs. Froude on November 12, 1844: “The unsettling of so many peaceable, innocent minds is a most overpowering thought, and at this moment my heart literally aches and has for some days. I am conscious of no motive but that of obeying an urgent imperative call of duty” (*LD*, X, 399). In a letter to Edward Coleridge on the same day, he identified this dreadful tension that his principle of economy was causing, a tension between his progressive discernment to convert and his pastoral reserve to avoid unsettling others in the Anglican Church: “The pain I feel at the distress I am causing others, at the great unsettlement of mind I am causing, and the ties I am rending, is keener than I can say.... such acts, ... seem likely to be urged on me as imperative to my salvation – but none can know the dismal thing it is to me to trouble and unsettle and wound so many quiet, kind, and happy minds” (*LD*, X, 399). Finally, on March 30, 1845 he recognized that his pastoral sensitivity to prepare the faithful could not avoid unsettling many: “this waiting subserves the purpose of preparing men’s minds. I dread shocking, unsettling people. Anyhow, I can’t avoid giving incalculable pain” (*Apo*, 208). On October 9 1845 Father Dominic Barber, an Italian Passionist priest, received Newman into the Catholic Church.

When considering the pastoral impact of Newman’s conversion, it should be noted that his pastoral concern for the Anglican faithful was as important for the Church of England as his religious conversion was for the Catholic Church.⁸⁰ His reference to the principle of economy in the *Apologia* provides an intelligible account of his conversion process, both in terms of his gradual discernment to convert and in terms of his pastoral reserve to avoid unsettling the Anglican faithful. These pastoral characteristics of the principle of economy were part of his sacramental principle that celebrated the progressive unfolding of truth.

His combined concerns with doctrine and salvation were articulations of those basic religious principles. The principle of dogma enlightened his concern with the doctrinal truth of Anglicanism, and the sacramental principle clarified his concern about salvation in converting. One might expect Newman to rely upon strength of faith to resolve his dogmatic principle’s concern with doctrine and his sacramental

⁸⁰ Chadwick (1990a); D’Arcy (1990).

principle's concern with salvation. Surprisingly, he decided to rely upon reason and conscience to resolve these concerns. He found his inspiration for doing so in the writings of the early Church.

2.2.3 *Patristic Influence*

With hindsight Newman interpreted his road to conversion as being enlightened by the writings of the early Christian Church.⁸¹ The extensive patristic influence can be traced back to his youth. The influence can be calibrated specifically in terms of helping him to resolve his combined concerns with doctrine and salvation. He first encountered the Fathers in 1816, the year of his conversion to Evangelicalism, by reading Joseph Milner's *Church History*.⁸² He was attracted especially to Augustine and Ambrose, whose writings "produced a deep impression" (*Apo*, 19) when he read Milner's work. As he became disenchanted with liberalism as an Oxford tutor in the late 1820s, he explained his captivation with patristic writings: "as I moved out of the shadows of that liberalism which had hung over my course, my early devotion towards the Fathers returned" (*Apo*, 35). During the long summer holiday of 1829 he undertook a systematic study of their writings, "beginning with St. Ignatius and St. Justin" (*Apo*, 35), becoming utterly absorbed by Irenaeus and Cyprian (*LD*, II, 150).⁸³ As a result, he believed that the Fathers had protected him from some of the Protestant the heresies of his day – the "precipices of Luther and Calvin" (*AW*, 83). More importantly, he was convinced that he owed his conversion in 1845 to the influence of the early Church Fathers: "The Fathers made me a Catholic" (*Diff*, II: 24; see, *AW*, 83).

After Newman had been forced to resign his Oxford tutorship in 1830, he found more time to read the Fathers, which had a significant influence on shaping the beginnings of the Oxford Movement (*AW*, 96). During these years, in the early thirties, he prepared his first book, *The Arians of the Fourth Century* (1833) in which he indicated his preference for the Eastern Church, especially the Alexandrian Fathers. Perhaps more than any others, the Alexandrian Fathers fascinated him, including Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, and Augustine (*Ari*, 48–49).⁸⁴ In them he discovered a liveliness of thought that surpassed what he knew of scholastic theology:

If the Fathers are not cold, and the Schoolmen are, this is because the former write in their own persons, and the latter as logicians or disputants. St. Athanasius or St. Augustine has a life, which a system of theology has not (*Jfc*, 31).⁸⁵

⁸¹ Magill (1992b).

⁸² Ker (1988), 5.

⁸³ Dragas (1981).

⁸⁴ Ferguson (2003); Dessain (1976), 85; Sillem (1969–1970), I, 181.

⁸⁵ Murray and Blehl (1993), 133–218.

This passage anticipates a topic that would help to craft his religious epistemology: his distrust of shallow forms of reasoning, such as logic or disputation, when dealing with matters of religion. However, such criticism did not mean rejecting any role for reason in religious discourse, of which there is a remarkable variety in his works.⁸⁶ He relied on reason to address his concerns with doctrine and salvation. This characteristic association between reason, doctrine, and salvation is evident in a very important passage in which he acknowledged the indebtedness of his conversion to the Patristic Fathers, and especially to St. Ambrose (*Diff*, II, 24):

And then I felt altogether the force of the maxim of St. Ambrose, ‘Non in dialecticâ complacuit Deo saluum facere populum suum’; - I had a great dislike of paper logic. For myself, it was not logic that carried me on; ... It is the concrete being that reasons; pass a number of years and I find myself in a new place; how? the whole man moves; paper logic is but the record of it. All the logic in the world would not have made me move faster towards Rome than I did. (*Apo*, 155–156)

This passage accords a prominent role for reason to address doctrine and salvation. If salvation (“complacuit Deo saluum facere populum suum”) depended upon resolving his doubt about Anglicanism that constituted his concern with doctrine, he could not rely upon shallow logic (“Non in dialecticâ ...”). From the Patristic Fathers he had learned about holistic reasoning (“the concrete being that reasons ... the whole man moves ...”) in contrast to deductive or logical reasoning (“paper logic...”). The importance of this passage struck him in 1833 when he provided his own translation: “Non in dialecticâ complacuit Deo saluum facere populum suum (it is not by logic that it pleased God to bring about the salvation of his people)” (*Ari*, 29).

He was not trying to state the obvious – that logic is not the means to salvation. Rather he was conveying a complicated insight: we require reasoning (but not logic) to deal with the doctrinal concerns upon which our salvation really depends, as related aspects of divine revelation.⁸⁷ Long after his death, Newman’s understanding of divine revelation had a significant influence on Vatican II.⁸⁸ The above quotation reappeared in his *Apologia* in 1864 to shed light on his conversion. The purpose seems to have been to enlighten his maturing insight on religious epistemology by clarifying the role of reason in religious belief, such as inspired his own conversion. This purpose seems to be confirmed when he later used the text from St. Ambrose in 1870 for the title page of the *Grammar*, the work in which he presented his most developed account of religious epistemology: “Non in dialecticâ complacuit Deo saluum facere populum suum.” This intellectual insight was an emblem of his complex epistemology.⁸⁹

In 1846, just after his conversion, he visited Milan, the See of Ambrose, explaining that he had been “under the shadow of St. Ambrose whose name for 30 years, a long time, I have so revered and loved,” (*LD*, XI: 256). It is no wonder that he used

⁸⁶ Powell (1975, 1977).

⁸⁷ Griffiths (1990), 90–91.

⁸⁸ Blehl (2001b); McGrath (1997), 17.

⁸⁹ Tracy (1981), 86.

words of Ambrose, “Non in dialecticâ ...”, not only to crystallize his conversion experience in the *Apologia* in 1864, but also to emblemize his religious epistemology in the *Grammar* in 1870. This famous text of Ambrose, “Non in dialecticâ ...”, also came to epitomize his lifelong opposition to religious liberalism.

2.3 Hostility to Religious Liberalism

In Newman’s writings as an Anglican he presented many different views of religious liberalism,⁹⁰ just as there were many other views of liberalism across Europe.⁹¹ Since 1833 he had been the unofficial leader of the Oxford Movement, along with Keble and Pusey,⁹² publishing the *Tracts of the Times* to counter the increasing influence of what they construed as religious liberalism in the Anglican Church.⁹³ Looking back in 1864 to his conversion two decades prior, he explained that the Tracts were intended to oppose “the principles of Liberalism” (*Apo*, 49).⁹⁴ He identified 18 theses that he attributed to it in his note in the *Apologia*. He prefaced them by saying: “I proceed to explain what I meant as a Protestant by Liberalism” (*Apo*, Note A, 254). In his work on doctrinal development in the years preceding his conversion, he presented a list of propositions that he identifies with “the principle of philosophies and heresies” (*Dev*, 358) that he aligned with liberalism. Finally, in his *Biglietto* speech as a new cardinal in 1879, his strategy and struggle with liberalism was prominent: “For thirty, forty, fifty years I have resisted to the best of my powers the spirit of Liberalism in religion.”⁹⁵

His hostility to liberalism as a form of relativism became a disputed topic for his commentators.⁹⁶ For example, there has been considerable discussion about the influence of the demise of the Oxford Movement in 1841 or the conversion of Newman in 1845 upon religious liberalism in the Church of England.⁹⁷ There is robust debate about what Newman meant by religious liberalism. It appears that he was somewhat of a moderate conservative with regard to liberalism in political theory.⁹⁸ Some consider the main issue was to distinguish liberalism from his understanding of Christianity.⁹⁹ Others contend that there was no single form of religious

⁹⁰ Boekraad (1955), 100–101.

⁹¹ Goldstein and Bouyer (1988).

⁹² Jaki (2003).

⁹³ Parker and Pahls (2009); Pereiro (2008); Lefebvre and Mason (2007b), 239–225.

⁹⁴ Chadwick (1990b); Cameron (1980).

⁹⁵ Norris (1987); Davies (1978); Ward (1912), II, 459–462; Neville (1905), 63–64.

⁹⁶ Biemer and Holmes (1984), 19; Busckler (1980), 261.

⁹⁷ Nockles (1994), 270–306; Hinchliff (1992), 31–49, 50–72; Thomas (1991), 43; Pattison (1991), 216; Chadwick (1960), 58–61; Church (1891), 333–352.

⁹⁸ Kelly (2012); Norman (1990), 153–173; Chadwick (1983), 72.

⁹⁹ Hinchliff (1992), 32–36; Yearley (1975).

liberalism in the nineteenth century with which his view can be associated.¹⁰⁰ Also, it has been argued that his critique of liberalism can be found hardly anywhere else except in his own works.¹⁰¹ Yet, despite these varying perspectives, a coherent explanation of his view of liberalism can be traced from his combined concerns with doctrine and salvation.

2.3.1 *Liberalism as Rationalism*

Newman's opposition to liberalism can be traced to his opposition to rationalism. His approach had more to do with a fundamental attitude relating to a social and cultural phenomenon in his day than with any particular party or movement related with an ecclesiastical or theological problem.¹⁰² His concern with liberalism emerged early in his career.¹⁰³ His most detailed exposition of his opposition to liberalism appears in his extended note on liberalism in his *Apologia*.¹⁰⁴ His analysis identifies a reform that started a few years before he arrived at Oxford in the early 1820s. The reform constituted what he described as "the rudiments of the Liberal party" (*Apo*, Note A, 255), giving rise to the Noetic school at Oxford.¹⁰⁵

Newman was appointed as a Fellow at Oriel College in 1822. Not surprisingly, he was enticed as a young tutor in the Noetic school at Oriel by the lure of this liberal reform under the skillful influence of Oxford's master Aristotelian, Richard Whateley (1787-1863).¹⁰⁶ But he was unwilling to develop this interest if it meant compromising his dogmatic principle that Christianity was a religion of doctrines: "Even when I was under Dr. Whateley's influence, I had no temptation to be less zealous for the great dogmas of the faith" (*Apo*, 54-55). However, he did not dally in that circle: "I was beginning to prefer intellectual excellence to moral; I was drifting in the direction of the Liberalism of the day. I was rudely awakened from my dream at the end of 1827 by two great blows - illness and bereavement" (*Apo*, 26).

In November 1827, during the time of examinations at Oxford, Newman suffered a nervous collapse due to the illness that he mentioned in the *Apologia*. In January 1828 Mary, his beloved younger sister, suddenly became seriously ill and died on the following day, a profoundly personal experience that remained with him for his entire life.¹⁰⁷ These rude awakenings seemed to cause him pause. With time for quiet reflection he became disenchanted with Whateley's rationalism. In turn, he

¹⁰⁰ Kenny (1974), 125, 144.

¹⁰¹ Pattison (1991), 215.

¹⁰² Merrigan (2005), 607-608.

¹⁰³ Conn (2007); Walgrave (1960), 148-163.

¹⁰⁴ Svaglic (1967), 5.

¹⁰⁵ Svaglic (1967), 580.

¹⁰⁶ Culler (1955), 58.

¹⁰⁷ Ker (1988), 30.

was inspired to return to the patristic writings: “as I moved out of the shadows of that liberalism which had hung over my course, my early devotion towards the Fathers returned” (*Apo*, 35). However, he kept a sharp eye on the encroachment of liberalism, so much so that by the time he wrote his *Apologia* over 40 years later he remarked (somewhat defensively it appears) that “the bulk of the educated classes through the country (were) liberal” (*Apo*, Note A, 256).

Wilfred Ward, Newman’s first biographer, argued that by opposition to liberalism Newman meant rejecting a view of equality in religion that had no room for revealed truth.¹⁰⁸ One of his correspondents, Richard Armstrong, addressed this explanation of liberalism when corresponding with Newman. Armstrong argued that liberals were those whose religious convictions bear tolerance for the convictions of others (*LD*, XXXI, 197–198). In this sense, perhaps Newman perceived liberalism as an attempt to make religion more relevant and meaningful in Victorian times.¹⁰⁹ The difficulty with this stance is that he did not identify liberalism as a distinct type of religion, although he did refer to it rhetorically as “the Religion of Reason” (*Idea*, 195). His response to Armstrong in a letter dated March 23, 1887 provides one of the clearest indications about what he meant by his opposition to liberalism: “Liberalism is the development of rationalism” (*LD*, XXXI, 198). Ward’s explanation of liberalism as a standoff between reason and revelation has merit in light of Newman’s response to Armstrong: “What I have written about Rationalism requires to be expanded ... I would contrast it with *faith*. Faith cometh by hearing, by the *Word of God*. Rationalists are those who are content with conclusions to which they have been brought by reason” (*LD*, XXXI, 197–198). In this letter he made a fascinating association between liberalism and what he described as “reason and the moral sense”:

Liberalism is the *development* of Rationalism. It views faith as a mere *natural* gift, the like and consequence of reason and the moral sense; and by reason and the moral sense he estimates it and measures its objects ... This is Liberalism (*LD*, XXXI, 198).

His reference to the moral sense here was to the rationalism of Lord Shaftesbury (1671–1713) that will be explored later. The critical point is Newman’s association of liberalism with rationalism. That is why many commentators have argued that he intended to oppose liberal rationalism, such as had influenced him so much as a young scholar when at Oxford with Whateley.¹¹⁰ Also, Newman criticized liberal Anglicans like the historians Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) and Henry Hart Milman (1791–1868) for accommodating religion with rationalism,¹¹¹ attributing the roots of this sort of rationalism in religion to the enlightenment philosophy of John Locke (1632–1704).

Newman argued that religious belief would be undermined by justifying various degrees of assent to propositions only in proportion to the available evidence. With

¹⁰⁸ Ward (1912), II, 460; Ward (1893), 193.

¹⁰⁹ Hinchliff (1992), 33–34; Yearley (1978), 94, 127.

¹¹⁰ Norris (1977), 101–103; Holmes (1975); Walgrave (1960), 34.

¹¹¹ Boekraad (1955), 71–73, 79; Mozely (1891), I, 256.

Locke in mind he wrote in 1867: “Liberalism consists in looking at all conclusions ... as strong only in proportion to the strength of their premisses (vid. Locke)” (*Phil.N*, II, 170). Moreover, he rejected the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) that he identified with liberal rationalism.¹¹² Just as Newman aligned liberalism with rationalism he also opposed its reductive influence on revealed doctrine. He understood liberal rationalists as “those who are content with conclusions to which they have been brought by reason.” As he approached his conversion in 1845, his antagonism towards liberalism appears to have become focused around the dangers of rationalism in his combined concerns with doctrine and salvation.

2.3.2 *Doctrine and Salvation*

The connection between liberalism and religious doctrine is apparent in his association of liberalism with anti-dogmatism. He perceived the anti-dogmatism of liberalism as identical with rationalism.¹¹³ The way that he explained the “Anti-dogmatic Principle” in 1864 (*Apo*, Note A, 254) is very similar to the way he explained liberalism in his letter to Armstrong in 1887, mentioned previously:

Now by Liberalism I mean false liberty of thought, ... Liberalism then is the mistake of subjecting to human judgment those revealed doctrines which are in their nature beyond and independent of it, and of claiming to determine on intrinsic grounds the truth and value of propositions which rest for their reception simply on the external authority of the Divine Word. (*Apo*, Note A, 255–256)

Newman’s opposition to liberalism highlighted his fundamental concern about doctrine. By saying that, “Liberalism ... is the mistake of subjecting to human judgment those revealed doctrines” he was stating what he would later clarify for Armstrong in 1887: “Liberalism is the *development* of Rationalism.” This association between liberalism and rationalism in religion is a recurring theme in his writings. For example, his 1871 essay on “The Introduction of Rationalistic Principles into Revealed Religion” was first published as *Tract 73* in 1835. In that essay he explained: “To rationalize in matters of Revelation is to make our reason the standard and measure of the doctrines revealed” (*Ess*, I, 31). It is necessary to recognize here that by liberalism he meant the rationalist challenge to revealed doctrines. In other words, seeing rationalism as a threat to doctrine is at the core of his hostility to liberalism. This threat accounts for his famous remark: “rationalism is the great evil of the day” (*Apo*, 127). He deplored liberalism’s “deep, plausible scepticism, ... as being the development of human reason” (*Apo*, 234) and as constituting what he described in his *Idea of a University* as a form of “godless intellectualism” (*Idea*, 196).

¹¹² Wood et al. (2010); Loesberg (1986); de Achaval and Holmes (1976), 39–50, 57–59.

¹¹³ Sillem (1969–1970), I, 60–62, 71, 77; Walgrave (1960), 30.

As Newman approached his conversion in 1845 his perception of liberalism as a rationalist assault on doctrine became more evident, causing him to refer to it as an anti-dogmatic principle.¹¹⁴ However, to understand what he meant by his opposition to liberalism, it would be mistaken to highlight only his concern with doctrine. His accompanying concern with salvation in his conversion process shed light on the danger that he perceived liberalism as posing for personal salvation. When discussing his conversion in 1845, he made a very important observation. He deplored the “spiritual evils” that arise when liberalism tries “to place reason before faith, or knowledge before devotion” (*Apo*, Note A, 256). He typically associated devotion with holiness and personal salvation, as is evident in a letter he wrote to W. G. Ward in 1860 about seminary training: “The more a man is educated, whether in theology or secular science, the *holier* he needs to be if he would be *saved* ... that *devotion* and self rule are worth all the intellectual cultivation in the world” (*LD*, XIX, 417, emphasis added).

The sanctity of Richard Hurrell Froude (1803–1836) had a significant influence upon Newman’s outlook as he distanced himself from the Noetics and their liberalism at Oxford.¹¹⁵ For Newman, devotion, sanctity, and salvation were ingredients of his view of personal religion that were under assault by liberal rationalism. Two satirical passages highlight his skepticism about it being able to foster virtue, holiness or religion. In 1841, when he was embroiled in the odd controversy over the Tamworth Reading Room, he tried to align the emerging trend of reading rooms with rationalism: “If virtue be a mastery over the mind, if its end be action, if its perfection be inward order, harmony, peace, we must seek it in graver and *holier* places than in Libraries and Reading-rooms” (*DA*, 254–297, at 268).¹¹⁶

Here Newman was arguing against the social and moral views of Peter Brougham (1778–1868) and Sir Robert Peel (1788–1850). In these remarks Newman tried (somewhat oddly for readers today) to connect rationalism with reading rooms. However, if his satirical association between libraries and rationalism can be conceded, his substantive point is worthwhile, that rationality alone is insufficient to yield virtue, piety, or belief. Much later, in 1870, he made his point again: “It is very well as a matter of liberal curiosity and of philosophy to analyze our modes of thought: but let this come second, ... But if we commence with scientific knowledge and argumentative proof, or lay any great stress upon it as the basis of personal Christianity, or attempt to make man moral and religious by libraries and museums, let us in consistency take chemists for our cooks, and mineralogists for our masons” (*GA*, 95–96; *DA*, 295–296).¹¹⁷

Newman’s concern with liberal rationalism was twofold. Just as placing “reason before faith” alludes to the danger that rationalism poses for doctrine, similarly placing “knowledge before devotion” alludes to the danger that rationalism poses

¹¹⁴ Newman (1994); Thomas (1991), 43, 109; Newman (1986), 30–32.

¹¹⁵ Gilley (1990), 58–60; Davies and Flanagan (1978), 16.

¹¹⁶ Beaumont (2010), 7; Wieland (1985).

¹¹⁷ Ker (1988), 66; Ker (1990a), 163; Gilley (1990), 196.

for salvation. The compromise of doctrine and salvation constitutes what he described as “the spiritual evils signified in what is called the ‘pride of reason,’” that is, liberal rationalism (*Apo*, Note A, 255). This combined role of doctrine and salvation in his opposition to liberalism is very prominent in his essay on the development of doctrine that led to his conversion in 1845. In the section on “The Assimilating Power of Dogmatic Truth” (that is, on doctrine), he wrote:

That there is a truth then; ... that our choice is an awful giving forth of lots on which salvation or rejection is inscribed; ... – this is the dogmatic principle, which has strength (*Dev*, 357).

In other words, Newman’s opposition to liberalism was because of its rationalist assault on doctrine and salvation. It is mistaken to reduce his critique to the so-called anti-dogmatic principle as a form of doctrinal totalitarianism, as if he assigned no role to reason in religious discourse.¹¹⁸ Rather, his rejection of the anti-dogmatic principle of liberalism included a central role for reason in religious discourse regarding both doctrine and salvation. This connection with doctrine and salvation can be traced in an intimate remark to John Keble on June 8, 1844 on his dismay and how his conversion would be a triumph for others: “what quite pierces me, the disturbance of mind which a change on my part would cause to so many – ... the temptation to which many would be exposed to *scepticism*, indifference, and even *infidelity*” (*LD*, X, 262, emphasis added).¹¹⁹ That is, liberalism was as much a threat to doctrine (through “scepticism”) as to salvation (through “infidelity”). In contrast, “the fidelity of the laity, and the effectiveness of that fidelity” (*Cons*, 86) enables “the body of the laity” to remain “faithful to its baptism” (*Cons*, 76), with obvious implications for salvation.

His combined concerns with doctrine and salvation clarify what he meant by liberalism as a rationalist assault upon both. This explanation clarifies that Newman’s opposition to liberalism should not be construed as an argument about conservatism.¹²⁰ In contrast, he developed an affinity with a movement that was far from conservative in Victorian England, the liberal Catholics.

2.3.3 *Affinity with Liberal Catholics*

Newman’s affinity with liberal Catholics arose within the context of an authoritarian movement in Catholicism that sought to privilege the authority of the Pope at the risk of displacing other legitimate authorities in the Church. This affinity with liberal Catholicism has led to associating Newman with the subsequent Roman

¹¹⁸Pattison (1991), 209–213.

¹¹⁹Ker (1988), 286.

¹²⁰Misner (1985), 4.

Catholic modernist movement.¹²¹ This connection has occurred for a variety of reasons such as his acknowledgement of the role of history in his work on doctrinal development,¹²² or because of the similarity of language between his writings and modernism.¹²³ It came as no surprise that by inquiring into a role for the faithful in the Church he aroused suspicion among the forces of Ultramontanist in England.

In 1859, he anonymously published an essay in the *Rambler*, just after becoming its editor, though he had considered the idea as an Anglican when writing about the Vincentian canon in the *Lectures of the Prophetic Office*.¹²⁴ The essay had the controversial title, “On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine.” His argument was very challenging to conservative Catholic England at the time, especially to those with Ultramontanist leanings. His 1871 amendment of his 1859 essay highlighted his basic argument: “the *fidelium sensus* and *consensus* is a branch of evidence which it is natural or necessary for the Church to regard and consult, before she proceeds to any definition” (*Cons*, 55). He used several terms interchangeably, including: “the sense of the faithful” (*Cons*, 56), “communis fidelium sensus” or “consensus fidelium” (*Cons*, 77), and “*sensus fidelium*” (*Cons*, 102).¹²⁵ This argument is a more developed enunciation of an insight from St. Augustine that had influenced his conversion to Catholicism: “Securus judicat orbis terrarum” (*Apo*, 110), translated as, “the Christian commonwealth judges without misgiving” (*LD*, XXIV, 355). Newman celebrated this insight in his *Apologia*:

‘Securus judicat orbis terrarum.’ ... What a light was hereby thrown upon every controversy in the Church! ... the deliberate judgment, in which the whole Church at length rests and acquiesces, is an infallible prescription.... For a mere sentence, the words of St. Augustine, struck me with a power which I never had felt from any words before.... ‘Securus judicat orbis terrarum!’ (*Apo*, 110).¹²⁶

The importance of this insight from Augustine is evident in a letter from Newman to Canon Walker of St. Edmund’s College in 1867: “For myself I think the securus judicat orbis terrarum, is the real rule and interpretation of the words of the Church” (*LD*, XXIII, 254; see, *LD*, XXV, 284).¹²⁷ The connection with Augustine makes the drama of the argument all the more evident: the purpose of consulting the faithful is for the Church to elicit consent “before she proceeds to any definition.” The ferocity of reaction by Church authorities seems to have reflected a perceived threat. In a letter to William Maskell on February 12, 1871 Newman emphasized the importance of this insight regarding the controversy over the doctrine of infallibility in the Council of Vatican I:

¹²¹Talar (2007); Loughlin (2004), 25–52; Daly (1980, 1985, 2002); Jenkins (1990); Loomer (1979); Barmann (1972).

¹²²Lash (1973), 83–140; Reardon (1966), 272.

¹²³Flanagan (1946), 138.

¹²⁴Crowley (1992a), 111, 126.

¹²⁵Ker (2002); Crowley (1992b).

¹²⁶Newsome (1966), 115–116.

¹²⁷Penaskovic (1983); Stern (1977): 171–188.

The rationale or theory which is to be held with reference to what has been done at Rome, will come out distinctly, – We cannot force things. The Council cannot force things – the voice of the Schola Theologorum, of the whole Church diffusive, will in time make itself heard, and Catholic instincts and ideas will assimilate and harmonize into the credenda of Christendom, and the living tradition of the faithful, what at present many would impose upon us, and many are startled at, as a momentous addition to the faith (*LD*, XXV, 284).

His essay on the faithful appeared in the *Rambler* that had been started in 1848 by John Moore Capes who was an Anglican convert. In general, the journal was a publication of educated lay converts that encouraged lay action. In particular, it was the mouthpiece of the liberal Catholics, especially under the leadership of Richard Simpson (1820–1876), editor from 1857 until 1859, and Sir John Acton (1834–1902) who had studied under the liberal theologian Döllinger (1799–1890) in Germany.¹²⁸ Newman was anxious about the political liberalism that was sweeping Europe,¹²⁹ and he did not appear to be interested in supporting the liberal cause of social democratic reform. Nonetheless, he had become highly attuned to the increasing tension between liberty of conscience and church authority (*Apo*, 254).¹³⁰ Because of the debate over personal liberty and church authority Simpson had resigned as editor of the *Rambler* in 1859. Newman succeeded Simpson as editor hoping to be an intermediary between the Ultramontanists and the liberal Catholics, at least in the sense of providing guidance for liberal Catholics.¹³¹

Although Newman did not publicly announce his becoming editor of the *Rambler*, he was determined to preserve its continuity.¹³² Interestingly, he saw his work at the *Rambler* along similar lines as his previous work as rector of the Catholic University in Ireland from the perspective of educating the laity. In a fascinating memorandum in his *Letters and Diaries* dated May 22, 1859 he noted: “I said that the Holy Father had united England and Ireland in one University, that I never would have gone there, except to do substantially the same work which I proposed in the *Rambler*” (*LD*, XIX, 141). It was in this memorandum that he noted his well-known witticism with regard to his correspondence with a bishop: “The Bishop who called today ... said something like, ‘Who are the Laity?’ I answered that the Church would look foolish without them.” On a more serious note, he described succinctly his educational goals in his University discourses and his *Rambler* experience in an address in 1851 to his fellow Oratorians. He adopted the metaphor of enlargement of mind that was so representative of his years as University rector in Dublin:

I want an intelligent, well-instructed laity ... I wish you to enlarge your knowledge, to cultivate your reason, to get an insight into the relation of truth to truth, to learn to view things as they are, to understand how faith and reason stand to each other, what are the bases and principles of Catholicism (*Prepos*, 390).¹³³

¹²⁸ Hill (2000), 27–29; Biemer (1989), 109–110; MacDougall (1962).

¹²⁹ Kenny (1974), 128, 130–131.

¹³⁰ Nicholls (1991), 194–213; Ward (1893), 195.

¹³¹ Miller (2007); Gilley (1990), 307.

¹³² Altholz (1962), 99.

¹³³ Ford (2006), 3–5.

Unfortunately for Newman, it was all too easy for the Ultramontanists to associate his argument on the faithful with the historicist approach of liberal Catholics who opposed authoritarianism in the church and its isolation from society.¹³⁴ His anonymous (albeit controversial) essay forced him to resign after being editor for only two issues of the journal. As had occurred in the controversy with the Anglican bishops over *Tract 90* in 1841, he faced a fierce backlash from the Catholic bishops. His essay in 1859 suggested an active role for the laity in collaboration with the bishops, an argument that had been at the heart of his explanation of the development of doctrine.¹³⁵ He certainly acknowledged being associated with liberal Catholics when talking later of his “solidarity with the Rambler” (*LD*, XX, 5). He dealt with the crisis in 1859 as he done in 1841, by removing himself from the public debate: “The cause of my not writing from 1859 to 1864 was my failure with the *Rambler*. I thought I had got into a scrap and it became me to be silent” (*AW*, 272).

Nearly 15 years after his conversion to Catholicism, his continuing concerns with doctrine and salvation that had influenced his conversion to Catholicism shed light on his essay in 1859. He argued that the faithful should be consulted precisely because of their potential contribution in matters of doctrine and salvation (which he alludes to by reference to devotion and worship):

In most cases when a definition is contemplated, the laity will have a testimony to give; but if ever there be an instance when they ought to be consulted, it is in the case of doctrines which bear directly upon devotional sentiments.... The faithful people have ever a special function in regard to those doctrinal truths which relate to the Objects of worship (*Cons*, 104).

His concerns in this passage occur prominently elsewhere in his essay. For example, he cited a doctrinal treatise by the Bishop of Birmingham to bolster his argument to make a clear link between doctrine (teaching) and salvation (devotion and God’s grace):

The more devout the faithful grew, the more devoted they showed themselves towards this mystery. And it is the devout who have the surest instinct in discerning the mysteries of which the Holy Spirit breathes the grace through the Church, and who, with as sure a tact, reject what is alien from her teaching (*Cons*, 72).

Just a few lines later, his famous summary of what he meant by the consent of the faithful seems to be constructed around his continuing concerns with doctrine and salvation. The 1st and 5th items address his concern with doctrine (with the language of “dogma” and “error”) and the 3rd and 4th items address his concern with salvation (with the language of “Holy Ghost” and “prayers”).

I will set down the various ways in which theologians put before us the bearing of the Consent of the faithful upon the manifestations of the tradition of the Church. Its *consensus* is to be regarded: 1. as a testimony to the fact of the apostolical dogma; 2. as a sort of instinct, or phronema, deep in the bosom of the mystical body of Christ; 3. as a direction of

¹³⁴ Misner (1991), 40–55; Misner (1985).

¹³⁵ Penaskovic (2007), 163–172; Frost (1979).

the Holy Ghost; 4. as an answer to its prayers; 5. as a jealousy of error, which it at once feels as a scandal (*Cons*, 73).

It is interesting to notice that his description of “*consensus*” is constructed around his concerns with doctrine and salvation. The passage introduces a crucial role for “phronema” (the 2nd item), connecting it with doctrine and salvation as essential to the process of consulting the faithful. The word “phronema” as a communal sense in this passage appears akin to Newman’s use of *phronesis* or Illative Sense.¹³⁶ In the *Grammar* Newman explained the inferential process of the Illative Sense by recalling Aristotle’s *phronesis*: “It is ... with the controlling principle in inferences that I am comparing *phronesis*” (*GA*, 356). In his 1859 essay, his allusion to “phronema” appears to have anticipated his more refined religious epistemology on the Illative Sense of the *Grammar* in 1870. This connection suggests a communal sense of awareness or consciousness among the faithful. In the 1859 essay he used the words from Möhler’s *Symbolique* to refer to the 2nd characteristic of “*consensus*” as, “cette conscience de l’Eglise” (*Cons*, 73; See, *Cons*, 33–34; *Diff*, II, 313).¹³⁷

The contribution of reason and conscience is as apparent in his 1859 essay as it was for his conversion in 1845 to resolve his concerns with doctrine and salvation. The importance of their contribution is evident in his support for liberal education in the context of moral pluralism when writing his *Idea of a University*¹³⁸: “Liberal Education is ... the process of enlightenment or enlargement of mind” (*Idea*, 130) which involves both “the cultivation of the intellect” (*Idea*, 126) and “the voice of conscience” (*Idea*, 183). This integrative relation between reason and conscience as the resources to address concerns with doctrine and salvation caused him to develop an affinity for liberal Catholics in his day. This reciprocity led to his conversion in 1845, focused his opposition to liberal rationalism as a Catholic, inspired his view of liberal education, and energized his argument on consulting the faithful. This reciprocity became the hallmark of his personal liberalism that informed his religious epistemology, as discussed in the next chapter.¹³⁹

2.4 Conclusion

Newman’s concerns with doctrine and salvation were resolved by his reliance upon reason and conscience that in turn fostered his commitment to truth and holiness. These concerns were articulations of his dogmatic principle and his sacramental principle; they invigorated him as an Anglican minister in the 1820s and 1830s; they

¹³⁶ Coulson (1961), 23.

¹³⁷ de Berranger (1990): 833–842.

¹³⁸ Magill (1992a).

¹³⁹ Sillem (1969–1970), I, 70–78, 86, 119.

steered his conversion process to Catholicism in the 1840s; and they guided his hostility to liberalism and his affinity with liberal Catholics in the 1850s. All of this was confirmed in his *Apologia* in the early 1860s. The impetus of these concerns to rely upon reason and conscience enabled him to develop an approach to religious epistemology that would justify certitude in matters of belief and morality. The role that he assigned to *phronema* (connecting reason and conscience) in his essay in 1859 provided a conceptual bridge between his practical experience of certitude when converting in 1845 and his theoretical explanation of certitude when publishing the *Grammar* in 1870.

His commitment to truth and holiness constitutes a bedrock foundation of religious morality in his thought. However, he never developed a systematic account of religious morality. Although his commentators typically focus upon his view of conscience to delve into aspects of moral discourse in his writings, a much broader perspective needs to be pursued to understand religious morality in his thought. His commitment to truth and holiness highlights his reliance upon reason and conscience to resolve his concerns with doctrine and salvation. By doing so he established a necessary connection between the realm of doctrine (in religious belief and morality) and the realm of salvation as a foundational context for understanding religious morality in his writings. Another major foundation of religious morality can be found in his religious epistemology that explains the connection between reason and belief.

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