

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

The prophetic figure of John Henry Newman has become the object of innumerable modern studies. Books, doctrinal theses and articles appear every year on some aspect or other of his life, writings and doctrine. He was one of the great thinkers of his century and it is only in our day that many of his insights and arguments are being studied and evaluated.

The theme of christian perfection and holiness forms a vital part of Newman's work and writings. As a young man he realized that religion was on the wane in the society in which he lived. He saw men intent on making money, on being successful in the world, on establishing a good name for themselves, avoiding all pain and indulging in every pleasure. He also noted that the Established Church of England was strongly influenced by the desires and good pleasures of the civil leaders, while the ministers of that Church were often men of gentlemanlike status who had influential friends and enjoyed hours of leisure. Were these pastors and their flock living up to the christian ideal? Were they worthy to be termed *saints* as Paul had called his pagan converts? And if not, why not?

Newman came on the scene like an Elias of old. He had a vision of an ideal higher than the impassive and anaemic religion popular in his time. An early realization of the grandeur of the christian soul and the destiny of the christian vocation made him dissatisfied with a natural and uncommitted form of christian living. As a student, and then as a tutor, pastor and spiritual leader, he condemned the worldly wisdom of the so-called religious men of his day and called repeatedly for something more consistent, more perfect, more christian.

The present study, of a spiritual and dogmatic nature, analyses the concept of christian perfection and sanctity as presented in the writings of Newman. It draws mainly on material published in his books of *Sermons*, in his *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification*, in his private *Meditations and Devotions* and in his *Oratory Papers*, recently published by Placid Murray.

We begin with an analysis of the human soul — the immediate subject of sanctification — since we regard Newman's concept of the spiritual life and of christian perfection as springing primarily from

his awareness of the value and dignity of the immortal soul. The understanding of the new grace-enlivened nature received at baptism puts our author's thought onto a supernatural level, thus giving rise to the question of how far the qualities of nature and culture and the refinement and education of the gentleman are capable in themselves of attaining to the perfection of the christian state. Finally we shall discuss the topical question of the universal call to sanctity resulting from baptismal regeneration.

I

SUBJECT OF SANCTIFICATION

The first two sermons printed in Volume One of Newman's *Parochial and Plain Sermons* deal respectively with the subjects of holiness and the immortal soul. This is significant.

The first is inspired by the text from *Hebrews*: "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"¹, and the second by Christ's

¹ 12, 14; PS, I, [1]-14. All quotations from Newman's writings are taken from the uniform edition of his *Works*, (London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1908-1914) unless otherwise specified. Scriptural quotations used by Newman are given in the translation used by him. Abbreviations used in this study, with date of publication in brackets, are as follows:

Apo. = *Apologia pro vita sua* (1913); *Ari.* = *The Arians of the Fourth Century* (1908); *Ath.*, I, II = *Select Treatises of St Athanasius*. Two volumes. (1911); *AW* = *John Henry Newman: Autobiographical Writings*. Edited by Henry Tristram. (London 1956); *Call.* = *Callista, a Tale of the Third Century* (1910); *CS* = *Catholic Sermons of Cardinal Newman*. Edited at the Birmingham Oratory. (London 1957); *DA* = *Discussions and Arguments on Various Subjects* (1911); *Dev.* = *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1914); *Diff.*, I, II = *Certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*. Two volumes. (Vol. I: 1908; Vol. II: 1910); *GA* = *An Essay in aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1913); *HS*, I, II, III = *Historical Sketches*. Three volumes. (Vol. I: 1908; Vol. II: 1912; Vol. III: 1913); *Idea* = *The Idea of a University defined and illustrated*. (1912); *Jfc.* = *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification* (1908); *LD*, XI - XXIV = *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*. Edited by Charles Stephen Dessain. (London 1961-1973, still in progress); *LG* = *Loss and Gain: the Story of a Convert* (1911); *MD* = *Meditations and Devotions of the late Cardinal Newman* (1911); *Mix.* = *Discourses addressed to Mixed Congregations* (1913); *Moz.*, I, II = *Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman*. Edited by Anne Mozley. Two volumes. (1911); *OS* = *Sermons preached on Various Occasions* (1913); *PS*, I - VIII = *Parochial and Plain Sermons*. Eight volumes. (1908-1911); *Prepos.* = *Present Position of Catholics* (1913); *SD* = *Sermons bearing on Subjects of the Day* (1909); *SN* = *Sermon Notes of John Henry Cardinal Newman, 1849-1879*, Edited by the Fathers of the Birmingham Oratory. (London 1914); *US* = *Fifteen Sermons preached before the University of Oxford*. (1909); *VM*, I, II = *The Via Media*. Two volumes. (Vol. I: 1911; Vol. II: 1914); *VV* = *Verses on Various Occasions* (1910).

words as related by St Matthew: "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"² These sermons do not have any chronological priority³ but they aptly present the reader, right from the start, with the essential Newman.

Holiness, in fact, is a recurring theme in Newman's writings from first to last. And the starting point of his teaching on sanctity and perfection is to be found in his early consciousness of invisible realities, above all of his own immortal soul and of God its creator.

A) THE IMMORTAL SOUL

John Henry Newman was keenly aware from an early age of the existence of his soul — that part of his nature which was spiritual and invisible, yet on that account no less real than his material and visible body. As a child the unseen world — angels, his soul, God, — was something very real to him. Not that these invisible realities were 'seen' by him, but his childlike faith and vivid imagination made him feel at home in their midst. In 1820 he wrote down on paper some of the more outstanding recollections of his childhood, and we have the following extract preserved in the *Apologia*:

"I thought life might be a dream, or I an Angel, and all this world a deception, my fellow-angels by a playful device concealing themselves from me, and deceiving me with the semblance of a material world"⁴.

The material world, despite its beauty, was merely a screen which hindered the gaze of the young Newman from resting on the world of spirits and on God, the noblest Spirit of all. Newman did not argue philosophically to the existence of this Supreme Being: his conviction of the Divine came rather from natural intuition and personal experience of God and of his own self. He was influenced, too, by the Rev. Walter Mayers, a clergyman and converted Evangelical, whom he met at Pembroke College during the Summer vacation of 1816. Greater still was the influence of the Calvinistic books given to him by Mayers — particularly *The Force of Truth* by Thomas Scott⁵. As a result of these providential influences Newman be-

² PS, I, 15-26 and Mt. 16, 26.

³ The former was written in August 1826, the latter in July 1833.

⁴ p. 2.

⁵ *The Force of Truth. An Authentic Narrative.* London 1779.

gan to believe more heartily in the truths of the Holy Trinity, the Indwelling of the Divine Persons in the soul, the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Redemption, the struggle between good and evil forces in the world and the doctrine of predestination. Even before this time, however, Newman had spoken of his isolation from the objects which surrounded him, his mistrust of material phenomena and his resting 'in the thought of two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator'⁶.

Here we have in germ form one of the essential parts of Newman's spiritual teaching — the existence and the greatness of man's immortal soul, created and cared for by God, destined for unending bliss or pain and incapable of being satisfied by anything or anyone except by God Himself.

This basic truth is not easily and immediately grasped in a realistic manner. It involves a labour, a process. In fact, according to Newman, we can never fully realize in this world what it means to live forever, nor consequently, what it means to have a soul⁷. But we should all be in progress towards this saving knowledge.

Yet difficult as it may be to realize, the stern but sublime truth remains: man is immortal because he possesses an immortal soul.

1. *The individual soul and its immense value*

"Every soul is a candidate for immortality"⁸. This sentence is to be found in the earliest of all the sermons published in the eight volumes of Newman's Anglican Sermons⁹. Here we see Newman already at pains to point out the relative value of temporal advantages in comparison with spiritual riches. The superiority of the latter is proved by the fact that man does not cease to be when his mortal life is ended, but lives eternally in happiness or in misery.

⁶ *Apo.*, 4. Cf. A. JANSSENS, C.C.I.M., *Newman: Introduzione al suo spirito e alla sua opera*. Roma 1945, pp. 99-103; CHARLES STEPHEN DESSAIN, *John Henry Newman*. London 1966, pp. 3-4; B.-D. DUPUY, O.P., *De l'ombre à la lumière. Introduction aux écrits spirituels de Newman in La Vie spirituelle* 102 (1960) I, [540]-562.

⁷ *PS*, I, 17. «...a thick veil is drawn over their [Christians'] eyes; and in spite of their being able to talk of the doctrine, they are as if they never had heard of it. They go on just as the heathen did of old...» (*Ibid.*, p. 18).

⁸ *PS*, VII, 73.

⁹ «Temporal Advantages» (*PS*, VII, [58] - 73). «If we have but once seen any child of Adam, we have seen an immortal soul. It has not passed away as a breeze or sunshine, but it lives...» (*PS*, IV, 86).

Cf. LAWRENCE F. BARMANN, S.J., *The Spiritual Teaching of Newman's early Sermons in The Downside Review* 80 (1962) 226-242.

Newman returns quite often in his Sermons to consider these proofs, or rather intuitions, which man has of his immortality. One example he gives is the very fickleness and feebleness of this world, which stirs up within the heart at some time or other during life the desire of another and unending world. The present world is forever changing; we rely on its promises and it disappoints us again and again. From this Newman argues as follows:

“We feel that, while it changes, we are one and the same; and thus, under God’s blessing, we come to have some glimpse of the meaning of our independence of things temporal, and our immortality”¹⁰.

The inevitable sufferings and misfortunes of life confirm our persuasion of the secondary importance of this world ‘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’¹¹.

In this sermon of 1833 we find the young Anglican curate expressing a truth which is basic in his spiritual teaching — the greatness of the immortal soul. Newman never forgot these early convictions.

Two years later he returns in another sermon, «The Mind of Little Children» to describe the difference between the state of a child and that of a mature Christian. The child, not in his actions for he is as yet unable to reason between right and wrong, but when he is still and quiet, is a reflection of heaven. His innocence and peacefulness ‘is a blessed *intimation*, given for our comfort, of what God will make us, if we surrender our hearts to the guidance of His Holy Spirit... a foretaste of what will be fulfilled in heaven. And thus it is that a child is a pledge of immortality...’¹².

Newman sees another confirmation of the existence of our immortal souls in the disparity between our exceeding gifts of mind and the insufficient opportunities we have to develop and display them on this earth:

“I mean, when we take into account the powers with which our souls are gifted as Christians, the very consciousness of these fills

¹⁰ PS, I, 20. «When we contemplate human life in itself, in however small a portion of it, we see implied in it the presence of a soul, the energy of a spiritual existence, of an accountable being, consciousness tells us this concerning it every moment» (PS, IV, 215-6).

¹¹ PS, I, 20.

¹² PS, II, 67. Cf. PS, IV, 262-3; VII, 81; A. JANSSENS, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-144, where the author examines Newman’s psychological insight and knowledge of man and his soul.

us with a certainty that they must last beyond this life; that is the case of good and holy men, whose present state I say, is to them who know them well, an earnest of immortality" ¹³.

Men of great talent and virtue cannot be said to bring to effect all their capabilities in this life, no matter how many years they may live. We feel it only reasonable and fitting that they should not suddenly and irrevocably cease to be, but that they should be removed into a higher state of existence. If this were not true we should be forced to admit that God had created man for nought, or had endowed him with immense capabilities destined never to be fulfilled. Such reflections give us a sort of sensible conviction of a future life ¹⁴.

These intuitions and longings of our mind and heart are mere confirmations of what we already know from reason and from Christ's revelation ¹⁵. Newman did, of course, admit that human reason can come to the knowledge of man's immortal soul, even though it does so with difficulty. But reason as it is found in fallen man did not actually and historically convince man of his immortality with sufficient certitude and awareness to make him rise above the attractions of this world ¹⁶. It was Christ's clear and certain teaching on immortality, declares Newman, that broke the power and fascination of Paganism. The sobering thought of a future life and of an immortal soul halted the onward rush of the ambitions and lusts of the heathen and turned the hearts of many to higher things. One of the greatest

¹³ PS, IV, 216.

¹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 218-9.

¹⁵ « I am not attempting by such reflections to prove that there is a future state; let us take that for granted. I mean, over and above our positive belief in this great truth... we attain a sort of sensible conviction of that life to come... by this imperfection in what is present » (*Ibid.*, p. 218).

¹⁶ Newman did not rely to such an extent on tradition as to incur the censure of *Traditionalism*, not even the 'mitigated' type advocated by Augustine Bonnetty and condemned in a Decree of the S. Congregation of the Index in June 1855 (Cf. H. DENZINGER - A. SCHÖNMETZER, *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum*. Editio XXXII. Friburgi Bisgoviae 1963, Num. 2811-4 [1649-52]). Newman had the greatest regard for the powers of reason but saw the danger of mere intellectualism. Consequently he regarded with deep respect the traditional nature of divine revelation, indefectibly handed on from generation to generation in the Catholic Church, which effectively offset the errors of mere reason: « I know that even the unaided reason, when correctly exercised, leads to a belief in God, in the immortality of the soul, and in a future retribution; but I am considering the faculty of reason actually and historically; and in this point of view, I do not think I am wrong in saying that its tendency is towards a simple unbelief in matters of religion » (*Apo.*, 243). Cf. *Ari.*, 151-2; *GA*, 417-8; GÜNTHER BIEMER, *Newman on Tradition*. Freiburg-London 1967, pp. 69-138; H. F. DAVIS, *Is Newman's Theory of Development Catholic?* in *Blackfriars* 39 (1958) 310-321.

assurances we have received from the Gospel is the certain knowledge of our immortality in a state of happiness¹⁷.

Newman considered this doctrine to be one of the most consoling of Christ's teaching. For man longed for something more satisfying than this earth's pleasures, something unchanging, everlasting, infinite. Implied, however, in this satisfying knowledge is the thought of everlasting pain for those souls who fail to use this life as a preparation for the next, who reject obstinately God's invitation to holiness, spiritual maturity and a sharing in the Divine Life¹⁸.

Overpowering thought of eternity

Newman found almost overpowering the thought that every soul that ever existed is destined to spend eternity in a state of complete happiness or intense torment¹⁹. There are only two states possible for eternity, one of joy, the other of pain. There is no state of neutrality. This thought is made still more solemn for the non-Catholic who has not the certainty and the consolation of the Catholic who believes in the grace of the Sacrament of Penance and the Eucharist. Newman as an Anglican did not believe in the sacramental forgiveness of sin²⁰ and this was a further stimulus to him to feel obliged to a life of holiness. This more sombre outlook is reflected in various sermons of Newman's Anglican days. At times he paints an alarming picture, emphasizes fear more than love, speculates on the probability of the number of souls lost being more than those saved and in support of his stern doctrine heaps up quotations from Scripture such as 'Many are called, few are chosen', 'Narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be who find it'²¹.

Another instance of this serious outlook is reflected in Newman's constant use of the words 'awe' and 'mystery', particularly in his Anglican writings. The feeling of awe springs from his vivid awareness of the invisible world, the transcendent sanctity of God, the heinousness of sin and the real need of Redemption and continual pardon. Awe, in the general context of Newman's writings, does not exclude love and trust and gratitude, but it does create an abiding sense of holy fear, of sobriety and wonder. The more a person becomes

¹⁷ Cf. *PS*, I, 15-17.

¹⁸ Cf. *PS*, III, 287-8.

¹⁹ Cf. *PS*, IV, 87.

²⁰ Cf. *VM*, II, 107-8; *Jfc.*, 152-4.

²¹ *Mt.* 22, 14; 7, 14; and *PS*, IV, 88; *US*, 48.

acquainted with God, the greater should his awe and holy fear become. And until one begins to 'approach God with reverence and godly fear' warns Newman, one is 'not even in sight of the strait gate'²².

Newman is echoing here a doctrine which was typical of the theology of the Tractarians of the Oxford Revival. Yngve Brilioth writes of it as follows:

"To the Oxford men, more than to the modern types of piety, the realities of religion form a *mysterium tremendum*. How could they do anything but tremble? Was not every step in life for the Christian full of dreadful mysterious seriousness? What is more dreadful than to have an immortal soul, a soul which never dies, never ceases to think and be conscious, capable of bliss and misery?"²³.

After his conversion to the Roman Catholic Church in 1845 Newman takes a more hopeful and joyous view of death, immortality and the everlastingness of the next life. Confidence becomes more evident in his writings than the former apprehensiveness, childlike love and joy take the place of excessive fear and trembling, and the security of being a child of God and redeemed by Christ and a member of the true Church overrules the sense of his own unworthiness.

In his *Meditations and Devotions* we find frequent examples of this love and hope and joy, such as the following:

"Thou art my elder brother. How can I fear...? Thou art now, though in heaven, just the same as Thou wast on earth: the mighty God, yet the little child — the all-holy, yet the all-sensitive, all-human"²⁴.

And in the novel *Callista*, written in 1855, Caecilius cries, expressing Newman's own thoughts:

"The nearer we draw to Him, the more triumphantly does He enter into us; the longer He dwells in us, the more intimately have we possession of Him. It is an espousal for eternity. This

²² PS, I, 322. Cf. PS, I, 295-308; II, 26-27, 207; V, 13-28; VIII, 2; OS, 26-29. For further treatment of this sentiment of awe and fear in Newman see the following: GIOVANNI VELOCCI, *Newman Mistico*, Roma 1964, pp. 176-186; A. JANSSENS, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-4; F. MINOGGIO, *Natura e valore della psicologia religiosa di Newman. Excerpta ex dissertatione ad Lauream in Facultate Philosophica Pont. Univ. Gregoriana. Romae* 1950, pp. 31-32; HENRI BREMOND, *The Mystery of Newman*. London 1907, p. 197; GEOFFREY WAMSLEY *Newman's Dream of Gerontius in The Downside Review* 91 (1973) 167-185.

²³ Quoted in *John Henry Newman* by FRANK LESLIE CROSS. Glasgow 1933, p. 82.

²⁴ pp. 360-1.

is why it is so easy for us to die for our faith, at which the world marvels" ²⁵.

It is clear that Newman gave particular importance to the value of the soul. If we continue our investigation a little further we shall see that he contemplates souls not merely collectively as forming a certain community or society, but above all as individual and unique beings.

Care and respect for the individual soul

Newman regarded the Church as an independent, organized and closely-knit body of souls, a truth which he acquired during his first four or five years at St Mary's, Oxford. However, he by no means neglected the value of the individual soul. It is the holiness of each single soul that forms the beauty and strength of the Church.

In the sermon, « The Individuality of the Soul », Newman presents us with a sweeping vision of humanity seen as a countless number of individual, living and immortal souls ²⁶. He condemns the attitude that tends to 'class men in masses, as we might connect the stones of a building or... the wheels or springs of some great machine' ²⁷ giving individuality to the group and not to each soul that goes to make it up. To contemplate man, while keeping in mind this truth of the reality of the immortal soul means to change our outlook on

²⁵ p. 222. Nevertheless, Newman never abandoned, when in the pulpit, the vivid descriptions of the *awfulness* of the future judgment, the thought of eternity, the vileness of sin and the unworthiness of even the just soul in the sight of God: Cf. *Mix.*, 8-21; *CS*, 32-42. « Every one of you must undergo the particular judgement, and it will be the stillest, awfulest [i.e. filling with awe] time which you ever can experience... I speak of holy souls, souls that will be saved, and I say that to these the sight of themselves will be intolerable, and it will be a torment to them to see what they really are and the sins which lie against them » (*CS*, 35. 37). Twelve years later Newman returns to the same theme: « What is eternity? Why, it is awful. I cannot call it good in itself... for me it is the most awful thought in the world » (*SN*, 160).

However, it is an exaggeration to say that the deepest element of Newman's religious life was 'a deep and terrifying sense of sin' (GEOFFREY FABER, *Oxford Apostles. A Character Study of the Oxford Movement*. London 1933, p. 171). A tone of sternness and rigidity is evident in the early Anglican sermons when Newman was still under the direct influence of Evangelical doctrine. Moreover, he never quite abandoned a certain sense of awe and reverence, (Cf. *LD*, XIII, 426-7), which however was no obstacle to the most gentle and tender expressions of affection as manifested, for example, in his *Meditations and Devotions*, pp. 331. 332. 373. Cf. PHILIP BOYCE, O.C.D., *St Thérèse and Newman in Mount Carmel* (Oxford) 21 (1973) 67-95.

²⁶ Cf. *PS*, IV, 80-93.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

many things. Two examples given by Newman are — a crowded city street and our view of history. The surface view of the former is that of movement, rush, energy and wealth. The real view is of thousands of independent and immortal souls, each its own centre, each with its own destined place in the plan of Providence. And in reading history one does not study characters who are dead forever, like heroes in a fairytale, but rather immortal beings who are still living somewhere²⁸.

We should expect a certain zeal for souls from a young curate who preached to his congregation in the tone of the sermon we have just quoted. And true enough, this anxiety to work for souls in one way or another, is constant in Newman's life. On the day of his Anglican ordination as deacon, June 13, 1824, he was greatly impressed by the thought of belonging to God 'forever' and writes in his *Memoranda* the following day:

“ ‘ For ever ’, words never to be recalled. I have the responsibility of souls on me to the day of my death... What a blessed day was yesterday ”²⁹.

For the first two years of his clerical life, Newman considered that missionary work among the heathen was to be the destined fulfilment of his ordination vow. He had left secular things forever and his duty was henceforth the care of souls. He also had a strong feeling from the age of 15 that his work for God would involve a celibate life³⁰. Work on the missions or as Tutor in a College would demand such a sacrifice. Circumstances, however, pointed in favour of Newman finding his mission field in the rooms of an Oxford College and, in fact, he always regarded his work to lie in the realm of education³¹. He was of the opinion that secular education could be so conducted as to become a pastoral care. Therefore when a vacancy occurred in Oriel College in the beginning of 1826, Newman

²⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-87; J. DEREK HOLMES, *Church and World in Newman in New Blackfriars* 49 (1968) 468-474.

²⁹ *AW*, 201. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 200; *Moz.*, I, 131; A. DWIGHT CULLER, *The Imperial Intellect. A Study of Newman's Educational Ideal*. New Haven and London 1965, pp. 50-52; PLACID MURRAY, O.S.B., *Newman the Oratorian. His unpublished Oratory Papers edited with an Introductory Study on the Continuity between his Anglican and his Catholic Ministry by Placid Murray, O.S.B.* Dublin 1969, pp. 15-29.

³⁰ Cf. *Apo.*, 7; *LG*, 191-4.

³¹ « ... it must be understood that, in his [Newman's] view, the tutorial office was but another way, though not so heroic a way as a mission to idolators, of carrying out his [ordination] vow » (*Moz.*, I, 131).

resigned his curacy at St Clement's for the office of Tutor. He took great pains to make his educational work a truly pastoral one, remembering that Origen had done the same centuries before him. It was this scrupulous, pastoral conduct that earned for Newman the displeasure of the College Provost, Dr Hawkins, and in the end cost him his Tutorship³². In 1828 Newman became Vicar of St Mary the Virgin's and this gave him a greater spiritual influence over his pupils who flocked to his sermons. However, he did not consider the pastoral aspect of his tutorial work to depend on his ministry in St Mary's³³.

This zeal for souls which appears in Newman's Anglican writings is partially explained by his early Evangelical beliefs. The Evangelicals insisted primarily on the soteriological teaching of the Gospel. Consequently, they had 'a passion for souls; a deep sense of the total depravity of man, against which they preached the Cross and the Atonement'³⁴. When Newman abandoned the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination and final perseverance, he was thrown back on the only alternative — a strict moral life, since as yet he did not believe in the certain pardon of sin through Sacramental Confession. This accounts for some of the Solemn and stern warnings in the Anglican sermons³⁵.

In later years as a Roman Catholic, Newman still insists on the importance of the individual soul. He strengthens his arguments now by pointing to the care and attention which the Church has for the single soul, and not merely for the multitude collectively:

"It [the Church] contemplates, not the whole, but the parts; not a nation, but the men who form it; not society in the first

³² Cf. *AW*, 86 sq.; *Moz.*, I, 130-6; A. DWIGHT CULLER, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-79.

³³ When Newman was about to enter this office for the first time he wrote in his *Journal*: « May I engage in them [fresh course of duties, viz. Tutorship], remembering that I am a minister of Christ, and have a commission to preach the Gospel, remembering the worth of souls and that I shall have to answer for the opportunities given me of benefitting those who are under my care » (*AW*, 209). Cf. *Moz.*, I, 132, and LOUIS BOUYER, *Newman. His Life and Spirituality*. London 1958, pp. 78. 83-87.

³⁴ DAVID NEWSOME, *The evangelical sources of Newman's power in The Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium*. Edited by John Coulson and A. M. Allchin. London 1967, p. 15.

³⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 25. A sense of awe at the thought of the paramount importance of the soul is evident in much of the Tractarian writing, e.g. John Keble in his ordination year writes of the soul as being 'worth more than the framing of a Magna Charta of a thousand worlds' (quoted in GEOFFREY FABER, *op. cit.*, p. 95) and Pusey strenuously supports infant baptism and Confession, especially for 'that populous East of London, swarming like a beehive with neglected souls, for whom Christ died' (*Spiritual Letters of Edward Bouverie Pusey*. Edited by Rev. J. O. Johnston and Rev. W. C. E. Newbolt. London 1898, pp. 186-7).

place, but in the second place, and in the first place individuals... The Church overlooks everything in comparison of the immortal soul" ³⁶.

While the Church realizes the value of man's soul and aims at sanctifying and saving as many souls as possible, the world, on the contrary, usually disregards the invisible and spiritual part of man and directs its energies to the accumulation of material and temporal benefits. To the eyes of unbelieving men it is the visible system as such that has meaning and life: individuals are merely parts of the mighty system of the universe. When a person dies it is simply a member that drops out of the system and ceases to exist ³⁷.

Newman returns rather frequently, even in his Catholic sermons, to this theme. In the first year of his Catholic ministry at St. Chad's, Birmingham (1848), he describes as foolishness and madness, 'the whirl and dance of worldly matters', that absorbs so many souls ³⁸. He points out that money-making is unlawful in both rich and poor when it becomes so time-absorbing as to dry up all interest in religious matters and block the avenues of the soul to God's grace. "Can any state be more fearful than that of an immortal being, who is to live for ever, attempting to live on mortal food, and having no relish for that immortal food which alone is its true nourishment?" ³⁹.

During the next two years, in both the *Discourses addressed to Mixed Congregations* and in *Certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, Newman censures the world several times for its

³⁶ *Diff.*, I, 236. 237.

³⁷ Cf. *PS*, VII, 4-5; *US*, 123-6. John Dalgairns did not agree with Newman's interpretation of Oratorian apostolate, especially with regard to work in convents. Hence the following unjust assessment of Newman's zeal for souls given by Dalgairns in notes written during a retreat under Fr de Ravignan in Paris, December 1855: « Il n'a pas cette ardeur pour le salut des âmes qui serait nécessaire pour agir sur une ville telle que Birmingham... Il a des qualités sous quelques rapports héroïques; il est tout pour Dieu;... Mais il est certain, que je n'ai jamais vu en lui ce zèle pour le salut des âmes que nous voyons toujours en St. Philippe. Il comprend, il accueillit, tout ce qui peut servir à l'intelligence, à l'éducation, à la littérature. Mais du moment qu'on lui présent quelque plan qui ait rapport au travail pour le salut des âmes, il semblent [*sic*] perdre sa grandeur d'âme, la largesse de ses vues... » (*LD*, XVII, 87). For this question cf. PLACID MURRAY *op. cit.*, pp. 15-29. 108-110. 35-39; MERIOL TREVOR, *Newman, Light in Winter*. London 1962, pp. 93-97. 142-9.

After the success of the *Apologia* Monsignor Talbot invited Newman to give a course of sermons in Rome, hoping thus to win his favour once more and affirming that the Roman audience would be more important than anything he would ever have in Birmingham. This earned for the Monsignor one of Newman's trenchant retorts: "Birmingham people have souls" (*LD*, XXI, 167).

³⁸ *CS*, 39. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 83-87.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

forgetfulness of spiritual realities, its self-centredness and godlessness.

Man's greatest good cannot coincide with the material welfare of the visible world. Higher things are at stake. Yet Newman had to admit that the world was blind to anything beyond its own interests, and its civil powers were ever 'trying to put the invisible out of view, and substituting expediency for faith'⁴⁰.

Newman never tired of emphasizing the fact that the world does not favour the welfare of immortal souls and that it can never satisfy the yearnings of the soul for unending happiness and peace. Only God can do this.

2. *God alone satisfies the soul.*

Six months after receiving the Diaconate, Newman delivered the sermon entitled « Temporal Advantages », in which he declared that the vice of the day was avarice for wealth and worldly prosperity⁴¹. He pointed out that temporal advantages such as wealth, influence, fame, power and enjoyment can never satisfy the demands of the spiritual soul. It is, in fact, more difficult to gain salvation if we enjoy these worldly advantages in abundance, since they take up more and more of our time and thoughts, and tend to make us trust in *them* rather than in God. Be this as it may, they can certainly never satisfy our desires. They content us for a while but after some short years they disappoint us. They cloy us with their monotony and insipidity but do not satisfy the heart. And their material multiplication will not remove their sameness and wearisomeness. Newman explains:

“ And why is this? It is, in a word, because the soul was made for religious employments and pleasures; and hence, that no temporal blessings, however exalted or refined, can satisfy it. As well might we attempt to sustain the body on chaff, as to feed and nourish the immortal soul with the pleasures and occupations of the world ”⁴².

⁴⁰ *Apo.*, 115. Cf. *Mix.*, 6-7. 167 sq. 185 sq.; CS, 38.

« The world believes in the world's ends as the greatest of goods; it wishes society to be governed simply and entirely for the sake of this world. Provided it could gain one little islet in the ocean, one foot upon the coast, if it could cheapen tea by sixpence a pound, or make its flag respected among the Esquimaux or Otaheitans, at the cost of a hundred lives and a hundred souls, it would think it a very good bargain » (*Diff.*, I, 235).

⁴¹ Cf. *PS*, VII, 58-73.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 62.

The happiness of the soul, then, is not to be found in the possession of material goods. Things of nature grow old and lifeless. Even man's fellow man cannot satisfy the heart for he too withers and dies like the grass of the fields. Nothing created has the stability and the completeness to fill the longings in man's heart: only what is immortal and infinite can do that⁴³. Newman declares that man's happiness consists in the employment and fulfilment of the affections of the soul. In other words, man is happy when he knows, loves, reveres, adores and contemplates. It is, however, the contemplation and love of God alone which can fully open out all the deepest affections of the soul. Hence it is that 'the thought of God, and nothing short of it, is the happiness of man... He alone is sufficient for the heart who made it'⁴⁴.

Elsewhere Newman has pointed out that the soul remains here below in solitude, an island cut off from intimate communication with other souls. Even our closest friends whom we love dearly cannot fully enter into our soul. This is the domain of the Creator Himself, where the soul remains 'alone with the Alone', 'sola cum Solo'⁴⁵.

Newman's life of trials, contradictions and disappointments helped to confirm this teaching of his younger and happier days. In his meditations he was accustomed to address God as the Lover of Souls. Repeatedly we read in his writings that God is the only One that matters, the only One who can give lasting peace and happiness to the soul:

"To possess Thee, O Lover of Souls, is happiness, and the only happiness of the immortal soul!... Thou alone canst satisfy the soul of man. Eternity would be misery without Thee"⁴⁶.

⁴³ « ...considering the state of the case — the immortal soul — how tired it will get of everything in eternity, except of something which is infinite » (SN, 191). Cf. PS, V, 317; SN, 36-8.

⁴⁴ PS, V, 316. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 318. « Nothing but what is infinite can sustain eternity » (SN, 161).

⁴⁵ Cf. *Apo.*, 195-6; PS, I, 20-1; IV, 82-3. Fr Louis Bouyer examines the implications of these famous and crucial words of the *Apologia*: "making me rest in the thought of two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator". Having refuted Bremond's interpretation which labels Newman a 'Voluntary Recluse' and 'Incurable Egoist' as a result of a fiercely independent spirit and firm self-reliance, Fr Bouyer concludes: « Thus the words 'Myself and my Creator' imply no more than the recognition that the soul only escapes from what is harmful to it, from what has been vainly endeavouring to enslave it, by discovering that it belongs wholly to God, and that it is truly itself only in the light of God's presence, God being its master, and the soul His, and His alone » (*op. cit.*, p. 24). Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-5; A. JANSSENS, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-103; HENRI BREMOND, *The Mystery of Newman*. London 1907, pp. 17-39.

⁴⁶ MD, 327-8; Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 196; SN, 161; PLACID MURRAY, *op. cit.*, p. 274. In 1865,

It is evident from the foregoing pages that man should, according to Newman, pause and think of the eternity of happiness or pain that opens out before him at the end of his mortal life. The person who is really convinced of the responsibility of having an immortal soul, will see worldly values in true perspective. To such a one, this world will be of secondary, not of primary, importance, being as it is, a place of trial and preparation for the next. Thus the realization of our immortality influences our daily conduct and attitude to life and to events.

3. *In the world to sanctify our souls.*

“To understand that we have souls, is to feel our separation from things visible, our independence of them, our distinct existence in ourselves, our individuality, our power of acting for ourselves this way or that way, our accountableness for what we do”⁴⁷.

These lines from the sermon «The Immortality of the Soul» sum up rather well Newman's thought on the subject under study. He who has a right view of his condition in God's sight, thought Newman, will not fritter away the years of his life in religious indifference or spiritual mediocrity. A man gives most attention to that which he thinks most important for his own welfare. If he is aware of the respective value of the material world, his own body and his soul, he will take care to nourish and sanctify the latter so as to secure for it eternal happiness. In fact, Newman would have Christian believers give up the love of this world for the next, listen to the voice of God within them and obey it, heedless of what men may say, 'as understanding that they have souls, which is the one thing they have to care about'⁴⁸.

Another sermon written three years later in October 1836, «The Greatness and Littleness of Human Life», brings out more strongly the detachment and solitude of the soul in relation to things visible:

the year in which Newman wrote the *Dream of Gerontius*, when he thought that death was near and that he was about to appear before his Creator (although Fr Geoffrey Wamsley has recently questioned the fact that the idea of death was any more than usually engaging Newman's thought at the time. Cf. *Newman's Dream of Gerontius*, in *The Downside Review* 91 (1973) 168-170), he again calls on God in the very beginning of the poem with the words: «*Lover of souls! Great God! I look to Thee*» (VV, 323). Cf. MAURICE NÉDONCELLE, *La Spiritualité de Newman d'après ses poésies* in *Revue de Sciences Religieuses* 30 (1956) 36-40.

⁴⁷ PS, I, 19.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

“ We should remember that it [this world] is scarcely more than an accident of our being — that it is no part of ourselves, who are immortal;... We should consider ourselves to be in this world in no fuller sense than players in any game are in the game; and life to be a sort of dream, as detached and as different from our real eternal existence, as a dream differs from waking; a serious dream, indeed, as affording a means of judging us, yet in itself a kind of shadow without substance, a scene set before us, in which we seem to be, and in which it is our duty to act just as if all we saw had a truth and reality, because all that meets us influences us and our destiny ”⁴⁹.

Here we have echoed the imaginations of Newman's childhood, when he thought that the world was a dream and he himself an angel in disguise and also the thoughts (expressed in a letter to his sister Jemina in May 1828, a few months after the death of their dearly loved sister, Mary) about the world of sense being a curtain or veil — ‘ beautiful but still a veil ’⁵⁰.

It has been pointed out that in passages such as those cited above we have a trace of Platonism in Newman. He would seem to regard the soul as imprisoned in the body on this earth, and that by means of the soul we belong to another world — the world of the invisible⁵¹. Nevertheless it is the christian message of the Gospel Revelation which dominates: the teaching of Paul that ‘ here below we have not a lasting city ’, that ‘ our life is hid with Christ in God ’ and hence ‘ we do not look at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen ’⁵². Therefore ‘ we ought not to be conformed to this world ’ but strive ‘ to become worthy of that world ’⁵³. We are told not to love the world but to take up our Cross in the footsteps of Christ, ‘ for what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? ’⁵⁴.

In other words, if we realize the responsibility placed on us by the fact of our immortality we will live up to what we profess. What we believe will surely influence our conduct. But until we make an effort to realize our accountableness and immortal destiny, we are in a precarious condition. Newman puts it before his audience as follows:

⁴⁹ PS, IV, 221-2. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 214-225.

⁵⁰ *Moz.*, I, 161. Cf. *Apo.*, 2.

⁵¹ Cf. LOUIS COGNET, *Newman ou la recherche de la Vérité*, Paris 1967, pp. 226-8.

⁵² Cf. *Heb.* 13, 14; *Col.* 3, 3 and PS, IV, 222; *II Cor.* 4, 18 and PS, IV, 200.

⁵³ *Rom.* 12, 2 and *Lk.* 20, 35.

⁵⁴ *Mt.* 16, 26 and PS, I, 15. Cf. *I Jn* 2, 15; *Mt.* 16, 24; 10, 37-39 and PS, VII, 90-91. 96-97. 105 sq.; VI, 91-93; V, 286-7. 294; I, 65-67; *Jfc.*, 176-8.

“ I want a man on the one hand to confess his immortality with his lips, and on the other, to live as if he tried to understand his own words, and then he is in the way of salvation ”⁵⁵.

Newman was accustomed to view the world as an immense battle field, in which the combatants were God and Satan, goodness and evil. At stake were immortal souls and Newman in all his sermons sought to help men make the correct choice and remain firm in their decision.

This doctrine of the existence of an immortal principle of life in man is the starting point of Newman's teaching on christian perfection. Man is obliged to think about his immortal destiny and to live in accordance with his beliefs. The stern truth that he must live forever in conscious joy or pain imparts a peculiar importance to his actions in this life. Immortal values are so much higher than transient ones: it is, then, the soul above all that has to be perfected and prepared for eternity. So much is evident from a mere natural viewpoint, which we have been chiefly considering up to this point. It becomes all the more vital when we consider it supernaturally, as we shall do later on in this study.

‘Holiness rather than peace’ for we are immortal⁵⁶.

One must not imagine, however, that Newman regarded the soul as the only important part of human nature. He was too much of a realist to make such a mistake. The soul is intimately united to a material body on which it depends for its development and activity. Moreover, the body is destined to share, one future day, in the immortal glory of the soul. It must accordingly be perfected in all its faculties along with the soul. Sanctity, for Newman, is in fact the completion and development of the whole man.

B) THE WHOLE MAN SANCTIFIED

Newman did not overlook with Platonic or Stoic disdain the importance and the dignity of man's body and all its powers. The balanced and sane outlook of our author in this respect is evident at all periods of his life, despite his deep awareness of the shallowness of visible realities and the preeminence of eternal and spiritual values.

⁵⁵ PS, I, 24-25. « Oh! that you could feel that you have souls! oh, that you would have mercy on your souls! ». (*Mix.*, 115). Cf. CS, 85-87. 90; PS, VIII, 73; VII, 249-251; SD, 79-80; *Apo.*, 125; OS, 304-5.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Apo.*, 5.

The dignity of the human body springs from its close union with the soul and its destiny to share in the future glory of the sons of God. With admirable insight, Newman, while still a young Anglican, stresses the basic unity of body and soul that forms the *one man*, born into this world, reborn in baptism and destined never to die. One of the effects of communicating in the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharistic Banquet is the pledge of future resurrection for the body, according to the promise of Christ. "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life, and I will *raise him up at the last day*"⁵⁷. Newman observes that Christ makes no distinction between soul and body: the promise is for the whole man — body, soul and all. The body, then, is not to be despised as a source of evil: sin originates in our spiritual faculties and defiles the whole person. Likewise, the Bread of Life and the power of grace sanctify the whole man, body and soul, and prepare him for immortal glory.

In another Anglican sermon four years later (1836) Newman exhorts his people to a worship in Church that would be truly reverent and real. Mere lip service, he says, is not sufficient: a Christian must prove in daily acts the sincerity of his sentiments and profession. Feelings of devotion are good but need to be complemented by good acts. In this way 'our hearts and bodies are both sanctified together, and become one; the heart ruling our limbs, and making the whole man serve Him, who has redeemed the whole man, body as well as soul'⁵⁸. This is merely a practical application of a christian principle formulated as follows in *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*:

"Also by the fact of an Incarnation we are taught that matter is an essential part of us, and, as well as mind, is *capable of sanctification*"⁵⁹.

During his Catholic days Newman meditates on the dignity and sanctity of the body which is the material structure in which the soul is enclosed. This body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and is destined to rise transformed and to share in the everlasting glory of the soul. Consequently it is worthy of veneration and is to be purified of all that is sinful and evil.

Christian perfection, therefore, is not a one-sided development

⁵⁷ *Jn* 6, 54. Cf. *PS*, I, 274. Italics are Newman's. The whole of this sermon « The Resurrection of the Body » (*PS*, I, 271-281) merits close study.

⁵⁸ *PS*, VIII, 16. Cf. *PS*, III, 259-260; IV, 224.

⁵⁹ p. 326. Italics are Newman's.

but a harmonious growth in all the virtues and in every faculty of soul and body. Not only does it entail a renewal of our moral nature but also a 'blending of all its [nature's] powers and affections into the one perfect man' in the likeness of Christ⁶⁰.

Newman regards this work of sanctification as issuing from the presence of the Holy Spirit. In a sermon for the Feast of Pentecost, 1836, he says:

"He [the Holy Spirit] vouchsafes to edify the whole man in faith and holiness... By His wonder-working grace all things tend to perfection. Every faculty of the mind, every design, pursuit, subject of thought, is hallowed in its degree by the abiding vision of Christ, as Lord, Saviour, and Judge"⁶¹.

A similar thought occurs in other parts of Newman's writings particularly in a sermon of 1843, again for the Feast of Pentecost⁶². The Divine Presence given to the soul in Baptism, asserts Newman, tends to penetrate and purify the whole man. Every faculty and affection is influenced by this sanctifying power. As the Church is made one by the Spirit so also are the powers of the individual members of the Church unified and set in order by the same Spirit. Reason and conscience take control of the lower tendencies of nature, while reason itself is subject to the light of faith. The Divine Leaven of holiness spreads 'through every thought of the mind, every member of the body, till the whole is sanctified'⁶³.

The soul, then, is the immediate and direct subject of sanctification, but the influence of God's grace reaches every faculty and power of the whole person. This, in turn, implies a delicate balance of nature and grace.

1. *Nature and Grace.*

Until 1822 Newman was only dimly aware of the transcendent dimensions of the grace of baptismal regeneration. He was still under the influence of the Evangelical creed. The sermons of this early period reveal that he distinguished between *justification* as an instantaneous act by which Christ's merits are externally imputed to the

⁶⁰ *US*, 48.

⁶¹ *PS*, II, 228. «I have been accustomed to consider Christianity as the perfection of man as a whole, body, soul, and spirit» (*LG*, 197).

⁶² Cf. *SD*, 126-136.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 132. Cf. *PS*, III, 258-9.

soul, and *regeneration* as a gradual process of liberation from sin. Holiness, implanted by God, and natural virtue are seen by him at this period to be altogether different qualities, but the difference is one of degree, not of essence. The new scale of being to which man is raised by grace is still not a conscious reality in Newman's mind.

He soon rejects this Evangelical tenet. Within a few years he is preaching about the transcendence of baptismal grace and the consequent ontological sanctity of the christian soul. Grace is not to be reduced in any manner to a development of nature. It absolutely transcends nature and all natural capacities⁶⁴.

Although he teaches that grace transcends nature and is decisively distinguished from it, Newman by no means denies that both are intimately united in the individual person. Grace is not independent of nature: it can work only in and through nature. Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, is the highest example of this mysterious union. Consequently, all Christ-centred holiness implies a union of nature and grace. Man cannot leave nature out of consideration in the pursuit of christian perfection⁶⁵.

Grace does not destroy or dispense with nature. God violates nothing of the original make-up of the human being. The Divine in the soul leaves man still completely free to answer or to neglect the calls of grace. No element is suppressed except what is evil and detrimental to ultimate happiness. The whole of man's nature — body and soul — is cultivated and perfected⁶⁶.

⁶⁴ Cf. THOMAS L. SHERIDAN, S.J., *Newman on Justification*. New York 1967, pp. 62-66. 119-121. In this important contribution to Newman studies, Fr Sheridan examines the progress of Newman's thought on justification from the days of his early Evangelical creed to the final development and synthesis as expounded in the *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification*. Cf. also *PS, IV*, [133]-149; *Ath.*, II, 88-90. 193-5. For the Catholic period see especially the sermons « Purity and Love » (*Mix.*, 62-82) and « Nature and Grace » (*Ibid.*, pp. 145-168).

⁶⁵ A practical example of this truth may be given from a *Memorandum* of 1857 in which Newman treats of the case of Henry Ryder. The latter had entered the Birmingham Oratory at the end of 1856. Four months later he was unsettled and doubtful about his vocation to the Oratory. Ryder, presumably, thought that it was a purely natural affection which had led him to the Oratory and that supernatural motives now urged him to go elsewhere. Newman, however, admirably analyses the various motives and sees the possibility of grace using natural affections to manifest God's Will and to protect supernatural charity. « He [Ryder] will have to consider », writes Newman, « whether he has any better proof urged on him that grace leads him *elsewhere*, than the fact that nature leads him *here*. But this is no proof, for it may easily happen that grace and nature lead the same way ». (*Memorandum of April, 1857* in PLACID MURRAY, *op. cit.*, pp. 365-6).

⁶⁶ « I have already said, it is the very triumph of His grace, that He enters into the heart of man, and persuades it, and prevails with it, while He changes it. He violates in nothing that original constitution of mind which He gave to

In illustration of this point of Newman's teaching on holiness we should like to note that while he admired all the Saints as masterpieces of God's creation, he had a special preference for that type of Saint in which grace was seen more obviously to combine and coalesce with nature instead of absorbing and superseding it. Such were men like St Paul, St John Chrysostom, 'the much-enduring and.. never-wearied Athanasius'⁶⁷ and St Philip Neri 'the man of primitive times'⁶⁸.

Newman sees in St. Paul's life and doctrine one of the most complete expressions of the ideal christian character. He is the Scriptural model of a sanctity suitable for Christians labouring in the world of culture or of manual work. Paul's characteristic is this — 'in him the fulness of divine gifts does not tend to destroy what is human in him, but to spiritualize and perfect it'⁶⁹. Again and again in his sermons, Newman proves and illustrates his teaching on christian holiness by quoting at length from St Paul's Epistles. He found in Paul an ideal suitable for the poorer working classes of Littlemore and Birmingham just as it had been appropriate for the early Christians of Macedonia and Colossus. It also offered to the scholars of Oxford and Dublin an ideal of christian humanism just as it had once been given by Paul to the intellectual and opulent citizens of Athens and Corinth.

Coming on to the Church of the Fathers, we see Newman display-

man: He treats him as man... » (*Mix.*, 71-2). Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 169; *PS*, VIII, 17-32; *Idea*, 234.

In his study *Realisierung des Glaubens. Grundzüge christlicher Lebensgestaltung nach John Henry Newman*. (Paderborn 1966). Fr Hieronymus Dittrich examines this question of the relationship between nature and grace in sanctification, and writes: « Wenn Newman den radikalen Unterschied zwischen Natur und Gnade mit allem Nachdruck betont und hervorhebt, so leugnet er doch in keiner Weise, dass im konkreten Menschen beides miteinander aufs engste verbunden ist. Der Natur ist es geradezu eigen, für die Gnade offen zu sein. Die Gnade wird nicht unabhängig von der Natur wirksam. Sie wirkt in der Natur und durch die Natur. Newman hat sich zu diesem Prinzip gerade aus seinem christologischen Denken heraus bekannt. Der Christ kann zwar nur in der gnadenhaften Verbindung und Gemeinschaft mit Christus seine Vollendung finden. Nur muss immer beachtet werden, dass diese gnadenhafte Verbindung und Gemeinschaft mit Christus jeweils den ganzen Menschen umfasst, also seine Natur nicht ausschliesst, sondern einschliesst. Alle Heiligkeit fordert also die Verbindung und Durchdringung von Natur und Gnade » (p. 288). Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 287-93.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Diff.*, I, 388; *HS*, II, 28.

⁶⁸ Cf. *MD*, 120.

⁶⁹ *OS*, 95. Cf. ROBERT G. GASSERT, S.J., *The Christian character according to Cardinal Newman. A Study of His Ideal of Catholic Higher Education*. Romae 1958, pp. 59-60; M.G. CARROLL, *The Mind and Heart of St. Paul. A Newman Anthology on St. Paul*. London 1959; GIOVANNI VELOCCI, *Paolo visto da Newman, in Divinitas* 12 (1968) 801-818.

ing a particular devotion to St John Chrysostom. This affection began in Newman's Anglican days and continued throughout his life. We may be surprised and ask why not a first choice of Athanasius, or Ambrose, or Basil or Jerome? The secret of Chrysostom's charm for Newman lay 'in his intimate sympathy and compassionateness for the whole world, not only in its strength but in its weakness' and in his 'discriminating affectionateness with which he accepts every one for what is personal in him and unlike others'⁷⁰. Here again we see Newman admiring those Saints who manifest in their lives the grace of God working in and through nature, accepting all that is good and personal in man while it purifies and strengthens every faculty and talent. Our author in fact declares that in St John Chrysostom he saw the 'most natural and human of the creations of supernatural grace'⁷¹.

Finally we come to St Philip Neri, Founder of the Oratorians. This was the Congregation which Newman chose for himself and his fellow-converts. Philip Neri seems at first sight an incongruous choice — an ecstatic saint and mystic from 16th century Italy. Yet he had many qualities which endeared him to Newman. He came from Florence and lived in Rome at the beginning of the Renaissance, when both these cities were centres of art and culture and worldliness. He was able to sympathize with the spirit of his age and by placing in the hearts of many young men of his days the attraction of a life of purity and holiness, he succeeded in counteracting the fascinations of worldliness. Despite his visions and ecstasies the Oratorian Founder was a man of gentle humour, sincere humility, shrewd judgement, simple devotion and christian joy. Newman, for years before his entry into the Catholic Church, was devoted to St Philip Neri. The latter reminded him in many ways of the saintly, severe, yet simple and serene character of John Keble.

If Newman ends his Discourses to the Catholics of Dublin University by paying a special tribute to St Philip, this is not merely an act of private devotion but an illustration of the christian perfection about which he had spoken to the educated Catholics of his day. The follower of Christ should not abandon the struggle to christianize

⁷⁰ *HS*, II, 285. 286. In a letter dated January 30th, 1867, to an old Oxford friend, Mgr Patterson, Newman writes: « I cannot help having as great a devotion to St. Chrysostom as to any Saint in the Calendar... St. Chrysostom comes upon one, whether one will or no, and by his sweetness and naturalness compels one's devotion » (WILFRID WARD, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman based on his Private Journals and Correspondence*, London 1913, Vol. II, p. 134).

⁷¹ *HS*, II, 283.

the proud and godless trends of thought that recur from age to age. Like St Philip he should prefer

“to yield to the stream, and direct the current, which he could not stop, of science, literature, art and fashion, and to sweeten and to sanctify what God had made very good and man had spoilt”⁷².

It was Newman's aim to bring Truth into the world, and to save souls not *from*, but *in*, the world. *In* this world, but not *of* it, they were to become all things to all men, christian gentlemen and fervent followers of Christ.

In these favourite Saints of Newman — Paul, Chrysostom, Philip Neri, — we contemplate a union of exalted supernatural, even mystical, grace combined with the more practical and human virtues. This harmony signified something very special and ‘ideal’ for Newman, since it meant that these figures were clear and living examples of that combination of opposite qualities that indicated the perfection of holiness. To master opposite virtues (e.g. fear and love; humility and zeal) in one's conduct meant for Newman to be perfect in every respect. This consideration leads us on to examine a peculiar aspect of Newman's doctrine, *viz.* his teaching on the ‘opposite virtues’.

2. *The Role of the ‘opposite virtues’.*

Being such a keen observer of people and events, Newman could not fail to see the opposing tensions that existed in life. As a result he knew that the Christian must take account of this dialectical reality and try to harmonize it in the unity of his personal, spiritual life. This, however, is not accomplished except by the exercise of opposite virtues. The Gospel itself, says Newman, tells us to be ‘wise as serpents and harmless as doves’⁷³. Innocence must be joined to prudence; gentleness of heart to decision in action. All the Saints possess this union of seemingly contradictory graces and in some it is more evident to us than in others.

⁷² *Idea*, 235. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 234-9; *OS*, 199-242; *MD*, [89]-124. [273]-282. 386. Cf. C. S. DESSAIN, *Cardinal Newman's Attraction to St Philip*, in *Oratorium* 1 (1970): [69]-77; PLACID MURRAY, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-26; A. DWIGHT CULLER, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-3; MERIOL TREVOR, *Newman. The Pillar of the Cloud*. London 1962, pp. 405-424.

⁷³ *Mt.* 10, 16 and *PS*, II, 341-2; VIII, 99-100.

The theme occurs constantly in Newman's writings, in one form or another. Fr Walgrave points to a certain contrast running through all of Newman's works. It takes different forms such as orthodoxy and heresy, faith and reason, real and notional, the ethos of the simple gentleman and the religious ethos. They all spring, according to Fr Walgrave, from the original tension between faith and imperious human reason ⁷⁴.

Another type of opposition is evident in the *Sermons* — between the conflicting tendencies of opposite virtues in the individual person. Christ, in fact, points the way to a perfection that involves a union in the one person of qualities that appear to be contradictory, e.g. firmness and meekness, zeal and gentleness, love and fear of God. To be 'sanctified wholly' it is not sufficient to concentrate on one virtue alone and forget about the others. Faith alone or zeal alone is not holiness. The whole man must be purified, developed and perfected in every aspect of his nature. Religious obedience which produces and displays true holiness is not an exaggerated and unbalanced exercise of one christian virtue to the exclusion of the others. It is rather a symmetrical and harmonious growth of many virtues, even opposite ones. 'The very problem which Christian duty requires us to accomplish', declares Newman, 'is the reconciling in our conduct opposite virtues' ⁷⁵.

It is relatively easy to acquire a certain perfection if we concentrate on one type of virtue alone, e.g. an exclusively active life, a meek and gentle behaviour always, fear of God only, etc. The Christian, however, must aim at something more, in Newman's opinion. To activity he must join prayer and meditation; to meekness, firmness

⁷⁴ Cf. J.-H. WALGRAVE, O.P., *Newman the Theologian. The Nature of Belief and Doctrine as Exemplified in His Life and Works*. London 1960, pp. 35-36.

⁷⁵ *PS*, II, 282. Cf. *PS*, VII, 12. It is interesting to note Newman's preference for historical lives of the Saints rather than devotional ones which 'chop up a Saint into chapters of faith, hope, charity, and the cardinal virtues' (*HS*, II, 229). Newman wanted to know the real, living person, the Saint as he existed in daily life, with his excellencies and failures, his actions and interior motives, his comments on the events and the experiences of his own lifetime. A study of isolated virtues, separate miracles and single deeds will never capture the real Saint unless these detached fragments are related to one another and shown in the context of the whole character. Newman would like to see how the Saint had integrated in his conduct the opposite qualities of christian perfection and how one characteristic virtue served to form and mould the other virtues. Speaking of such a 'view' of St Philip Neri, Newman says: « I would contemplate him, if I could, not merely in this action, or that, but as a man. I want so to bring him before me, that the most opposite or apparently irreconcilable points in his conduct, as detailed by his biographers, should at once by the very sight of him be understood and coalesce with each other » (*Fragment of a Life of St Philip. Lent 1853*. in PLACID MURRAY, *op. cit.*, p. 257). Cf. *HS*, II, 217-231.

of character; and fear of God is to be tempered by love of the Father. He must expect the second coming of Christ from day to day and yet do his duty as if the end were years away: he should love all men and yet feel himself separated and removed from the world and society⁷⁶.

Many virtues are imperfect in themselves and have to be complemented by their opposite grace. Thus repentance becomes a proud remorse unless accompanied by faith and love; wisdom turns to craft unless regulated by the innocence of the dove; meekness leads to weakness if it is not guided by fidelity to principle and firmness of character, and zeal for the law is imperfect unless it be purified by the love of the Gospel and the obedience of faith.

A favourite combination with Newman is the union of fear with virtues that would seem at first sight to exclude it, namely, joy, hope and love. By practising each of them separately, the Christian acquires eventually a sublime harmony of all these qualities in his conduct. Thus fear sobers joy, while joy tempers fear: they become at last a godly fear and a christian joy. Fear also gives scope to hope: without fear of evil there would be no hope. Similarly, fear and love must go together at all times, since love regulates fear and prevents it from becoming servile, while fear keeps love from being irreverent and presumptuous. When he possesses this union of opposite virtues, the Christian 'becomes the paradox which Scripture enjoins'⁷⁷.

Newman insisted on the acquisition of opposite virtues as a result of his balanced view and presentation of christian perfection. Moreover, he understood that the final perfect synthesis of holiness cannot be attained all at once. Human limitation makes it imperative that man begin with one concrete virtue and advance step by step.

⁷⁶ Cf. *US*, 47-48. « Was Newman mit seiner Lehre von den 'opposite virtues' meint, macht er vor allem am rechten Verhalten des Menschen gegenüber Gott und der Welt deutlich. Er weist darauf hin, dass der Mensch nur dann die rechte Einstellung zu Gott hat, wenn er in sich die Freude an Gott und die Furcht vor Gott vereinigt, wenn er also um das 'fascinosa' und das 'tremendum' in Gott weiss. Newman gibt sich keinerlei Mühe, eine genaue Abgrenzung dieser beiden Verhaltensweisen vorzunehmen. Gerade durch den scharfen Kontrast, in dem beide zueinander stehen, soll ihre wahre und wirkliche Bedeutung dem Menschen aufleuchten » (HIERONYMUS DITTRICH, *op. cit.*, p. 193).

⁷⁷ *PS*, V, 67. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-8, 286; *PS*, I, 303-5, 322; VIII, 14-16; NICHOLAS MEYER, O.F.M., *Motives for a Christian Life in the Sermons of Cardinal Newman. Part of a Dissertation at the Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, Rome*. Illinois 1960, pp. 19-21; H. DITTRICH, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-4, where the author concludes: « Newman sieht sehr genau, dass christliches Leben nur in der Spannung der 'opposite virtues' verwirklicht werden kann. Jede Auflösung dieser Spannung muss zu einer letztlich unchristlichen Haltung führen, in der Gott und Welt nicht mehr ernst genommen werden » (p. 194).

The harmonious synthesis which is the result and the essence of holiness remains unseen and unattainable for a long time. Still it is only in a true and balanced exercise of opposite virtues that the final and complete perfection of the christian life is possessed⁷⁸.

We must also remember a certain characteristic striving of Newman himself for thoroughness and perfection in all things. This trait is also evident in his teaching on spiritual perfection, which in his view is the work of a lifetime, 'great and arduous beyond expression'⁷⁹. Even those who are holy in the estimation of their fellow-men are still imperfect in their own opinion and in God's sight. Moral perfection in this life is fragile and fragmentary: it is to be acquired little by little and with constant labour.

'No man will ever be perfect here, so sinful is our nature', writes Newman in an early sermon⁸⁰. Fallen man has lost the security with which he had been bound to God before sinning. He makes his way to God now by trial and error, endeavours to acquire a harmony between his temporal and spiritual actions and also to master the opposite graces inculcated by the Gospel.

In this respect, Newman points out that Christians have a common basis for mutual sympathy — not only because of the privileges and graces they share but also because they confess common sins and experience the same temptations. This explains the similarity between the confessions of holy men, in which they accuse themselves of many faults, and the lives of reckless and sinful souls. On the other hand, the accounts of the evil ways and thoughts of sinners often impress holy men because in them they discern evil sentiments and desires that lie hidden and unnoticed in their own hearts⁸¹.

Finally, the teaching on the opposite virtues puts into relief the type of holiness advocated by Newman, namely, one which developed

⁷⁸ « It is by means of these strong contrast that Scripture brings out to us what is the real meaning of its separate portions.. I do not say that this makes it at all easier to combine the separate duties to which they relate; that is a further and higher work; but thus much we gain at once, a better knowledge of those separate duties themselves » (*PS*, V, 65. 66). « Fast alle Predigten Newmans lassen sein Bemühen erkennen, die Verwirklichung dieser opposite virtues als Ideal aufzuzeigen: Bereits ganz im Unsichtbaren leben, und doch nicht hochmütig die Erde verachten, sondern demütig lieben; voller Einsatz, praktisches Handeln, aber ohne unser Herz an das Werk unserer Hände zu verlieren; ganz heranwachsen zur Entfaltung, aber nur um reines Kind zu werden » (FRANZ WIEDMANN, *Theorie des realen Denkens nach John Henry Newman*, in *Newman-Studien*. Herausgegeben von Heinrich Fries und Werner Becker. Nürnberg 1960, Vierte Folge, p. 242).

⁷⁹ *PS*, I, 12-13.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁸¹ Cf. *PS*, V, 119-127.

all the capabilities of the human person and issued in a perfection that was whole, complete and well-balanced. Every virtue had its part to play in making up the many-sided excellence of the perfect Christian. Newman, in fact, taught a perfection that was characteristic for its wholeness, completeness and equilibrium.

3. *Perfection is wholeness.*

Newman, as we have said, regarded sanctity as a certain complete and integrated perfection and maturity of the whole man, soul and body. A person is perfect when all his faculties of body and soul work in a manner which corresponds to his nature and to the designs of the Will of God for him. This implies that a man must be consistent in his temporal and religious duties. It is not sufficient to be religious now and then, sporadically. One must be religious at all times; morning, noon and night, seeing in every event and in every duty the presence and the providence of God. Perfection, in fact, is

“a certain character, a mould in which his [a truly religious man's] thoughts, words and actions are cast, all forming parts of one and the same whole”⁸².

In this light the Christian's temporal and secular obligations and activities take on a deeper meaning. To be, while still on earth a good citizen of the Heavenly Jerusalem, one must also be a worthy member of secular society. To be a christian gentleman does not mean that one does not possess the good qualities of a natural gentleman. Even the little duties of daily life, the ordinary common actions that make up our lives in great part, are of vital importance to the truly religious man. This thoroughness about little things is typical of Newman's spiritual teaching⁸³.

Perfection demands that the Christian perform his duty in all its parts and at every moment. We easily perceive in Newman's

⁸² PS, VII, 205. « The very test of a mature Christian, of a true saint, is consistency in all things » (PS, VI, 186). Cf. PS, VII, 184-5; I, 25-6.

⁸³ Cf. PS, I, 66-9. 174. Francis Joseph Bacchus, an Oratorian from 1881, wrote of Newman forty years after the Cardinal had died: « He carried the art of being ordinary to perfection. He took his food, his recreation, went about his ordinary duties, conversed without any mannerisms whatsoever. He had no crotchets » (quoted in C. S. DESSAIN, *John Henry Newman*. London 1966, p. 166, from *The Eighteen-Eighties*. Edited by Walter de la Mare. Cambridge 1930, pp. 71-72). Cf. PHILIP BOYCE, O.C.D., *St Thérèse and Newman in Mount Carmel* (Oxford) 21 (1973) 93-94.

teaching a striving for completeness and wholeness. He regrets that there should be so many really good Christians with plenty of admirable qualities, who nevertheless have one serious fault which they seem unable to correct. If only they succeeded in overcoming this one weakness they would be saints instead of second-rate Christians. It often happens, however, that they cover up or ignore this defect and forget 'that in spite of this harmony between all within and all without for twenty-three hours of the day, there is one subject, now and then recurring, which jars with his mind, — there is just one string out of tune'⁸⁴.

Finally, it is no surprise that Newman, whose aim was to perfect and transform the whole man, did not undervalue the fulfilling of worldly duties and the development of all the talents and powers of nature. Suffice it to say that he laboured a lifetime in the cause of the education of youth, an education that was truly christian as well as highly cultural and intellectual. In Newman's mind, education and culture were precious if they were not separated from religious influences. They served to build up the perfect man who 'sees things as God sees them, with the judgement of His Spirit, and according to the mind of Christ'⁸⁵. It is significant that this should be the final ideal Newman put before the scholars of Oxford: learning and knowledge leading to true Wisdom that judges all things according to the mind of Christ.

It can be affirmed, then, that Newman regards the whole man, with all his faculties and powers of soul and body, as the total subject of sanctification. The soul is the more important element, the immediate dwelling-place of God, but the body partakes of the soul's immortality and holiness. By this insistence on the immortality and value of the soul that can be made happy by God alone, by his teaching on the duty of cultivating all God-given talents, by his doctrine of the 'opposite virtues' and the obligation of performing all temporal duties, even the most trivial, with thoroughness and care, Newman shows us that he aimed at bringing 'the *whole* man, soul and body, into captivity to Christ'⁸⁶.

⁸⁴ PS, IV, 47. Cf. PS, V, 239-240.

⁸⁵ US, 311.

⁸⁶ PS, VI, 305.

II

THE INADEQUACY OF A NATURAL PERFECTION

Newman proposed an ideal of christian holiness which he had learned from Scripture and the writings of the early Fathers of the Church. It was an ideal that far surpassed the sad mediocrity and superficiality which he saw practised in the name of religion and accepted on all sides as the normal form of christian living.

Faith, as Newman saw it, was on the wane: a subtle liberalism was destroying the beliefs of the people and was preparing the way for an agnostic and unbelieving age. The Unseen was, conveniently, being left out of consideration. Naturalistic and materialistic principles were taking the place of the rules of faith. At most, it was nature and the powers and capabilities of nature and culture that were being developed and perfected. Conscience was being substituted by reason; faith by expediency. The ideal of christian perfection was being replaced by another ideal — one achieved by reason, nature and culture.

This type of religion with its earth-bound and humanistic outlook did not satisfy Newman. He aimed at a higher destiny for the immortal soul — a destiny revealed by God Himself. Before examining this ideal and man's obligation to strive for a divine holiness, it will be useful to describe the ethical principles of those forms of religious belief and conduct prevalent in Newman's day, and his objections to them. They could be reduced to the 'religion of the day' against which our author waged a tireless warfare. Different aspects of the same reality are presented in other terms such as 'the religion of society', 'the religion of the world', 'mere civilization', 'the religion of reason or of philosophy'. Basically they were all relying on the powers of nature rather than on the supernatural; they were explained by reason more than by faith⁸⁷.

For practical purposes we reduce these moral codes to the following two types: 'the religion of the world and society' and 'the religion of culture'.

⁸⁷ Cf. the following sermons: « Profession without Practice » (*PS*, I, [124]-138); « The Religion of the Day » (*Ibid.*, pp. [309]-324); « The Powers of Nature » (*PS*, II, [358]-367); « Sincerity and Hypocrisy » (*PS*, V, [222]-236); « Religion a Weariness to the Natural Man » (*PS*, VII, [13]-26); « Nature and Grace » (*Mix.*, 145-168); « The World and Sin » (*CS*, 80-91); *US*, *passim*; *Diff.*, I, *passim*; « The Tamworth Reading Room » (*DA*, 254-305).

1. *The religion of the world and of society.*

Man's great temptation on this earth is that he become so intent upon the pursuit of created goods that he forget about their Creator. Mammon, as far as Newman was able to judge, was still the real, though unspoken, god in the heart of many people who professed to be Christians. Money was esteemed as the practical and prompt solution to all problems. The love of wealth had eaten into the hearts of the prosperous English citizens of Newman's day. They tended to measure all things by worldly prosperity and regarded as unenterprising and unimportant the man who did not show his ambition to accumulate a store of wealth. This greed was one of the symptoms of the 'religion of the day', against which Newman hurled strong indictments such as the following :

"For the sake of gain do we not put aside all considerations of principles as unseasonable and almost absurd?... Could we not easily persuade ourselves to support Antichrist, I will not say at home, but at least abroad, rather than we should lose one portion of the freights which 'the ships of Tarshish' bring us?... Surely, if we are to be saved, it is not by keeping ourselves just above the line of reprobation, and living without any anxiety and struggle to serve God with a perfect heart... Surely if Christians are to be saved, they must have carefully unlearned the love of this world's pleasures, comforts, luxuries, honours. No one, surely, can really be a Christian, who makes his worldly interests his chief end of action" ⁸⁸.

Excessive worldly-mindedness inevitably issues in unbelief, and when faith declines sin is no longer regarded as the terrible evil it is. At most it is considered to be an imperfection in nature, an offence against society and a disruption of human relationships. A certain acquaintance with sin from personal experience is tacitly thought to be a part of human education. Society has a subtle way of making men respect themselves by keeping the thought of original sin out of mind and living up to an external code of natural morality. This was Newman's thought as he contemplated the superficial morality of the world, in which there was no cleansing of sin and vice but 'a smoothing it over, an outside delicacy and polish... Men give good names to what is evil and... bribe vice with the promise of bearing with it, so that it does but keep in the shade' ⁸⁹.

⁸⁸ *PS*, III, 12-14 *passim*. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 331-3; *PS*, IV, 164-5; VI, 18-21; VII, 43; *SD*, 82-94; *Mix.*, 88-92.

⁸⁹ *PS*, VIII, 266. Cf. *PS*, IV, [1]-17; *US*, 12-14. 125-7; *OS*, 33-34; *CS*, 110-1.

A so-called secular morality saps the vigour of a sincere christian life. Its worldly moral code has not the faith to accept the truths of revelation and consequently it raises its ethical structure on the fallen and wounded nature of man. Conscience is not regarded as the voice of God, but merely as a moral sense which points to the decent and tasteful thing to do. Man's supernatural growth in Christ is overlooked, or else is considered as co-extensive with his external decency, his success in business, his work for his family and his good name in society. Religion, in fact, does not seem to be needed for success in this world: hence it is relegated to second place as being unimportant⁹⁰.

Here we see Newman's first quarrel with the religious state of his times, namely, the neglect of religious duties. It is not yet a question of whether the powers of nature are sufficient to build up a christian holiness as such; there is first of all that more fundamental error that stifles any genuine commitment, namely, the indifference to, and neglect of, God and divine things, which invariably accompanies material prosperity when it is coupled with a purely worldly-orientated religiousness.

Newman with keen and discerning judgment concludes that men's real quarrel is not so much with the strictness and severity of religion as with religion itself:

"...not that it goes too far, but that it *is* religion. It is religion itself which we all by nature dislike, not the excess merely. Nature tends towards the earth, and God is in heaven. If I want to travel north, and all the roads are cut to the east, of course I shall complain of the roads"⁹¹.

⁹⁰ Cf. *PS*, IV, 7-11; V, 222-3. 229-233; VI, 20; VII, 58-65. Newman observes in an Anglican sermon that the mass of men are 'without God in the world' — that is 'they do not keep before their minds, in any sense, that He is present, though unseen; they do not even admit that they ought to do so, or try to do so, or approach even to the idea that there are persons who do live as in the sight of the Invisible... What an awful sight does the baptized world present to any one who retires some few steps out of it!' (*PS*, VI, 117).

⁹¹ *PS*, IV, 14. Cf. *SD*, 89-92; *US*, 173-4; *Mix.*, 149-151; H. DITTRICH, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-93. This author sums up the godlessness of this secular morality as follows: « Bei der säkularisierten Sittlichkeitsauffassung wird der Bezug zu Gott nicht beachtet, ja bewusst ausgeschlossen. Es geht ihr nicht um die Verantwortung gegenüber dem heiligen Gott, sondern um die völlig weltimmanent und autonom verstandene Persönlichkeitsbildung oder um eine vom Gemeinwohl her diktierte Gesellschaftsmoral. Das Gewissen wird dann aber nicht mehr in seiner metaphysischen und religiösen Verankerung gesehen und daher in seiner naturgegebenen Funktion verkürzt. Die dadurch bedingte Verkümmernng des Gewissens hat eine Verkümmernng des sittlichen Bewusstseins zur Folge und führt deshalb zu einem veräusserlichten Ethos » (*Ibid.*, p. 94).

Another category of citizens did not openly repudiate their religious beliefs but professed to be religious and made an external show of certain religious practices. Yet Newman called them hypocrites and pharisees. Their goodness was all on the outside. They bolstered up a make-believe Gospel and advocated a secular morality. The brighter side of Christ's teaching was accepted while the darker and sterner aspects were conveniently forgotten or explained away. Christianity for them was a religion of love, and joy and benevolence. Vice was wrong because it was not good taste. Virtue was praiseworthy, yet it had to be judged and moderated, not by conscience but by expediency and elegance. A worthwhile purpose was sufficient to justify the means used to accomplish the end. In other words, these people accepted religion up to a certain point, as long as it was reasonable; when it demanded too much they had neither the faith nor the generosity to make the complete surrender necessary for supernatural perfection⁹².

Newman emphatically rejected this standard of religion because he saw that it was beneath the christian calling. The fundamental objection to it was that it sought to raise a religious structure relying only on reason and on the powers of nature. Its greatest aim did not transcend the perfection of nature. Its origins and teaching were purely from nature and it ignored the supernatural destiny offered to man by the Christian Revelation. Newman, on the other hand, proposed a state of perfection and a rule of conduct taught by faith and based on revealed principles. His ideal was one disclosed by Christ, one that insisted on interior virtue more than on correct external behaviour. The inferior aim of a natural perfection would leave the Christian no better than the good pagan of ancient times. Mere external virtue would leave him on a par with the Pharisee. In the end it would lead to pride and a satisfied self-contemplation, the very opposite of christian humility⁹³.

The canons of Christ's Gospel, as Newman rightly judged, demanded more.

The Christian, in fact, has been redeemed by Christ and has been endowed with supernatural gifts. Baptism has raised him to a higher scale of being. Therefore he cannot be satisfied with an excellence that comes from the powers of nature alone. He has been reborn into the kingdom of God. The Church of which he is a member has been charged by Christ to apply the fruits of the Redemption to individual souls. And Newman points out that the Church uses no half-measures.

⁹² Cf. *PS*, I, 125-138. 311-320; IV, 8-11; V, 239-240; *SD*, 391-4.

⁹³ Cf. *Mix.*, 102-3. 148-9; *OS*, 22-25; *US*, 28-29; *Apo.*, 247-9; *SN*, 31-32.

She repeats to everyone: "You must be born again of the Holy Ghost and become a living temple of God"⁹⁴.

The holiness of the baptized, therefore, is not the perfection of mere nature, but something beyond nature, namely, the complete growth in the likeness and fulness of Christ. This is the ideal Newman put before his congregation: this is his concept of the perfect Christian. It is this union with Christ by grace that changes the material observance of a law into a supernatural labour of love.

The Gospel message, then, is meant to make the Christian more than a good citizen who observes the accepted canons and rules of society. Not that a good Christian will not be a worthy citizen, but he will be more. A man could well be a good citizen without ever hearing of Christ. It is not enough for the Christian to be no better than the good heathen. The gift of faith has been freely given to the baptized soul and it demands that the soul live by higher principles than those of reason and unaided nature.

This supernatural faith is, in Newman's opinion, the essence of the christian life. It implies a venture, a staking of what we have for the sake of what we hope to be hereafter. This fundamental principle colours the whole of christian living. It puts all things into perspective, giving to each its relative value. It gives a new vision whereby the Christian sees supernatural values as more important than natural ones; it makes the inferior give way to the superior value. Consequently, the efforts required for self-denial are no longer regarded as absurd; fasting and prayer and celibacy are seen as preparing a future glory:

"God has graciously willed to bring us to heaven; to practise a heavenly life on earth, certainly, is a thing above earth. It is like trying to execute some high and refined harmony on an insignificant instrument. In attempting it, that instrument would be taxed beyond its powers, and would be sacrificed to great ideas beyond itself. And so, in a certain sense, this life, and our present nature, is sacrificed for heaven and the new creature; that while our outward man perishes, our inward man may be renewed day by day"⁹⁵.

We must not imagine, however, that a natural religion and natural goodness are evil or unnecessary. On the contrary, they are the foundation of a higher and supernatural perfection. Newman did not disregard or despise man's human nature. If anything, the

⁹⁴ Cf. *Jn* 3, 3-8 and *Apo.*, 247-8; *PS*, V, 148-152. 178-181; VII, 53-54.

⁹⁵ *SD*, 87. Cf. *PS*, IV, 161; VI, 266-7.

very opposite was the case, for he emphasized, as we have already seen, that the whole man is to be changed and sanctified by the heavenly gift. He realized that grace does not dispense with nature but perfects it and raises it to a new and superior state⁹⁶. The supernatural holiness of the Gospel is in fact the perfection of natural virtue. To give a few examples; the benevolence and justice of the heathen is perfected into charity by the Christian; natural temperance becomes Christlike self-denial; faith in a divinity is changed into the hope of eternal life with a Personal God. Other christian virtues like humility, purity and Christlike love speak of a perfection beyond the comprehension of the natural man. Holiness, therefore, for the Christian means more than being naturally good⁹⁷.

It is clear, then, that Newman was not content with a purely natural perfection for the Christian. Another text which illustrates this point occurs in a sermon entitled « The Church and the World » preached on New Year's Day, 1837. In the concluding exhortation Newman speaks as follows:

“ Do not be satisfied with the state in which you find yourselves; do not be satisfied with nature; be satisfied only with grace. Beware of taking up with a low standard of duty, and aiming at nothing but what you can easily fulfil... You must either conquer the world, or the world will conquer you ”⁹⁸.

This effort to raise the minds of Christians to a perfection beyond that of nature was one of the principal aims of Newman's sermons, as it was also of the whole Oxford Movement⁹⁹. Although Newman stressed the co-operation between grace and nature in the work of sanctification he also insisted on the radical difference between the

⁹⁶ Cf. *Idea*, 181. 234. « I have already said, it is the very triumph of His grace, that He enters into the heart of man, and persuades it, and prevails with it, while He changes it. He violates in nothing that original constitution of mind which He gave to man: He treats him as man... » (*Mix.*, 71-2).

⁹⁷ Cf. « Evangelical Sanctity the Completion of Natural Virtue » (*US*, [37]-53). Cf. *VM*, I, lxxi (*Preface* to 3rd Edition). « Alas! for those, of whom the best that can be said is, that they are harmless and naturally blameless, while they never have attempted to cleanse their hearts or to live in God's sight » (*Mix.*, 122).

⁹⁸ *SD*, 110. 111.

⁹⁹ « The Oxford Movement was unquestionably an affirmation of the Church's God-given authority and inherent power, but this affirmation was part of an attempted renewal of the Church in the interests of supernatural religion. Over against the aridities of empiricist philosophy and Utilitarian ethics, the Tractarians sought a renewed awareness of transcendent mystery and a renewed sense of human life as guided by a transcendent power to a transcendent goal » (EUGENE R. FAIRWEATHER, *The Oxford Movement*. New York 1964, p. 5).

two. Grace is by no means a sublime development of the powers of nature. It cannot be traced back to nature since it outstrips all of man's possibilities. God alone is its author. In fact, Newman had a rather pessimistic idea of the ability of nature to produce a lasting virtue. 'Mere natural virtue' he declares, 'wears away, when men neglect to deepen it into religious principle'¹⁰⁰.

Newman had other visions for the Christian in which he saw Baptism opening up new horizons of holiness and perfection. A new spiritual birth conferred a Divine Presence on the Christian and this Presence pervaded him body and soul and raised him above nature. This is Newman's outlook on the christian pilgrimage.

No natural perfection, not even the refinement of culture and the perfection of the gentleman — ideals which exercised a strong influence on Newman himself — could measure up to the standards of evangelical sanctity.

2. *The religion of culture.*

If, for Newman, any ideal of perfection could have taken the place of the supernatural one of the Gospel, it would probably have been the character formed by the influence of civilization and education, personified in the perfect gentleman of 19th century England.

The advancement of culture and civilization tends to refine man intellectually and to produce a religion of proper external conduct, fine tastes, honest dealings and decent orderly behaviour. This is the perfection which we admire in the product of the ancient Athenian University long before the coming of Christ. During the Middle Ages it was represented in the heroic deeds of the chivalrous knight. In England it took the peculiar form of the perfect gentleman.

This term had taken on a new meaning, however, during the course of the centuries in England. From being a distinction of class in the 16th century, it was transformed in the following century into an ideal of courtly gallantry, permeated however with deep religious and moral traits. But the era of Enlightenment in the 18th century saw the term debased to a mere secular and unchristian level. The natural goodness and decency and tolerance remained while the supernatural element was abandoned¹⁰¹.

¹⁰⁰ PS, III, 40.

¹⁰¹ Cf. W. RENZ, *Newmans Idee einer Universität. Probleme Höherer Bildung*. Freiburg 1958, p. 256 sq.

Newman acknowledged the good qualities and the excellencies of the gentleman. However, he judged that there was something lacking, namely, the supernatural aspect. The classical exposition of Newman's thought on the subject is to be found in the Discourses he delivered in Dublin University, 1852, and published in *The Idea of a University*¹⁰². In these Discourses the words 'philosophy', 'civilization' and 'reason' are used to designate the one reality — 'Culture'. In sharp contrast we have the words 'Revelation' and 'supernatural'. However much they may seem to resemble one another in the exterior conduct of the person they produce, they are nevertheless two essentially distinct and unequal principles.

Newman examines the problem — which is not dogmatic but moral — in Discourse VIII of *The Idea of a University*¹⁰³. There he studies the relation between the religion of culture and revealed religion in regard to their moral effects. It is not a matter of what one and the other make a man believe but what they make him *do* as a result of his beliefs¹⁰⁴.

Newman begins by showing how civilization and intellectual pursuits can and do help religion to a certain extent. First of all they draw man away from an ignoble subjection to sense and sensuality, by giving him other interests, ones worthy of a human being. They substitute the interests of the intellect, harmless in themselves, for the sinful excitements of lower nature. Moreover, culture refines the mind, so that it abhors certain excesses of speech and action as being ungentlemanlike. Thus it affords a natural restraint against certain temptations¹⁰⁵.

The means, however, by which the religion of culture effects this ideal are false and hollow in themselves. For example: in place of christian hope and fear, philosophical morality puts only shame and self-reproach. In the words of A. Dwight Culler:

“ If the philosopher does wrong he is angry and calls himself a fool, whereas if the Christian does wrong he calls himself a sinner and is afraid ”¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰² pp. 1-239.

¹⁰³ pp. 179-211. (« Knowledge viewed in relation to Religion »).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 182-4.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 184-9. « But when intelligence is awakened, and they [men] learn to feel, reflect, hope, plan and exert themselves; then mere animal indulgences are not enough for them, and they look about for some higher pleasures, more lasting and more refined. This is the real effect of that civilization which is so much extolled; it gives men refined wishes, and sets them on gratifying them » (*PS*, VIII, 174).

¹⁰⁶ *op. cit.*, p. 231.

This is perfectly logical in the morality of a religion that is based entirely on human culture. It is the morality of the mere philosopher who has substituted a moral sense for conscience. This moral sense is merely a faculty which points out what is beautiful, correct and in harmony with good taste. In this case, morality is no longer determined by the voice of God in the individual conscience. Consequently sin is no longer an offence against God but against nature and society.

In contrasting the moral principles of mere civilization with those of Christianity, Newman exposes the superficiality of a mere religion of culture. Its standard of holiness is based on external harmony and decency while it neglects the interior values of purity of heart and union with Christ by faith. It is all on the surface whereas Christianity is chiefly concerned with deep, basic realities.

Culture's humility is simply condescension which still remains proudly aloof. 'As has been often observed', writes Newman, 'ancient civilization had not the idea [of humility], and had no word to express it: or rather it had the idea, and considered it a defect of mind, not a virtue, so that the word which denoted it conveyed a reproach'¹⁰⁷. The man of culture stoops down without abandoning his proud position. He merely pretends to be humble. What he succeeds in doing is to become 'modest'. Modesty is philosophical humility. It keeps a man from debasing himself in front of others, or of praising himself too highly. It is a cloak for pride which in this guise acquires a new name, *viz.* self-respect. The latter justifies the pride which may not be displayed under its proper name. It looks at others and, in comparison, considers itself worthy of esteem. It takes nature for its model and measures up quite well to its ideal. No wonder it is self-conceited, self-complacent and self-centred! It leaves God out of the picture before Whom all things are seen in their just proportions.

This is Newman's *exposé* of the religion of culture, a religion whose humility is condescension, whose modesty is a disguise, whose pride is self-respect and whose ideal is the gentleman. It is in this context that we find Newman's famous definition of a gentleman and it is in this context that it must be judged.

¹⁰⁷ *Idea*, 205. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 191-3.

3. *The Perfect Gentleman and his Religion.*

“Hence it is that it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain”¹⁰⁸.

This is the opening sentence of Newman’s famous portrait of a gentleman, who appears from the start as a man who tries not to upset the harmony and smoothness of human relationships, — as if this were the criterion and essence of religion and morality. He is a man of worldly comfort: he aims at having and enjoying pleasure. Not that he does anything positive to promote the good he seeks for society: he leaves the initiative to others and satisfies himself with not making life more difficult than it is for man. A. Dwight Culler in his fine study of Newman’s educational ideal, *The Imperial Intellect*, rightly observes that most of the sentences describing the gentleman are in the negative form, or at least imply a negative. The perfect gentleman *avoids* causing a jar or a jolt to other minds; he *never speaks* of himself; he *concur*s with others; his disciplined intellect *preserves him from* discourteous blunders. His efforts to adapt himself to his company and to society are inspired by a mere human prudence and stoic resignation:

“He is all things to all men because he is really nothing in himself. He has no inner nature or essential form; he simply assumes in rapid succession, the forms and natures of the various persons with whom he comes in contact. If he believed in some principle, he might be positive in its defense, but he does not and so he is pliable in the extreme”¹⁰⁹.

His one principle is to conform to the refined tastes and fashions of the society in which he lives. An outward behaviour that is decent and correct makes him a respectable man in the sight of his fellows. The habit he has acquired from youth of being orderly and regular in his actions helps to keep his unruly passions in check. He likes the world and society and his good name; he tolerates religion in others but he himself declines its truths lest they demand too much from him. Newman sums up this type of self-contained and gentlemanlike person when he writes: “they are what they are, decent and correct, but very little more”¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

¹⁰⁹ A. DWIGHT CULLER, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

¹¹⁰ *PS*, IV, 243. Cf. *Idea*, 208-211; *Mix.*, 102-3; *PS*, II, 315-8.

The gentleman avoids whatever gives scandal, whatever disgusts, whatever is looked on by society as vulgar and unrefined. Hence laziness, dishonesty, drunkenness and vulgar language are to be avoided. The reason for all this, however, is that vice is out of taste and unworthy of a gentleman. His criterion of right and wrong is 'visible beauty and tangible fitness'¹¹¹. A sense of propriety takes the place of conscience and virtue is practised for its own sake, because it is 'so praiseworthy, so noble, and so fair'¹¹². Like the ancient scholars of Athens, the gentleman has deified the Beautiful.

Such a life is destined to be superficial because it turns its back on the deeper mysteries of human existence and aims at adapting itself in a decorous manner to the shifting scene of society. It thinks right to be impartial towards all religious sects without openly condemning or advocating any particular one¹¹³. It lacks faith to see and appreciate the value of the invisible realities of the Christian Church. The divine life which the little ones of the Gospel develop within their souls is something that is not revealed to these rich and wise ones.

Newman's critique deals, we must remember, with what we may call the *mere* gentleman — the man who has no inward depth or faith-inspired principles that would perfect the natural and praiseworthy qualities of erudition, decency, self-control and preciseness. Laudable as these virtues may be in themselves, if they are nothing *more*, they crumble when looked at from the evangelical and supernatural viewpoint. The pursuit of knowledge and cultural refinement for their own sake, and when unaided by divine grace, is stigmatized and condemned because it leads to a godless intellectualism and mere humanism. When speaking in the University Church, Dublin, Newman had said of the University:

“A great University is a great power, and can do great things; but, unless it be something more than human, it is but fool-

¹¹¹ *Idea*, 201.

¹¹² *HS*, III, 80. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹¹³ Speaking to an audience in 1856, who it may be supposed was prone, in varying degrees, to the failures of the *mere* gentleman, Newman says: « You think it the sign of a gentleman to set yourselves above religion... to gain a smattering of knowledge on a number of subjects, to dip into a number of frivolous publications, if they are popular, to have read the latest novel, to have heard the singer and seen the actor of the day, to be well up with the news, to know the names and, if so be, the persons of public men, to be able to bow to them, to walk up and down the street with your heads on high, and to stare at whatever meets you; and to say and do worse things, of which these outward extravagances are but the symbol » (*Mix.*, 114-5). He then goes on immediately to censure this vain affectation and superficiality: « O! that you could see how absurd and base are such pretences in the eyes of any but yourselves! » (*Ibid.*).

ishness and vanity in the sight and in comparison of the little ones of Christ" ¹¹⁴.

We can say the same thing of the product of the University: such a man has the power to do great things, but he must not remain on a purely human level. Newman himself had made this application eight years previously to his Oratorian Community, then at Mary-vale:

"Aim at being something more than mere University men, such as we all have been. Let grace perfect nature, and let us, as Catholics, not indeed cease to be what we were, but exalt what we were into something which we were not" ¹¹⁵.

Hence it is good to be a gentleman, to have a cultivated mind, a classical education, refined tastes and correct conduct. However, if a man has no higher excellencies than these, he falls beneath the demands of the christian profession.

It is ironical, then, that Newman's definition of a gentleman is commonly taken to be a eulogy of an admirable and christian ideal of perfection. This is partially explained by the fact that it is published and read mainly in anthologies of English literature. In this way it is studied as an independent extract quite removed from its real context. When we consider it, however, in its original setting we find that it is part of a critique of a *mere* gentleman and that it does not come up to Newman's ideal of a perfect and saintly christian character.

There are two types involved here: the *mere* gentleman and the *christian* gentleman. We must keep this distinction in mind or else we shall misinterpret many of Newman's words and judgements on the question. The gentleman had good natural qualities but because he failed to inform them with divine charity and develop them in a spirit of faith and by means of supernatural grace, these natural virtues were soon tainted with shallowness, formalism and pretence. Newman's chief objections to the character of the *mere* gentleman were: he relied solely on nature and culture; he had a false view of sin; external decency and formalities were valued by him more than interior love and faith; attachment to a comfortable and pampered life made him averse to the mortification of the Gospel and, finally, he mistook knowledge and erudition for virtue.

¹¹⁴ OS, 58. Cf. G. DAUTZENBERG, O.F.M., *Newmans Kritik am Gentleman-Ideal* in *Theologie und Glauben* 50 (1960) 101-110.

¹¹⁵ PLACID MURRAY, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

The fundamental weakness in the *mere* gentleman is that he is a *product of nature and civilization alone*. He would act with these very same gentlemanlike qualities, says Newman, if the Gospel had never been given or if Christianity were not the religion of the land. The 'mere human loveliness' which is the chief virtue of the gentleman was also the characteristic of the cultivated pagan of ancient Athens¹¹⁶.

The religion of a mere gentleman, like that of a purely humanistic philosopher, was unable to rise above the perfection of nature. It did not accept the voice of God's supernatural revelation which spoke to it of original sin, of man's utter unworthiness in the sight of his Creator, of Christ's free grace and of a call to supernatural perfection. It knew only of nature, of natural beauty and of natural goodness, and it gave man 'such hopes of achieving that perfection that it led insensibly into a kind of conscious pride which, although it was the highest conception of pagan ethics, was also the root of all the Christian sins'¹¹⁷.

Newman often condemned this subtle pride and self-complacency which ruled out all self-condemnation and true sorrow. The theme occurs frequently in his sermons in connection with the need for a more consistent religious life and better self-knowledge¹¹⁸. In his own private life Newman followed quite a severe regime of mortification and self-discipline. This aroused a good deal of opposition even in the days of his Oxford career: the very presence of Newman and his Tractarian friends whose lives were characterized by stern self-control and religious earnestness was in itself an embarrassment to the other young gentlemen and a silent reproof of their behaviour¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁶ Cf. *HS*, III, 28; *PS*, I, 30-33; *US*, 40-41.

¹¹⁷ A. DWIGHT CULLER, *op. cit.*, p. 230. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 231-2. 238; *Idea*, 199-200.

¹¹⁸ Cf. *PS*, I, 43-44. 95; V, 132-6; VIII, 116-7; *OS*, 15-30; *CS*, 36.

«...it is but building on the sand to profess to believe in Christ, yet not to acknowledge that without Him we can do nothing» (*PS*, V, 135). Those who act in such a manner, says Newman, 'are practically Pelagians, for they make themselves their own centre, instead of depending on Almighty God and His ordinances' (*Ibid.*, p. 136).

¹¹⁹ Dean Church remarks that 'as tutor of Oriel, Mr. Newman had made what efforts he could, sometimes disturbing the authorities, to raise the standard of conduct and feeling among his pupils' (*The Oxford Movement*. London 1922, p. 21).

The following statements, taken from a sermon of 1837, could be applied to Newman himself: «Such men [true Christians] have accustomed themselves to speak to God... they feel 'the powers of the world to come' as truly as they feel the presence of this world, because they have been accustomed to speak and act as if it were real... Such men are little understood by the world because they are not of the world; and hence it sometimes happens that even

Another point in which Newman is at variance with the gentleman ideal is in *the concept and nature of sin*. Since nature is the practical model on which this ideal is based it is logical that sin is looked upon as an imperfection in nature, a breach of harmony between members of society and a loss of self-respect and human dignity, more than as an offence against God. Vice, consequently, is avoided because it happens to be out of taste. Conscience, that determines which actions are 'out of taste' and which are not, is no more than self-respect (in proud characters) or a sense of the beautiful (in men of kindlier dispositions)¹²⁰. People who are *mere* gentlemen may well consider themselves religious, but they wish to go to heaven by a pleasant, plain and reasonable track, more in keeping with the whims of society and the dignity of its citizens. As Father Faber describes this attitude:

"If the Anglo-Saxon race really fell in Adam why obviously we must take the consequences. Still, let the mistake be repaired in that quiet, orderly way, and with that proper exhibition of sound sense which are so dear to Englishmen"¹²¹.

Newman, however, tells these respectable men that sin makes man more than an offender against nature and society: it makes him 'a rebel in the sight of God... and weighed down with positive, actual evil... conscience is most certainly a moral sense, but it is more; vice again, is a deformity, but it is worse'¹²². The true christian gentleman must acknowledge himself a sinner and go beyond the pale of common sense to the folly of the Cross, which 'knows no knowledge but the knowledge of Jesus Christ crucified'¹²³. Thus Newman would wish to introduce a little bit of supernatural faith and love into the life of the gentleman.

the better sort of men are often disconcerted and vexed by them. It cannot be otherwise; they move forward on principles so different from what are commonly assumed as true... Hence, perhaps, they seem abrupt in what they say and do; nay, even make others feel constrained and uneasy in their presence... perchance, they appear severe, because their motives are not understood, nor their sensitive jealousy for the honour of God and their charitable concern for the good of their fellow Christians duly appreciated » (PS, IV, 234-6 *passim*).

¹²⁰ Cf. *Idea*, 191-3. 200.

¹²¹ Quoted by RONALD CHAPMAN in *Father Faber in English Spiritual Writers*. Edited by C. Davis. London 1961, p. 180.

« What, indeed, is the very function of society, as it is at present, but a rude attempt to cover the degradation of the fall, and to make men feel respect for themselves, and enjoy it in the eyes of others, without returning to God » (PS, VIII, 266).

¹²² US, 12-13; *Idea*, 200. Cf. A. JANSSENS, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-8.

¹²³ Cf. PS, VIII, 268. Cf. *I Cor* 2, 2.

The gentleman's religion, in fact, tended to be extremely *sober, cold and calculating*. He observed the *external ritual* from a sense of propriety more than from the love of God. It never occurred to him that religion should be a thing of the heart, a complete surrender in faith and love to a supremely lovable God. Consequently the gentleman tried to please himself without displeasing God and, in Newman's phrase, succeeded in being 'moral without being religious'¹²⁴. He laid no stress on the supernatural virtues of faith, hope and love. Purity of intention and inward devotion were passed over as unimportant provided a man performed his external duties with accuracy and order. Mgr H. Francis Davis, in the *Preface* to Fr Bouyer's study on Newman's life and spirituality, writes as follows on this superficial religion:

"Newman was never happy about 'society'; for, full as it appeared of gentlemanly virtues, it lacked true depth. Everything was sacrificed for the sake of decent appearances. 'To *seem* becomes to *be*'. The religion of society is a religion of outward appearance, which offends no one, and gets nowhere. Polite society could not understand the religion of the inward heart, the acceptance of difficult creeds, and the dedication of one's real, everyday life to the pursuit of sanctity. It was not that Newman was opposed to poetry or culture. He was only opposed to the substitution of these for the hard facts of human existence"¹²⁵.

Outward decency, without the help of grace, could not hold in check for long the downward pull of nature. Newman had to confess that eventually 'that very refinement of Intellectualism, which began by repelling sensuality, ends by excusing it'¹²⁶. The good taste and exterior decorum of society then become an apology and a cover for interior and private vice. As an example of this, Newman quotes Edmund Burke's lament over Marie Antoinette in which the famous orator was led to say:

"It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound; which inspired courage, while it mitigated ferocity; which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which *vice lost half its evil by losing all its grossness*"¹²⁷.

¹²⁴ PS, IV, 30. « National love of virtue is no test of a sensitive and well-instructed conscience, — of nothing beyond intellectual culture. History establishes this: the Roman moralists write as admirably, as if they were moral men » (US, 41).

¹²⁵ Newman. *His Life and Spirituality*. London 1958, p. xi of the *Preface*. Cf. PS, IV, 18-36; OS, 24-25; *Idea*, 201-4.

¹²⁶ *Idea*, 202.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

The chivalric spirit of the gentleman, as Newman points out, had come to the same extreme. What was sinful was stripped of its evil by having all its uncouthness removed. The essence of sin was not disobedience to the dictates of conscience and to God's law, but the fact of being *detected* in wrongdoing by society. Morality, then, did not enter the sphere of man's private actions: it was meant for society alone. The religion of society could make man refine all his grossness, but its morality was powerless to cure the festering evil underneath the bright exterior. Fr Gassert, in his study of Newman's ideal of higher education, concludes as follows:

"Obviously Newman is holding this [ethical character of the *mere* gentleman] up, not as an ideal of Christianity, but as the hollow sepulchre of a religion of civilization, which is made beautiful *to look upon* — and nothing more" ¹²⁸.

This feeling of discontent with the gentleman ideal is confirmed by Newman's own spiritual life. As a young boy of seventeen he was shocked at the excesses of the gentlemen-commoners of Oriel College, especially at their wine parties. Getting drunk was regarded as an ordinary thing at these orgies. Moreover, the worst party of all took place at what was called the 'Gaudy', a college feast celebrated on Trinity Sunday and Monday. All were expected to go to communion on the Sunday. On the following day it was customary to drink almost to a state of intoxication. Newman, despite the ridicule of his companions, resolutely refused to attend the party and suffered for his principles ¹²⁹.

A similar zeal made Newman impatient of the standard of religion among the clergy of the Church of England in the beginning of the 19th century. They had become, for the most part, more interested in their benefices, their hobbies and their gentlemanly status, than in the care of the souls entrusted to them. It was to such as these that Newman and his friends began to send the *Tracts for the Times*, by which they tried to rouse them out of their self-complacency and comfort to a prospect of defending and even suffering martyrdom for the independence and purity of the Church of Christ! ¹³⁰.

¹²⁸ ROBERT G. GASSERT, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

¹²⁹ Cf. *AW*, 89-90; *Moz.*, I, 132-3.

¹³⁰ « I am but one of yourselves, — a Presbyter; and therefore I conceal my name, lest I should take too much on myself by speaking in my own person. Yet speak I must; for the times are very evil, yet no one speaks against them... Suffer me, while I try to draw you forth from those pleasant retreats, which

Later on while preparing for his priestly ordination at St Eusebio's, Rome, Newman writes down in his Retreat Notes words of self-accusation which echo the easy-going, superficial ways which he had always censured in his sermons. He knew that his intellectual activity left him all the more open to the temptation of living a quiet, secure, untroubled life, — the mentality of one who tries to get the best out of this world while he hopes at the same time to keep straight with God, too. Newman, in these Retreat Notes, accuses himself of acting, not from the pure motive of charity and faith but from a feeling of self-respect, a feeling that it was right and becoming for a gentleman to act in a morally correct manner¹³¹. He was far from satisfied with this gentlemanlike idea of morality and perfection. It might, it is true, lead a man eventually to act from a conscious motive of duty, and not merely from a fear of censure or the desire of praise. Nevertheless, it left him in a purely human sphere of action. It could not raise him to the supernatural level and make him act from a lively faith, a simple confidence and a pure love of God.

Finally it is not sufficient to have a good education and to be well informed on many subjects. *Mere knowledge*, as Newman often said, *was not virtue*¹³². A man could know the Scripture by heart and possess an immense store of culture, and, for all his knowledge, live a very mediocre and lukewarm religious life. Not that Newman was against knowledge and cultural formation: his life's work was

it has been our blessedness hitherto to enjoy, to contemplate the condition and prospects of our Holy Mother in a practical way; so that one and all may unlearn that idle habit, which has grown upon us, of owning the state of things to be bad, yet doing nothing to remedy it » (*Tracts for the Times. By Members of the University of Oxford*. London 1839, Vol. I, p. [1]). The shocked astonishment which these famous words of the first *Tract* produced on the snug complacency of many a clergyman helped undoubtedly to draw wide attention to the leaflets of the Tractarians from the very start of their campaign.

Four years after the publication of the first *Tract*, Newman read the early diaries of his youthful friend, Hurrell Froude, and discovered that the latter had led a strict life of penance and self-control. Froude had died the previous year (1836) of consumption, but his father, Archdeacon Froude, gave Newman permission to publish his son's journals according as he thought fit. Newman edited them, with Keble's help, without any watering down of Froude's blunt expressions. Newman did not repent of what he did despite the cry of horror raised on all sides at 'a young man of good family, fasting! Hesitating to buy himself an overcoat! Criticizing his own gentlemanliness!' (M. TREVOR, *Newman. The Pillar of the Cloud*. London 1962, p. 214).

¹³¹ « ... although I have often prayed earnestly to do His will, yet my actions have proceeded rather from a kind of conscientiousness which forbade me to act otherwise, from a sense of correctness, from perceiving what became me, and in doing which I should be consistent, than from faith and charity » (AW, 246). Cf. AW, 245-8.

¹³² Cf. PS, I, 30-33; VI, 26; DA, 254-305; CS, 76-78.

one long plea for a true christian education of youth. He would find nothing unusual in the statement of the Second Vatican Council which urges lay people to 'strive skilfully to acquire a more profound grasp of revealed truth' and 'labour vigorously so that by human labour, technical skill, and civic culture, created goods may be perfected for the benefit of every last man, according to the design of the Creator and the light of His Word'¹³³. Education and culture, according to Newman, should deepen one's religious understanding. All knowledge should be subservient to faith and help lead a man to God. But, alas, the mere gentleman of society had acquired the culture without its spiritual values. Newman rejects this secularized idea of the mere gentleman in a trenchant phrase when he declares that intellectual advancement had made him but 'a bad imitation of polished ungodliness'¹³⁴.

This, in conclusion, is Newman's final view of the ideal of the *mere* gentleman, who remains heedless to the call to higher perfection. It is the product of civilization, not of Christianity. It is superficial, since it attends to the outside of things and dismisses the inner man. 'The presence of Christ is not in it'¹³⁵ and all its apparent beauty and ability is no compensation for the supernatural perfection to which every Christian is destined as a result of baptismal regeneration and his membership of the Mystical Body of Christ.

The gentleman possesses admirable qualities, no doubt, on a natural level, and his humanism may be an ally or a foe of Christianity. Therefore, we cannot discard it as something evil or valueless in itself. For it begins by creating a natural goodness which Christianity presupposes. In this light it may become a preparation for, and support of, a higher christian and supernatural ideal. To do this, it must not degenerate into a purely external moral or social code, but rather, have its naturally good qualities developed by the supernatural principles of the Gospel. Then the *mere* gentleman becomes the *christian* gentleman. For if the good qualities of the gentleman are the ornaments of every man of culture and natural virtue, then much

¹³³ Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*), No. 35 and 36. Cf. *The Documents of Vatican II*. Edited by Walter M. Abbott and Mgr. J. Gallagher. New York 1966, pp. 62, 63.

¹³⁴ *Mix.*, 115. Cf. *OS*, 29-30, 206. As regards the relation between moral and intellectual gifts, Newman thinks that 'the more a man is educated, whether in theology or secular science [i.e. comparing one degree of science with another] the holier he needs to be if he would be saved' and that 'devotion and self rule are worth all the intellectual cultivation in the world' (*LD*, XIX, 417).

¹³⁵ *PS*, V, 127.

more so should they belong to the christian gentleman. Hence Newman can write:

“It is well to be a gentleman, it is well to have a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life;...

but he goes on to say that they are no guarantee of sanctity and that something else is needed for christian perfection:

..Quarry the granite rock with razors, or moor the vessel with a thread of silk; then may you hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend against those giants, the passion and the pride of man”¹³⁶.

The final judgement on the gentleman, then, is not entirely negative. For the refinement typical of a gentleman may well be a preparation for a lofty christian morality, and also the natural result of christian sanctity. Newman himself was a gentleman all his life and lived for the most part in the company of men of refined taste and thought. He felt all along that his peculiar work in life was directed particularly to the educated classes. When choosing a religious vocation he opted for the Congregation of the Oratory which, from its earliest days, attracted the educated and refined type of person into its ranks. In one of Newman's early Chapter Addresses of 1848, he points out how St Philip Neri had gentlemen as his followers, and ‘wished to keep them gentlemen, but at the same time wished to purge them of the fastidiousness, self-importance, and loftiness which is commonly the characteristic of a gentleman’¹³⁷.

In like manner Newman wishes his Oratorians to be gentlemen — not *mere* gentlemen, but *christian* gentlemen, in whom refinement of mind is ‘superadded to a high religious perfection’ and is ‘the natural *result* of christian holiness, and the necessary result when it is carried out into its full and ultimate effect’¹³⁸. In this sense,

¹³⁶ *Idea*, 120. 121. Cf. *Prepos.*, 391-2. «Philosophy, however enlightened, however profound, gives no command over the passions, no influential motives, no vivifying principle. Liberal education makes not the Christian nor the Catholic but the gentleman» (*Idea*, 120). Cf. JOHN COULSON, *Newman's Idea of an Educated Laity — the two Versions in Theology and the University: An Ecumenical Investigation*. Edited by John Coulson. London 1964, pp. 47-63.

¹³⁷ PLACID MURRAY, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 189. 190. In the same Discourse to his Oratorian Brethren, Newman enlarges on the value of the natural graces of the gentleman in the christian and in the religious: «Hence it is that mere secular training, gentle nurture, good society, classical education, are of special benefit to the Christian,

the qualities of the christian gentleman do not spring from social or egoistic pressures but from the imitation of the external meekness, considerateness and gentleness of Christ.

We do not say that these virtues of decency, broad-mindedness, patience and observance of the law are in themselves christian virtues; they are ornaments of any sound natural religion. However, as Newman observes, 'they are Christian *in* a Christian'¹³⁹ for the Christian has within him a supernatural principle of action which elevates all the good qualities of nature to a sphere that transcends nature and participates in the divine goodness. Thus grace and faith and divine charity must transform and elevate the life and activity of the mere gentleman into that of the christian gentleman.

If the qualities of nature which are typical of the gentleman remain on the level of nature without rising any higher, then the outcome is more pagan than christian. What is missing in the humanism of the *mere* gentleman is the supernatural power of grace which is offered by Christ's revealed religion. Fr Charles L. O'Donnell sums up Newman's thought as follows:

"The gentleman is the product of culture, religious principle being left out of consideration. What is to be thought of such a character? Newman answers; engraft Christianity upon it, or let Christian principles inform it throughout, and you have possibly the ideal character; leave it to itself, it ministers rather to evil than to good"¹⁴⁰.

The gentleman of civilization must therefore become the christian gentleman, in whom nature is refined, perfected and transformed by grace and the theological virtues.

It appears then that the Christian is destined to a supernatural perfection and that nature alone is not capable of attaining to this end. We have examined Newman's thought on this question and have seen that he reproached those who wasted their lives in mediocrity or in neglect of their religious duties. The religion of

first as at least excluding their contraries, habits of rusticity or oddness or affectation and thus protecting and giving room for the unimpeded development of the saintly character in all its parts, as concurring in that development, encouraging and completing it, and lastly, when there is after all from some fault or other a deficient development, at least stimulating it, and supplying from inferior principles and by secular instruments that refinement which ought to follow, and often does follow even in the humblest and least educated, from Christian faith and love » (*Ibid.*, p. 190).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

¹⁴⁰ Newman's « *Gentleman* ». New York 1916. pp. 9-10.

society falls short of the ideal set forth by Newman. Not even the perfections of the gentleman — who is refined and educated, well-mannered and correct — are sufficient in themselves. Something more is required, namely, the supernatural virtues of faith and love which open up new horizons and make the folly of the Cross more treasured than the wisdom of this world.

III

THE NATURE OF, AND CALL TO, CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

If nature alone, given even the refinement and elevation of culture and self-control, cannot meet the ideal of christian perfection, it follows that some higher interior principle of action is needed which gives a new orientation and value to daily life and conduct. Of this Newman was convinced.

The harmonious growth in perfection and holiness which he envisaged for the Christian rested firmly on a supernatural foundation. More was needed than a mere facade covering up interior corruption, or an external and decent manner that was more 'reasonable' than divinely wise.

Newman's reading of Scripture, of the Fathers and of Church documents, made him see clearly that baptismal regeneration with the accompanying grace of the Indwelling Trinity and membership of the Church formed the basic supernatural principles of the new life inherited by the christian soul. These realities entered into the very structure of christian perfection and constituted the deep and solid nature of real holiness. Being living realities — a new *life* — they would not remain static but would ceaselessly urge the Christian towards the perfection of his calling as God had preordained it from eternity.

We shall take up these facts in turn in order to determine more precisely the nature of, and call to, christian perfection as it appears from Newman's writings.

1. *Theological Principles of Christian Nobility and Perfection*

The soul, as we saw earlier on, is of immense importance in Newman's doctrine. Yet very little experience of life is needed to make us aware of an essential element missing that would make the soul happy. The reality of sin and of man's estrangement from his Creator must be faced.

Newman spoke frequently about sin, both personal and original¹⁴¹. He was keenly aware of the detrimental influence of the hereditary curse that infected nature and corrupted the heart of man. Before his conversion to Catholicism, his teaching on this point was quite solemn and startling, owing to the Evangelical insistence on man's depravity and the uncertainty of sacramental forgiveness.

By the time he wrote the *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification* he put more emphasis on the supernatural character of the gift which Adam lost than on the actual nature of the ensuing sinfulness. He concludes that man needs God's friendship again if he is to be happy. Immortality without complete happiness would be torment, and only the Spirit of God can make man happy for eternity.

The state of original sin, then, postulates a purification, a justification, which would make man capable of enjoying the divine friendship again. This justifying principle is not to be found within man himself; it has to be a new principle of life and holiness infused into him by God. Newman read with remarkable insight the words of the prophets of the Old Testament, notably Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who foretold the 'new heart' and the 'new spirit' which God promised to bestow¹⁴². This new, interior and purifying principle was the presence of the Holy Spirit in the souls of the just.

Justification was the name given to the individual application of the fruits of the Redemption¹⁴³. The difficult and dividing question, however, was: how exactly did this application take place and to what extent did it condone sin and transform the soul with divine life? The question was important, for upon it depended the nature of christian holiness. Newman realized the seriousness of the problem and wrote a masterful treatise on the subject in his *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification* — a book enduring doctrinal and ecumenical value¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴¹ Cf. PS, VIII, 116-7; VII, 43; VI, 336-7; SD, 105; Apo., 242-3; GA, 495-501; Mix., 335-340; MD, 452-472. Christopher Hollis affirms: « The clearest and most certain of the dogmas of the Church argues Newman, was that of original sin... Newman never wavered in his belief in Man's double nature, in the reality of obligation and the reality of original sin » (*Newman and the Modern World*. London 1967, pp. 63. 64).

¹⁴² Cf. Jer. 31, 31. 33; Ez. 36, 26-27 and PS, V, 151; VI, 175; VM, II, 165.

¹⁴³ Cf. Jfc., 204; SD, 161.

¹⁴⁴ I. Döllinger regarded the *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification* as 'one of the best theological books published in this century' (W. WARD, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman based on his Private Journals and Correspondence*. London 1913, Vol.I, p. 444). Fr Louis Bouyer of the Oratory emphasizes their ecumenical value and affirms that Newman's « *Lectures on Justification* are scarcely less important a milestone in his career than the *Essay on the*

While expounding the Evangelical and Protestant theories of justification and accepting what was good and valuable in them, he rejected their underlying suppositions and found in Catholic Tradition a more satisfactory answer to the problem. Although influenced by Evangelical tenets himself, he was never an out and out Evangelical. As far back as 1825 he was convinced of the necessity of a real inward change in baptism, a regeneration of the soul to new life. This can be seen from an entry in his *Journal*, dated January 13:

“It seems to me that the great stand is to be made, *not* against those who connect a spiritual change with baptism, but those who deny a spiritual change altogether”¹⁴⁵.

‘Conversion’ in the Evangelical sense and the certainty of being predestined to glory were no substitutes for the interior renewal envisaged in Scripture. Righteousness that could only be *imputed* and that left inner corruption under a cloak of forensic justification plainly contradicts the teaching of the Apostle:

“When St Paul says that we are *made righteous*, what but antecedent and established theories could be strong enough to persuade men either that ‘*righteous*’ does not imply ‘acceptableness’ or else that ‘*made*’ means nothing but accounted?”¹⁴⁶.

Newman came to believe in a real and effective pardon of sin and purification of the soul at the moment of justification. Baptism — the sacramental and outward rite of justification — leaves no part of the soul uncleansed. Whatever discussions may persist about the abstract nature of the Sacrament, there could be no doubt but that in concrete reality it implies *making* and not merely *counting* a person righteous. It thereby involves a change of heart, an interior renewal and deification of the soul to such an extent that the baptised can be called, in biblical terms, a new man.

The new principle of life and holiness imparted at the moment of baptism raises the Christian to a divine and surpassing dignity. It confers on him privileges that far exceed the claims of nature:

Development of Christian Doctrine » (THOMAS L. SHERIDAN, *Newman on Justification*. New York 1967, p. 11 of the *Preface*). Hans Küng describes the volume as ‘one of the best treatments of the Catholic theology of justification’ (*Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection*. London 1965, pp. 202-3).

¹⁴⁵ *AW*, 78; *Moz.*, I, 106.

¹⁴⁶ *Jfc.*, 119. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-123.

“ By this new birth [in baptism] the Divine Shechinah is set up within him, pervading soul and body, separating him really, not only in name, from those who are not Christians, raising him in the scale of being, drawing and fostering into life whatever remains in him of a higher nature, and imparting to him, in due season and measure, its own surpassing and heavenly virtue ”¹⁴⁷.

The author of these marvels in the christian soul is the Indwelling Spirit of God. For Newman the truth of grace and the Indwelling was of primary importance. In his explanation of the theory of justification, he gave singular importance to the role of uncreated grace, thus offering a possible meeting ground for the Protestant and Roman Catholic schools of thought — justification, namely, consisting not in *faith* alone nor in a renovating *quality* imparted to the soul by God's grace, but rather in the Presence of the Divine Persons in the soul. The inward gift of the Gospel 'is nothing short of the indwelling in us of God the Father and the Word Incarnate through the Holy Ghost. If this be so, we have found what we sought: *This* is to be justified, to receive the Divine Presence within us, and be made a Temple of the Holy Ghost'¹⁴⁸.

Without this elevating and saving grace, man could do little or nothing towards the attainment of his eternal and supernatural destiny. He had lost God's friendship through sin and was therefore unhappy, and would never be happy until he regained God's grace. Only the inward Presence of the three Persons of the Trinity really makes the soul acceptable, and gives light, energy and joy. The true dignity of the Christian, then, is not measured by worldly attainments or outward correctness and decency, but by the secret growth of divine grace within the soul.

The Spirit of God is, in fact, the Author of all holiness. The renovating grace of the Spirit raises man to a new and divine life in baptism. All through life the Spirit continues to purify and transform the soul into the image of Christ. The fundamental dignity which this Presence confers on the Christian is described by Newman in words that are simple yet full of solemn beauty:

“ The Holy Ghost, I have said, dwells in body and soul, as in a temple. Evil spirits indeed have power to possess sinners, but His indwelling is far more perfect; for He is all-knowing and omnipresent, He is able to search into all our thoughts, and

¹⁴⁷ PS, III, 266-7. Cf. PS, II, 222-3.

¹⁴⁸ *Jfc.*, 144. Cf. C.S. DESSAIN, *Cardinal Newman and the Doctrine of uncreated Grace in The Clergy Review* 47 (1962) 207-255. 269-288.

penetrate into every motive of the heart. Therefore, He pervades us (if it may be so said) as light pervades a building, or as sweet perfume the folds of some honourable robe; so that, in Scripture language, we are said to be in Him, and He in us”¹⁴⁹.

The presence of the Holy Spirit, then, is no mere figure of speech but real and personal companionship. His coming now means more than it did to the prophets of old, for He dwells in the christian soul not merely by His gifts and operations but in His Divine Person. In the following quotation from St Paul, Newman underlines the word ‘dwelleth’ in order to stress the reality of the Spirit’s real, personal presence: “He shall quicken even your mortal bodies by His Spirit that *dwelleth* in you”¹⁵⁰.

The Holy Spirit comes, however, not to supply Christ’s absence, but to bring about His presence. The fact of the Spirit being present in the soul does not imply the absence of Christ. On the contrary, the Spirit prepares Christ’s presence in the soul and reveals Him to those who believe. For Newman, Christ was no mere historical figure but a real living Person whose property the soul becomes on the day of baptism. The effects of this union with Christ is likened by St Paul to putting on a robe of salvation. Newman argues that this robe is not a mere profession of Christianity, nor a purely external imputation of Christ’s merits; not even a newness of life, but something more fundamental, namely, ‘the inward presence of Christ, ministered to us through the Holy Ghost;... as a sort of invisible Shekinah, or seal of God’s election... the indwelling and manifestation in our hearts of the Incarnate Word... a grafting invisibly into the Body of Christ; a mysterious union with Him, and a fellowship in all the grace and blessedness which is hidden in Him’¹⁵¹.

Christ, then, dwells in our souls in a very real though inexplicable manner. Through Him we have access to the Father; along with Him we are called sons. Our divine adoption as sons of the Father is something more real and intimate than adoption as applied to human relationships. It is no mere legal fiction or external change of status, but an interior renewal, an elevation of nature through a sharing in the very life of the Father who adopts us. By taking our nature to the Father, Christ has taken the Father down to us. Consequently our life is hidden with Christ in God and we receive a new principle of supernatural life so that the words of Paul mean ‘that we are

¹⁴⁹ PS, II, 222. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 60; *Jfc.*, 149-152.

¹⁵⁰ *Rom.* 8, 11 and PS, II, 221.

¹⁵¹ *Jfc.*, 156. 160. « Christ is present in that heart which He visits with His grace » (PS, V, 181).

new-created, transformed, spiritualized, glorified in the Divine Nature, — that through the participation of Christ, we receive, as through a channel, the true Presence of God within and without us, imbuing us with sanctity and immortality' ¹⁵².

This new life of grace and holiness has to increase and develop, and in the present economy of salvation, this growth takes place in a special way by means of the Sacraments in the Church.

The Church, according to Newman, is the great sacrament of salvation, communicating divine life and symbolizing the realities of heaven. The Sacraments and rites of the visible Church are meant to prepare souls to participate in the life of the heavenly Jerusalem. Hence the Christian is obliged to frequent the Church and to receive the Sacraments, because otherwise he would cut himself off from a principal source of supernatural life.

If baptism is the doorway to supernatural holiness it is because it leads the soul into the Church where Christ is encountered. As a result of this initial regeneration, the Christian is a member of the Body of Christ. Baptism incorporates him into the Mystical Body and the Eucharist helps to develop the divine life in his soul, thus keeping him a living and active member of the Body of the Church. Consequently the whole moral life of the Christian rests on a sacramental foundation and to live through Christ means to live through the Sacraments ¹⁵³. The Christian, then, cannot remain isolated from

¹⁵² *Jfc.*, 219. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 201.218-220. Newman also mentions a few times that, according to Scripture, Christ is present in the soul not only as God, but in some mysterious manner as man, too. Thus we read in a sermon of 1838: « You will say, 'Yes; He is present as God'. Nay, I answer; more than this, He is the Christ, and the Christ is promised, and Christ is man as well as God. This surely is plain even from the words of the text. He said He was going away. Did He go away as God or as man? 'A little while, and ye shall not see Me'; this was on His death. He went away as man, He died as man; if, then, He promises to come again, surely He must mean that He would return as man, in the only sense, that is, in which He could return. As God He is ever present... » (*PS*, VI, 125). Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 133. The previous year in the *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification*, he had affirmed that the Divine Presence had a special reference to Christ 'which would seem to imply that the « Word made flesh » is in some mysterious manner bestowed upon us' (p. 148). Newman felt the difficulty of explaining this Scriptural position theologically. In the *Advertisement* to the Third Edition of the *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification* (1874) he quoted the Benedictine theologian, Dominic Schram (*Institutiones theologiae mysticae*. 2 Vols. Augsburg 1774; Paris 1868) in order 'to show that the hypothesis of a Personal Presence of our Lord in the soul, apart from His Incarnate Presence which is vouchsafed in the Eucharist, though not as a form of justification, is in itself neither preposterous nor inadmissible' (p. xiii). Cf. C.S. DESSAIN, *John Henry Newman*. London 1966, pp. 57-58; WILLIAM F. LEROUX, S.J., *The Inhabitation of the Holy Trinity in the Writings of John Henry Cardinal Newman. Excerpta ex dissertatione ad Lauream in Facultate Theologica Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianaе*. Romae 1959, p. 30.

¹⁵³ Cf. H. DITTRICH, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

the Body of the Church, for the saving grace of Christ comes not privately but only in and through the Church¹⁵⁴.

Christ leads us into the Church not simply to make us orderly citizens of society but rather to make us 'fellow-citizens with the Saints'¹⁵⁵. As a result of this mystical fellowship we find ourselves in a communion of saints. For if all Christians are members of the Head, then they are also members one of another and obliged to sanctify themselves because the Church to which they belong is holy. Moreover, each action has its repercussions for good or evil on all the other members of the Body. One sin is sufficient to defile the beauty of the Spouse of Christ. On the other hand the prayers and good deeds of individual souls help to build up the strength and holiness of the whole Body: 'the intercessions of the Saints are the life of the Church'¹⁵⁶.

The Christian is not alone, then, in his journey to heaven. In the Church he begins to recognize 'a starry host... of divine companions, the inhabitants of Mount Zion, where we dwell'¹⁵⁷. He is spiritually united to all the saints and heroes of antiquity as well as to all the members of the pilgrim Church on earth. In the Church he finds a home and a place of comfort where the elect of all the ages serve the Living God¹⁵⁸.

We now see more clearly the high ideal of solid sanctity which Newman proposed to all the baptized, and we realize why any ideal based on the powers of nature alone could never be sufficient. The real life of the Christian involves a deep union with Christ through faith and love, a state of holiness according to each one's calling, and a way of life which builds up the Church in strength and sanctity while it brings to perfection the individual soul. In modern theological language we would say that it perfects by placing the soul in the

¹⁵⁴ « It is most true, then, and never to be explained away, that the grace of the Gospel is lodged in a divinely appointed body, and spreads from it » (*PS*, VI, 169). Cf. *VM*, II, 416-7.

¹⁵⁵ *Eph.* 2, 19 and *PS*, IV, 161. Cf. *SN*, 129-131.

¹⁵⁶ *PS*, IV, 48. Cf. *PS*, III, 350-366; *Diff.*, II, 68-71; *SD*, 271.

¹⁵⁷ *PS*, IV, 229.

¹⁵⁸ « Shall we be as infidels to suppose that the Church is only what she seems to be, a poor, helpless, despised and human institution, scorned by the wealthy, plundered by the violent, out-reasoned by the sophist, and patronized by the great, and not rather believe that she is serving in presence of the Eternal Throne... Nay shall we not dimly recognize amid the aisles of our churches and along our cloisters, about our ancient tombs, and in ruined and desolate places, which once were held sacred, not in cold poetical fancy, but by the eye of faith, — the spirits of our fathers and brethren of every time, past and present, whose works have long been « known » to God, and whose former dwelling-places remain among us, pledges (as we trust) that He will not utterly forsake us, and make an end? » (*PS*, IV, 179-180). Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 234; *SD*, 170-1.

Paschal Mystery of the Redeeming Christ. Newman aptly sums it all up in the following words taken from one of his Easter sermons:

“ Let us not deny Him the glory of His life-giving holiness, that diffusive grace which is the renovation of our whole race, a spirit quick and powerful and piercing, so as to leaven the whole mass of human corruption, and make it live. He is the first-fruits of the Resurrection: we follow Him each in his own order, as we are hallowed by His inward presence. And in this sense, among others, Christ, in the Scripture phrase, is ‘formed in us’; that is, the communication is made to us of His new nature, which sanctifies the soul, and makes the body immortal ”¹⁵⁹.

Man's basic dignity, then, appears in the light of the Indwelling Trinity and of his place in the Mystical Body of Christ. This participation in the life and holiness of God effects a deep and wondrous transformation in the soul. The Christian, while remaining a man, is no longer a mere man, but — in the strong words of Newman — is made all but a god by virtue of his partaking of the Divine Nature¹⁶⁰. He is changed as far as he could be changed without losing his identity. In the face of this divinization, all earthly distinctions and titles fade into insignificance.

Yet Newman has to confess that many Christians are not aware of their dignity. They find great difficulty in realizing what their privileges are, because carnal and worldly pleasures dull their perception of unseen realities. In their catechism they learn that they are no longer slaves but free men, no longer servants but sons of God, not poor any longer but heirs to Christ's kingdom. Nevertheless, many years pass before they begin to understand the implications of these words¹⁶¹. And yet, the Christian is under the serious obligation of realizing his dignity and consequently of living up to it. Only in so far as he comprehends what he really is by grace, can he understand his duty and his responsibility of living in the likeness of Christ. On this account Newman often inculcated in his sermons the greatness of the christian vocation and the duty of living in a manner worthy of the new nature imparted by baptismal regeneration.

Otherwise the Christian is wasting the talents bestowed on him

¹⁵⁹ PS, II, 146-7. Cf. C. S. DESSAIN, *Newman's Spirituality and its value to-day* in *The Clergy Review* 45 (1960) 257-282 and reprinted in *English Spiritual Writers*. Edited by C. Davis. London 1961, pp. 136-160; WILLIAM R. LAMM, S.M., *The Spiritual Legacy of Newman*. Milwaukee 1948.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. PS, VIII, 252-3.

¹⁶¹ Cf. the sermon for Easter Sunday, 1839, « Difficulty of Realizing Sacred Privileges » (PS, VI, [94]-104). Cf. also CS, 113-6.

by God. Newman points out that all of God's gifts and graces are meant to be used. He reproaches many Christians with negligence in fulfilling the duties springing from their sublime privileges. Their lives are full of obvious contradictions, professing, as they do, to be Christians, yet living like unregenerate men. Theirs is a profession without practice, a life of hypocrisy and empty ostentation. With such people Newman becomes indignant as St Paul did once when he wrote:

“What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?”

And Newman comments:

“As if he said, ‘Can you be so mean-spirited and base-minded as to dishonour yourselves in the devil's service? Should we not pity the man of birth, or station, or character, who degraded himself in the eyes of the world, who forfeited his honour, broke his word, or played the coward?... But for Christians, it is theirs to walk in the light, as children of the light, and to lift up their hearts, as looking out for Him who went away, that He might return to them again’”¹⁶².

The dignity and nobleness of the Christian's new nature, then, puts him under the obligation to avoid the darkness of sin and to walk in the light of love and good works. Newman concludes the sermon on « Christian Nobleness » with the exhortation to ‘grow in grace’¹⁶³. He counsels his listeners to practise all the virtues and habits of a saintly life — devotion, faith, consistency, love, meditation and mortification:

“... aim at inward sanctity... Let not this sacred season [Pentecost] leave us as it found us; let it leave us, not as children, but as heirs and as citizens of the kingdom of heaven... Let us redeem the time while it is called to-day; « till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ »”¹⁶⁴.

Such is the profoundly theological concept of holiness which

¹⁶² *SD*, 145 and *I Cor.* 6, 19. Cf. the following sermons: « Christian Nobleness » (*SD*, [137]-149); « Profession without Practice » (*PS*, I, [124]-138); « Profession without Hypocrisy » (*PS*, I, [139]-151); « Profession without Ostentation » (*PS*, I, [152]-164); « God's Will the End of Life » (*Mix.*, 104-123). Cf. also WERNER BECKER, *Realisierung und « Realizing » bei John Henry Newman in Newman Studien*. Nürnberg 1962, Fünfte Folge, pp. 269-[282].

¹⁶³ *SD*, 149.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* and *Eph.* 4, 13.

Newman taught and proposed for the Christian. We shall not develop this concept any further now on dogmatic lines but turn to its incarnation in daily life. In other words we shall endeavour to see how the Christian is obliged to let these principles of sanctity rule his life and how this development is reflected in his moral conduct. The dogmatic and theological theory has to be put into practice: it is time to consider how the theory appears when incarnated in real life and moral behaviour.

2. *Perfection in practice*

The above examination of theological principles has given us an outline of the ontological holiness of the soul regenerated by divine grace — the perfection of what the Christian *is*. We now presuppose this foundation and consider briefly the moral excellence which should flow from such interior wealth — the perfection of what the Christian *does*. Perfection in this practical, concrete sense, does not, according to Newman, imply the presence of extraordinary gifts, which in fact are given to relatively few people. The possession of such gifts may raise souls to a state of charismatic holiness which the Church can canonize as a model for others to imitate. But the perfection, which we consider now in its practical aspects, is neither ecstatic nor ethereal, but tangible, hard-working and within the grasp of every Christian. Newman himself tells us what he means by perfection in this sense:

“ It does not mean any extraordinary service, anything out of the way, or especially heroic in our obedience (not all have the opportunity of heroic acts, sufferings) but it means what the word perfection ordinarily means. By perfect we mean that which has no flaw in it, that which is complete, that which is consistent, that which is sound. We mean the opposite to imperfect. As we all know well what imperfection in religious service means, we know by the contrast what is meant by perfection.

He then is perfect who does the work of the day perfectly — and we need not go beyond this to seek for perfection. <You need not go out of the *round* of the day [.]>”¹⁶⁵.

¹⁶⁵ PLACID MURRAY, *Newman the Oratorian. His unpublished Oratory Papers edited with an Introductory Study on the Continuity between his Anglican and his Catholic Ministry by Placid Murray, O.S.B.* Dublin 1969, p. 360. This text had been previously published, with slight alterations, in *Meditations and Devotions*, pp. [285]-6. Cf. *PS*, III 267-9.

This statement occurs during Newman's mature years in a Chapter Address to his community in Birmingham, 1856. Some readers find it disappointing on account of its very simplicity and meagreness¹⁶⁶. Nevertheless it is in perfect accord with Newman's practical and concrete spirituality. In fact Newman goes on to defend his 'simplicity': "I insist on this, because I think it will simplify our views, and fix our exertions on a definite aim"¹⁶⁷. It is the paradox of great minds to be able to simplify and clarify what is complex and difficult. The practical bent in Newman's character made him concentrate on one thing at a time, namely, the duty of the present, passing moment. This simplified life prevented the loss of energy and the inefficiency attached both to indefinite and aimless action and, at the other extreme, to feverish and manifold activities.

Another definition of perfection given in the final draft of the *Remarks on the Oratorian Vocation*, sent from Dublin to the Birmingham Oratory in March 1816, gives us a more theologically adequate description of perfection:

"What is meant by perfection? I suppose it is the power or faculty of doing our duty exactly, naturally, and completely, whatever it is, in opposition to a performance which is partial, slovenly, languid, awkward, clumsy, and with effort. It is a life of faith, hope, and charity, elicited in successive acts according to the calls of the moment and to the vocation of the individual. It does not consist in any specially heroic deeds; it does not demand any fervour of devotion; but it implies regularity, precision, facility, and perseverance in a given sphere of duties. He is perfect who does the duties of the day perfectly"¹⁶⁸.

In this passage Newman points to the essential duties of faith, love and hope. They are the key-notes of all christian perfection for him. Each person exercises them in a different manner according to the peculiar occupations of each vocation. In order to provide a practical and tangible norm, Newman reduced perfection to faithful obedience to the Divine Will as manifested in the providential and particular duties and circumstances of every day. The important thing, however, which underlay and sustained this obedience was the growth in grace and in the supernatural life of faith, hope and charity. The duties of the day merely gave scope for the exercise of these virtues. Perfection, then, for Newman, here in the *Oratory*

¹⁶⁶ Cf. PLACID MURRAY, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-120.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 315-6.

Papers as in the *Anglican Sermons* and in the *Lectures on Justification*, 'immediately depends upon *acquired habits* formed in the soul by means of past supernatural acts, or contemporaneously with their exercise'¹⁶⁹.

This provides us, then, with a practical outline of perfection which flows from the deeply theological and dogmatic view of christian holiness which Newman built up on grace and faith, and which he developed especially in his *Sermons* and in the *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification*.

3. *Perfection for all Christians*

The Presence of the Divine Persons, granted at the moment of baptismal regeneration, produces a profound change in the soul. Sin is blotted out and a new life infused. Baptismal grace, however, is meant to grow and develop and gradually influence the whole man and all his activities, so that all his inclinations and actions are brought into line with the divine Will.

The Christian corresponds in a special manner with divine grace by means of the exercise of the supernatural virtues, especially the theological virtues of faith, love and hope, along with prayer and penance. In baptism, the Christian receives the divine power to exercise these virtues. They follow naturally from his new nature and in turn develop the divine life in the soul. This entails a long work of purification which leads to moral or subjective perfection, as distinguished from ontological holiness. And this moral perfection is the logical consequence of the ontological divinization of the soul in baptismal regeneration.

It would seem to follow, then, from the supernatural premises postulated by Newman, that the Christian, by the very fact of his baptismal regeneration, is obliged to tend to the moral perfection of his state, or in other words, to holiness.

In this concluding section of the present study we shall examine the extent and nature of this duty according to the mind of Newman.

a) *Holiness necessary for Future Blessedness*

The question appears at an early date in Newman's preaching. A sermon delivered in 1826 — and which is the opening one in the first Volume of the *Parochial and Plain Sermons* — is inspired by the

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 316.

text from *Hebrews*: "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" ¹⁷⁰. Newman still under the influence of the Evangelical pre-occupation with holiness, attaches the utmost importance to sanctity for salvation. He points out that the unholy soul, even if it were allowed to enter heaven, would not be happy there. For the one common work and interest of the blessed in heaven is the worship of God, and the soul that is not pure and sanctified is not ready for that:

"None but the holy can look upon the Holy One; without holiness no man can endure to see the Lord" ¹⁷¹.

It is erroneous to think that heaven must necessarily make one happy, if one succeeds in getting there. The unprepared soul might not even be aware of being in heaven, says Newman, just as many men passed Christ in the days of his mortal life, and were unaware of being in the presence of a Divine Person ¹⁷². Or if the unholy soul did realize where it was, the sight would be a torment to it. The divine holiness would be a fire that would torture it: "Heaven would be hell to an irreligious man" ¹⁷³.

On the other hand, man is incapable of finding complete happiness in anything outside of God Himself. Created joys, be they ever so varied and numerous, will sooner or later become insipid and unsatisfying to the immortal soul. God alone is ever new, fresh and inexhaustible. Only God can make the soul happy for all eternity.

Man is in this world to prepare himself for his eternal state. Before entering into heaven he must become like unto God if he is to be happy in the divine Presence. God, in fact, cannot love what is unholy. The soul must first be purified and sanctified to such a degree as will make it at ease and at peace in the unveiled presence of God, if heaven is to mean happiness for it. For this reason we can say that 'a holy life is our only happiness' ¹⁷⁴.

The obligation of christian perfection does not follow immediately from these remarks since it may be objected that Newman is speaking here mainly about the ontological holiness (the presence of grace irrespective of its development) conferred in baptism. How-

¹⁷⁰ *Hebs.* 12, 14 and *PS*, I, [1]-14.

¹⁷¹ *PS*, I, 6.

¹⁷² Cf. *PS*, IV, 245-8.

¹⁷³ *PS*, I, 7. «... an unrenewed spirit could not live in heaven, he would die; an Angel could not live in hell. The natural man cannot live in heavenly company...» (*PS*, VII, 180). Cf. *Call.*, 219-220.

¹⁷⁴ *PS*, VII, 183. Cf. *PS*, V, 316-326; *SN*, 250-1; *MD*, 432-4; *Jfc.*, 32.

ever, this initial ontological holiness is not something static and complete. On the contrary, it is meant to be developed and to transform the whole person, and produce the morally holy and perfect man in the likeness of Christ. Newman expresses this thought as follows:

“Never, indeed, must it be supposed, as we are indolently apt to suppose, that the gift of grace which we receive at baptism is a mere outward privilege, a mere outward pardon, in which the heart is not concerned; or as if it were some mere mark put on the soul, distinguishing it indeed from souls unregenerate, as if by colour or seal, but not connected with the thoughts, mind, and heart of a Christian... For the new birth of the Holy Spirit sets the soul in motion in a heavenly way: it gives us good thoughts and desires, enlightens and purifies us, and prompts us to seek God. In a word (as I have said), it gives a spiritual *life*; it opens the eyes of our mind, so that we begin to see God in all things by faith, and hold continual intercourse with Him by prayer; and if we cherish these gracious influences, we shall become holier and wiser and more heavenly, year by year, our hearts being ever in a course of change from darkness to light, from the ways and works of Satan to the perfection of Divine obedience”¹⁷⁵.

Ontological sanctity, then, postulates as its natural outcome the holiness of the whole person with all his acts and thoughts. This truth is also proved by the dynamic and vital nature of grace.

b) *The Dynamism of Grace*

The Sacrament of baptism, as we have seen, places the soul in the state of grace. A complete transformation occurs: the former aspects of sin and corruption are blotted out and the Indwelling Trinity imbues the soul with life, holiness, grace and beauty. Newman compares the change to a dark room being flooded with a ray of light or a coin being imprinted with the likeness of the sovereign¹⁷⁶. Our author is emphatic on the point that if baptismal regeneration means anything at all it must include internal holiness: “Justification tends to sanctify”, he writes, “and to obstruct its sanctifying power, is as if we stopped a man’s breath; it is the death of that from which it proceeds”¹⁷⁷.

¹⁷⁵ PS, VII, 210.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. PS, V, 138-140; *Jfc.*, 32-36. 65-84.

¹⁷⁷ *Jfc.*, 88.

This baptismal holiness, however, is meant to grow and penetrate the whole man and all his faculties. Grace, in fact, is likened to a seed of glory because its final development is the beatific vision enjoyed by the saints in heaven. Newman declares:

“As the seed has a tree within it, so men have within them Angels. Hence the great stress laid in Scripture on growing in grace. Seeds are intended to grow into trees. We are regenerated in order that we may be renewed daily after the Image of Him who has regenerated us”¹⁷⁸.

Newman frequently repeated in his sermons this Scriptural plea for growth in grace. He exhorted his people to strive at all times for what was perfect; to endeavour to obey God's will cheerfully and consistently; to change their affections — with the aid of God's grace — from earthly to heavenly pursuits and to pray for a spirit of perfect self-surrender¹⁷⁹. Yet he had to admit that many people stopped short on the way to holiness, allowing the good seed, which otherwise would have come to perfection, to be choked up and to wither.

The soul that corresponds, however, will be led from grace to grace, until it is moulded in all those holy virtues and dispositions which characterize the perfection of the saint. These actual graces are, in Newman's words, so many 'divine calls'¹⁸⁰ to a higher and a holier life and they indicate the dynamic power of divine grace which grows steadily within the soul.

For grace is essentially a *life*; a participation by the created soul in the divine life. Since it is something living it tends to develop and increase to the perfection of its state. This takes place when the individual person is completely purified and able to perform every detail of the Divine Will in his regard. We can readily believe that Newman, for whom the concept of development meant so much, should have insisted on the necessity for the Christian of being willing to be changed and to develop under the influence of grace. To 'change oneself' and 'to be changed' are recurring themes in his writings. “In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often”¹⁸¹ —

¹⁷⁸ *PS*, V, 351.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. *SD*, 50-51. 348-350; *PS*, VIII, 89-90; V, 252-3. «Nor does any one know any thing of... our growings in grace, of our successes, but God Himself, who secretly is the cause of them» (*PS*, VI, 216).

¹⁸⁰ Cf. *PS*, VIII, [17]-32; I, 148-9.

¹⁸¹ *Dev.*, 40. Cf. *PS*, III, 267.

this could be taken as Newman's outlook on the process of sanctification under the influence of the Holy Spirit Who changes the soul into the Image of Christ.

Holiness, then, is not a static and completed reality, but essentially a dynamic and progressive one¹⁸². The tiniest degree of holiness has within itself a tendency to greater holiness, to perfect sanctity. The infant is sanctified in baptism but when it comes to the use of reason it is obliged to strive personally and constantly to comply with the inspirations of grace. This means that the Christian must leave himself open to the calls of grace that will change him. He must cultivate that willingness to be changed by Christ, that self-surrender that will make him other than what he now is. In other words, he must become what he is not, and cannot be by nature alone, namely, alive to the full with the supernatural grace and beauty of Christ.

Just as change and growth are the signs of natural life, so also spiritual change and spiritual growth are the tokens of supernatural and divine life within the soul. 'It is the sign of a Saint to grow', Newman once wrote¹⁸³. The mediocre Christian who recoils from this change shrinks spiritually instead of increasing. And this unwillingness to be changed has a simple explanation — change is unpleasant:

"What then is it that we who profess religion lack? I repeat it, this: a willingness to *be* changed, a willingness to suffer (if I may use such a word), to suffer Almighty God to change us. We do not like to let go our old selves; and in whole or part, though we were promised no trouble at all in the change, though there were no self-denial, no exertion in changing, the case would not be altered. We do not like to be new-made; we are afraid of it; it is throwing us out of all our natural ways, of all that is familiar to us"¹⁸⁴.

The generosity of the average and mediocre Christian is not great enough to cope with the suffering involved in change. If change he must, he would have it come about without the slightest exertion on his own part; without pain, without self-denial, without meditation. It seems to him that it is sufficient that Christ alone should have suffered. As for himself he wishes to enjoy both worlds. And in this

¹⁸² « ... that sovereign, energetic power, which forms and harmonises his whole nature, and enables it to fulfil its own end, while it fulfils one higher than its own » (*Mix.*, 169).

¹⁸³ *LD*, XIV, 29; W. WARD, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 327.

¹⁸⁴ *PS*, V, 241. Cf. *PS*, VII, 150-3. [86]-89.

way he deceives himself and dulls the calls of grace that would lead him forward on the road to perfection.

Basically this unwillingness to be changed is a lack of faith and generosity, or as Newman would say, a lack of perfect self-surrender to God and His ways. Without this fundamental disposition of self-surrender in faith, the Christian remains stunted in his spiritual growth and baptismal grace is not allowed to develop as it should. On the other hand when this willingness and readiness to be changed is present the Christian life possesses its characteristic dynamism, which makes the Christian unsatisfied with the perfection he has already attained and gives him the energy ever to strive to come nearer to the perfect image of Christ¹⁸⁵.

It appears, then, that the dynamic characteristic of grace obliges the Christian to develop the precious gift bestowed on him at baptism, a gift which makes him truly privileged and adorned with an immortal dignity.

The final important question now arises: to what degree can all Christians be said to be called to holiness? What would Newman have to say about the universal call to sanctity discussed and proposed by the recent Vatican Council?

c) *Perfection for all?*

There are a few passages in Newman's writings that seem, at first sight, to exclude the majority from perfection and to make a distinction between first and second rate Christians. In one of the *Chapter Discourses* to the members of the Birmingham Oratory, on December 11th, 1850, Newman spoke of the special difficulties which saints have to face on the way to exalted holiness. He compares these troubles to the struggle of a ship tossed upon the stormy ocean and unprotected from the gales and terrors of the seas. Such is our trial 'if we would be saints'. Then he adds:

"It is easy to be a second rate Christian — many are called to nothing higher — they live in the pale of the Church and in the

¹⁸⁵ « Der Christ würde seine spezifisch christliche Existenz aufgeben, wäre in ihm nicht mehr der Wille, heilig zu werden. Christ sein beinhaltet daher notwendigerweise das Verlangen nach Heiligkeit und nach Vollkommenheit... Der Christ muss daher zunächst einmal die grundsätzliche Bereitschaft haben, ein anderer Mensch zu werden... Dieser Wille und diese Bereitschaft geben dem Leben des Christen die ihm eigentümliche Dynamik. Ohne diese Dynamik müsste sein Leben steril und unfruchtbar werden » (H. DITTRICH, *op. cit.*, pp. 275. 278-9).

round of their prescribed duty, they do the precepts and wait on the sacraments, and they are comparatively safe..."¹⁸⁶.

Another similar statement is to be found in the sermon « God's Will the End of Life », in which Newman points out the vanity of living for this world's pleasures, of being satisfied with an external and superficial decency, while the unseen world is disregarded and the Father's Will for our mission in life is unheeded. In the course of the sermon Newman voices the objection which must have been on the lips of many of his Anglican and Catholic listeners:

" You give us no alternative,... except that of being sinners or Saints. You put before us our Lord's pattern, and you spread before us the guilt and the ruin of the deliberate transgressor; whereas we have no intention of going so far one way or the other; we do not aim at being Saints, but we have no desire at all to be sinners. We neither intend to disobey God's will, nor to give up our own. Surely there is a middle way, and a safe one, in which God's will and our will may both be satisfied. We mean to enjoy both this world and the next. We will guard against mortal sin; we are not obliged to guard against venial; indeed it would be endless to attempt it. None but Saints do it; it is the work of a life; we need have nothing else to do. We are not monks, we are in the world, we are in business, we are parents, we have families; we must live for the day"¹⁸⁷.

Newman admits their premises but denies the conclusion. However, in refuting their arguments he does state the following:

" It is true also that you are not obliged to aim at being Saints; it is no sin not to aim at perfection"¹⁸⁸.

These two texts would seem to indicate that Newman did not envisage the ordinary Christian in the world as obliged to strive for perfection.

Newman's real thought, however, is discovered when we bear in mind the general context of each passage. To begin with the latter text addressed to a congregation of lay people from both Anglican and Catholic denominations; although Newman does admit that ' it is no sin not to aim at perfection ', he proceeds in the very same sermon to put a high ideal before these business men, parents and

¹⁸⁶ P. MURRAY, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

¹⁸⁷ *Mix.*, 117-8.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

others, who were involved in the world's problems and activities but who — as Newman claimed — were obliged to live with the Unseen in mind and not to be idle in spiritual matters. They were to fight against spiritual foes and suffer tribulations like all followers of Christ. It was not sufficient for them to avoid mortal sin; they also had to strive to be clear of venial sin, since the soul that is at peace with venial sins will soon fall into more serious faults. They were either saints or sinners: to deny this would mean that they had not a mission or work still to do in life. Like all men they were to make use of the talents given them, strive to cleanse their hearts and live in God's sight¹⁸⁹.

A further clarification of these seemingly contradictory assertions is offered when we recall the importance which Newman gave to the personal and individual manner in which God treats each soul. No two saints are exactly alike and the way to holiness is unique for every soul. For each soul has to answer to an individual call and a particular providence of God on its behalf. It is not a matter of imitating the actions of Saints and holy men in a rigid, mechanical manner. This would make our actions forced and unreal, and would soon lead to despondency and despair. Hence it is that 'holy men may say and do things which we have no right to say and do'¹⁹⁰.

In this sense it is true to say that the Saints 'are not always our examples, we are not always bound to follow them'¹⁹¹. What can be perfection and correspondence with grace in one man may well mean a refusal of grace and an escape from what God wants of another man in the concrete circumstances of a given moment of life. Each person has his own work, his peculiar mission, his unique role. He need not, or better still, he must not stray from this path if he is to come to the perfection which God has destined for him.

The other text mentioned above, occurs, as we said, in a *Chapter Discourse* to his Oratorian Community. In this context Newman has the precise aim of determining and emphasizing the perfection to which his Community is called even though the members do not take the three vows of religion. He notes that the three monastic vows are not ends in themselves but only means to the common goal of all Christians, namely, the perfection of charity. This leads him to stress that not *all* the counsels are necessary for perfection 'which consists, in its substance, in the observance of precept, not of

¹⁸⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 119-122.

¹⁹⁰ *PS*, VI, 34-35. Cf. *PS*, V, [29]-45.

¹⁹¹ *Mix.*, 101. Cf. *SD*, 291-2; H. DITTRICH, *op. cit.*, pp. 280-2.

counsel'¹⁹³. This does not imply that the counsels are superfluous since the observance of one or other counsel is included of necessity in the exact fulfilment of precept. The important thing, however, is the exercise of faith, hope and charity in the performance of daily duties and the consequent growth in grace.

However, if we limit our analysis to the *Oratory Papers* alone, it appears that Newman, in his effort to establish the possibility and obligation of perfection in a Community (like the Oratory) without vows, did not appreciate to the full the value and spiritual effects of the vows of religion. It is true that he is dealing directly with the excellence and existence of the spontaneous and unvowed obedience of his Oratory — *la Santa Comunità* — and not with the existing merits of religious vows in other Orders. Nevertheless, he seems to regard the vow as leading too easily to a forced obedience and an external conformity resulting from a past act rather than from an ever-willing and renewed offering.

On the other hand, when we keep the context and practical aim of the *Oratory Papers* in mind, and when we examine Newman's idea of perfection as reflected in his general thought, in his preaching and in his life, then we can conclude that his ideal for the Christian is a high one and that his concept of perfection is theologically sound and deep, and obliges every Christian to aim at the full development of divine charity received in baptism¹⁹³.

In fact, although Newman would not have us imitate slavishly the actions of saints and holy men, he does not thereby condone spiritual mediocrity. "No one has any leave to take another's lower standard of holiness for his own. It is nothing to us what others are"¹⁹⁴. The grace which each soul receives and its particular way to perfection is a very personal matter between itself and God. Yet, personal as it may be, the general effect is similar for every Christian, namely, transformation in the likeness of Christ and intimacy with the Indwelling Trinity. This is the 'duty and privilege'¹⁹⁵ of Christians. While in the world and living externally in a manner similar to other men, they cultivate an interior life of communion with Christ who leads them up the steep hill of perfection in order to be worthy fellow-citizens of the Saints.

¹⁹³ P. MURRAY, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

¹⁹³ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-120, and the review of *Newman the Oratorian* in *Doctrine and Life* 21 (1971) 166-8. The question of which *type* of perfection (priestly, religious, lay) is *in se* the highest does not directly come into discussion, nor interest us, here.

¹⁹⁴ PS, VIII, 31.

¹⁹⁵ PS, VI, 214.

Hence it was that Newman spoke out strongly and severely against that 'safe, uninteresting mediocrity'¹⁹⁶ which blighted the spiritual growth of so many Christians of his day. Mediocrity in spiritual matters, typical of Newman's time, meant that a man preferred himself and his own pleasures to the Will of God and to the interests of his neighbour. A life of ease and indolence was the norm. Wealth, distinction and worldly pleasures were the idols that in practice received pride of place in the worship of the heart. God was not loved and served as a Person who took interest in each soul. Religion was honoured chiefly because it was necessary for preserving an honourable position in society. Newman admitted that people with such superficial religious attitudes could well possess many praiseworthy qualities. In fact, they often were kind, sociable, upright and temperate; regular in the devotions and Church services established by custom and society. Yet this was not sufficient for Newman, who saw that these people were attached to the world and that they regarded religion as a matter of secondary importance. He would have them aspire to greater things:

"They like wealth, and distinction, and credit, and influence. They may improve in conduct, but not in aims; they advance, but they do not mount; they are moving on a low level, and were they to move on for centuries, would never rise above the atmosphere of this world...

Without denying, then, to these persons the praise of many religious habits and practices, I would say that they want the tender and sensitive heart which hangs on the thought of Christ, and lives in His love... The mirror within them, instead of reflecting back the Son of God their Saviour, has become dim and hence, though (to use a common expression) they have a good deal of good *in* them, it is only *in* them, it is not through them, around them, and upon them"¹⁹⁷.

This passage is typical of Newman who was never satisfied with anything short of perfection in any field, and above all in the realm of religious truth and holiness. From *The Force of Truth* by Thomas Scott, which he had read at the age of 15, Newman took as a motto the phrase: "Holiness rather than peace"¹⁹⁸. It is true to say that his entire life was a majestic expression of this ideal. Geoffrey Faber affirms that his 'whole strength lay in his refusal to come to terms

¹⁹⁶ *SD*, 22.

¹⁹⁷ *PS*, IV, 327-8. Cf. *PS*, I, 39; *SD*, 22-24. 272-3; *Mix.*, 107-8; *CS*, 85-87.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. *Apo.*, 5.

with imperfection'¹⁹⁹. This moral urgency is also reflected in his writings.

The subject-matter of his sermons, in fact, is aimed at raising the standard of religion in the ordinary Christian layman of his day. Their ascetic and compelling tone shows his awareness of the self-denial involved in following Christ up the mount of perfection. Fr Bouyer says of them:

"They put us on our trial, they arraign us, they challenge us in a way that precludes all possibility of slipping away on some side-issue, aesthetic or other. As someone has said, you could not come away from St Mary's without feeling the need of giving up something, of making some sort of sacrifice, of shaking off the benumbing influence of habit, and of ceasing to settle down contentedly with one's own mediocrity"²⁰⁰.

Newman realized that nothing short of suffering could change a person from being proud and sensual and selfish to being humble, pure, charitable and self-sacrificing. Hence, in his sermons, he insisted on the necessity of self-denial and penance because he wished his people to aim at a life of perfection:

"This is the especial object which is set before us, to become holy as He who has called us in holy, and to discipline and chasten ourselves in order that we may become so... And their legitimate effect [of all methods of self-chastisement], through the grace of the Holy Spirit, is to make us like Him who suffered all pain, physical and moral, sin excepted, in its fulness"²⁰¹.

In one of his early *Journals* Newman enters the following words, dated September 16, 1824, about the subject and scope of preaching:

"Those who make comfort the great subject of their preaching seem to mistake the end of their ministry. *Holiness* is the great end. There must be a struggle and a trial here. Comfort is a cordial, but no one drinks cordials from morning to night"²⁰².

¹⁹⁹ *Oxford Apostles. A Character Study of the Oxford Movement*. London 1933, p. 381. 'The only way ultimately to succeed is to do things thoroughly' Newman wrote in a letter to his mother when he was 21 years of age. (*Moz.*, I, 67).

²⁰⁰ *Newman. His Life and Spirituality*. London 1958, p. 182. Cf. *PS*, V, 96-98.

²⁰¹ *PS*, VII, 110. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88; *PS*, VII, 136-140.

²⁰² *AW*, 172. Fr Michael Tynan writes as follows of Newman's sermons: « His sermons, although possessing many lyric passages, are singularly devoid of

Newman understood, however, that perfection is not acquired in a short time. It involves a deep change, a transformation of man's inclination, a healing of his weakness. All this is the work of a life-time. Trials and sufferings under the action of the Spirit, gradually purify and perfect all the powers of the soul, and divine grace comes to its fulness. A man may not be aware of this transformation while it is being effected; it may be only a long time later, on looking back, that he perceives how he has been changed over the years.

Newman never doubted this providential action of the Spirit nor the Christian's duty of aiming at perfection. In hours of trial and darkness, when he hesitated and felt insecure about many truths, he never doubted about the ideal of sanctity springing from baptismal regeneration, which should be the constant aim of the christian soul. At the beginning of his Dark Night of doubt and sorrow (early in 1842), he confidently ends a sermon with the following words:

"Let us attempt, through God's grace, to advance and sanctify the inward man. We cannot be wrong here. Whatever is right, whatever is wrong, in this perplexing world, we must be right in 'doing justly, in loving mercy, in walking humbly with our God'; in denying our wills, in ruling our tongues, in softening and sweetening our tempers, in mortifying our lusts; in learning patience, meekness, purity, forgiveness of injuries, and continuance in well-doing"²⁰³.

This holds good for all Christians since all have been given the same fundamental gifts of grace and called to be members of the Mystical Body of Christ. In this context there is no difference between rich and poor, mighty and unknown, educated and unlearned. It may seem naive, notes Newman, to ask a poor man to live above the world's care and to be ambitious of perfection. Our author answers the objection, however, by pointing to the Apostles who were poor, yet they were told as expressly as others: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"²⁰⁴. Newman wishes to prove

glowing perorations. They aim at conveying the difficult message that deeds are more acceptable to God than dreams. Like the Bible, on which they are so accurately based, they move the will to humility and effort, while they secure an imaginative sympathy for the higher ideal. Newman's literary manner, like his spirituality, was the transformation of a natural character of mind into an earnest striving after perfection » (*The Approach to Newman in The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 66 (1940) I, 272-3). Cf. PHILIP BOYCE, *Euntes docete... Newman as Preacher in Ensign* (Navan), Autumn 1972, pp. 1-12; C. PASQUIER, S.J., *Newman Prédicateur in Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 69 (1947) [839]-851; HERMANN BREUCHA, *Newman als Prediger in Newman Studien*. Erste Folge, (1948), pp. 157-177.

²⁰³ SD, 12-13

²⁰⁴ PS, IV, 163 and Mt. 6, 33.

here that it is *sin*, and not poverty which is the hindrance to progress in the perfection of holiness.

Hence he exhorts his listeners to avoid sin, even venial sin and imperfection, and allow the seed of grace to grow and transform the whole person. He points out how good people usually have one pet fault that keeps them from being perfect. It is just one string out of tune in the harmony of their spiritual perfection. Even slight transgressions, however, obstruct the free development of grace in the soul and devitalize the holiness of the Mystical Body. Christians, then, 'must never be contented with themselves, or stand still and relax their efforts, but must go on *unto perfection*'²⁰⁵. It is true, however, that to be holy and religious-minded up to a certain point is quite easy and that, when a soul really makes progress, the trials and difficulties become much greater. In this connection, Newman uses the striking comparison of a person climbing a ladder, to illustrate the increasing difficulties met by the soul as it approaches the perfection of holiness:

"No paradox is truer than this, that the higher we are in holiness, the more are we in danger of going wrong. I have been accustomed to compare the ascent to perfection to the mounting a high ladder. As the climber gets higher, the ladder dances under him — behold the state of a soul mounting towards heaven. I thus account for the wonderful falls of holy men — the utter shipwreck of ascetics — the heresies of grave and learned teachers — the delusions in which Satan enwraps souls which he cannot on the whole separate from God. This is why Saints are so few — they drop off as they get more likely to be Saints"²⁰⁶.

Yet this threat should not dishearten anyone, for grace has been promised to those who pray for it. Newman offers two arms of defence: humility and patience. Humility to seek the counsel and the advice of others; patience that keeps a person from going too fast

²⁰⁵ *PS*, I, 79. Italics are Newman's. Cf. *PS*, IV, 44-48; *SD*, 149. These considerations by Newman on slight transgressions remind us of the doctrine of St John of the Cross, in the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, on habitual imperfections: « ...as long as the soul has this [attachment] there is no possibility that it will make progress in perfection, even though the imperfection be extremely slight. For it comes to the same thing whether a bird be held by a slender cord or by a stout one; since, even if it be slender, the bird will be as well held as though it were stout, for so long as it breaks it not and flies not away » (*The Complete Works of Saint John of the Cross, Doctor of the Church*. Translated and edited by E. Allison Peers from the critical edition of P. Silverio de Santa Teresa, C.D. London 1964, Vol. I, pp. 50-51).

²⁰⁶ P. MURRAY, *op. cit.*, p. 353. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 233.

and wishing to be perfect overnight, and thus making him willing to work on the foundations before proceeding to the heights²⁰⁷. Elsewhere Newman had told the soul that was setting out in quest of holiness, not to be disappointed at its weakness, for it had at its disposal the privileges and the grace of the matured saint. The fact that the Christian in this world is not *called* a saint does not mean that he has forfeited a right. Grace is always offered to him to advance towards 'the abiding image of Christ' and to 'the intense brightness and purity of that holiness to which we are called'²⁰⁸. Whatever about the 'duty to aim at perfection in all things under any Dispensation' Newman has no doubt about the holiness which 'Christians have pledged to them from above on their regeneration'²⁰⁹. For Christianity has offered to every baptized soul the higher ideal of being renewed in Adam's original likeness and of being transformed into the perfect image of Christ. This is our duty as Christians. As baptized members of the Church of Christ we have before us 'that perfection of the religious character, at which it is our duty ever to be aiming'²¹⁰.

What we have said above may be summed up in the following words of Newman which manifest and describe the deep spiritual life which he demanded from the Christians of his day:

"It is then the duty and the privilege of all disciples of our glorified Saviour, to be exalted and transfigured with Him; to live in heaven in their thoughts, motives, aims, desires, likings, prayers, praises, intercessions, even while they are in the flesh; to look like other men, to be busy like other men, to be passed over in the crowd of men, or even to be scorned or oppressed, as other men may be, but the while to have a secret channel of communication with the Most High, a gift the world knows not of; to have their life *hid* with Christ in God... Aspire, then, to be 'fellow-citizens of the Saints and of the household of God'. Follow their steps as they have followed Christ"²¹¹.

In our treatment of Newman's concept of perfection and its binding force on all Christians we have frequently echoed the words of the Gospels and the Letters of St Paul. In this we have simply

²⁰⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 234-5. In another context Newman recommends devotion to Our Lady as a safeguard and protection against all similar trials on the road to perfection (*Mix.*, 374-6).

²⁰⁸ *US*, 50, 49.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

²¹⁰ *PS*, VII, 250-1.

²¹¹ *PS*, VI, 214, 219.

followed the trend of Newman's own doctrine. In fact, the frequent use of New Testament quotations makes Newman's sermons in twentieth-century England a faithful echo of the exalted doctrine which the Apostle of the Gentiles proposed to the early Christians. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council have drawn on the same Gospels and the Epistles of St Paul in their *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* in order to demonstrate and clarify the call of the whole Church to holiness. The following quotation from *Lumen Gentium* gives us the genuine mind of the Church on the question of holiness and on the obligation on all Christians to strive for the perfection of charity and the full development of their baptismal gifts:

"The followers of Christ are called by God, not according to their accomplishments, but according to His own purpose and grace. They are justified in the Lord Jesus, and through baptism sought in faith they truly become sons of God and sharers in the divine nature. In this way they are really made holy. Then, too, by God's gifts they must hold on to and complete in their lives this holiness which they have received... Thus it is evident to everyone that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity"²¹².

From what we have discussed until now of Newman's teaching on this question we can readily see how attuned his thought was to that of the mind of the Church and of the New Testament.

CONCLUSION

Newman regarded christian holiness as springing essentially from the presence of grace in the soul, which means in his teaching that the Three Divine Persons of the Trinity dwell in the soul, really transforming and purifying it and communicating divine life. This marvel of God's condescension gradually takes control of the whole person, and is manifested and developed by the supernatural activity of the christian life. It is primarily an invisible reality, perceived by faith alone, and a life of faith in turn is its most characteristic expression.

Throughout Newman's writings we have noticed a continuous effort to create a harmonious balance between conflicting tensions

²¹² *Lumen Gentium*, 40. in *The Documents of Vatican II*. Edited by Walter M. Abbott, S.J. and Very Rev. Msgr. Joseph Gallagher. New York 1966, p. 67.

and principles that form part of our human existence. He aimed at the fulfilment of all human powers and capabilities in a perfect development which achieves a perfect balance and harmony of opposing and complementary forces in one and the same person: of nature and grace, the body and the soul, the temporal and the eternal, the human and the divine, the good points of the gentleman and the higher sanctity of the Gospel, the mastery of opposite virtues, and, underlying them all, the matching of moral perfection with ontological holiness. From the basic nobleness issuing from the ontological holiness imparted by baptismal regeneration, it became evident to us that every Christian by virtue of his baptism, is called to a life hidden with Christ in God, where the seed of divine life received at the moment of justification comes gradually to full maturity and the soul progresses towards the perfection of charity. It is a perfection peculiar to each particular state in life, and even more precisely, a perfection that is proper to each individual soul.

Christian perfection, then, appears as a complete, balanced and comprehensive quality. Not only is the soul to be sanctified but also the body is to be perfected with all its activities and powers. Not merely one class of virtues must be practised, but all the virtues, even opposite and seemingly contradictory ones, have to be exercised and mastered by the individual Christian.

The educated Christian has to unite in his conduct the ethos of the gentleman and the ethos of the religious and faith-guided soul. The good qualities of the philosophical gentleman are not absent from, but rather elevated and perfected in the christian gentleman. Newman did not disregard human nature but attributed due importance to it. He realized that grace does not destroy nature's talents but raises them to their destined place in God's creation.

All Christians, finally, who are in the world, have to set up in their conduct an evangelically-inspired balance between the demands of their eternal destiny and the calls of earthly duties. They have to be good citizens of society while striving to be saintly members of the Church and the New Jerusalem. They are to remain *in* the world yet are not to be *of* the world, but are to keep their mind and heart intent on the unseen world. Translated into practical terms, this means that they are to perform to perfection, and with a spirit of supernatural faith and love, the round of daily duties.

In conclusion, Newman's ideal of christian perfection has appeared as a genuine Scriptural holiness inspired essentially by the Person and teaching of Christ. He has presented to us the primitive Christianity of the New Testament, without gloss or comment or tradition of man. From his writings there emerges an ideal of a

deeply religious life in spirit and in truth; a life, above all, of obedient faith which he regarded as the standard of Gospel holiness. He saw the ideal personified in the early Christians and proposed it in its integrity to the Christians of his own day. Thus John Henry Newman taught a Gospel holiness which, in its single aspects and in the perfect harmony of all its parts in one and the same person, made the Christian the paradox which Scripture enjoins.

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