

THE BATTLE OF THE UNIVERSITIES

ALBERT BRODERICK, O.P.

"As Abbot-President [of Downside] Gasquet promoted the foundation at Cambridge of a Benedictine house of studies. . . . Long before this he had warmly supported Cardinal Vaughan in reversing the policy of Cardinal Manning, which was opposed to young Catholics going to Oxford or Cambridge."

The Times (London), obituary notice for Aidan Cardinal Gasquet, April 6, 1929.

To impress the simplicity of the Christian ideal upon un-Christian generations has been the aim of Roman pontiffs from Peter to Pius XII, and of Christian bishops from the apostle Paul of Tarsus, Timothy of Ephesus and Augustine of Hippo to Mindszenty of Hungary. Yet essential consistency often escapes the skimming glance. A divine Church and human instruments, crystal principles and groping men, ageless truth and changing cultures—concepts such as these we may well use to illuminate that unity in diversity which a contemporary English Benedictine has called history as written by the Holy Ghost.

Directly in point is the problem of higher education.

During the embattled pontificate of Pius IX and the episcopate of Cardinal Manning of Westminster (and their immediate successors) there was waged in that fragment of Victorian England which was Catholic a vigorous contest over university education. Its ultimate result is that today there is no Catholic University in all of Britain. Current American Catholic interest in higher education (cf. *Catholics in Secular Education*, Book Review *infra* pp. 266) makes the question "Why?" well worth the asking.

In that "battle" there was little disagreement as to the fundamental ideal of Christian education. Pope Pius XI in his Encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri* (1929) later expressed the standard which had long been prized by Catholics:

" . . . it is clear that there can be no true education which is not wholly directed to man's last end, and that in the present order of Providence since God has revealed Himself to us in the Person of His Only Begotten Son, who alone is 'the way, the truth and the life,' there can be no ideally perfect education which is not Christian education."

How to implement this ideal in an age of progressing and precocious science, of fervent, and sometimes arrogant rational inquiry, of confident scoffing at faith, of rampant nationalism and social unrest—this was the challenge. Two main streams of Catholic thought flowed through this Victorian age. For one the first task of the Church was the establishment of the supremacy of the papacy and the reestablishment of the primacy of faith. The other would emphasize the restoration of the Catholic intellect to 13th century proportions (with an added 19th century content), and the reconciliation of faith with reason and with the new science of the age. To our day Pope Pius and Cardinal Manning have come to symbolize the first; Pope Leo XIII and Cardinal Newman, the other. This is an oversimplification, understandable, but still a surface view. The scholastic revival actually commenced under Pio Nono; and the prestige and authority of *Ecclesia Docens* scaled a lofty eminence in the Leonine Encyclical *Immortale Dei* (1885).* There was nothing anti-intellectual about Manning; and none held obedience to ecclesiastical authority more sacred than did Newman.**

I. BACKGROUND FOR CONFLICT

An appreciation of the narrow lines of combat within which the issue was joined calls for a preliminary consideration of the mid-19th century European scene, of the currents of continental Catholicism, and of the Catholic body and spirit in England, then but recently reawakened and having, in Newman's phrase, "a second spring."

Continental Europe

This century knew the raging flames of Ultramontanism vs. Gallicanism in France, and its counterpart in Germany; Garibaldi and Mazzini and the rise of nationalism in Italy; the papal dislodgement from Rome in 1848 and restoration by the great powers in the following year; the end of the temporal power of the papacy in 1870. It was the century of the Syllabus of Errors of Pope Pius IX (1864),

* "It is to the Church that God has assigned the charge of seeing to, and legislating for, all that concerns religion; of teaching all nations; of spreading the Christian faith as widely as possible; in short, of administering freely and without hindrance, in accordance with her own judgement, all matters that fall within its competence." *Immortale Dei* (11).

** "It does not seem to me courage to run counter to constituted superiors—they have the responsibility and to them we must leave it." Newman to Acton, June 1861, quoted in Ward, Wilfrid, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, Longmans, Green & Co., Vol. I, p. 524.

and of the scholastic revival. Finally it was the century of the Vatican Council (1869-70). This was the mighty conclave—the first since Trent—which would pronounce as faith that God's existence could be discovered by reason, the absolute supremacy of the papacy within the Church, and papal infallibility in *ex cathedra* statements on faith and morals.

Currents of Catholic Thought

From France had come the first signs of a new Catholic apologetic to assist men from the ruins caused by the excesses of the previous century. It called for a rallying of Catholics behind the Pope (Ultramontanism), and a turning away from a 'local' Catholicism (Gallicanism) in which the main power was often wielded by the reigning sovereigns through friendly bishops. Ultramontanism in France from De Maistre, through Lacordaire, Montalambert and Ozanam, united love of freedom and patient attention to the scientific questions of the age, with an intense devotion to the papacy.

In Germany, at least in the so-called Munich school of Dollinger and Mohler, the Catholic intellectual party was not so hospitable to papal direction. This group hoisted a banner of "Liberal Catholicism" which

". . . took the form of an intense faith in scientific freedom, and a somewhat revolutionary campaign on behalf of the reformation of Catholic theology in the light of fashionable hypotheses in history as well as in physics."¹

Its activities subsequently provoked a formal censure of the Holy See after the Munich Congress of 1863.

English Catholicism at Mid-Century

Queen Elizabeth I, in 1559, had imprisoned those members of the Catholic hierarchy who would not take the Oath of Supremacy. Only one bishop took the oath; three others escaped from the country. From that year to 1621 there was no Catholic bishop in England. In 1688 the Holy See divided the country into four vicariates apostolic, with a "missionary" bishop over each. Catholic Emancipation did not come until 1829. In 1840 the number of vicariates was increased to eight. Finally, on September 29, 1850, the diocesan hierarchy was restored to England—with thirteen separate sees. On the following day Bishop Wiseman of the See of Westminster was created a Cardinal, the Metropolitan of England.

¹ Ward, *op. cit.*, I, 460.

Throughout the century England remained in the status of a missionary country, and therefore continued, until the time of St. Pius X, under the direction of the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fidei*—popularly referred to as “Propaganda.”*

By 1850 the main force of the Oxford Movement within the Church of England had largely spent itself. Under the recognized leadership of Newman, with Keble and Pusey only slightly less influential, this group had unsuccessfully attempted to reverse the trend against doctrine within the Established Church, and to promote Anglo-Catholicism as a *Via Media* between Roman Catholicism and dedoctrinized Protestantism. The wave of clerical conversions to Catholicism was now over. Many former Anglicans were now active within the Roman fold—Newman since 1845, William G. Ward, T. W. Allies, and Faber among many. They were joined in 1850 by a former rising Anglican Archdeacon, Henry Edward Manning.

Under the sponsorship of Bishop Ullathorne of Birmingham** Newman had established an Oratory (the Congregation of St. Philip Neri) in that city. Another Oratory, an independent offshoot from Birmingham, would soon spring up in London and presently would come under the leadership of Father Faber. W. G. Ward, the early Oxford disciple of Newman's, now a “lay theologian” in high favor with the episcopacy, would soon be editor of the *Dublin Review*, a Catholic journal of slender circulation and weighty opinion, whose presiding genius from its founding in 1836 had been Cardinal Wiseman. Another convert, Monsignor Talbot, was Wiseman's eyes and ears at Rome, and would later be Manning's.

Oxford, which Newman loved to say “made us Catholics” was by 1850 neither High Church, nor Low Church, but in the hands of the Latitudinarians. Non-conformists and agnostics of the mark of

* *The English Catholics, 1850-1950*, a series of splendid essays edited by Bishop Beck of Brentwood, is a centenary commemoration of the restoration. For the historical data in the above paragraph acknowledgement is due to Father Albion's essay “The Restoration of the Hierarchy,” pp. 86-115 in that volume.

In another centenary essay, “The English Catholics in 1850,” Father Philip Hughes, estimated that there are approximately 680,000 Catholics (826 priests) in England and Wales in 1851; with but 590 churches and chapels (186,111 “sittings”). The 99 Catholic schools could care for 7,760 pupils. By 1874 there were 1484 schools, handling 100,372.

** Ullathorne was later Propaganda's choice to succeed Cardinal Wiseman at Westminster. Pope Pius IX made a personal selection—Manning. Hughes in *English Catholics op. cit.*, p. 213, Father Hughes calls Ullathorne “surely the greatest of the 90 bishops whose lives make up the first century of the restored hierarchy.” (p. 75).

Matthew Arnold, Benjamin Jowett, Huxley and John Stuart Mill were preparing the intellectual atmosphere that was to welcome Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859.*

Within the Catholic fold two hostile intellectual camps would soon look across at each other from barbed trenches. In one Manning, "Ultramontane" Ward and Monsignor Talbot (in Rome) would be preeminent. The other was a curious, brilliant, somewhat pathetic school of lay apologetes led by Sir John (later Lord) Acton, and Richard Simpson, an Angelican minister convert. Their vigorous and often irreverent** lay activities which paralleled so closely the Munich school of Dollinger in their hostility to papal overlordship, were chiefly conducted in Catholic reviews—the *Rambler* and its successor, the *Home and Foreign Review*. But Acton later extended his campaign to the very floor of the Vatican Council, in opposition to the declaration of papal infallibility. Newman would find himself often between these trenches. His biographer, Wilfrid Ward, son of W. G. Ward, later assessed Newman's orientation:

"In the *Apologia* he [Newman] had expressed his 'enthusiastic concurrence with the attitude of such 'Liberal' Catholics as Lacordaire and Montalambert, whom he held to be 'before their time'. With regard to the 'liberalism' of Acton and his friends his concurrence was far more limited. But he sympathised with their avowed programme of approaching religious problems with a mind keenly alive to the thought and science of the day."²

In France "Ultramontane" and "Liberal" had been two sides of the same icon. In England—as at Munich—they were at opposite pillars. Few but Newman would venture between.

The Chief Figures

All these men would play large parts in the drama which was

*" . . . in a celebrated paper—*A Form of Infidelity of the Day* . . . 1854 . . . Newman described the policy towards theology which the new infidelity would adopt; never to attack theology, rather to ignore it, to 'bypass' it, as we might say, and to raise up against it rival intellectual interests." Father Philip Hughes in *English Catholics op. cit.*, p. 5.

** This irreverence often grieved Newman and forced his crackling prose: "And further, I must, though it will pain you, speak out. I despair of Simpson being other than he is. He will always be clever, amusing, brilliant and suggestive. He will always be flicking his whip at Bishops, cutting them in tender places, throwing stones at Sacred Congregations, and, as he rides along the high road, discharging peashooters at Cardinals who happen by bad luck to look out of the window." Newman to Acton, January 1861, quoted Ward, *op. cit.*, I, 524.

² Ward, *op. cit.*, I, 472.

to follow. But astride this Catholic age like two giants were Manning, who would not succeed Cardinal Wiseman until 1866, and Newman. So often did they rub that the saying was that though the Catholic Church was big enough to contain them both, England was too small.

What a superb contrast they made! Manning, the ecclesiastical autocrat, with his sure sense of mission. Newman, the gentle, sometimes irritable scholar, clear in thought yet ever puzzling out his true role. Manning the doer, the diplomat skilled among princes of church and state. Newman the prophet sensing that his own destiny was to temporal failures. Still Manning was, in his style, a prophet—a conscious precursor of the social encyclicals of Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI, an early and vigorous advocate of Irish Home Rule. And Newman, of course, had never shunned activity. At Oxford before his conversion he had been the most celebrated preacher in England. As a Catholic he sipped public failure to the dregs.

Failure—which Manning rarely tasted—indeed cruelly dogged Newman after his conversion—the humiliation of the Achilli trial, the seven frustrating years foredoomed, as Rector (without power) of the infant Catholic University in Dublin; the cloud cast over him in Rome for an article on infallibility in the *Rambler* and for his misunderstood mediations between the Ultramontane party and Acton and Simpson.

Yet there was much that was common to them. They shared an unspeakable loyalty to the papacy, a keen historical sense, a rich and mellow spirituality. In somewhat different ways each was stirred by a deep consciousness of Providence. Newman perhaps was dazzled in its glare. For Manning it seemed to cast a beam within which he moved with bold and confident strokes. Each had his way with men. Manning's was a steely charm. He won over his bishops, who had been largely hostile on his appointment as Metropolitan as a personal choice of Pius IX from outside the episcopal ranks. Newman's ways were winsome and understanding with his friends and associates. He had blind spots. Manning was one of them.

"I knew Manning best," said Cardinal Barnabo, the Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda, "but I loved Newman." Manning's biographer, Sir Shane Leslie, writes:

"Out of their rivalry and suffering the strength and progress of the Church was moulded in England. Newman had to bear the balking of his schemes, and Manning had to endure to read on every brick thrown at him by his critics the sacred initials 'J.H.N.'"³

³ Leslie, *Cardinal Manning*, P. J. Kenedy & Sons, p. 120.

II. THE UNIVERSITY PROBLEM

How were English Catholics to be given their higher education? Should there be a separate Catholic University? Or should there be established Catholic colleges at the existing universities, Oxford and Cambridge? Or should Catholics be permitted to attend the established secular colleges at these universities?

Oxford and Cambridge Universities were, from their medieval foundations, communities of separate colleges. Each college was distinct in its traditions, customs and in its physical entity, sharing with the others a common educational facility. Newman had been a student and scholar at Trinity College, Oxford. Manning was next door at Balliol, and later a fellow at Merton.

The Decks Cleared for Acton (1864)

When the bishops of England gathered for their Eastertide meeting of 1864, the question of higher education was on their agenda. First choice of all the bishops, and of Newman, had been a separate Catholic University. The Dublin failure was still fresh when the abolition of the religious oaths at Oxford and Cambridge and the increased pressure of the laity brought about consideration by the bishops of the other two alternatives. They were promptly disposed of.

The bishops passed one resolution against establishing a Catholic College, and another discouraging attendance of Catholics at Oxford and Cambridge. But since there was to be no Catholic College, it was determined not to circulate the second resolution.

Newman's First Rebuff on Oxford

In August of 1864 Newman had an opportunity to acquire five acres of land in Oxford. Bishop Ullathorne obligingly offered Birmingham the mission at Oxford, which the Jesuit Fathers had discontinued five years before. In October of that year, Newman was enthusiastic, (though Ullathorne indicated his opposition to a hall or college developing out of the mission). With money raised by friends, he purchased the land. He was concerned that "young Catholics must be seen to." In November of that year he wrote "I go (to Oxford) primarily and directly to take care of the Catholic youth who are beginning to go there, and are in Protestant colleges." His circular letter, enclosing the invitation of his bishop, was already among his friends in November of that year, when significant opposition to his going to Oxford, even as part of a mission, became apparent. A visit of Newman to Cardinal Wiseman found the prelate strangely cool.

Machinery had already been placed in operation to thwart Newman's return to Oxford. The basis was apparently not personal, but fierce opposition had developed to "mixed education." W. G. Ward thundered against it in the *Dublin Review*, and privately warned Monsignor Talbot, in Rome. Monsignor Manning was its bitter enemy, as were Bishop Grant (of Southwark) and Monsignor (later Cardinal) Vaughan, "When Vaughan went to Rome as the ambassador of a party, he found ears ready enough to listen to him at Propaganda."⁴ Propaganda had stomached a full diet of the evils of "mixed education" at the continental national universities which had been centers of the anti-Catholic reaction throughout Europe. At their December meeting in 1864 the Bishops unanimously resolved to dissuade parents from sending their sons to the Universities, and communicated their decision to the Holy See. In February of 1865 Propaganda confirmed the bishops' decision, and exhorted them "to perfect Catholic education." The following month the ruling was set forth in a circular letter to their clergy. There was still to be no public pronouncement.

Newman had raised the funds to buy the land in Oxford "solely for the sake of the Catholics in the colleges." He now considered that problem settled. There were to be no Catholics there. With Ullathorne's permission and a breath of prophetic resignation he dropped his Oxford mission plan: ". . . we are in a transition time and must wait patiently, though of course the tempest will last through our day."⁵

Newman's Second Purchase and Final Rebuff (1865-66)

The year 1864 had been a great one for Newman. Reeling from the misfortunes which had pursued him following his conversion, a vicious personal attack upon his motivation in late 1863 and early 1864 by Charles Kingsley, a Protestant clergyman, completely backfired. Newman became fairly a hero to his Catholic brethren* and he was encouraged to write his *Apologia*. Published in 1864, it was so well received that his importance to the Church in England seemed

* Archbishop David Matthew writes: "His English co-religionists were riveted to Newman by the attack made by Kingsley in 1864. Suffering, and especially public suffering, formed a link between Newman and the men who did not forget the proscribed centuries. This was a bond that Manning always lacked." *English Catholics, op. cit.*, 235.

⁴ Ward, *op. cit.*, II, 64.

⁵ Ward, *op. cit.*, II, 69.

at a new high. His reply in December 1865 to Pusey's attack on Catholic devotions was respectfully received by a large audience.

In early 1866 the new Oxford mission was again offered to the Birmingham Oratory and Newman was invited by Bishop Ullathorne to build a church and Oratory there. New land was bought, a new circular written by Newman enclosing the Bishop's letter, and widely distributed. In February of 1866 a new Archbishop had come to Westminster, Henry Edward Manning—determined to brook no leaks in the firm seawall against mixed education. He moved firmly. Newman himself had recognized "my going there must tend to bring Catholics there." Propaganda needed little priming on this subject from Manning. But Newman's friends too were active. The Holy Father himself was apparently called upon to decide whether the Oratory mission at Oxford might be established. A compromise was achieved—unknown to Newman. Permission would be given to go ahead with the Oratory's mission at Oxford, but Bishop Ullathorne was provided with a "secret instruction" that the mission was *not* to include Newman. If the possibility should arise that Newman would plan to reside in Oxford, the Bishop should advise him of the prohibition of the Holy See *blande suaviterque*—which one biographer engagingly translates as "in the gentlest manner in the world."⁶

The news of the secret instruction came to Newman not directly from his Bishop, but, unhappily, through a press leak from Rome. This unofficial channel hissed an innuendo—that the instruction of the Holy See was no mere opposition to mixed education, but to Newman's theological unsoundness. The fascinating details of Newman's subsequent vindication by Cardinal Cullen of Dublin, who had reviewed his writings at the request of Pope Pius IX, his invitation to attend the Vatican Council as a theologian, and his enrollment in the Sacred College by Pope Leo XIII are well known, and are not part of this story. But his active role in the Battle of the Universities was at an end. He permitted himself only an occasional whisper from the wings.

Solemn Warning (1867)

Propaganda and Archbishop Manning, their minds as one, were moving further against "mixed education" even as Newman was

⁶ May, *Cardinal Newman*, 227. Newman's associate, Father Ambrose St. John, later reported to him from Rome: "It was the Pope himself who had insisted on the special condition . . . as his [Newman's] going to Oxford would give too much weight to the position of Catholics there, and inevitably encourage Catholic students to go. This the Holy Father could not make himself a party to." Ward, *op. cit.*, II, 161.

being dislodged as an incidental obstruction. In April of 1867 the Bishops met and again decided not to publish the Propaganda letter of February 1865 (dissuading University attendance) but to instruct their priests to carry out its provisions. In August of 1867 came a new reiterating rescript from Propaganda from which the bishops were to prepare pastoral letters. And still, as Newman pointed out in a letter to a mother seeking his advice:

“. . . there is no command, no prohibition in the the Propaganda rescript. . . . And this, on purpose. The Pope might have prohibited youth from going to Oxford had he been so minded, but he has not done so. . . .

“What then is the message if not a prohibition? It is the greatest of dissuasions. It throws all the responsibility of the act upon those who send a youth to Oxford. It is an authoritative solemn warning.”⁷

Wilfrid Ward summarizes the effect of the 1867 rescript, which was to be the operative document until 1895:

“. . . it was clear that the Catholic young men as a body would now keep away from the Universities.”⁸

Holding the Line (1868-74)

The effect of the two decisions—no separate Catholic University and no Catholics to be permitted at Oxford or Cambridge—was to Newman a form of “nihilism.” The next 15 years (1867-82) was a period of constant tugging. There was already pressure (from Propaganda) for the foundation of a Catholic University, the Dublin experience notwithstanding. This possibility was reconsidered at the Bishop’s meeting of 1868 and 1869, but nothing was done. The meeting of 1871, following the Vatican Council, led to the appointment by the bishop of a committee to consider the question of higher education. To Manning’s annoyance there was substantial support in 1871 on this special committee, which included bishops, heads of colleges and superiors of religious orders, for the founding of a Catholic college or hall at the existing universities. The bishops meeting of 1872 which received the subcommittee report was restless. Under the prodding of Bishop Ullathorne there was sentiment for reopening the question concerning a Catholic College at Oxford or Cambridge,

⁷ Newman to Lady Simeon, November 1867, quoted Ward, *op. cit.*, II, 192.

⁸ Ward, *op. cit.*, 195.

“It became the accepted doctrine that only a bishop was competent . . . to declare that one of his subjects might attend Oxford or Cambridge without incurring grievous sin.” H. O. Evennett, “Catholics and the Universities, 1850-1950,” included in *English Catholics, op. cit.*, 299. To this fine study this article owes a large debt.

or at least for making preliminary inquiry of the University authorities as to its feasibility from their standpoint. Manning seems to have headed off this move by proposing that they first seek guidance from Rome. Propaganda was accordingly advised of the discussion at the meeting and that the removal of the final religious tests in 1871 would now permit Catholics to be members of the governing body of the universities. The Congregation was unimpressed and again directed further consideration of a separate Catholic University.

Manning's unflinching views are described by his biographer:

Manning was inexorable in keeping the Universities under ban. By 1872 only eight Catholics dared his displeasure. . . . A decade later there were only four English among the Catholics at Oxford, but they all came to the sacraments. Manning was implacable.⁹

The Kensington Experience (1874-82)

Almost single-handed in 1874, Manning drove to create a Catholic University—at Kensington, a suburb of London. The college was moved four years later and mercifully abandoned in 1882 as “a distinct failure.” A prominent English educational authority refers to “the high tributes to its teaching paid by able men who passed through it, such as Abbot Cuthbert Butler of Downside and Wilfrid Ward.”¹⁰ He shares, however, the conclusions of a biographer of the Archdiocese of Westminster as to why “it was wrecked”:

“Newman was left out of it; the Religious Orders who wielded a paramount influence educationally were excluded from it; the old Catholics never accepted it and frequently sought and obtained from their bishops and even from the Pope dispensations to send their sons to the older universities; the Bishops themselves stood aloof and were finally, on financial grounds, hostile.¹¹

Mounting Pressures (1882-94)

The alternatives now narrowed as pressure increased in the 1880's against the ban on the Universities. The work of the Vatican Council had given a new self-assurance to the Church. It was suggested that the high water mark of rationalism and atheism at the Universities may have been past.* Lay Catholics prominent in public

⁹ Leslie, *op. cit.*, 79.

¹⁰ H. O. Evennett in *English Catholics, op. cit.*, 303.

¹¹ Rev. Gordon Wheeler, “The Archdiocese of Westminster,” in *English Catholics, op. cit.*, 159.

* “Most important of all, at Oxford and Cambridge themselves the intellectual air was calmer [in the '80's]. There was less open hostility to Christianity, and liberal criticism was less aggressive.” Evennett, *op. cit.*, 304. But compare Newman's earlier warning (footnote 2, *supra*).

and Catholic life — even such pillars of orthodoxy as the Duke of Norfolk and T. W. Allies, the powerhouse of the Catholic Schools Committee, began urging reconsideration. In 1887 the Duke enrolled his nephew, James Hope, at Oxford (with the approval of his bishop), and so informed the Cardinal. Manning was polite, but unbending:

“Every personal feeling I have is and always has been powerfully, and perhaps more powerfully than in most men, on the side of sending Catholic youth to Oxford. But every conviction I have as a Catholic and for the Catholic Church in England, confirmed by all I have learned and seen in eight-and-thirty years, compels me to suppress all personal feeling.”¹²

As a Balliol man he would indulge his personal feeling by sending, in 1889, a copy of St. Thomas to his old Oxford college. As metropolitan of England Oxford remained out of bounds for his flock.

In 1882 Bishop Hedley of Newport and some lay supporters of the universities had presented a memorandum against the ban in an audience with the new Pope, Leo XIII. The Pope then asked all the English bishops for their views. In 1885 the new Prefect of Propaganda reminded the bishops that the rescript of 1867 was still in full force. Manning’s Easter pastoral of 1885 returned to the subject with all his old zest.

In 1888 there was founded a Newman Society for Catholic undergraduates at Oxford. The mounting anxiety among the English laity and bishops was making its mark on Rome. Monsignor Vaughan reported to Manning in late 1890:

“I find from Cardinal Simeoni that the University Question was on the eve of a general discussion. Your old letters had been brought out, and everything looked favorable for a solution when the Pope ordered the subject to be laid aside. The Duke, the Bishop of Southwark, and, I believe, of Clifton has intervened.”¹³

A month later Vaughan again wrote to the Cardinal:

“I tried the Pope on Oxford and Cambridge, but he would not. His policy is to do nothing that might displease the powers, and he thinks a decision against the Protestant Universities might, especially as we have no Catholic University and he lets Catholics frequent the Italian University in Rome.”¹⁴

¹² Leslie, *op. cit.*, 212.

¹³ Leslie, *op. cit.*, 213.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Newman by now (December, 1890) was dead. Manning outlived him but 17 months. New principals moved onto the scene.

A New Metropolitan (1892)

The new Archbishop of Westminster, Herbert, Cardinal Vaughan, had been Manning's intimate and confidant. A scholar who has recently examined the question writes:

"There is, however, every evidence that right up to the very eve of the change (in 1895), Vaughan's determination not to abandon Manning's principles remained firm and unaltered. The universities—he believed—were centers of infidelity and worldliness. No social or worldly advantages could offset this."¹⁵

Yet Cardinal Vaughan noted that in recent years the bishop's permissions had greatly increased. Privately compiled statistics showed that whereas from 1867 to 1887 there were 47 Catholics in Oxford, in the following seven years there were 100. Either a firm restatement of the ban was in order, or the ban should be lifted. Some feared the Cardinal's preference would be for the former. In 1894 he refused permission for a summer school of Catholic elementary school teachers in Oxford, over the head of Bishop Ilsey of Birmingham who had previously approved it.

The Reversal (1894-95)

Events now moved swiftly. In June, 1894, the Duke of Norfolk, always extremely close to Vaughan, had called a meeting of interested laity which led to the preparation of a petition to the bishops to withdraw the ban on the universities. The petition, "ably and tactfully" drawn up, emphasized changed circumstances at the universities, lack of educational opportunities for Catholics, and need of safeguards for those Catholics who were at the universities. Originally it was intended for lay signatures only. As presented to the bishops it listed 436 signatories, of which 80 were priests.

In September of that year Vaughan indicated to Bishop Hedley that he was "prepared to advocate a solution." In January, 1895, the bishops "by a good majority" decided to petition the Holy See for the change. On March 26 the proposal was accepted by Propaganda and the following week approved by Pope Leo XIII. Two weeks later the approvals were communicated to Cardinal Vaughan.

Two conditions were stipulated in the approval of the Holy See.

1. No individual was to be permitted to benefit from the toleration

¹⁵ Evennett, *op. cit.*, 306.

unless he had a sound Catholic upbringing and was personally suited for the university. 2. Compulsory lecture courses were to be given in philosophy, history and religion by Catholic professors. The bishops were to apply the latter directive in the form of weekly conferences. In addition, special chaplaincies for the undergraduates were established.

Subsequent Developments (1894)

Despite the note of judicious caution which the hierarchy at first appended to the announcement, the university gates, once ajar, fairly burst inwards. Almost immediately after Propaganda's announcement the Jesuit Fathers announced the intention of founding Campion Hall at Oxford. The next year (1896) they were followed by the Benedictines of Ampleforth. The Benedictines of Downside soon established St. Edmund's Hall at Cambridge. A certain opposition developed among the bishops to these establishments, but in 1896 Rome gave explicit approval on the condition that the clerical students live under strict ecclesiastical discipline. Capuchins and Salesians (at Oxford), and Franciscans, Christian Brothers (Irish and De La Salle) and Rosminian Fathers (at Cambridge), later established houses for university study. Mr. Evennett makes reference to a later foundation (of 1921):

... the return to Oxford of the Dominican house of provincial studies has exercised a powerful influence on Catholicism in the University."¹⁶

III. EPILOGUE—ENGLISH HIGHER EDUCATION TODAY

The contemporary problem of Catholics in England with respect to higher education is no longer simply a matter of Oxford and Cambridge. There is, as we have seen, still no Catholic University. In his Centenary Essay, H. O. Evennett attributes this situation:

"... partly to the comparative poverty of Catholic intellectual resources and the lack of coordination among them, partly to the mishandling of the attempts to found a Catholic University College in the later decades of the 19th century, and partly also to lack of incentive, seeing that during the last fifty years the ecclesiastical toleration of Catholics going to Oxford and Cambridge... has developed de facto into definite approval and positive encouragement."¹⁷

The same author estimates that there are some 4200 Catholic univer-

¹⁶ Evennett, *op. cit.*, 313.

¹⁷ Evennett, *op. cit.*, 290.

sity students in England and Wales, of which only 800 are at Oxford and Cambridge, with perhaps 2000 at London University. The growth following World War I, of the provincial universities parallels the earlier expansion of higher education in the United States. As of 1950, there were 18 Catholic chaplains in the provincial universities, each appointed by the local bishop. A post-World War II development is the Newman Association of Catholic graduates of secular Universities, which grew from 70 in 1942 to 1500 in 1950. An estimated 150 Catholics are professors or lecturers at British Universities. Evennett concludes:

“. . . it is difficult to imagine a general retreat from the existing universities on the part of Catholics in general; and the idea of a full Catholic University to which all English Catholics desirous or deserving of a university education would normally go, would seem in any foreseeable future for England . . . Platonic.”¹⁸

IV. IN RETROSPECT

“And he himself gave some men as apostles, and some as prophets, others again as evangelists, and others as pastors and teachers [*doctores*] in order to perfect the saints for a work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” Ephes. 4: 11-12.

Can the historical development of the problem of higher education for Catholics be accounted a vindication of Newman and a rebuke of Manning?

St. Thomas describes these offices in the Church, referred to in the above words of St. Paul, as spiritual gifts of Christ and shows how St. Paul is revealing their three proximate effects. The first effect is in the officeholders themselves that they “may minister to God and to their neighbors.” The other two effects are in those who receive the fruits from the hands of the ministers—both (1) the believers, those already baptized—the “saints”*; and (2) those still outside the fold—“for building up the body of Christ.”**

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 321.

* “In another way as to the perfection of those already believers, . . . that is, of those who are already sanctified through the faith of Christ” *Super Epistolam S. Pauli ad Ephesios*, Cap. IV, Lect. IV, 214.

** “Thirdly with respect to the conversion of unbelievers; and as to this he says ‘in the building up of the body of Christ’ [*in aedificationem Corporis Christi*], that is in order that there might be converted unbelievers, from among whom is built up the church of Christ, which is his body.” *Ibid.*

Manning the Prelate

It is not that St. Paul envisioned that these two latter effects necessarily would be imparted by separate ministers. Yet he goes on to point out that the sanctification of the faithful takes first place in the mission of a prelate: "For prelates ought specially to direct themselves to lead those who are subjected to them to the state of perfection."

To Manning, holding the mitre, this consideration was ever foremost. Knowing the temper of his age, sensing as lethal the lunges of Liberal Catholicism, and

"... not satisfied that the Catholic young were sufficiently protected to resist the blandishments of free thought and religious 'liberalism' then flourishing at the Universities, he opposed the entry of Catholic undergraduates."¹⁹

To Manning the supreme issue of his day was the utter demolition of Gallicanism and of Liberal Catholicism, and the solid unification of the Church behind the papacy. His concept of pastoral duty would accept no less. "Pius IX reconciled the whole Episcopate to himself," Manning wrote near the end. "The Bishops of the whole Church no longer rest upon Sovereigns, but upon the Vicar of Our Lord." The Faith secure, the Pope supreme—after the Vatican Council had resolved the issue—the way was then open for the now intensified Vatican-sponsored intellectual revival so long cherished by Newman. Thomism was sponsored by Pope Leo XIII as the intellectual underpinning of theology, the Vatican library was opened to historians, biblical studies were encouraged. And in the course of these events "mixed education" became permitted in England. It is noteworthy that when so-called Modernism, that "synthesis of all heresies" (St. Pius X), produced a crisis in the Church which St. Pius X struck down with a mighty blow, there were "no qualms" among Catholics in the English Universities. The principle of papal supremacy had been firmly established. Manning had done his work well.

Newman the Builder

If Manning the "pastor" looked first to his flock, Newman the "teacher," the apologete, may be seen chiefly in this other role of "conversion," of "building up the body of Christ." Like St. Thomas before him he saw the way in the glory of the Christian intellect, operating under the guidance of faith:

¹⁹ Slessor, Sir Henry, Preface to Leslie, *op. cit.*, xv.

"He who believes Revelation with the absolute faith which is the prerogative of a Catholic, is not the nervous creature who starts at every sound and is fluttered by every strange and novel appearance which meets his eye. . . ."20

He was not to be alone. From Rome in 1879 came Pope Leo XIII's clarion call to the Christian intellect—the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*:

" . . . nothing was of greater use to the philosopher than diligently to search into the mysteries of nature and to be earnest in the study of physical things."(30)

and, in exhorting the restoration of "the golden wisdom of St. Thomas,"

"We hold that every word of wisdom, every useful thing by whomsoever discovered or planned, ought to be received with a willing and grateful mind." (31)

Would Newman the doctor have viewed with a contented eye the Catholic educational scheme in England today—or in America with over half its Catholic college students, and 600 to 700 Newman Clubs at secular universities?

Wilfrid Ward reminds us that

" . . . the Oxford scheme was never Newman's ideal. It was a concession to the necessities of the hour. His ideal scheme, alike for the education of the young and for the necessary intellectual defense of Christianity, had consistently been the erection of a large Catholic University like Louvain."21

Such a program he had attempted to effect at the call of the bishops in Catholic Ireland: "I want the intellectual layman to be religious," he had said in his first University Lecture at Dublin, "and the devout ecclesiastic to be intellectual."22

In 1867 when the possibility was still alive of his opening the mission church at Oxford he had written a friend:

" . . . I will tell you my own opinion on the matter. . . . If I had my will, I would have a large Catholic University, as I hoped might have been set up in Dublin when I went there. But I hold this to be a speculative perfection which cannot be carried out in practice—and then comes the question what is to be done under the circumstances."

20 Newman, *Idea of a University*, 465-6.

21 Ward, *op. cit.*, II, 50.

22 Ward, *op. cit.*, I, 395.

"Under the circumstances"—here it was, his great disagreement with Manning. They shared the same ideal stated two generations later by a great teaching Pope:

"It is therefore as important to make no mistake in education as it is to make no mistake in the pursuit of the last end, with which the whole work of education is intimately and necessarily connected."²³

Yet so certain was Newman of the deChristianization of non-Catholic England that he could not abide abandoning to the secularists the watering of the intellectual hills. Newman would further concede in this same letter of 1867, "that Oxford is a very dangerous place to faith and morals. This I grant." He immediately added:

". . . but then I say that all places are dangerous—the world is dangerous. I do not believe that Oxford is more dangerous than Woolwich, than the army, than London—and I think you cannot keep young men under glass cases."²⁴

Not all in England today agree that the result reached has been a happy one. Father John LaFarge, S.J., in his recent autobiography recalled his English visit of 1938:

"Splendid work was being done by the Church at Oxford and Cambridge under conditions vastly more congenial than those I had experienced at Harvard, or which exist at the average American secular institution . . . nevertheless, talking in London to scholarly men like Father Philip Hughes, and Richard O'Sullivan . . . I found a distinct regret that Britain lacked a Catholic college or a Catholic university. With such a nucleus and rallying point, they thought, the position of the church today in Britain would be considerably stronger."²⁵

Even if the present outlook in England did offer a real alternative to permissive "mixed" university education, some Catholics would undoubtedly consider the price of abandonment of the secular education to the seculars higher than ever today.* Bishop Beck of Brentwood recently wrote:

²³ Encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri* (Pope Pius XI, 1929).

²⁴ Ward, *op. cit.*, II, 136.

²⁵ LaFarge, Rev. John, S.J., *The Manner is Ordinary*, Harcourt Brace & Co., 257.

* Cf. Father Gordon Albion in *English Catholics op. cit.*, 160, comments on the reversal decision of 1894: "One can only feel that this was the wisest decision and unless it had been taken Catholic influence could never have leavened the English universities in the way that it has in the twentieth century."

"The process of de-Christianization which Newman foresaw so clearly has continued with gathering momentum. Doctrine is at a discount and with its disappearance the inevitable disintegration in morals has taken place."²⁶

In his introduction to Leslie's life of Cardinal Manning Sir Henry Slessor pondered the imponderable "Where would Manning stand today?"

"Today, when the Faith has become, perhaps, the most practised religion in England, and increasingly people of good will are looking to the Church for guidance and protection, it may be that he would have taken a different course [on higher education], for Manning was a realist and faced varying situations with no rigid preconceived solutions: only in the matter of the Faith was he inflexible."²⁷

²⁶ *English Catholics, op. cit.*, 609.

²⁷ Slessor, *op. cit.*, xv.

"Perfect schools are the result not so much of good methods as of good teachers, teachers who are thoroughly prepared and well-grounded in the matter they have to teach; who possess the intellectual and moral qualifications required by their important office; who cherish a pure and holy love for the youths confided to them, because they love Jesus Christ and His Church, of which these are the children of predilection; and who have therefore sincerely at heart the true good of family and country."

Pope Pius XI, Christian Education
of Youth, Dec. 31, 1929.