

- Perspective* (London: SCM, 1965).
- 11 Bonhoeffer, *Letters*, 282.
 - 12 Bonhoeffer, *Letters*, 286.
 - 13 John A.T. Robinson, *Honest to God* (London: SCM, 1963).
 - 14 Harvey Cox, *The Secular City. Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (London: SCM, 1965).
 - 15 Hanfried Müller, *Von der Kirche zur Welt. Ein Beitrag zu der Bedeutung des Wortes Gottes auf die societas in Dietrich Bonhoeffers theologischer Entwicklung* (Hamburg: Herbert Reich Evangelischer Verlag, 1966).

John Henry Newman's Adoption of Baptismal Regeneration, and the Relative Importance of John Bird Sumner, Richard Mant and William Beveridge to his Development

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The Context of the Discussion

The commonly accepted opinion of Newman's adoption of the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration and rejection of Calvinism follows his account in the *Apologia* that it was Hawkins' gift, in 1824, of

the "Treatise on Apostolical Preaching," by Sumner, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, from which I learned to give up my remaining Calvinism, and to receive the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.¹

This statement in the *Apologia* is based upon a journal entry of August 1824:

Lately I have been thinking much on the subject of grace, regeneration &c. and reading Sumner's Apostolical Preaching, which Hawkins has given me. Sumner's book threatens to drive me either into Calvinism, or baptismal regeneration, and I wish to steer clear of both, at least in preaching.

Undoubtedly, the *Apologia* continues to be an invaluable insight into the religious development of its author, but yet we need to be aware of its tendency to pass over the details of what was a very complicated and lengthy development.

Newman divides his spiritual journey into four broad phases: Evangelical, Liberal, Apostolical, and lastly Roman Catholic. This has the great advantage that the broad sweep of his brush portrays the dynamic of his pilgrimage towards a definite goal, but this is at the expense of some of the background to significant changes in his life, for neither the Evangelical nor the Liberal stages of his progress were entirely unmixed with other strands of thought. In particular, the *Apologia* does not do justice to the whole spectrum of influences to which he was subject before he went up to Oxford.

It also seems that many have failed to appreciate the nuances in Newman's statement of his conversion to Baptismal Regeneration, oversimplifying a process which had taken some years, and in which a significant part had been played by both Richard Mant and William Beveridge. At the very least, they prepared the way for Newman to accept the doctrine.

What Newman says in the *Apologia* is that it was with Sumner's help that he learned to give up his "remaining Calvinism." This carries the clear implication that his Calvinism, such as it was, had already been diminished when he read Sumner in 1824.

There is no doubt at all that Sumner's book, *Apostolical Preaching considered in an Examination of St. Paul's Epistles*, was written to refute the Calvinistic doctrines of special grace and the need for a conscious conversion, in order to replace them by the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration. Sumner maintains that "our Church considers Baptism as conveying regeneration," "that grace sufficient to salvation is given to all who are dedicated to Christ in baptism," and that it was possible for those who had been baptised "might still fail of final salvation." Calvinism, on the other hand, is possessed of a "dangerous tendency," which is "completely at variance with St. Paul."

If one were simply to follow the *Apologia*, one would assume that the earliest influences upon Newman were almost "all of the school of Calvin," (Romaine, Scott, Milner, and Newton) except for William Law's *Serious Call*, and that it was Sumner who broadened his outlook and taught him to think differently.

That this is not the case, and that there were earlier influences pulling him away from Calvinism, can be seen from a very interesting letter from Newman to his schoolmaster, Walter Mayers, dated January 1817, in which Newman compares the baptismal theology of Richard

Mant, the Bampton Lecturer of 1812, with that of William Beveridge, whose *Private Thoughts*, Mayers had given him as a present in 1816, and which Newman described as “an excellent work”:

There is one passage in the first chapter of the second part that I do not quite comprehend: it is on the Sacrament of Baptism. I had, before I read it, debated with myself how it could be that baptized infants dying in their infancy could be saved unless the Spirit of God was given them: which seems to contradict the opinion that baptism is not accompanied by the Holy Spirit. Bishop Beveridge’s opinion seems to be that the seeds of grace are sown in baptism, though they often do not spring up; that baptism is the mean whereby we receive the Holy Spirit, although not the only mean; that infants when baptised receive the inward and spiritual grace, without the requisite repentance and faith. If this be his opinion... he agrees with Dr. Mant.³

In later life Newman said that “I was very fond of Beveridge’s *Private Thoughts* at this time”, and Beveridge’s influence was such that he wrote several quasi-sermons in his style, but yet Beveridge is totally ignored in the *Apologia*, and Newman found it necessary to write in his copy of the *Private Thoughts* in 1874,

This work is not mentioned in my “Apologia”, because I am speaking there of the formation of my doctrinal opinions, and I do not think they were influenced by it. I had fully and eagerly taken up Calvinism into my religion before it came into my hands. But no book was more dear to me, or exercised a more powerful over my devotion and my habitual thoughts.⁴

It is of interest that neither Beveridge nor Mant figure greatly, if at all, in most discussions of the early influences upon Newman. Like most recent scholars, Ian Ker⁵ ignores both, and, while Sheridan Gilley does mention Beveridge, he follows the *Apologia* and distorts his position, contrasting “the Calvinism of... William Beveridge’s *Private Thoughts*” with the High Church William Law.⁶ It can be contended that this is mistaken, for Mant and Beveridge were important, if preparatory, influences.

William Beveridge was born in 1638 and died in 1708 as Bishop of St. Asaph. Although he was not a Non-Juror, he had sufficient sympathy with them to have previously refused to follow the deprived Bishop Ken to Bath and Wells. The Tractarian editor of his works describes his teachings as “seeds which have long lain hidden, and are now again springing up and bringing forth fruit an hundredfold,” and, in spite of “occasional tinges” of Puritanism, believes that his mind was “too essentially practical to entertain Calvinistic opinions.”⁷ Perhaps the best

description of Beveridge's theology is "inconsistent." He can both deny final perseverance, and teach limited atonement, but the *Private Thoughts* are particularly free of Calvinism, the only evidence of it being in one passage which espouses the doctrine of imputed righteousness.

On the other hand, Richard Mant, the Bampton Lecturer of 1812, had no sympathy whatsoever with Calvinism. His Lectures, *An Appeal to the Gospel or an Inquiry into the Justice of the Charge alleged by Methodists and other Objectors, that the Gospel is not preached by the National Clergy* argued the case for the efficacy of Baptismal Regeneration against the Evangelical demand for a personal conversion. He subsequently became Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore, and is chiefly remembered, if he is remembered at all, for his hymn, "Bright the vision that delighted."

Newman certainly retained no great respect for Mant, describing one of his works in 1830 as "a twaddling... publication,"⁸ and omitting him entirely from the *Apologia*. He, too, has been almost totally ignored by subsequent students, except for H.D. Weidner,⁹ whose position, however, it seems necessary to modify.

Weidner overstates the general importance of Mant's Bampton Lectures, blaming them for causing the Evangelicals to take a firm party-line against Baptismal regeneration. It would surely be better to date the Evangelical reaction against Baptismal Regeneration to the Gorham controversy. After all, Sumner, who was renowned as an Evangelical, published his *Apostolical Preaching* in 1817, at the height of Weidner's supposed reaction, and in it very firmly advocated Baptismal Regeneration. Against this, he seems to underestimate the importance of the *Lectures* for Newman personally.

Newman's Adoption of Baptismal Regeneration

Newman undoubtedly found in Beveridge's *Private Thoughts* a doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration. Beveridge gives a very high place to the efficacy of baptism in the scheme of salvation. In the *Private Thoughts* Beveridge says:

When children are baptized, being "born again of water and of the Spirit," as the guilt of their original sin is washed away in the "laver of regeneration," so that it will never be imputed to them, unless it break forth afterwards in actual transgressions; so they receive also the Spirit of God to prevent all such eruptions.¹⁰

Beveridge had indeed taught that "Baptism [is]... a sacrament of regeneration, wherein we are born again and made members of Christ." In case the statements in the *Private Thoughts* are not sufficiently

unambiguous, we may illustrate his thinking from “The Church Catechism Explained” to show his view of the great gifts and terrible responsibilities of baptism.

He is in baptism made a “member of Christ,” because he is made a member of His Church.... Therefore we are said to be baptized into Christ, and by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, even into the body of Christ, and by that means are made the members of Christ; so as to be moved, influenced, and actuated, by that Holy Spirit which proceeds from Him.... It is settled upon them in their Baptism; and they shall hereafter have the full possession and enjoyment of it, unless, while they are in this world, they provoke their Heavenly Father to disinherit and cast them off, by not doing what they promised when they were baptized.... And as this was thus ordained or instituted by Christ our Saviour, it must needs be not only necessary, but generally necessary, to Salvation, seeing it is the only way or means ordained by Him, whereby to be admitted into His Church, out of which there is no Salvation.¹¹

Mant also taught that baptism really gave spiritual privileges — it was more than just a mechanical rite, or a promise of something to come: “by that sacrament we are made Christians, and are born anew of water and the Holy Spirit,” and both salvation and justification were “the fruit of baptismal regeneration.” The result of Mant’s doctrine is that “all persons who have been baptized, are indiscriminately said to have been regenerated”; the denial of this is a “heresy”, and to “do despite unto the Spirit of grace.”¹²

Mant’s *Lectures* are full of references to the Holy Spirit, saying, just as much as Newman would in later years, that in baptism, water is the “Instrument” but the Holy Spirit is the “efficient principle.” For, “what water could produce such an effect without the operation of the spirit?” So,

we are justified in contending, that for the express purpose of regeneration, not only is his operation necessary, but that it must also (humanly speaking) be administered through the mediation of water.¹³

This is hardly more than a reiteration of Beveridge, who has a very strong pneumatological element together with a recognition that God usually works only through appointed means:

I know it is by Christ only that we can attain to salvation, and that it is by the Spirit only that we can be fitted and qualified for it. But howsoever, we must not, we cannot expect that he should act upon us immediately from Himself, without the use of those means which He Himself hath prescribed for that end; for He would never

have prescribed them, but that He designed to act by them. I know also, that the efficacy of the Word and Sacraments, and all the means of grace which He hath ordained, are not to be ascribed to themselves, but only to His Spirit moving in them, and working together with them.¹⁴

This passage alone is enough to demonstrate the relationship between Newman's sacramental theology and Beveridge's, for Newman said in 1829 that Christ promised us grace "not immediately from Himself, but through *His Spirit*," Whom

He lodged in His Church, i.e. the body of Xtians. He will give *any* man grace who asks for it... but at the same time He has told us where to look - to the assembled congregation.¹⁵

The gifts of baptism are not, however, indelible. Mant was sure that some "by their future conduct... may forfeit the privileges of their new birth," but they are still regenerate. Regeneration and conversion have often been confused, but it is "a conceit which revelation warrants not" to say that all need to be converted.

Such a change of heart [as conversion] may be wrought either before, or after, baptism; in persons either regenerate or unregenerate; it qualifies them for regeneration, if unbaptized; it restores them to the privileges of baptism, which they may have forfeited by being hardened in sin.

His understanding of "the doctrine of our Church" is that children are regenerated in Baptism, but that they "may not, and... some do not, ultimately remain in that state of election and grace." On the other hand, sure that Calvinism discounted good works, he accused it of teaching men that "however great and numerous may be their sins, they are eternally sure of salvation," thus giving them a "sanction... to licentious practice."

He takes great pains, as Newman later would in the *Lectures on Justification*, to avoid the taint of Pelagianism, and any idea of human merit in salvation. Good works cannot be performed apart from the grace of God, and, even then, have not "the slightest shadow of merit," for

neither faith, nor holiness, nor any, nor every thing, which we can do, has the faintest claim to be regarded, as the meritorious cause of our salvation.¹⁶

In Mant there is a great stress upon practical Christian holiness, as there is in Beveridge, who taught Newman that the way to a knowledge of God is not through some deep, mystical experience but through simple, practical obedience to His revealed will, teaching that, "As obedience without faith is impossible, so faith without obedience is vain

and unprofitable,” and that “The serving of God consisteth also in the performing of sincere and universal obedience to all His laws and commands.”¹⁷

This emphasis remained characteristic of Newman himself for the rest of his life. From his ordination, in 1824, onwards he believed that “Holiness is the great end” of ministry¹⁸ and saw it as his duty

to warn people that it is quite idle to pretend to faith and holiness, unless they show forth their inward principles by a pure disinterested upright line of conduct.¹⁹

But for Mant, Christian obedience is not simply simply the fruit of faith, it becomes a condition of salvation. He is quite happy to talk about “the indispensable necessity of obedience to the moral law.” Salvation is certainly by Christ alone, but it is equally certainly not through Faith alone, to say which is “fundamentally and absolutely erroneous.” If we would profit “ultimately by Christ’s sacrifice”, we cannot deny “as the condition of salvation... the absolute necessity of either faith or good works.”²⁰ Christian faith and Christian holiness are

jointly and equally necessary to the attainment of everlasting life, but these are not meritorious causes of salvation. In contrast to Rome, the Anglican Church attributes it exclusively to the merits of our blessed Redeemer.²¹

In places, we can find a similar doctrine of justification in Beveridge. Though a man

can be accounted righteous before God only by the righteousness which he hath in Christ, yet he can never be accounted so in Him, unless he be made sincerely righteous in himself.²²

When confronted by Newman’s questions about the position of Mant and Beveridge on Baptismal Regeneration, Mayers replied by disagreeing outright with Mant:

With Dr. Mant I feel it impossible that I should agree, because he plainly contends that “Baptism is the only vehicle of regeneration, and that no other than Baptismal regeneration is possible in this world.”

On the other hand, he tried to distance Beveridge from an outright espousal of Baptismal Regeneration by pointing to his undoubted inconsistencies in this area and quoting from his Sermon on 1 Peter 1:3, where he says:

*When a man believes in Xt the second Adam and so is made a member of his body he is quickened and animated by his Spirit which being the principle of a new life in him he thereby becomes a new creature from what he was before and therefore is properly said to be born again.*²³

In spite of Mayers's dismissal of Mant, Newman must have valued him to some extent, for, in March 1824, fully six months before Sumner's *Apostolical Preaching* finally drove him into baptismal regeneration, it was to Mant's *Prayer Book* that he went for teaching "with reference to the question of Regeneration."²⁴

Newman and Calvinism

Sumner's other aim, apart from positively teaching Baptismal Regeneration, was to oppose Calvinism as its antithesis, and it is in this area that Mant's influence on Newman is very apparent. If we can prove that Mant turned Newman against Calvinism, we have strong indirect support for claiming that he influenced Newman towards Baptismal Regeneration.

The evidence consists of Newman's attitude to William Romaine, whose work he read whilst at school. We know that something turned Newman against Romaine, for it was fully three years before he read Sumner, that we find a letter from Mayers trying to minimise the distance which Newman had put between Scott, whom he admired, and Romaine, whose Calvinism he found objectionable.

Why did Newman love the one and hate the other? One can postulate two reasons. The first is the attractive nature of Scott's most famous work, *The Force of Truth*. It is easy to read and its title encapsulates its message, describing the author's spiritual pilgrimage from being "nearly a Socinian and Pelagian, and wholly an Arminian," towards credal orthodoxy.

However, a more substantial reason for Newman's aversion to Romaine may have something to do with the fact that his mind had been poisoned against him at an early stage. This would be especially true when we consider that Mayers felt he must "wait for authority ere I can give credence to the fact."²⁵

We can deduce that Mant played some part in this process. His *Lectures* were a deliberate attack upon Calvinism in general, and Romaine in particular, whom he took as a prime exponent of antinomianism, basing his association of Calvinism with antinomianism on a statement, taken from Brandt's *History of the Reformation*, which purported to be a definition of Calvinism:

true and saving faith was a constant principle, and could not be lost; and therefore that they who were conscious to themselves of having such a faith, were even now already assured of everlasting salvation; notwithstanding they might fall into very grievous sins.²⁶

One has to say that Mant's scholarship does not inspire confidence. In this reference, he omits to mention that Brandt was by no means an unbiased observer of the Reformation, but a Dutch Remonstrant pastor, who himself confessed to differing from Calvinists "never so much in many opinions not necessary to salvation."²⁷

Brandt, in his turn, hardly does justice to Calvin. He explicitly claims to base the above statement on Calvin's *Institutes*, 3: 21, 22, but yet says almost exactly the opposite of Calvin.

Calvin does not base the assurance of salvation upon a man being "conscious to himself," but roots it in the deliberate will of God. Nowhere does he allow that the elect can fall into very grievous sins, for the very purpose of election is holiness. He strenuously denies that salvation merely depends upon Divine prescience of good works, for that would confuse cause and effect:

For when it is said that believers were elected that they might be holy, it is at the same time intimated that the holiness which was to be in them has its origin in election.

Or, again, he writes:

We dream not of a faith which is devoid of good works, nor of a Justification which can exist without them: ... while we acknowledge that faith and works are necessarily connected, we... place justification in faith, not in works.²⁸

Mant misinterprets Romaine in exactly the same way that Brandt misunderstood Calvin, and derides him by name, quoting selectively from him: "Remember that thou art not required to obey in order to be saved for thine obedience; but thou art already saved."²⁹ In this he fails to take into account Romaine's assumption that the true Christian will be motivated to obedience. So, Mant omits to quote from Romaine

If thou art acting aright, the love of Christ is constraining thee to obedience.... this is gospel obedience. It is faith working by love, which refines duty into a grace: the commandments are exalted into privileges.³⁰

On the basis of this shaky understanding, and a series of selective

quotations, Mant confidently claims that Calvinism is “irreconcilable with the doctrines of Christ.”³¹

What matters, however, for our purposes, is not whether Mant was correct or not, but that Newman read his interpretation of Calvin and Romaine in 1817, and it almost certainly affected his judgement.

Newman said in his Autobiographical Memoir of 1874 that it was Sumner who “was successful beyond any thing else in routing out evangelical doctrines” from his creed.³² That is no doubt true, in the sense that Sumner finished the task, but there can be little doubt that Mant, supported by Beveridge, at the very least, prepared the way. It was Mant who first suggested to Newman that Calvinism meant antinomianism, and he was among the first to teach him that regeneration comes only by baptism. The roots of Newman’s adoption of Baptismal Regeneration are rather more complex than would appear from the *Apologia* alone.

- 1 *Apologia pro Via sua*, London, 1864, p. 65.
- 2 *Apostolical Preaching*, London, 1826, pp. 165, 155f., 199, 185f., 313f.
- 3 *Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, I, Oxford, p. 30. Hereafter referred to as *LDI*.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 *John Henry Newman: A Biography*, Oxford, 1990.
- 6 *Newman and his Age*, London, 1990, p. 20.
- 7 *The Theological Works of William Beveridge*, Vol. I, Oxford, 1842, p. vii, ix.
We shall probably never know who wrote these words. The general editor of the series was W.J. Copeland, Newman’s curate at Littlemore from 1840, but there is no record of who actually edited Beveridge’s Works.
- 8 *LDI2*, p. 185.
- 9 H.D.Weidner, *The Via Media of the Anglican Church*, Oxford, 1990.
- 10 *Private Thoughts*, in *Works*, VIII, p. 303.
- 11 *Works*, IX, p. 37, VIII, pp. 21, 22, 111.
- 12 *Lectures*, Oxford, 1812, pp. 333, 69, 363, 339, 355.
- 13 *Lectures*, pp. 361, 354f.
- 14 *Sermon 4*, *Works*, I, p. 66.
- 15 Manuscript Sermon 213.
- 16 *Lectures*, pp. 334, 396, 372f., 128, 253, 144, 75, 92, 64.
- 17 *Private Thoughts*, p. 216, 322.
- 18 *Autobiographical Writings*, p. 172.
- 19 *LDI*, p. 189.
- 20 *Lectures*, pp. 61, 106, 95, see also p. 87.
- 21 *Churches of Rome and England*, London, 1836, p. 14.
- 22 *Sermon 74*, *Works*, III, p. 415.
- 23 *LDI*, pp. 32f.
- 24 *Autobiographical Writings*, p. 197.
- 25 *LDI*, p. 110.
- 26 *Lectures*, p. 204.
- 27 *The History of the Reformation and other Ecclesiastical Transactions in and about the Low Countries*, Gerard Brandt, London, 1720, Vol II, p. xii.
- 28 *Institutes* 3:22:3, 3 :16: 1,2.

- 29 *Lectures*, p. 101. He specifically attacks Romaine again on p. 290.
30 William Romaine, *The Life, Talk and Triumph of Faith*, Cambridge and London, 1970, p. 197.
31 *Lectures*, p. 121.
32 *Autobiographical Writings*, p. 77.

Whales (again): A Reply to Paul Waldau

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In 1992 this journal published an article entitled “Do Whales have Souls?”. Despite the somewhat whimsical title and the light style the author’s aim was serious. I had hoped to show that it was possible with traditional categories to engage with some contemporary concerns about animals and ecology. Paul Waldau (*New Blackfriars* Sept. ’95) has done me the courtesy of taking this article seriously and has subjected it to a sustained critique. He considers that the traditional theological categories used “risk reinforcing the exclusivist or humanocentric notions which have previously been used to justify a wholesale dismissal of other animals”. In particular he considers the use of “soul”, “rational” and “the implicit use of the category of ‘species’” to undermine the good intentions of the article.

However his criticisms are often at cross purposes with the initial article. A rereading of the original would show that often I was making the same points Waldau wishes to make against me. The modern use of “soul” is usually confined to human beings. “The difference between human beings and animals is sometimes expressed by saying that only human beings have souls”. If one accepts this usage then by asking “Do whales have souls?” I would be asking if whales were really human. “By using the traditional category ‘soul’, Jones is asking if whales have an essence which is like the essence of humans”. Yet I rejected the modern usage and argued that the traditional category of “soul” was not radically humanocentric in the way that Waldau fears. Rather in its biblical and scholastic usage the soul was thought of primarily as the principle of life. Therefore every living thing would have its own sort of soul and “soul” could be used to stress the variety and communality of