

Consumed yet quickened by the glance of God:
John Henry Newman's Theology of Purgatory

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D.Phil. Abstract

This thesis outlines the development of the doctrine of Purgatory in the theology of the nineteenth century theologian John Henry Newman (1801-1890). I trace the beginning of this development from 1816-1828 by identifying key theological themes from Newman's early Evangelical writings on holiness, purification and conversion. After rejecting the Evangelicalism of his youth, Newman moved progressively towards High-Church Anglicanism from 1828 onward, and adopted the Anglican teaching of the 'intermediate state.' From 1830 he began to preach on this teaching by presenting it as an alternative to the 'depressing prospect' to the 'Romish' doctrine of Purgatory. However from 1837-1845 his views on Purgatory shifted considerably after studying the Tridentine decrees. In 1841 he claimed in *Tract XC of Tracts for the Times* that significant changes in the formulation of *Article XXII* of the *XXXIX Articles* meant that the Church of England did not reject the doctrine of Purgatory in its primitive form, but rather only the 'Romish' extremes of mediaeval theology which had corrupted her teaching. His claim that there was no disparity between what Trent taught on Purgatory and what the Church of England held in *Article XXII* caused widespread controversy among his contemporaries.

In his early Roman Catholic years, from 1845-1853, he initially adopted the commonly held punitive model of Purgatory, but leaned increasingly towards an ameliorative understanding of the doctrine. By 1865 Newman had adumbrated a theology of Purgatory in *The Dream of Gerontius*, in which he showed how rather than being purged by material fire, the soul was purified by a singular and instantaneous experience of the holiness of God. I demonstrate how his theology of Purgatory in the *Dream* represents a significant contribution to a renewed understanding of the doctrine in Roman Catholic theology.

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D.Phil. Long Abstract

In 1865 John Henry Newman (1801-1890) wrote the poem *The Dream of Gerontius*. The work is known predominantly through Edward Elgar's adaptation of it in his oratorio (1900). It recounts the death of an old man, Gerontius, and his journey from death to the afterlife. Toward the end of the poem Gerontius is brought before the 'veiled presence of God', and is given leave to experience a brief glimpse of God. In an instant Gerontius experiences the holiness of God and is purged – 'consumed, yet quicken'd, by the glance of God.' Newman described how in his ardent desire to see God, Gerontius is 'smitten and 'pierced' by two pains: the first is the pain of '[...] longing for Him, when thou seest Him not', the second, the pain of '[...] the shame of self at thought of seeing Him.' This understanding of Purgatory as a personal encounter with God, rather than of punishment by fire, was unusual then in Roman Catholic theology. At the height of the Oxford Movement, some thirty years before he wrote *The Dream of Gerontius*, Newman argued that the 'received' teaching of purgation by fire was no longer used in the last conciliar definition of the doctrine at Trent (1563). He emphasised in *Tract LXXIX* (1837) that Trent simply acknowledged the existence of this post-mortem state but said nothing of the nature of purgation. In *Tract XC* (1841) Newman went further by distinguishing what he called the 'primitive' doctrine of Purgatory from its 'Romish' corruption. Newman's argument for a primitive form of the doctrine of Purgatory, which he believed could be reconciled with the *XXXIX Articles* of the Church of England, provoked critical reactions from his contemporaries.

Eschatology is an area which is relatively underdeveloped in Newman studies. Four doctoral dissertations have been produced on aspects of his eschatology: W.J. Heugebach, 'J.H. Newman's Theology of Death', University of Notre Dame, (1976); C. McKeating, 'Eschatology in the Anglican Sermons of J. H. Newman', Pontifical Gregorian University, (1992); J.R. Vélez, 'Death, Immortality, and Resurrection in J. H. Newman', University of Navarre, (1998); and David Deavel, 'Under Judgement: The Possibility of Damnation in the Thought of John Henry Newman', Fordham University (2011). None of these works deal in detail either with Newman's understanding of the 'intermediate state', or with the

development of his understanding of Purgatory in his Roman Catholic years. This thesis will look at Newman's hitherto unresearched theology of Purgatory. I will demonstrate how the development of Newman's theology of Purgatory can be seen in both his Anglican and Roman Catholic years. I show how Newman's *The Dream of Gerontius* replaced the traditional image of purgation by fire with a theology of Purgatory which emphasised the need for conformity to God in holiness, and how his unique contribution to the theology of Purgatory was indebted, in part, to influences from his Anglican years. I will look particularly at his sermons on the 'intermediate state' and the theological tradition which this teaching had within Anglicanism.

This thesis traces the development of Newman's theology of Purgatory chronologically in five chapters. Newman was not a systematic theologian and therefore any analysis of his theology must take into consideration his own religious development and the historical context in which he was writing. His theology developed primarily through his relationship and correspondence with other persons, controversy, and the events of his time, rather than by means of contact with abstract ideas and concepts. One must therefore consider the very different kind of primary sources which are available to us. These range from letters, diaries, poems, historical works, theological tracts and autobiographical memoirs.

The first chapter deals with Newman's Evangelical years from 1816-1828. Newman's earliest conception of the state of the departed soul was characterised by a twofold scheme of either beatitude or damnation. This conception was gleaned from Evangelical authors whom Newman had been reading under the direction of his mentor, Walter Mayers. I will look at Newman's sermons from this period, and emphasise the importance which the themes of holiness, conversion and purification had in this formative theological period. I will include material from important unpublished essays Newman wrote at the height of his Evangelical period on the nature of the soul's transformation. I will show the importance of his concept of holiness as a condition for beatitude. This emphasis on conformity to God in holiness united the High-Church and Evangelical traditions in a common eschatology.

The second chapter will cover the years 1828-1836. By 1828 Newman had moved away from the Calvinist-Evangelicalism of his youth to the High-Church tradition. His reading of both the Church Fathers and the Caroline divines made a deep impression on Newman's eschatology. From 1830 onward Newman began to preach on the intermediate

state as an alternative to the ‘depressing prospect’ of Purgatory. I will analyse the teaching of the intermediate state within the tradition of Anglican eschatology, looking particularly at authors which Newman was reading. The teaching of the intermediate state can be traced back to the Caroline divines and Non-Juror theologians. They rejected the ‘abuses’ of the Roman doctrine of Purgatory, but advocated the acceptance of a primitive belief in a progressive spiritual growth in a post-mortem state which could not be reduced solely to its punitive dimension.

In the third chapter I will look at Newman’s exposition of what he called a ‘primitive’ doctrine of Purgatory which he adopted from 1837-1845. Here I will look particularly at two theological tracts: *LXXIX* (1837) and *XC* (1841). In *Tract XC* Newman’s attempted to reconcile the decrees of the Council of Trent on Purgatory with *Article XXII* of the Church of England. The thesis Newman put forward for a ‘primitive’ doctrine of Purgatory was one of the key issues addressed in the letter of the *Four Tutors* which was presented to Convocation in protest at *Tract XC*. Newman showed that it was in fact impossible for *Article XXII* to have condemned the Tridentine decree on Purgatory as the Council promulgated it in December of 1563, some ten months after the *XXXIX Articles* were published. Indeed Newman argued that the teaching of Trent was closer to the Articles of the Church of England than that of the received ‘Romish’ theology of the day. I will analyse the reception of Newman’s ‘Anglican doctrine of Purgatory’ in the flurry of theological pamphlets which were written in response to *Tract XC*. I will show that the distinction Newman used in *Tract XC* to differentiate between the ‘Romish’ and the ‘primitive’ doctrine of Purgatory was indebted to the influence of Charles Lloyd (1784-1829).

Chapter four will trace the development of Newman’s Roman Catholic theology of Purgatory from his conversion and publication of the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* in 1845, to the publication of his first volume of Roman Catholic poetry in 1853. I will assess how the doctrine of Purgatory was received in mid-nineteenth century England by Roman Catholic authors contemporaneous to Newman, and also look at some of his most significant early sermons and poems on the doctrine from works such as his *Sermon Notes*, *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, and *Verses on Religious Subjects*.

In the final chapter I look at the culmination of Newman’s theology of Purgatory in *The Dream of Gerontius* (1865). I begin by looking at possible literary and theological

influences in the composition of the work. The Romantic poets, such as Robert Southey and Walter Scott exercised a particular influence on Newman since his youth. I will demonstrate how parts of the *The Dream of Gerontius* have similarities with Romantic poets. I will compare other works of Victorian death-bed literature which have a resonance with *The Dream of Gerontius*. I will demonstrate the differences in Evangelical deathbed literature and devotional poetry of the High Church Tradition, such as Bickersteth's *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, and John Warton's *Death-Bed Scenes*. From a theological perspective, I analyse the nature and experience of the disembodied soul after death, the relevance of the communion of the dead with the Church, the 'willingness' of the soul to undergo purification, the nature of pain in Purgatory, and the intimate connection between particular judgement and purgation. I show how *The Dream of Gerontius* has a very pronounced Christocentric eschatology.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Works by John Henry Newman

Unless otherwise indicated all references are to the uniform edition published by Longman Green and Co. of London (1868-1881).

- Apo.* *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, ed. Martin J. Svaglic. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.
- Ari.* *The Arians of the Fourth Century*
- AW* *John Henry Newman: Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Henry Tristram. London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956.
- BOA* Birmingham Oratory Archives
- CS* *Catholic Sermons of Cardinal Newman*, edited by the Birmingham Oratory. London: Burns and Oates, 1957.
- DA* *Discussions and Arguments on Various Subjects*
- Dev.* *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*
- Diff.* *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*
- Dream* *The Dream of Gerontius*
- Ess.* *Essays Critical and Historical*
- GA* *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, ed. Ian Ker, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
- HS* *Historical Sketches*
- Idea* *The Idea of a University*, ed. Ian Ker, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.
- Jelf* *A Letter Addressed to the Rev. R. W. Jelf DD, Canon of Christ Church, in Explanation of No. 90, in the Series called The Tracts for the Times.* Oxford: Rivington, 1841.
- LD I-XXXII* *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vols. i-iv, eds. Ian Ker and Thomas Gornall. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-80; vol. v, ed. Thomas Gornall. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981; vols. vi-viii, ed. Gerard Tracey. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984-1999; vols. ix-x, ed. Francis Mc Grath. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. vols. xi-xxii, ed. Charles Dessain. London and Edinburgh: Nelson, 1961-77;

vols xxiii-xxxi, eds. Charles Dessain and Thomas Gornall. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973-1977; vol. xxxii, ed. Francis McGrath. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

- LA* *Lyra Apostolica*. Oxford: Rivington, 1837.
- LG* *Loss and Gain*, London: Burns, Lambert and Oates, 1869.
- MD* *Meditations and Devotions*
- Mix.* *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*
- OS* *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions*
- PN I-II* *The Philosophical Notebook of John Henry Newman*, vols. I-II, edited at the Birmingham Oratory by Edward Sillem. Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1969-70.
- PPS I-VIII* *Parochial and Plain Sermons*
- Ser., I-V* *John Henry Newman Sermons 1824-1843*, vol. i, ed. Placid Murray. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991; vol. ii, ed. Vincent Ferrer Blehl. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993; vol. iii, eds. Francis McGrath and Placid Murray. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010; vol. iv, ed. Francis McGrath. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011; vol. v, ed. Francis McGrath. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2012.
- SD* *Sermons Bearing on the Subject of the Day*
- SN* *Sermon Notes of John Henry Cardinal Newman, 1849-1878*, edited at the Birmingham Oratory, London, 1913.
- Thea. Gre.,* ‘The Theatre of the Greeks; or the History, Literature, and Criticism of the Grecian Drama. With an Original Treatise on the Principal Tragic and Comic Meters.’ *London Review*, 1:1 (January 1829).
- Tract* *Tracts for the Times by Members of the University of Oxford*, vols. i-v London: Rivington, 1838-1840.
- Tract XC* *Tracts for the Times - No. 90*, London: Rivington, 1841.
- TT* *Tracts Theological and Ecclesiastical*
- US* *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford*
- VM* *The Via Media*
- VRS* *Verses on Religious Subjects*, Dublin: James Duffy, 1853.
- VVO* *Verses on Various Occasions*. London: Burns, Oates and Co., 1874.

ABBREVIATIONS

Other Works

- AFJ* Frederick William Faber, *All for Jesus or The Easy Ways of Divine Love*. London: Richardson and Son, 1853.
- BP* Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, London: Scholar Press, 1984.
- BW* George Bull, *The Works of George Bull. Volume I*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1827.
- Cat. Rom.,* *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, (translated by J. Donovan). Dublin: Richard Coyne, 1829.
- Controv.,* *The Controversy Between Tract XC and the Oxford Tutors*, London: How and Parsons, 1841.
- DMS* Archibald Campbell, *The Doctrines of the Middle State between death and the Resurrection*. London: Tyler, 1721.
- EH* Frederic W. Farrar, *Eternal Hope – Five Sermons Preached in Westminster Abbey November and December 1877*, London: Macmillan, 1892.
- Ever. Punish.,* Edward Bouverie Pusey, *What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment – In Reply to Dr. Farrar’s Challenge in his ‘Eternal Hope’*, London: Walter Smith, 1888.
- Observ.,* Richard Pretyman, *A Review of No. 90 of The Tracts for the Times with Observations upon the Articles to which it relates*. Oxford: Rivington, 1841.
- ODNB* *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 60 volumes, eds. Henry Colin Gray Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Ornsby* Robert Ornsby, *The Life of St. Francis de Sales*. London: Burns and Lambert, 1856.
- Purg.,* Richard Whately, (Published anonymously), *Remarks on Mr. Newman’s Doctrine of Purgatory by a Country Clergyman*. Oxford: J. Vincent, 1841.
- Prep. Death,* Alphonsus Liguori, *The Eternal Truths - Preparation for Death or Considerations on Eternal Maxims*. Translation: R.A. Coffin, London: Burns and Lambert, 1857.

- Princ. Doc.,* Nicholas Wiseman, *Lectures on the Principle Doctrines and Practices of the Roman Catholic Church*, volume II, New York: O'Shea, 1836.
- Reunion,* E.B. Pusey, *Is Healthful Reunion Possible? A Second Letter to the Very Rev. J. H. Newman*. Oxford: Parker, 1870.
- Subscrip.,* John Keble, *The Case of the Catholic Subscription of the Thirty-Nine Articles Considered*. London: Rivington, 1841.
- Tay. Ser.,* Jeremy Taylor, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of that worthy Knight George Dalston, September 28 1657*, London: Martin, Allestrye and Dicas, 1658.
- Us. Ans.,* James Ussher, *An Answer to a Challenge made by a Jesuit in Ireland: Wherein the Judgement of Antiquity in the Points Questioned is delivered, and the Novelty of the now Romish Doctrine is Plainly Discovered*, London: R. Young, 1631.
- Vindic.,* E.B. Pusey, *The Articles Treated in Tract 90 reconsidered and their Interpretation Vindicated in a Letter to the Rev. R.W. Jelf*. Oxford: Parker, 1841.
- YTF* Edward Henry Bickersteth, *Yesterday, Today and Forever*, London: Rivingtons, 1866.

Introduction

This thesis provides the first attempt to systemise John Henry Newman's theology of Purgatory considered from both his Anglican and Roman Catholic years, thereby fulfilling a considerable gap in Newman scholarship. Among the numerous themes researched in Newman studies, the area of eschatology is surprisingly underdeveloped. Reviewing the state of Newman scholarship in 1973, Charles Stephen Dessain noted with regret that no substantial research had been produced on Newman's eschatology.¹ In 1976 Theodore Hengesbach was the first to explore an eschatological theme in Newman's writings.² In his 'J.H. Newman's Theology of Death' Hengesbach used the *Apologia*, letters, diary extracts and poems to analyse Newman's personal reaction to the death of loved ones and friends. While Hengesbach referred to some sermons on judgement and death, his research had very little in terms of a theological reflection on themes such as immortality, the state of the soul after death or other aspects of dogmatic eschatology. Almost twenty years after Hengesbach's thesis Colm McKeating's 'Eschatology in the Anglican Sermons of J.H. Newman' (1992) provided a much needed systematic presentation of Newman's eschatology based on a detailed analysis on his Anglican sermons.³ Colm McKeating reviewed 604 published and unpublished Anglican sermons from 1824-1843, analysing a wide variety of topics of both individual and general eschatology. McKeating's thesis is an excellent introduction to Newman's early eschatology but it left many writings from his Anglican

¹ C.S. Dessain 'Newman's Philosophy and Theology', in D.J. DeLaura (ed.), *Victorian Prose - a Guide to Research*, New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1973, p. 182.

² Theodore Hengesbach, 'J.H. Newman's Theology of Death', University of Notre Dame, Doctoral Thesis, 1976.

³ Colm McKeating, 'The Eschatology of the Anglican Sermons of John Henry Newman', Pontifical Gregorian University Rome, Doctoral Thesis, 1992.

and Roman Catholic period untouched. In his postscript McKeating addressed these limitations and the need for further research, particularly regarding Newman's Roman Catholic eschatology and his theology of Purgatory.⁴

J. R. Vélez's 'Death, Immortality, and Resurrection in John Henry Newman', (1998) represented a concentrated effort to look at specific areas of Newman's individual eschatology, particularly death, immortality and resurrection.⁵ Reviewing the work which McKeating had undertaken, Vélez identified the problem of isolating Newman's eschatology to one period in his life. He emphasised that there were underlying themes in Newman's eschatology which indicated a continuity between his Anglican and Roman Catholic periods, and as such his thesis was built on the premise that there was a development in Newman's eschatology. In 2011 David Deavel wrote on Newman's theology of judgement and eternal punishment in 'Under Judgement: The Possibility of Damnation in the Thought of John Henry Newman'.⁶ Significant contributions have also been made in more general studies on Tractarian eschatology, the controversy of Universalism, and the doctrine of Eternal Punishment in Geoffrey Rowell's *Hell and the Victorians* (1974), and Michael Wheeler's *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians* (1994).⁷

An important part of this thesis looks at Newman's theology of Purgatory in the *Dream of Gerontius*. Interest in the poem is limited almost exclusively, in academic research, to its literary value. A small number of articles deal with the theology of the

⁴ Colm McKeating, 'The Eschatology of the Anglican Sermons of John Henry Newman', p. 324.

⁵ Juan Rodrigo Vélez, 'Death, Immortality and Resurrection in John Henry Newman', University of Navarra, Doctoral Thesis, 1998.

⁶ David Deavel, 'Under Judgement: The Possibility of Damnation in the Thought of John Henry Newman', Fordham University, Doctoral Thesis, 2011.

⁷ Geoffrey Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974; Michael Wheeler, *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Dream, but by no means represent a comprehensive theological analysis of one of the most important source of Newman's eschatology.⁸ Literary criticism of the *Dream* is extensive and goes beyond the scope of my thesis, however I have used a number of works which acknowledge the theological value of the *Dream* as a piece of dogmatic poetry.⁹

My research in this area of Newman's eschatology is also motivated by the more general need which many Roman Catholic theologians recognise for a renewed debate on the doctrine of Purgatory. The perception among some English-speaking theologians is that the doctrine of Purgatory has simply 'fallen off the eschatological map.'¹⁰ Others speak of a more 'urgent need' to reinstate the doctrine, suggesting a move away from 'traditional' images which are legalistic or punitive, thereby providing 'the theological space to generate contemporary images for the kind transformation being in Purgatory involves.'¹¹ In 1979 the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith addressed some of the more broader concerns in a series of clarifications on 'Certain Questions Concerning Eschatology.'¹² The publication of Jacques Le Goff's

⁸ See Thomas P. Whelan, 'The Dream of Gerontius', *The Irish Monthly*, Volume 48, No. 569, November 1920, pp. 584-588; Geoffrey Wamsley, 'Newman's *Dream of Gerontius*', *The Downside Review*, Number 304, Volume 91, July 1973, pp. 167-185; Alan G. Hill, 'Three Visions of Judgement: Southey, Byron and Newman', *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, Vol. 41, No. 163, August 1990, pp. 334-350; J. R. Véléz, 'Newman's Theology in the Dream of Gerontius', *New Blackfriars*, Issue 967, Volume 82, September 2001, pp. 387-398.

⁹ See Elisabeth Ann Noel, 'An Edition of Poems by John Henry Cardinal Newman', University of Illinois, Doctoral Thesis, 1956; Jane M.C. James, 'The Genesis of The Dream of Gerontius – A Study in the Poetry of John Henry Newman', MA Thesis, Open University, 1989; Elisabeth Jay, 'Newman's Mid-Victorian Dream', in David Nicholls and Fergus Kerr, (eds.), *John Henry Newman: Reason, Rhetoric and Romanticism*, Bristol: The Bristol Press, 1991, pp. 214-232; Rebecca Rainof, 'Victorians in Purgatory: Newman's Poetics of Conciliation and the Afterlife of the Oxford Movement', *Victorian Poetry*, Volume 51 (2), 2013, pp. 227-247.

¹⁰ John E. Triel, 'Time, Judgment and Competitive Spirituality: A Reading of the Development of the Doctrine of Purgatory', *Theological Studies*, (69), 2008, pp. 741-785.

¹¹ Robert Ombres, *Theology of Purgatory*, Dublin: The Mercier Press, 1978, pp. 7, 51.

¹² Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, *Letter on Certain Questions Concerning Eschatology*, Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1979.

*The Birth of Purgatory*¹³ (1984) was considered a ‘notable event’ in the contemporary debate on the subject of Purgatory, and continues to be used in research.¹⁴ Despite its thoroughness, Le Goff’s work seems to reinforce common misconceptions of the doctrine. At the very beginning of the work Le Goff claims that the doctrine of Purgatory is a teaching which ‘offers a second chance to attain eternal life.’¹⁵ His research on the doctrine of Purgatory is based on the presumption that death is neither final or irrevocable, and that some form of post-mortem repentance is therefore possible. *The Birth of Purgatory* is based almost entirely on the premise that the linguistic development of the term *purgatorium* corresponds to its doctrinal development. His research and textual analyses leads him to the conclusion that ‘Purgatory did not exist before 1170 at the earliest.’¹⁶ In dealing almost exclusively with the terminological development of the teaching of post-mortem purification, minimal treatment is given to the doctrine and its theological application.

The more general reflections made by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1979 were addressed in more detail by The International Theological Commission in ‘Some Current Questions in Eschatology’ (1992).¹⁷ The commission recognised several areas in contemporary writings on eschatology which needed greater clarification. One of these areas dealt with ‘The Purification of the Soul Prior to Meeting Christ in His Glory.’¹⁸ The commission confirmed the long tradition in both liturgy and doctrine of the belief in post-mortem purification. The belief in Purgatory is

¹³ Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, London: Scholar Press, 1984.

¹⁴ See Graham Robert Edwards, ‘Purgatory: ‘Birth’ or Evolution?’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 36, No. 4, October 1985, p. 634; Jerry L. Walls, *Purgatory: The Logic of Total Transformation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, which relies heavily in both structure and content on Le Goff.

¹⁵ *BP*, p. 5.

¹⁶ *BP*, p. 135.

¹⁷ International Theological Commission, ‘Some Current Questions in Eschatology’, *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 58, 1992, pp. 209-243. The Latin original is available in *Gregorianum* 73, 1992, pp. 395-435.

¹⁸ ‘Some Current Questions in Eschatology’, *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 58 (1992), p. 231.

a central part of the theology of man's future existence, so much so that the teaching that souls enjoy the Beatific Vision of God after death rests on the 'presupposition' that they are purified. The premise that 'nothing soiled can approach the divine presence' is a belief so fundamental to eschatology that the necessity of some form of post-mortem purification belongs to many great historical religions.¹⁹ The commission clarified that 'any stain', that is, mortal or venial sins, can hinder the soul's communion with God. Whatever form the process of purification after death may take, the commission warned that it was 'categorically important' to 'avoid any too close assimilation of the purificatory process which precedes our meeting with God with the process of damnation.'²⁰

This thesis is structured chronologically in five chapters, which correspond to significant stages in Newman's religious and theological development. In the first chapter I deal with the formative years of his Evangelical-Calvinist period from 1816-1828. I look at the influences of several Evangelical authors whom Newman had been reading under the direction of his mentor, Walter Mayers. Newman's earliest sermons reveal common themes associated with his later theology of Purgatory, such as conversion, purification, and striving after perfection. I will include material from important unpublished essays Newman wrote at the height of his Evangelical period on the nature of the soul's transformation. While the Evangelical creed he held in early adulthood rejected the belief that souls are kept in a third state other than beatitude or damnation after death, the emphasis on holiness and conversion facilitated the development of his later theology of Purgatory. Newman did not relinquish the conviction that holiness was a necessary condition for beatitude when he moved from

¹⁹ 'Some Current Questions in Eschatology', p. 231.

²⁰ 'Some Current Questions in Eschatology', p. 232.

Evangelicalism to High-Anglicanism and to Roman Catholicism, rather it continued to be the most fundamental aspect of his eschatology.

The second chapter will cover the years 1828-1836. By 1828 Newman had moved away from the Calvinist-Evangelicalism of his youth to the High-Church tradition. His reading of both the Church Fathers and the Caroline divines made a deep impression on Newman's eschatology. He gradually began to abandon the doctrines of 'imputed righteousness' and 'final perseverance' that he had previously accepted from Evangelical authors. From 1830 onward Newman began to preach on the intermediate state as an alternative to the 'depressing prospect' of Purgatory.²¹ I will analyse the teaching of the intermediate state within the tradition of Anglican eschatology, looking particularly at authors whom Newman was reading. The teaching of the intermediate state can be traced back to the Caroline divines and Non-Juror theologians. They rejected the 'abuses' of the Roman doctrine of Purgatory, but advocated the acceptance of a primitive belief in a progressive spiritual growth in a post-mortem state which could not be reduced solely to its punitive dimension.

In the third chapter I will look at Newman's exposition of what he called a 'primitive' doctrine of Purgatory which he adopted from 1837-1845. Here I will look predominantly at two *Tracts for the Times: LXXIX* (1837) and *XC* (1841). This period represents one of the most decisive stages in the development of Newman's theology of Purgatory. From 1834 Newman began working on *The Prophetical Office of the Church* (1837). His research involved extensive reading of the decrees of the Council of Trent. Several months after the publication of the *Prophetical Office*, the appearance of

²¹ *PPS* III, pp. 371-373.

his anonymous *Tract LXXIX On Purgatory* in 1837 shows that his research on the decree on Purgatory of the XXV session of the Council of Trent (1563) had radically changed his views on Purgatory. Reading the Tridentine decrees on Purgatory, he noticed the disparity between what the Roman Catholic Church taught, and how the doctrine was received by the faithful. Moreover, he noted that Trent taught nothing on purgatorial pains, which was one of the main obstacles which hindered the acceptance of the doctrine of Purgatory among Anglicans. The Tridentine decree simply acknowledged the existence of a post-mortem state, that souls were ‘detained’ there, and that they were assisted by the prayers of the faithful:

As the catholic church, instructed by the Holy Spirit, has taught from holy scripture and the ancient tradition of the fathers in its holy councils and most recently in this ecumenical council that purgatory exists, and that the souls detained there are helped by the prayers of the faithful and most of all by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar; the holy council charges bishops to ensure the sound teaching on purgatory, handed down by the holy fathers and sacred councils, is believed and held by the Christian faithful and everywhere preached and expounded. In homilies to uninstructed people the more difficult and subtle questions, which do nothing to sustain faith and give rise to little or no increase of devotion, should be excluded. They [Bishops] should not allow uncertain speculations or what borders on falsehood to be publicly treated. And they should prohibit all that panders of curiosity and superstition, or smacks of base gain, as scandalous stumbling-blocks to the faithful.²²

For Newman the Tridentine definition became, from 1837 onward, the definitive and continual reference for his theology on Purgatory. His acceptance of the Tridentine decree on Purgatory brought him to a closer examination of the twenty second article on Purgatory of the *XXXIX Articles* of the Church of England. In *Tract XC* (1841) he

²² Norman P. Tanner (ed), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume II – Trent to Vatican II*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1990, p. 774.

suggested reconciling Trent with *Article XXII* on Purgatory. Taking the wording of the article literally, he claimed that it was the ‘Romish’ corruption of the doctrine of Purgatory which was condemned, rather than what he called the ‘primitive’ doctrine, or indeed the Tridentine formulation, which was drawn up after the Articles were promulgated:

The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well as of Images and Relics, and also invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty on Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.²³

The thesis Newman put forward for a ‘primitive’ doctrine of Purgatory was one of the key issues addressed in the letter of the *Four Tutors* which was presented to Convocation in protest at *Tract XC*. Newman showed that it was in fact impossible for *Article XXII* to have condemned the Tridentine decree on Purgatory as the Council promulgated it in December of 1563, some ten months after the *XXXIX Articles* were published. Indeed Newman argued that the teaching of Trent was closer to the Articles of the Church of England than that of the received ‘Romish’ theology of the day. I will analyse the reception of Newman’s ‘Anglican doctrine of Purgatory’ in the flurry of theological pamphlets which were written in response to *Tract XC*. I will show that the distinction Newman used in *Tract XC* to differentiate between the ‘Romish’ and the ‘primitive’ doctrine of Purgatory was indebted to the influence of Charles Lloyd (1784-1829).

²³ *Articles Agreed Upon by the Archbishops 1562*, London, 1689, p. 8.

The fourth chapter reviews Newman's understanding of the doctrine of Purgatory in the early stages of his Roman Catholic years from 1845-1853. I begin by contextualising the teaching of the doctrine in English Roman Catholicism, using sources contemporaneous to Newman in the 1830-50s. There were generally two forms of the doctrine advocated at the time, the punitive model, associated with the writing of Alphonsus Liguori; and the ameliorative model, made popular through the writings of St. Francis of Sales and St. Catherine of Genoa. Using sermons and poems I show how Newman initially adopted the commonly held punitive model of Purgatory but gradually moved towards a more ameliorative understanding of the doctrine. In the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* he outlined the framework of the doctrine from Scripture and Tradition. He took the Tridentine synthesis as the standard magisterial definition of the doctrine of Purgatory. There are a number of reasons why the Tridentine decree was significant for Newman in his Anglican and Roman Catholic years. First, the council left the question of the nature of purgation open to further theological development. Second, the Fathers at Trent wanted to respond to the abuses associated with the doctrine. Finally, Newman believed, as an Anglican, that the wording of the decree could be reconciled with the *XXXIX Articles* of the Church of England.

In the fourth chapter I also show how Newman believed the doctrine was drawn from definite, yet often obscure, indirect passages from Scripture. He showed how the Church Fathers, from the second century onward, identified scriptural passages such as 1Cor 3:13, 'the work of each builder will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has

done', with post-mortem purification. Other passages, such as Mt 5:25-26, also had a defining influence on the formation of the images associated with the doctrine:

Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Newman gave preference to Scriptural texts often used by Anglican Divines to describe the rest of the post-mortem state, some of which he used in his Anglican sermons, such as the parable of Lazarus and Dives in Luke 16:22-25, and the 'halt mid-way' of Elijah in 1Kings 19:5-8, who after resting and gaining strength, proceeded to encounter God at Horeb.

In the final chapter I look at the theology of the *Dream of Gerontius* (1865). Despite Newman's statement that the idea of the poem simply 'came into my mind',²⁴ I demonstrate how the *Dream* represents the culmination of several decades of theological development and reflection on the nature of Purgatory and the state of the soul in the hereafter. The literary influences in his theological formation are crucial for understanding the context of the *Dream* as 'dogmatic' poetry. In the poem he deals with central questions such as the efficacy of prayer for the dead, the nature of purgation, and the temporal and spatial perception of disembodied souls. What is significant about Newman's theology of Purgatory in the *Dream* is his understanding of how the soul is purged. At the climax of the poem the soul is brought before the 'veiled presence of God', and is given leave to experience a sight of God. In an instant Gerontius beholds

²⁴ LD XXII, p. 72.

the holiness of God and is judged and purged – he is, in Newman’s words, ‘consumed, yet quicken’d by the glance of God.’ In his desire to see God, Newman described how the soul is ‘smitten’ and ‘pierced’ by two pains: the first is the pain of ‘longing for Him, when thou seest Him not’, the second, the pain of ‘the shame of self at thought of seeing Him.’ The representation of Purgatory as a personal encounter with God, rather than the traditional image of punishment by fire, is unusual, but not novel in the history of theology. However the *Dream* was, in nineteenth century English Roman Catholicism, a radical step towards a renewal of the doctrine of Purgatory. After Newman wrote the *Dream* in 1865, there were no significant developments in his theology of Purgatory. However there are a number of isolated reflections on the doctrine, particularly concerning ‘eternal punishment’, and notes he had been compiling from 1858-1888 (*The Philosophical Notebook*), on various topics on the philosophy of religion and other sundry metaphysical subjects.

Many of the primary sources available on Newman’s theology of Purgatory are fragmentary, isolated and brief. The occasional nature of Newman’s theology means that his reflections on Purgatory are found in a variety of literary and theological sources. As well as using some unpublished manuscripts from his Evangelical years, I use published sources from sermons, theological tracts, poems, autobiographical memoirs, and letters. As well as the fragmentary nature of the types of sources available on Newman’s eschatology, there are other challenges in researching his theology of Purgatory. First, in dealing with his understanding of the intermediate state in his Anglican years, there is the difficulty of establishing a consensus in Anglican

eschatology, which is made up of a numerous and often conflicting traditions.²⁵ Rather than trying to present an Anglican synthesis on the question, I limit the scope of my research, in this area, to particular authors whom Newman either read, or of those who had a possible influence on his thought. Second, the sources we have from his Roman Catholic sermons are not as extensive as those from his Anglican years. Newman's preaching, both in style and theological content, changed considerably when he became a Roman Catholic. From 1849 Newman followed the usage among Roman Catholic priests of preaching spontaneously. This means that rather than having fully developed texts, many of the sources from his Roman Catholic sermons on Purgatory are limited to brief unelaborated notes.

²⁵ See G.W.H. Lampe *The Doctrine of the Church of England – The Report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York*. London: SPCK, 1922, and also Ian Ramsey (ed.), *Prayer and the Departed. A Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Christian Doctrine*. London: SPCK, 1971.

Chapter One

Conversion, Holiness and Purification: The Evangelical Foundation 1816-1828

This chapter outlines the formative stages of Newman's eschatology prior to his acceptance of a 'middle state' between death and resurrection. From 1816 to 1826 Newman held to two doctrines which had a defining influence on his eschatology: Final Perseverance and Imputed Righteousness. Using some unpublished material, I look at his understanding of the themes of conversion, holiness and purification, which have a lasting influence, and correlation to his later theology of Purgatory. From diary entries and correspondences with his Evangelical mentor, Walter Mayers, I identify key theological works that Newman had been reading from 1816-1828. These include Thomas Scott's *The Force of Truth* (1779), William Beveridge's *Private Thoughts* (1661), Philip Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* (1745), William Law's *Serious Calls to a Devout and Holy Life* (1729), and an unspecified work by William Romaine.

I. Newman's Early Calvinistic Evangelicalism

Two very distinct theological traditions formed Newman's eschatology before he became a Roman Catholic in 1845. The first of these was Evangelical and theologically Calvinistic; the second was formed by the High-Church tradition with its dependence on the Caroline divines and the Fathers of the Church. Newman's period of Calvinistic Evangelicalism lasted from 1816 until around 1826, when he began to

question its theological and pastoral credibility.¹ From 1826 to 1828 Newman progressively began to abandon Evangelicalism. While he was aware of the theological deficiencies of Evangelicalism as a ‘system’, Newman also praised it as a ‘great blessing for England’, and for the enormous influence it had in his own religious development which ‘had sheltered and protected him in his most dangerous years.’² Given the length and influence that Evangelicalism had on Newman, it is therefore regrettable that it receives little consideration in view of its lasting effect on his theology. It is unfortunate that Newman’s adherence to Evangelicalism, which spanned in excess of a decade, is regarded by many authors as a marginal topic of insignificant relevance.³ For despite abandoning many theological opinions he had gained from this period, Newman retained a number of very important key elements of his nascent Evangelicalism.⁴ As we shall see, the associated themes of conversion, purification and holiness, were to have a continuing effect on his eschatology in both his Anglican and Roman Catholic periods.⁵ These core themes of Evangelicalism form striking parallels to Newman’s later theology of Purgatory, in which he described how the soul is transformed, cleansed and sanctified through God’s intervention. One can of course legitimately argue that the themes of conversion, purification and holiness belong to a broader theological context which cannot be reduced solely to Evangelicalism, although their introduction and foundation in Newman’s thought occurred primarily through the channel of the Evangelical movement.

¹ AW, p. 79. See LD I, pp. 178f., 196, 252, 294.

² AW, p. 79. See LD VI, pp. 128f.

³ See John E. Linnan, ‘The Evangelical Background of John Henry Newman’, Volume I, Doctoral dissertation: University of Louvain, 1965.

⁴ See Ian Ker, *Newman and the Fullness of Christianity*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993, pp. 19-30.

⁵ For the lasting effect of Calvinistic Evangelicalism in Newman’s theology, see Yngve Brilioth, *The Anglican Revival – Studies in the Oxford Movement*, London: Longman, Green and Co., 1925, pp. 254ff. David Newsome, ‘The Evangelical Sources of Newman’s Power’, in John Coulson and A. M. Allchin (eds.), *The Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1967, pp. 25-27.

Nineteenth-century Evangelicalism was a movement of renewal within the Church of England.⁶ Known derogatorily as ‘enthusiasts’ or ‘peculiar’, the Evangelicals were a loosely connected group of individuals, united by very general theological convictions such as justification, conversion and atonement. When Newman joined its ranks in the early 1800s, English Evangelicalism had already reached its climax, and was soon to be eclipsed by Tractarianism in the mid 1830s.⁷ Finding a Church that had become lifeless and indifferent, the Evangelicals aimed to ‘purify the world by conversion to Christ.’⁸ Reacting against the ‘dry and rationalistic’ religion of the Hanoverian divines, the Evangelical party of the Church of England stressed above all else the need for personal conversion and holiness.⁹ Theologically there were a number of different factions which existed among the Evangelicals. By the beginning of the nineteenth century two main branches of Evangelicalism had emerged within the Church of England which had become theologically distinct from each other. The first, associated with John Wesley (1703-1791) tended towards Arminianism, a doctrine which stressed the value of good work, moral living and philanthropy as a visible sign of the ‘elect.’ The second, under the direction of George Whitefield (1714-1770), was doctrinally Calvinistic. This form of Evangelicalism distinguished itself from Arminianism on the central questions of election and predestination, particularly by its adherence to the doctrine of final perseverance – the teaching that the elect are given assurance of their salvation at conversion.¹⁰ It was this form of Calvinistic Evangelicalism that Newman was introduced to as a young man.¹¹

⁶ Grayson Carter, Oxford Theological Monographs: *Anglican Evangelicals. Protestant Successions from The Via Media*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

⁷ E. A. Knox, *The Tractarian Movement*, London: Putman, 1933, p. 61.

⁸ E. A. Knox, *The Tractarian Movement*, p. 54.

⁹ Yngve Brilioth, *The Anglican Revival*, p. 29.

¹⁰ See Alan C. Clifford, *Atonement and Justification. English Evangelical Theology 1640-1790: An Evaluation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, pp. 70ff.; Yngve Brilioth, *The Anglican Revival*, p. 31.

¹¹ See Henry Offley Wakeman, *An Introduction to the History of the Church of England*, London: Rivington, 1914, pp. 438ff.

Newman's introduction to Evangelicalism came about while he was still a boarder at Great Ealing School, which he attended from 1808-1816.¹² It was towards the end of his time at Ealing that Newman underwent a spiritual conversion which led him from a nominal faith of 'no formed religious convictions' to belief in a personal God.¹³ Newman's Evangelical school master, Walter Mayers (1790-1828), had a profound impact on his religious and theological development at this time. It was under his direction that Newman's theological outlook took on what he would later describe as an 'Evangelical-Calvinistic bias.'¹⁴ For Newman Mayers became 'the human means of [the] beginning of divine faith in me', and of, 'one to whom I am so much indebted.'¹⁵ While he had no doubt that it was the force of the Evangelical witness to holiness, in men such as Mayers, that had converted him to a spiritual life, Newman later questioned the specifically Evangelical character of this first conversion.¹⁶ It is therefore necessary to distinguish between Newman's religious and theological development during this period. While his early formation was theologically Calvinistic and Evangelical, his religious experiences certainly were not. 'In truth', he later wrote in his memoirs, 'he never had been a genuine evangelical.'¹⁷ Yet despite the absence of those 'special evangelical experiences' of an emotive and 'violent' conversion of heart which was so imperative among the Evangelicals, Newman's writings display very pronounced Evangelical traits.¹⁸

¹² *AW*, p. 29.

¹³ *Apo.*, p. 15.

¹⁴ *LD XIV*, p. 235.

¹⁵ *Apo.*, p. 17. *LD II*, p. 58.

¹⁶ *AW*, p. 79.

¹⁷ *AW*, p. 79.

¹⁸ *AW*, p. 80.

Doctrinally Newman reached the height of his Evangelical period in 1821. It was at his time when he was ‘more devoted to the evangelical creed, and more strict in his religious duties than at any previous time’, that he penned a memorandum of his beliefs.¹⁹ This unpublished memorandum represents a synthesis of Newman’s religious convictions at the height of his Evangelical period and gives us an important insight into his theological position before his transition to the High Church party.²⁰ Newman composed two editions of the work which he continued to edit and develop until early 1822.²¹ The first manuscript, dated ‘June 1821’, entitled ‘A collection of Scripture papers setting forth in due order of succession the doctrine of Christianity’, consists of 34 bound pages.²² The second, longer work, is dated 1821, and bears no title. This latter work is the ‘transcript’ Newman refers to in his memoirs, to which he added a commentary in 1826.²³ In both versions Newman copied copiously from Scripture on typical Evangelical subjects such as the Law, the natural state of man, mercy and justice, the manner of redemption in Christ, the Holy Spirit, holiness and the nature of conversion. Each section concluded with a brief commentary.

In 1826 Newman confessed in his journals that ‘very many of my most positive and dogmatical notions were taken *from books*.’²⁴ In fact, Newman’s creed of 1821 was inspired by an array of Evangelical authors whom he tried to imitate. Under Mayers’ direction Newman was introduced to works from authors which he described as ‘all of the school of Calvin.’²⁵ They included the works of a charismatic preacher, a non-juror

¹⁹ AW, p. 80.

²⁰ Cf. LD I, p. 108.

²¹ Cf. LD I, p. 108.

²² BOA A.9.1.e

²³ BOA A.9.1.c. Cf. AW, pp. 80, 172. See Thomas Sheridan, *Newman on Justification*. New York: Alba House, 1967, pp.51-56, who has summarised the central aspects of this manuscript.

²⁴ AW, p. 172. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 166.

²⁵ *Apo.*, p.17.

divine and a bishop: Thomas Scott's *The Force of Truth* (1779), William Beveridge's *Private Thoughts* (1661), Philip Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* (1745), William Law's *Serious Calls to a Devout and Holy Life* (1729), and an unspecified work by William Romaine.²⁶ The theologically Calvinist authors, upon whom Newman was dependant, did not exhibit any kind of systematic eschatology. While they were known for their impressive philanthropy, preaching and missionary activity, many nineteenth century Evangelical authors lacked any sort of speculative theological thought.²⁷ It was their infectious enthusiasm for the Word of God and the salvation of souls, rather than profound theological eloquence that distinguished them from the 'lethargic religion of the establishment.'²⁸ Indeed, the both Calvinist and Ariminian Evangelicals frowned on any type of speculative theology, and rejected conjectures on the nature of the afterlife which were not directly Scriptural. Writing on the various theories which had been put forward on the question of eternal punishment and beatitude, Thomas Scott, whom Newman relied upon in many of his early sermons, affirmed this strictly Scriptural methodology in his *Force of Truth*:

By experience I am well acquainted with Satan's intention, in employing so many of his servants to invent and propagate those pestilential errors, whether in speculation, or as reduced to practice, that have in all ages corrupted and enervated the pure and powerful doctrine of the gospel.²⁹

²⁶ *Apo.*, pp. 17-19. *LD I*, pp. 29f., *AW*, p. 79.

²⁷ See Bernard M. G. Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age*, London: Longman, 1980, p. 25; Henry Offley Wakeman, *An Introduction to the History of the Church of England*, p. 441.

²⁸ Francis McGrath, *John Henry Newman: Universal Revelation*, Tunbridge Wells: Burns and Oates, 1997, p. 26.

²⁹ John Scott (ed.), *Thomas Scott Works I*, London: L. B. Seeley and Son, 1823, p. 11.

Mayers' sermons also attest to this principle, admonishing that 'faith in Him unto salvation is not a speculative faith [...] but it is also a principle of spiritual life and action.'³⁰ Their distaste for theological speculation did not, however, mean that their teaching lacked doctrinal content. The doctrine of justification dictated much of their theology, which consequently meant that their works displayed a preoccupation with soteriological themes. References to eschatological questions were scant, and when considered, were based largely on literal interpretations from Scriptural passages devoid of any references to Patristic commentaries or Tradition. While the doctrinal synthesis of many Evangelicals may have been reductive, it reflected their emphasis on religious experience as the core of the Christian vocation. The Evangelicals were not Latitudinarians, rather their approach to dogma was determined by the 'principle of spiritual life and action'.³¹

It was from the above cited works, which were so crucial to Newman's early theological development, that he adopted a number of closely related theological ideas which became milestones for his eschatology as an Evangelical. Initially Newman held that assurance of beatitude for eternity was given in the present life to God's 'elect'. The doctrine of 'final perseverance' not only implied a very individualistic eschatology, but also ruled out the development of any kind of theology of a third state after death. Consequently the teaching of final perseverance reinforced his belief in the strict division of humanity into the saved and the damned. This latter doctrine meant that his understanding of the afterlife was of a twofold receptacle of souls – heaven or hell. Thus no third or middle state was considered.

³⁰ Walter Mayers, *Sermons*, London: James Nisbet, 1831, p. 10. Mayers died suddenly in 1828 leaving no published works. A single volume of sermons was published posthumously in 1831 by his wife. Newman was listed amongst its subscribers.

³¹ See John E. Linnan, 'The Evangelical Background of John Henry Newman', Volume I, p. 100.

II. The Eschatology of ‘A Two-Fold Receptacle of Souls’

The influence which an Evangelical eschatology had on Newman can be seen at the very beginning of his ministry in the Church of England. His first sermon at the Church of St. Clement’s, Oxford, on 27 June 1824 roused the opposition of Edward Hawkins (1789-1882). Hawkins criticised the distinction Newman made between the elect and the damned, arguing for a spectrum of moral excellence rather than simply categories of the just and the damned:

The sermon divided the Christian world into two classes, the one all darkness, the other all light, whereas, said Mr. Hawkins, it is impossible for us in fact to draw such a line of demarcation across any body of men [...] because religious and moral excellence is a matter of degree. Men are not either saints or sinners ...³²

In the sermon, Newman spoke of how ‘there is no middle course [...] we are either in the path that leadeth to life or in that of endless misery.’³³ This vision of a twofold division of humanity as either ‘real’ and ‘nominal’ Christians, or as ‘just’ and ‘reprobate’, dominated Evangelical theology, and consequently their eschatology. In his sermon ‘Affliction Profitable’, Mayer spoke of how

We cannot say what is it to be in hell or heaven; we cannot attempt to penetrate farther than the Word of God; and here we find enough for our guidance, enough to invite us to the realms of glory [...] Not that we are to imagine that the spirit sleeps; that, as soon as it has departed from the body, it passes either into happiness or misery, either with the Lord of angels, or the Prince of devils. There is no middle state, no

³² *AW*, p. 77.

³³ *BOA* A.17.1. ‘Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.’ 27 June 1824.

alternative, no purgatory. Hence the Apostle speaks of his departing as identical with his being with the Lord.³⁴

Newman adopted this vision of a divided humanity from works he had been reading under the direction of Mayers. Thomas Scott (1747 - 1821), whom he came to rely on more than any other Evangelical author, advocated a similar ‘two-state’ eschatology.³⁵ Scott had become for Newman the ideal of conversion and ‘unworldliness’, and even after Newman had moved away from the Evangelical system he praised Scott’s works. In 1837 he wrote to a correspondent who criticised him for his ‘unfair’ evaluation of the Evangelicals:

From the age of 15, when I first knew him [Scott], I was attracted by the earnestness, manliness and independence of his character [...] and I have never lost this impression of him. He is the fairest specimen that can be taken of the so called Evangelical school, from the very practical character of his works.³⁶

Newman read Scott’s spiritual biography, *The Force of Truth*, as well as his commentaries on Scripture. Scott was critical of any attempts at theological speculation of an intermediate or third state after death. He maintained that Scripture teaches that upon death both the righteous and wicked immediately enter into a state of happiness or misery.³⁷ in his essay on the ‘State of separate Spirits’ he wrote:

Various absurd notions and curious speculations have been formed about this intermediate state, which the use of the word *hell*, for the place of *separate spirits*, in our translation of the Bible, of the Creed, and elsewhere, may have in part occasioned.³⁸

³⁴ Walter Mayers, *Sermons*, London: James Nisbet, 1831, pp. 295-297.

³⁵ David Newsome, *The Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium*, p. 19. *Apo.*, p. 60.

³⁶ *LD VI*, p. 129.

³⁷ John Scott (ed.), *Thomas Scott Works II*, London: L. B. Seeley and Son, 1823, p. 480.

³⁸ John Scott (ed.), *Thomas Scott Works II*, p. 484.

Theologically Thomas Scott was dependant on the writings of William Beveridge, and it is therefore unsurprising that he also advocated the same theology of the fate of the soul after death.³⁹ On New Year's Eve 1816 Mayers sent Newman a copy of Beveridge's *Private Thoughts*, advising him to 'adapt and interpret it to your opinions.'⁴⁰ Some sixty years later Newman wrote in the book, 'No book was more dear to me, or executed a more powerful influence over my devotion and my habitual thought.'⁴¹ In *Private Thoughts* Beveridge insisted on both the doctrine of final perseverance for the 'elect' and the existence of two states in the hereafter:

I may, with great Assurance, affirm and believe, that as really as I now live, so really shall I never die, but that my Soul, at the very Moment of its Departure from the Flesh shall immediately mount up the Tribunal of the most High GOD, there be judg'd, first privately, by itself (or perhaps with some other souls, that shall be summoned to appear before God the same moment:) And then, from these private Sessions I believe that every Soul that ever was or shall be separated from the Body, must either be received into the Mansion of Heaven or else Sent down to the Dungeons of Hell, there to remain, till the grand Assizes.⁴²

Beveridge's work, which is structured around 'articles' of belief, made continued reference to a 'twofold receptacle of souls' in the post-mortem state.⁴³ References from Newman's Evangelical period reiterated the belief of a twofold state of the souls of the dead, as being either in a state of damnation or beatitude. In his *Apologia* he recorded that one of the Calvinistic tenets which 'took root in [his] mind' was 'the fact of heaven and hell, divine favour and divine wrath, of the justified and the unjustified.'⁴⁴ This sharp distinction between the elect and the damned in the hereafter was reinforced by

³⁹ John Scott (ed.), *Thomas Scott Works I*, p. 56.

⁴⁰ *LD I*, p. 29.

⁴¹ See *Apo.*, p. 479.

⁴² William Beveridge, *Private Thoughts*, London, 1752, p. 74.

⁴³ William Beveridge, *Private Thoughts*, p. 77.

⁴⁴ *Apo.*, p. 19.

Newman's reading of the works of the Non-Juror bishop William Law. Law's *Serious Calls to a Devout and Holy Life* presented Newman with a vision in which the rigid distinction between the elect and the unregenerate, the world and the Church, governed all manner of life and existence.

Another Evangelical author who exercised an influence on Newman from an early age was William Romaine (1714-1795). Born of Huguenot stock, Romaine's theology was in many ways typical of the Evangelical-Calvinistic clergymen of his time. While remaining firmly in communion with the Church of England, he was doctrinally Calvinistic. His interpretation of the Thirty-Nine Articles was so rigidly Calvinistic he would eventually be denied access to the university pulpit at Oxford in 1742.⁴⁵ In the *Apologia* Newman gave no indication of the title of the work which he read from Romaine. However Yngve Brilioth has suggested that it was probably the *Treatise upon the Life, Walk and Triumph of Faith*, which was published posthumously in 1823.⁴⁶ The assumption seems plausible as Mayers wrote to Newman in the early 1820s praising this work which 'next to the Scriptures, [has] given me clearer views of the Gospel than I have ever found in any other author'.⁴⁷

While the title, and even the content of Romaine's work, may have eluded him in later years, Newman's memory of one doctrine he had learnt from this author certainly did not. Newman remembered that he 'received it at once' the doctrine of final

⁴⁵ William Romaine, *Treatise upon the Life, Walk and Triumph of Faith*, New York: Robert Carter, 1857, p. iv.

⁴⁶ Yngve Brilioth, *The Anglican Revival*, p. 32. William Romaine, *Treatise upon the Life, Walk and Triumph of Faith*, New York: Robert Carter, 1857. The work was originally comprised of three separate volumes, *The Life of Faith* (1763), *The Walk of Faith* (1771), and *The Triumph of Faith* (1795).

⁴⁷ LD I, p. 110. Newman was unsure when Mayer's wrote the letter. He later wrote 'mid-June? 1821?' on the letter, but Mayers presumably wrote to Newman on Romaine's work after 1821 as it was first published in 1823.

perseverance which he and believed to have come from ‘a divine source’.⁴⁸ This doctrine gave Evangelicals the assurance of their election to eternal bliss in the hereafter at the moment of their conversion. Influenced by Romaine’s work, Newman believed that he had been granted the same assurance of being ‘elected to eternal glory’, and ‘predestined to salvation’ at his conversion in 1816.⁴⁹ The theological foundation of the doctrine of final perseverance was one of atonement as a fulfilled salvation. This meant that the believer had nothing more to do once they had undergone a ‘conversion of heart.’ Arguing from the Scriptural basis of God’s irrevocable covenant with man, Romaine taught that at conversion, an ‘immortal seed of eternal life’ was placed within man, preserving him for eternal life.⁵⁰ For the believer who had undergone conversion, the state of his salvation for both this life and the next remained immutable. The doctrine of final perseverance which assured man of beatitude after death meant that any kind of a third state was seen as unnecessary. In his two university sermons ‘The Divine Legations of Moses Demonstrated’ (1739) and ‘Future Rewards and Punishments Proved to be Sanctioned by the Mosaic Dispensation’ (1742), Romaine argued for the existence of two states after death as evidenced in the Pentateuch.⁵¹ It is therefore not surprising that many of Newman’s references to hell and eternal punishment from his Evangelical period are particularly reminiscent of Romaine’s sermons.⁵²

⁴⁸ *Apo.*, p. 17.

⁴⁹ *Apo.*, pp. 17f.

⁵⁰ William Romaine, *Treatise upon the Life, Walk and Triumph of Faith*, New York: Robert Carter, 1857, p. 85.

⁵¹ William Romaine, *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated*, London: Cooper, 1739. *Ibid.*, *Future Rewards and Punishments Proved to be the Sanctions of the Mosaic Dispensation*, London: Gosling, 1742.

⁵² See *Ser.*, IV, p. xxi.

The belief in ‘final perseverance’ radically influenced Newman views of God and the world around him, steering him in the way of an extremely individualistic eschatology. Considering himself predestined to eternal bliss, Newman was at this time, oblivious to the state of others who may not have gained this assurance of salvation. While he did not consider them as predestined to eternal death, the doctrine meant that he only ‘thought of the mercy to himself.’⁵³ The belief in his own predestination consequently created despondency and mistrust in material phenomenon, so that Newman came to consider himself and God as the only two absolute ‘self-evident beings.’⁵⁴ While he would later abandon the doctrine of final perseverance, the individualistic eschatology which accompanied this doctrine would remain part of Newman’s theology. The emphasis on an individual eschatology, which deals with questions pertaining to the fate of the individual soul, rather than to the collective events of the consummation of the cosmos, can be seen in a number of Newman’s Anglican sermons. In 1833 he preached on the subject of the immortality of the soul, emphasising that

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 [...] 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.⁵⁵

Some ten years later Newman still insisted in his preaching that we shall come to know ‘when we stand before God at judgement’, the solemn truth that ‘there are but two beings in the whole world, God and ourselves.’⁵⁶

⁵³ *Apo.*, p. 18.

⁵⁴ *Apo.*, p. 18.

⁵⁵ ‘The Immortality of the Soul’, *PPS*, I, pp. 19f.

⁵⁶ ‘Our Lord’s Last Supper and His First.’ *SD*, p. 38. See also David Newsome, ‘The Evangelical Sources of Newman’s Power’, in John Coulson and A. M. Allchin (eds.), *The Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1967, p. 21.

The first direct reference Newman made to the condition of departed is found in sermon 110 of 1825, entitled ‘On the Feelings Produced in Common by all Revelation.’⁵⁷ In this brief passage Newman referred to the just who died before Christ as ‘saints’, implying that they experience the beatitude of heaven. However Newman’s expressed apprehension of speculating beyond strictly Scriptural accounts of the condition of the dead:

These ancient saints have long since passed into another world, yet tho’ dead [Hebr 11], they still speak [~~to us~~], holding up to us a partaker of holy love, and simple [~~faith~~] trust and disinterested devotion. Where they are now we know not – nor what their state, their employments, their works, their knowledge – whether they yet know the glories of redemption from the Son of God, we cannot tell [...] and it is perhaps rash to inquire or conjecture – we know that they are at rest, that they have ceased from their labours – that is all we know.’⁵⁸

While Newman comforted his congregation with assurance that the just were ‘at rest’ and have ‘ceased from their labours’ he refused to elaborate on what the nature of their present condition was. His conviction that it would be ‘rash’ to inquire further as to the state of these ‘saints’ reiterated the theological reserve which was expressed by Romaine, Scott and Beveridge on dealing with eschatological opinions of a purely speculative nature. Despite this Colm McKeating has suggested that this passage represents Newman’s first reference to the doctrine of the intermediate state.⁵⁹ The doctrine of the intermediate state represented a tradition exclusive to a High Church eschatology which taught that in the period between death and resurrection the soul is kept in a state of incomplete but progressive beatitude. While Newman’s reference to

⁵⁷ *BOA* A. 17.1. Sermon No 110, 16th October 1825.

⁵⁸ *BOA* A. 17.1. Sermon No 110, 16th October 1825, pp. 15, 16.

⁵⁹ See Colm McKeating, ‘Eschatology in the Anglican Sermons of John Henry Newman’. Pontifical Gregorian University Rome: Doctoral Thesis, 1992, p. 224.

souls which are ‘at rest’ is characteristic of the doctrine, this conjecture seems unlikely, as Newman avoids the term ‘intermediate state’ and explicitly refrained from developing what the term ‘rest’ implied. Furthermore, his use of the term ‘saints’ rather than ‘spirits’ implies that he is referring to heaven rather than to an intermediate state of disembodied souls. The general tone of the sermon certainly also does not lend itself to opinions which one could describe as High Church. Newman’s references to the necessity of conformation to God’s infinite holiness in the *present* life clearly express the Evangelical emphasis on conversion and man’s total depravity:

Again this principle of faith was (is) one of holiness (purity). It was one that looked up and loved the Lord. It felt the inexpressible holiness of God, and taught the soul, which struck with shame and sorrow for its many pollutions to desire to seek after a transformation into his likeness.⁶⁰

Of greater interest are the corrections which can be seen on the original manuscript of sermon 110. ‘They still speak [~~to us~~’ suggests that he may have entertained, but decided against the notion that the dead have direct communion with the living.⁶¹

The experience of the death of close relatives and friends gave Newman impetus to reflect on the nature of the soul’s existence in the afterlife. The sudden death of his sister Mary in 1828, revealed how aspects of his eschatology still remained broadly Evangelical and Calvinistic up to his first systematic reading of the Church Fathers. Newman considered his youngest sister’s premature death as one of the ‘heaviest affliction[s]’ he had experienced, yet also as a means of God’s visitation and providence in his life.⁶² In a letter addressed to his sister Jemima some months after Mary’s death, he asked her to recollect in a ‘memoranda’ of all she could remember of her late sister,

⁶⁰ *BOA* A. 17.1. p. 7.

⁶¹ *BOA* A. 17.1. p. 15.

⁶² *AW*, pp. 211, 213.

lamenting that '[...] Alas, memory does not remain vivid. The more minute these circumstances, the better.'⁶³ Newman expressed his distress and frustration of what he understands as his incapacity to do anything for the good of Mary's soul after death, stating that all he could do is

To talk of her thus in the third person [...] It draws tears into my eyes to think that all at once we can only converse *about* her as about some inanimate object, wood or stone. But she shall flourish from the tomb. And in the meantime, it being but a little time, I would try to talk to her in imagination, and in hope of the future.⁶⁴

Despite the hope that his sister would 'flourish from the tomb' Newman made no mention of the intermediate state. His hitherto undeveloped theology of an intermediate state meant that he was wary of the implications of accepting the communion between the living and the dead. If we were to judge Newman's position from this letter alone, it would be questionable if, at this early stage, he believed in the efficacy of prayers for the dead. In his correspondences after Mary's death we find no evidence of recommendation of the practice. A year earlier in 1827 Pusey, who had also been distraught at the loss of his brother, wrote to Newman asking him if 'Dare one pray for them?', adding that nothing 'can be found in Scripture against praying for the dead.'⁶⁵ While Newman kept no record of his reply to Pusey, the reservation expressed in Pusey's letter highlights the fact that in their theological milieu prayer for the dead was by no means a readily accepted practice.

The remnants of Newman's Evangelical eschatology in the late 1820s can be seen in a series of poems he composed in memory of his sister Mary, a year after her

⁶³ *LD II*, p. 61.

⁶⁴ *LD II*, pp. 61f.

⁶⁵ *LD II*, p. 21.

death – *Waking Thoughts, Consolation in Bereavement, and A Picture*. Another followed in 1829, *A Voice from Afar*, which he published both in the *British Magazine* and the *Lyra Apostolica* (1836). The first of these three compositions give us a valuable insight into Newman’s understanding of the fate of the soul at death prior to his acceptance of a developed theology of the intermediate state. Returning from Oxford to Brighton for the first time after Mary’s death, Newman slept in his sister’s deathbed.⁶⁶ It was during this break that he wrote the first of these poems, *Waking Thoughts*, which he never published. Citing Genesis 28, on Jacob’s rising from sleep to experience a place where God dwelt, he wrote of Mary as ‘a saint’ who upon meeting the Lord begins her ‘long sleep’:

This is the room, and this is the bed
Whence at the sudden word
Of high command once upward sped
A saint to meet her Lord [...]

Here to we came day after day [Her bed]
Before our God to weep,
While in death’s casket drear she lay
Clad meet for *her long sleep*. [my italics]

And hence, that casket duly sealed
Our gem of price was borne,
To *rest in calm* of hallowed field [my italics]
Till our redemption morn.⁶⁷

While Newman accepted that the soul of his sister was at rest, *Waking Thoughts, Consolation in Bereavement* and *A Picture* reflect little of a theology of the intermediate state. Rather, his reference to her condition as one of a ‘long sleep’ seems more akin to the doctrine of Psychopannychism, that is, the doctrine (distinguishable

⁶⁶ LD XXI, p. 7.

⁶⁷ John Henry Newman, *Waking Thoughts*, 13 April 1828. Unpublished. See Elisabeth Ann Noel, ‘An Edition of Poems by John Henry Cardinal Newman’, Doctoral Thesis, University of Illinois, 1956, pp. 31f.

from Mortalism) that the soul at death is incapable of ‘motion, feeling, vigour and perception’ and therefore is analogically described as ‘asleep’ in the hereafter.⁶⁸

Newman made a similar reference to Mary in *A Picture*. Here he linked the state of his sister directly to Mt 9:24 ‘The maiden is not dead but sleepeth.’⁶⁹

III. Conversion: The Beginning of the Soul’s Transformation

The single most defining aspect which was impressed upon Newman during his Evangelical years was the necessity of conversion. While ‘repentance’ was a continual task throughout life, for the Evangelicals conversion was a singular and unrepeatable experience of grace between God and the soul. Evangelicals such as Scott taught that genuine conversion of heart was a prerequisite for holiness and encounter with God, thus giving man the assurance of final perseverance.⁷⁰ The necessity for conversion, as a key element of Newman’s Evangelicalism, was an aspect of his early religious development which had a lasting influence on his theology. Newman’s understanding of conversion, as primarily an act of God upon the soul, finds parallels in his Roman Catholic reflections on how the soul is renewed through purgation. Writing on his conversion of 1816 Newman speaks not simply of his assent to faith, but foremost of God’s initiative – who ‘touched’ his heart and enlightened his conscience:

When I was a boy of fifteen, and living a life of sin, with a very dark conscience and a very profane spirit, He mercifully touched my heart; and, with innumerable sins, yet I have not forsaken him from that

⁶⁸ See George Hudson Williams, *Radical Reformation*, Kirksville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992, pp. 64f, 507; C. A. Patrides, ‘Psychopannychism in Renaissance Europe’, *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 60, No. 2, Part 1, (Apr., 1963), pp. 227-229.

⁶⁹ *VVO*, p. 25.

⁷⁰ See Thomas Scott, *The Doctrines of Election and Final Perseverance*, London: Seeley, 1811.

time, nor he me. He upheld me to this hour, and I have called myself his servant.⁷¹

This gift, which he understood as God's merciful election, had very practical consequences in his life. This is seen particularly in the seriousness of his resolve to continual repentance in the minute details of every aspect of his day. In an unpublished text, dated 1817, he scribbled a series of resolutions on how he was to act at any given situation during the course of a day.⁷² This very brief manuscript reveals the enthusiastic freshness of his conversion in 1816. His 'resolutions' were divided into 'Morning', 'Day Employments' [*sic*], and 'Evening'. He charged himself to be aware of 'wanderings' and 'vain thoughts' if alone, and to be against 'ill example' and 'using God's name irreverently', when in company. He understood it as a daily task to consider the end of his life by reflecting on 'the evidence of thy salvation, the coming of Christ, [and] thy own mortality.'⁷³ The disapproving tone in his letters to Walter Mayers on the frivolities of the 'many apostasies' of undergraduate life, attest to the religious candour which one would expect from a serious minded young Evangelical.⁷⁴

Yet Newman's understanding of the soul's transformation was not limited merely to a striving after moral excellence. In a series of essays he wrote at the height of his Evangelical period from 1821-1823,⁷⁵ Newman described systematically the process of transformation which God effects upon the elected soul. In the untitled manuscript BOA A. 9.1. of 1821, Newman wrote a prolonged reflection on the nature of

⁷¹ Birmingham Oratory (eds.), *Correspondence of John Henry Newman with John Keble and others 1839-1845*, London, 1917, p. 314.

⁷² BOA A. 9.1.a. The resolutions are found on the back cover of an 18 paged booklet which Newman wrote on the subject of 'Texts to Prove the Divinity of Our Lord and the Holy Trinity.'

⁷³ BOA A. 9.1.a.

⁷⁴ See AW pp. 37ff. *LD*, I, p. 66.

⁷⁵ BOA A. 9.1. This essay consists of 10 pages. See also a summary of this manuscript by John E., 'The Evangelical Background of John Henry Newman', Louvain, 1965, p. 275. BOA A. 9.1.c. Essay 4 'On Conversion.'

the soul's conversion.⁷⁶ Here he showed how God 'elects' man to be transferred from darkness to light. Firstly he spoke of the 'gloomy season' in which man becomes convinced of his depravity, but as yet is devoid of faith in Christ. At this preliminary stage of conversion man is 'struck with horror at the enormity of his transgressions', but is motivated merely by selfish means of fear of judgement. In his awareness of his own unworthiness, man is confronted with the task of conforming himself to God. Newman described the constant to and fro which man passes through, seeking to live virtuously, while habitually breaking 'all his resolutions' and the consequent despair this causes. It is at this stage of 'crisis' that God intervenes to transform the soul. Newman likened the soul in this state to the cosmos before God's word was spoken, which was 'without form and void.' It was upon such 'troubled and angry waters' that God begins the process to 'recreate' the soul through the action of the word and the Holy Spirit who 'inclines his heart':

It is the beginning of the new creation, and an Almighty voice uttereth, 'let there be light' – yes! a glorious morrow on that night is breaking; a day is opening which will never close, a sun is rising which will never set. In the course of this happy change the first feeling pronounced is hope. Before the offer of pardon the convinced sinner shuns the presence of God he fears.⁷⁷

At the end of this passage Newman made an annotation where he cited a section of Thomas Scott's commentary on Genesis 3:15, which he had been using to develop the concept of conversion as a divine recreation. The framework for his argument of man's depravity, election and conversion as a 'recreation' can be found in Scott's works.⁷⁸ It is also a concept which is found in the sermons of Walter Mayers.⁷⁹ In a typically

⁷⁶ BOA A. 9.1.c. Newman makes passing reference to the essay on conversion in his early journals. See AW, p. 172.

⁷⁷ BOA A. 9.1.c.

⁷⁸ See Thomas Scott, *The Doctrines of Election and Final Perseverance*, London: Seeley, 1811, p. 18.

⁷⁹ See Walter Mayers, *Sermons*, London: James Nisbet, 1831, p. 138.

Evangelical fashion Newman viewed the process of conversion and regeneration by the external experience of the uttered Word, and the internal effect of the Spirit that regenerates the soul. Towards the end of these reflections, Newman described how the elected soul is overcome with both immense joy and sorrow as it is ‘recreated’ by God’s merciful intervention:

Happy, happy soul! [my italics] Behold, he weepeth, he prayeth – his stout heart hath been softened by the prospect of his sins and the dread of God’s displeasure – he is now humble and tenable – he feels he is nothing in himself [...] *Happy, happy soul!* [my italics] He hath laid hold on the appointed means of justification, he hath brought down from above the robe of righteousness – he believeth!⁸⁰

This description of the converted soul of 1821 has striking similarities to passages from *The Dream of Gerontius*, which he composed some forty years later. As an Evangelical Newman described how the converted soul oscillates between joy and sorrow, and is ‘softened’ and made ‘tenable’ by the dread of God. Similarly, the ‘happy, suffering’ soul of Gerontius is ‘scorch’d and shrivell’d’ as it leaves the angel’s side to approach its judge:

The eager spirit has darted from my hold,
And, with the intemperate energy of love,
Flies to the dear feet of Emmanuel;
But, ere it reach them, the keen sanctity,
Which with its effluence, like a glory, clothes
And circles round the Crucified, has seized,
And scorch’d, and shrivell’d it; and now it lies
Passive and still before the awful Throne.
O happy, suffering soul! [my italics]⁸¹

⁸⁰ BOA A. 9.1.c.

⁸¹ VVO, p. 362.

Before his eventual acceptance of baptismal regeneration, Newman held that it was man's process of conversion that justified the soul and made it pure before God. Thus he spoke of the converted soul as 'perfectly pure and righteous', that could approach the throne of God not to ask for mercy but to 'demand justice'.⁸² The relationship between conversion, regeneration and baptism was a question which Newman wrangled with throughout his undergraduate years, and dedicated prolonged study to in the early 1820s.⁸³ He struggled to reconcile how the baptised, whose lives were 'nominal' rather than 'faithful', could be considered regenerate. The topic was also the subject of frequent correspondence with Walter Mayers.⁸⁴ Mayers wrote to Newman in April 1817, explaining in detail the nature of true conversion. Citing Scott, Mayers emphasised that conversion consisted not in an external rite, but rather in the experience of holiness, which implied 'an entire change of views, of temper, and conduct', and as 'something which he [man] cannot operate upon himself [...]'⁸⁵ Playing down the role of baptism, Mayers insisted that conversion must be a gradual rather than instantaneous event.⁸⁶ The witness of a converted soul was thus the visible sign of a regenerate soul. The Evangelical Newman was therefore inclined simply to make regeneration synonymous with conversion, so that assurance of faith or final perseverance was acquired by conversion rather than by baptism.⁸⁷ In an essay on the question of baptism and regeneration he wrote some time after 1821,⁸⁸ Newman summarised his thoughts on the process of conversion:

We may pronounce that in conversion, there are generally the following stages of feeling and in the following order, though the

⁸² *BOA A. 9.1.c.*

⁸³ See Thomas L. Sheridan, *Newman on Justification*, pp. 59ff.

⁸⁴ See *LD I*, pp. 30. 32ff. 37.

⁸⁵ *LD I*, p. 32.

⁸⁶ *LD I*, p. 32.

⁸⁷ See Francis McGrath, *John Henry Newman: Universal Revelation*, p. 28.

⁸⁸ *BOA A. 9.1.* The manuscript is dated '1822 or 1823?'

length of each may be different to different individuals: 1) sense for God's holiness and our own vileness, 2) sorrow for sin, 3) belief in Christ as the saviour of the world, 4) justification or adoption or the being made children of God in Christ Jesus, 5) peace with God and faith working by love, 6) good works.⁸⁹

This text provides us with an important synthesis on Newman's Evangelical views on authentic conversion. By setting out six general stages of conversion, Newman had adopted much of the language and ideas of both Mayers and Scott – viewing the soul's transformation as a gradual process of divine intervention and human desire. John E. Linnan has drawn attention to Newman's use of numerous Scriptural citations in manuscript BOA A. 9.1. on baptism and regeneration. Linnan shows how they demonstrate the causality, agency, means, principle and process of conversion in the soul. The meritorious cause of man's conversion is Jesus Christ, working through the agent of the Holy Spirit. The means of conversion is the word of God. The principle of conversion in man's soul is faith. Finally, conversion is a process of humiliation, repentance and acknowledgement of sin.⁹⁰

Man's transformation was a key element of Newman's theology as an Evangelical. Yet how far did he conceive this transformation as restricted solely to man's present life? While man undergoes 'stages' of conversion, Newman viewed it as a singular, unrepeatable act which occurred before death. The effect of conversion is holiness, which is a continual process of perfection. In a sermon of 1824, No. 4 – entitled 'The Wounded Spirit', Newman dwelt briefly on how man's sanctification can only be fully perfected after death:

⁸⁹ BOA A. 9.1. p. 6.

⁹⁰ John E. Linnan, 'The Evangelical Background of John Henry Newman', Louvain, 1965, p. 514. Linnan cites BOA A. 9.1. p. 2.

Expect not indeed to be made perfectly whole on earth. The soul has been wounded too seriously to give hopes of immediate cure. Evil thou wilt always have in thy heart, enough to humble thee. Pardon indeed of sin thou wilt have on thy repentance without delay – but the sanctification of thy heart, the drawing up of the whole man to God, is a gradual work – requiring all thy efforts and exertion, to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, and perfected only in heaven.⁹¹

The consoling tone of this sermon demonstrates the development of Newman's thought since his essay on conversion of 1821.⁹² Where he had hitherto described the 'perfectly pure' soul which approached the throne of God not to beg mercy, but rather 'demand justice', in 1824 he spoke of 'the drawing up of the whole man' after death. In the essay 'Remarks on the Covenant of Grace' written in 1828, Newman reiterated this conviction that while regeneration was 'immediate and complete', the sanctification of man, 'needing our own active cooperation, must, it stands to reason, be a prospect, the work of time, nay of our whole lives.'⁹³

IV. Holiness: The Condition for Future Blessedness

Newman's theology of conversion is connected directly to his understanding of both holiness and regeneration, which with the doctrine of justification, constitute the core of Evangelical theology. When Newman came to reject the validity of the doctrine of final perseverance as an assurance of beatitude, it was replaced with a strong emphasis on the necessity for holiness. This emphasis on holiness as a condition for beatitude remained a central and concurrent aspect of his theology of the state of the soul after death. In particular it was his insistence on sanctification and growth in holiness, rather than punishment and torment, which characterised both his Anglican

⁹¹ BOA A. 17.1. See also Thomas L. Sheridan, *Newman on Justification*, p. 89 who has published a part of this sermon.

⁹² See BOA A. 9.1.c.

⁹³ BOA A. 9.1.8. p. 9.

exposition of the intermediate state, and his later understanding of purgation in *The Dream of Gerontius*. Both Rowell and McKeating agree that ‘holiness’ forms the basis of the overall scheme of Newman’s eschatological vision.⁹⁴

Before his conversion in 1816 Newman contended with his mentor, Walter Mayers, on the subject of the necessity for holiness, and sought to substitute it for ethical integrity:

I recollect (in 1815 I believe) thinking I should like to be virtuous, but not religious. There was something in the latter idea I did not like. Nor did I see the *meaning* of loving God. I recollect (in 1815) contending against Mr Mayers in favour of Pope’s Essay on Man. What, I said, can be more free from objection than it? does it not expressly inculcate, ‘Virtue alone is happiness below’?⁹⁵

The centrality of holiness for the Evangelicals meant that from his conversion onward, conformity to God in holiness became for Newman the most central and fundamental of Christian obligations. As an ordained minister in the Church of England in 1824, he wrote of holiness as ‘[...] the great end’ of one’s life, which must be characterised not by peace, by trial and purification. Newman warned against ‘substituting certain feelings for holiness’, so that instead of labouring for goodness some seek merely to ‘cherish warm emotions and estimate their growth in grace.’⁹⁶ Similarly, he admonished ministers who neglected an insistence on striving after holiness for ‘comfort’ in their

⁹⁴ See Geoffrey Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974, p. 95. Colm McKeating, ‘Eschatology in the Anglican Sermons of John Henry Newman.’ Pontifical Gregorian University Rome, Doctoral Thesis, 1992, p. 242.

⁹⁵ AW, p. 169. See also Philip Boyce, ‘Holiness – The Purpose of Life according to Newman’, in Günter Biemer and Heinrich Fries (eds.), *Christliche Heiligkeit als Lehre und Praxis nach John Henry Newman – Studien, XII Folge*. Sigmaringendorf: Glock und Lutz, 1988, pp. 136-147.

⁹⁶ BOA A. 17.1. p. 18. Sermon 103, 4th September 1825, ‘Holiness the End of the Gospel.’

preaching, arguing that ‘[...] Comfort is a cordial, but no one drinks cordials from morning to night.’⁹⁷

Newman’s early sermons demonstrate how he understood regeneration through the Holy Spirit as the foundation and beginning of holiness. In an unpublished sermon of September 1825 he described how it was the gift of the Spirit to the regenerate soul that purified it from sin and prepared it for heaven:

Besides the pardon of sins God has also given us Christians the Spirit of life to regenerate and purify our souls, to enlighten, to strengthen, to spiritualize, to comfort – to wean us from worldly joys, to give us a holy taste and judgement, and prepare us for that heavenly dwelling place.⁹⁸

It was the Evangelical emphasis on the total depravity of man which gave rise to the corresponding truth of God’s unspeakable sanctity. For man, regeneration is the initiatory phrase of the life long process of conformity with God in holiness and the striving after the original state of man before the Fall:

Holiness [...] is required of all rational creatures of God – by holiness only can they see God and enjoy him – and was the state of man before his fall.⁹⁹

Newman could therefore speak of holiness as the most fundamental element common to all forms of revelation.¹⁰⁰ It is this principle of faith, that ‘felt the inexpressible holiness of God’ which ‘taught the soul, struck with shame and sorrow at its many pollutions to

⁹⁷ *AW*, p. 172.

⁹⁸ *BOA A.* 17.1. p. 3.

⁹⁹ *BOA A.* 17.1. p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ *BOA A.* 17.1. p. 4. Sermon 110, 16th October 1825, ‘On the Feelings Produced in Common by all Revelation.’

desire and seek after a transformation into His likeness.’¹⁰¹ This insistence on the desire for transformation in God’s likeness, and the preparatory dimension of holiness for the hereafter, gave Newman’s theology of holiness its specifically eschatological emphasis.

Newman understood holiness not simply a means to an end, but rather in a preparatory dimension for man’s future state. This is expressed in Newman’s first sermon he gave on the subject of Christian death. First preached in 1825, the sermon was rewritten in 1831, and later published in the *Parochial and Plain Sermons* under the title ‘The Lapse of Time.’¹⁰² Here Newman considered it an imperative that man’s life on earth be considered one of probation, in which he is readied for the crucial moment of death. Growth in holiness in preparation for the afterlife is of such urgency as man is incapable of improving his condition after death:

[...] in that moment of death what an awful change has overcome him! What a crisis for him! [For] he cannot now alter his state from bad to good, or from good to bad. What he dieth that he must be for ever; as the tree falleth so must it lie.¹⁰³

If however the conduct of man’s earthly life defines his future existence in the hereafter, he must possess a ‘connaturality’ to God in holiness if he is to experience beatitude. This emphasis on connaturality comes to particular expression in the sermon ‘Holiness Necessary for Future Blessedness’ of 1826. Rather than understanding the beatitude of heaven solely from a meritorious perspective, Newman viewed man’s existence in heaven as a consequence of his conformity to the awful reality of God’s holiness. Rejecting purely temporal expectations of heaven, Newman stressed that if the soul is to be admitted to the Beatific Vision, it must already have had an empathetic

¹⁰¹ *BOA* A. 17.1. p. 7.

¹⁰² *PPS* VII, pp. 1ff.

¹⁰³ *PPS* VII, pp. 5f.

relationship to God in the present life. Holiness is therefore to ‘live habitually as in the sight of the world to come, as if we had broken the ties of this life, and were dead already.’¹⁰⁴ Analogically, Newman presented Heaven as ‘a church’ in which the irreligious, and the business of the world, have no place. It is therefore not simply that the ‘unholy’ may not be admitted to beatitude, rather, they will be *incapable* of enduring the presence of God’s sanctity:

Supposing, then, instead of it being said that no irreligious man could serve and attend on God in heaven (or see Him, as the text expresses it) [...] Ah! he could not *bear* the face of the Living God; the Holy God would be no object of joy to him. ‘Let us alone! What have we to do with thee?’ is the sole thought and desire of unclean souls, even while they acknowledge His majesty. None but the holy can look upon the Holy One; without holiness no man can endure to see the Lord.¹⁰⁵

As there can be no greater joy for the holy to live in the presence of God, similarly, for the unjust God’s presence represents ‘no greater Hell’. Placed in the presence of God the reprobate would wish to flee from his presence, and ever ‘forlorn he would wander through the courts of heaven’, aware of the reproaches of conscience and ‘know[ing] that the Eternal Eye was ever upon him; that Eye of holiness [...] of wrath and punishment.’¹⁰⁶ What we have here an elementary example of Newman concept of God’s holiness as having ‘purging’ qualities. The theme of holiness as a condition for beatitude is essential to Newman’s later understanding of the intermediate state, in so far as it demonstrates that he accepted that the soul must undergo some form or process of gradual transformation and purification. A very similar passage to the one cited

¹⁰⁴ *PPS* I, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ *PPS* I, pp. 5f.

¹⁰⁶ *PPS* I, pp. 7f.

above is also found in Thomas Scott's *Discourse on Repentance*, which shows that this was a concept accepted by other Evangelical authors:

A holy heart relishes the delights of heaven. But he, who despises and disrelishes holiness in this world, could find no happiness in that place where all the joys are holy, and where consequently all the employments would be irksome to him. No impenitent sinner has this 'meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light'; because he cannot relish and delight in holiness [...] Were it possible for a person of this description to enter heaven: he would secretly condemn his maker for severity.¹⁰⁷

'Holiness Necessary for Future Blessedness' is significant for Newman's eschatology generally, as it represented a stark reproach to growing Universalist tendencies in Victorian theology. Universalism flourished within the growing liberalism of nineteenth century British theology, which reacted against the despondent soteriology of double predestination.¹⁰⁸ The Calvinist doctrine of predestination taught that a portion of mankind, while intermittently sinful, were predestined to beatitude, while others were damned as eternally and unconditionally reprobate.¹⁰⁹ Christian Universalists therefore advocated a form of restitution theory whereby all men, even those who suffer the torments of Hell, would through the salvific death and Resurrection of Christ be reconciled to God and experience the beatitude of the Just in a future state.¹¹⁰ Set against the rise of these tendencies the theme of holiness as a

¹⁰⁷ John Scott (ed.), *Thomas Scott Works*, I, pp. 163f.

¹⁰⁸ Geoffrey Rowell has linked the rise of Universalism in Britain to the influence of the Unitarians. See Geoffrey Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians*, pp. 32-38.

¹⁰⁹ George Hudson Williams, *Radical Reformation*, pp. 92f.

¹¹⁰ See Thomas Talbott, 'Universalism' in *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, Jerry L. Walls (ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 446ff.

condition for beatitude became a sort of eschatological common ground between Evangelicals and later movements of renewal such as the Tractarians.¹¹¹

V. Purification: The Salutary Role of Suffering

There is a final aspect of Newman's Evangelicalism which had a particular influence on his later theology of Purgatory. As an Evangelical Newman accepted the principle that suffering could aid man's spiritual development and that the continual process of holiness necessarily involved purification. God permitted suffering in order to purify the soul. Rather than being punitive, Newman viewed suffering as a visitation of God's loving providence. This conviction was initially gleaned from Mayers. In a correspondence of 1817, Mayers reminded Newman that it was by means of suffering and personal crisis that God intervened in man's life to teach, admonish and bring about a conversion of heart.¹¹² Throughout his life, moments of failure, death and sickness would become sources of purification and renewal for Newman. Following the bankruptcy of his Father in 1821, Newman wrote to his aunt, Elizabeth Newman, of how the Christian should 'exult in undergoing trials and passing through the flames of calamity' so that they may 'come forth purified and refined, with the dross of human corruption purged away.'¹¹³ He recalled, in his journals, how God had continually formed him through the blows of physical and spiritual suffering:

I have had three great illnesses in my life, and how they have turned out! The first keen, terrible one, when I was a boy of 15, and it made me a Christian – with experiences before and after, awful, and known only to God. My second, not painful, but tedious and shattering was that which I had in 1827 when I was one of the

¹¹¹ See Geoffrey Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians*, pp. 90ff.

¹¹² *LD I*, p. 32.

¹¹³ *LD I*, p. 115.

Examining Masters, and it too broke me off from an incipient liberalism – and determined my religious course. The third was in 1833, when I was in Sicily, before the commencement of the Oxford Movement.¹¹⁴

Mayers' conviction of the salutary effects of suffering, which he sought to impress upon Newman, is also reflected in his sermons. Mayers spoke of how through 'eclipses of his glory', God teaches the soul to be 'more sensible of the need of his gracious presence', and to 'quicken their desires after that blessed world.' It was, he argued, pre-eminently through suffering and 'darkness' that man's sight is turned to 'the eternal world, with all its awful realities.'¹¹⁵

Newman adopted and developed the concept of the divine pedagogy of suffering in a series of sermons he preached on consecutive Sundays at the church of St. Clement's, Oxford, in January of 1825.¹¹⁶ The Evangelical tone of the sermons is distinguishable by his use of phrases such as 'faith does not consist in knowing much, but in feeling much', as well as his references to Thomas Scott.¹¹⁷ In four sermons he dealt with two general themes relevant to the spiritual life: firstly, the spiritual suffering produced by the privation of God and the effects it produces on the soul; and secondly, on the value of temporal afflictions in the lives of Christians. While it is clear that the Evangelical Newman would have rejected any notion that the 'elect' need suffer in the hereafter, these sermons are of relevance as the themes of 'privation' of God and physical suffering touch upon two corresponding aspects of the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory: the *poena damni*, the suffering of the damned, characterised by

¹¹⁴ AW, p. 268.

¹¹⁵ Walter Mayers, *Sermons*, London: James Nisbet, 1831, pp. 79f, 261.

¹¹⁶ Sermon Nos. 47 (16th January), 48 (23rd January), 49 (January 30th, morning), and 54 (January 30th, afternoon). *Ser.*, II, pp. 242-254; 272-278.

¹¹⁷ *Ser.*, II, p. 255.

the suffering produced by the privation of God; and the *poena sensus*, the material or physical suffering of purgation.

In sermons 47, 48 and 49 Newman covered the general theme of how the experience of the ‘absence of God’ in Salvation History, was a cause of suffering and distress for man. Using Scriptural examples, Newman described the experience of ‘privation’ according to each soul’s relationship with God. Newman explained how to understand the value of the suffering of privation one must consider that God principally imparts three gifts to the soul: holiness, knowledge and peace. By ‘hiding his face’ God withholds peace and knowledge from the soul, leaving it to grow solely in holiness without the comfort and knowledge of assurance, a principle reminiscent of Scott’s dictums which Newman ‘used almost as proverbs’ - ‘holiness before peace.’¹¹⁸

Newman divided mankind into two categories of souls according to their acceptance or rejection of God. Both experience the pain of ‘God’s absence’, yet the degree, duration and cause of this pain is different. God can therefore be said to be absent to the just men who strive after him, as to the irreligious who are unwilling to receive him. While both just and unjust may suffer privation of God, the cause and duration of his God ‘hiding himself’ is different for both. Through wilful insensitivity to God and of the benefits of communion with him, the unjust experience the absence of God out of ‘wrath.’ Unaware of the misery of their condition, the unjust therefore never enjoy the presence of God, and dwell in the ignorance of ‘lasting darkness’.¹¹⁹ To the just however, who have felt the benefits of communion with God, his absence is a trial. While the souls of the just must also suffer to dwell in the darkness of God’s absence, it

¹¹⁸ *Ser.*, II, pp. 251f. See *Apo.*, p. 19.

¹¹⁹ *Ser.*, II, p. 249.

is permitted 'out of love' but 'at most temporarily'.¹²⁰ Here again Newman divided the souls of the just into various categories, according to the stage of their religious advancement. In each case God's absence is permitted for their own particular spiritual improvement. To the weak Christian God hides himself so that they may seek and desire him more earnestly. The suffering which this produces for the soul is salutary, as in his absence 'God was even then strengthening their souls, but concealed the fact from them till it should be good for them to know it.'¹²¹ Similarly, God leads the 'established Christian', through 'mental darkness' so that through humility they may have a more ardent expectation for beatitude.¹²² Finally, by wilful sin man deprives himself of the enjoyment of God's countenance. Such souls are plunged into darkness and soon become insensitive to God, finding the divine presence unbearable. However the distress of their condition by suffering the pain of privation of God, are for such souls a sure sign that they still long for his presence. Hope of return is therefore possible, Newman claimed, if they can muster a sense of horror for their sins and repent.¹²³

Newman showed how by allowing the just to experience the darkness of the irreligious through privation, God humbles, edifies, and increases within them the desire for him. It is in such times when God allows 'darkness and anxiety to overspread the soul' that the Christian is 'purified and comes forth like gold.'¹²⁴ It is this unique form of suffering, Newman argued, that enables the soul to 'acquire a deeper view of the evil of sin, of the greatness and purity of God – and the depth of Christ's suffering

¹²⁰ *Ser.*, II, p. 249.

¹²¹ *Ser.*, II, p. 250.

¹²² *Ser.*, II, pp. 251f.

¹²³ *Ser.*, II, pp. 258ff.

¹²⁴ *Ser.*, II, p. 255.

for us, as consisting in the absence of God's countenance.¹²⁵ It is the very distress of the 'lack' of God that creates in the soul a longing for eternity:

There is something grand and elevating in the affliction and disquietudes of the Christian. – His sorrows do not arise from petty sources which create the sorrows of the worldly ends, but from things unseen and unspeakable, from knowing God, feeling the misery of sin and launching forward into the depth of futurity.¹²⁶

While in the previous three sermons Newman described how the spiritual pain of the privation of God purifies the soul, in the sermon 'Blessedness of Affliction' he developed the theme of the advantages of temporal suffering.¹²⁷ Reviewing the lives of an array of biblical figures, Newman found that when wilfully accepted, suffering brought purification and enlightenment to the soul.¹²⁸ He demonstrated how the nature of temporal suffering can be either sudden and violent, or long and unabating. Sudden afflictions are sent as a 'loving judgement' for sins committed, and are permitted to urge the 'wanderer' back to God. In contrast, long suffering afflictions are allowed by God not as punishment, but rather as a means of growth, enabling the soul to align its will with God so that it may be prepared to stand in his presence:

Melt and remould us – yea all things for a spiritual taste and seeing eyes and a discovering mind – so may we eventually in the strength and through the merits of thy Son attain to the mount of God, and stand in thy presence arrayed in that heavenly garment clean and white which is the righteousness of the saints.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ *Ser.*, II, p. 256.

¹²⁶ *Ser.*, II, p. 256.

¹²⁷ *Ser.*, II, pp. 272-278.

¹²⁸ *Ser.*, II, p. 274.

¹²⁹ *Ser.*, II, p. 278.

Temporal afflictions are, Newman maintained, ‘an instrument’ used by God to make man reflect on the state of his spiritual life and his readiness for eternity. In the face of suffering man is free, but there is no ‘middle way’, either he accepts it and advances, or rejects it and becomes embittered and hard, leading him ultimately to self-destruction. Through wilful acceptance suffering can become the means of God for ‘stirring up the divine gift’ which is in man by detaching his thoughts from purely earthly things:

Sufferings were the means of detaching their thoughts from worldly things to fix them upon God – they were led to pause and reflect – to consider their ways – to search their hearts – and thus that they at last turned to the Lord with a perfect mind, and come to Christ in humility, repentance and lively faith, and they are now walking in the love of God being chosen in the furnace of affliction.¹³⁰

In this sense, Newman understood man’s experience of affliction and beatitude as two inseparably united dimensions of human existence. The ultimate purpose and end of all human afflictions is therefore the beatitude of heaven. In this manner Newman wrote of affliction as the ‘gate of heaven’, through which every man must pass, for to be ‘purified for heaven’, is the ‘great and one thing needful.’¹³¹

¹³⁰ *Ser.*, II, pp. 272f.

¹³¹ *Ser.*, II, p. 278.

Chapter Two

The Intermediate State: The High Church Tradition 1828-1836

This chapter looks particularly at the development of Newman's eschatology during the early years of his High Churchmanship. Reading the *Caroline Divines* and *Non-Jurors*, Newman discovered a distinctive and continuous teaching on the middle or intermediate state between death and the General Resurrection. The doctrine of the intermediate state rejected the abuses of Purgatory, while upholding the acceptance of a primitive belief in a progressive spiritual growth in a post-mortem state. I give a synthesis of the origins of the teaching of the intermediate state within the Anglican tradition, and demonstrate how it was held by some of the most representative advocates of this doctrine. Using predominantly sermons and tracts, I outline the development of Newman's understanding of this teaching within the High-Church tradition, and how he distinguished it from the 'Romish' doctrine of Purgatory. I also review Newman's position on prayers for the dead and how the Tractarians viewed the alterations which were made in the *Book of Common Prayer* in regard the liturgy for the dead.

I. The Transition to a High Church Eschatology

Newman's theological progression from Calvinistic-Evangelicalism to the High Church tradition was a gradual one which redefined his eschatology. The inconsistencies Newman understood to be inherent within Evangelicalism as a 'system'

meant that he gradually began to reject the Calvinism which he had been introduced to under Walter Mayers.¹ The new direction of Newman's eschatology after 1828, and in his overall theological outlook, can be traced to a number of separate events and influences prior to his definitive break with Calvinism. Up to 1828 Newman's reading had been dominated by Evangelical authors, although there were a number of other influences during this time which prepared the way for the change in his theological opinions.

As a youth Newman admitted being 'nothing short of enamoured' by the 'long extracts from St. Augustine, St. Ambrose and the other Fathers' he read in Joseph Milner's *Church History* (1794-1809) in 1816.² In his memoir he wrote of his 'imaginative devotion to them and to their times.'³ It was this romantic appeal to primitive Christianity that initially attracted Newman to the writings of the Church Fathers. In the 1820's he took pleasure in reading the lives of Romantic heroes in works such as Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819), *Napoleon* (1827), Robert Southey's *Roderick the Last of the Goths* (1814), and *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801).⁴ Similarly, the 'long extracts' of Augustine and Ambrose enticed his imaginative devotion, creating in him a longing for that *beau idéal* of primitive Christianity.⁵ One may ask why Newman did not pursue the ideal of Christianity he found in the writing of the Fathers. Newman explained that simultaneous to reading the Fathers in Milner's *Church History*, he read

¹ See *LD VI*, p. 128.

² *Apo.*, p. 20.

³ *AW*, p. 83.

⁴ See *LD I*, pp. 65, 68, 73, 115; *LD XII*, 450; *Apo.*, pp. 42f.

⁵ Thomas M. Parker mistakenly thought that Newman's interest in the writings of the Church Fathers prior to 1828 was merely a 'by product' of his interest in history. See Thomas M. Parker, 'The Rediscovery of the Fathers in the Seventeenth Century Anglican Tradition', in John Coullson and A. M. Allchin (eds.), *The Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1967, p. 38.

Thomas Newton's three volume work *Dissertation on Prophecies* (1754-8).⁶ Newton's work convinced him that the Pope was the Antichrist, thus creating in him two starkly contrasting ideals of Christianity which planted in him what he called the 'seeds of intellectual inconsistency which disabled me for a long course of years.'⁷

Upon securing the prestigious fellowship at Oriel in 1822, Newman felt the influence of a much different kind in the liberal thinking of men such as Copleston, Hampden and Whately.⁸ Edward Copleston (1776-1849), who had become Oriel's provost in 1814, imbued the college with his own conception of education, emphasising a vigorous dialectic on questions of logic and ethics. The rigorousness of this approach gained Oriel something of a reputation, so much so that it was said that its common room 'stank of logic.'⁹ The overriding academic tone of the college under Copleston became so firmly established that its senior fellows were known as the 'Noetics'. The Oriel Noetics sought to defend the Established Church from the dominance of secularisation by emphasising the reasonableness of Revelation. Inspired by Joseph Butler's thesis in his *Analogy of Religion* (1736) on how one could apply analogous arguments to answer questions on the two dispensations of nature and revelation, the Noetics demonstrated that Scripture could also be understood by purely scientific and rational methods.¹⁰ Immersed in the academic milieu of the Oriel Noetics, Newman began to adopt what he described as an 'incipient liberalism'.¹¹ His journals of 1823 show that he had already considered the rationalism of the Noetics as a possible alternative to Evangelicalism, even before he had broken away from it:

⁶ *Apo.*, p. 20.

⁷ *Apo.*, pp. 19f.

⁸ *Apo.*, pp. 23, 48.

⁹ *Apo.*, p. 156.

¹⁰ Richard Brent, 'The Oriel Noetics', in M.G. Brock and M.C. Curthoys (eds), *The History of the University of Oxford*, Volume VI part I, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, pp. 72-76.

¹¹ *AW*, p. 268.

Fifty or sixty years ago the intellectual and ecclesiastical antagonist and alternative of the Evangelical Creed was Arminianism [...] A cold Arminian doctrine, the first stage of Liberalism was the characteristic aspect, both of the high and dry Anglicans of that day and of the Oriel divines. There was great reason to expect that on Newman's leaving the crags and precipices of Luther and Calvin, he would take refuge in the flats of Tillotson and Barrow, Jortin and Paley.¹²

Richard Whately (1787-1863), Newman's extemporaneous mentor, was keen to advance Newman's career. Through his mediation Newman made a number of contributions to the *Encyclopedia Metropolitana* on philosophical and historical subjects. Whately had a derogatory attitude to 'the Fathers', calling them 'certain old divines'.¹³ It was during this period that Newman began to recognise a 'certain distain for Antiquity which had been growing for several years now' and which expressed itself in 'some flippant language against the Fathers in the *Encyclopedia Metropolitana*'.¹⁴ The Noetic influence had brought him to the point whereby he was 'beginning to prefer intellectual excellence to moral' and was 'drifting in the direction of the Liberalism of the day.'¹⁵

In 1823 Newman came under the direction of a man whom he described as 'diametrically opposite' to Whately - the Regius Professor of Divinity, Charles Lloyd (1784-1829).¹⁶ Newman, Pusey and Froude were among those who attended private lectures given by Lloyd on theology from 1823-4.¹⁷ Lloyd encouraged a renewal of Anglican theology through a return to the sources of the High-Church Tradition – The Prayer Book, the Caroline Divines and the Church Fathers. More importantly, Lloyd

¹² AW, p. 83.

¹³ AW, p. 70. It is unclear if Newman is referring to the Caroline divines or the Church Fathers.

¹⁴ *Apo.*, p. 25.

¹⁵ *Apo.*, 26. See AW, p. 210.

¹⁶ AW, p. 69.

¹⁷ See AW, pp. 69f. LD I, p. 167.

sought to justify the theological coherence of these works with primitive doctrine. Frederick Oakeley, Newman's fellow ordinand who also attended the lectures, believed that Lloyd's lectures became an important influence in the shaping of Tractarian theology, describing them as the 'proximate cause' of the future movement:

I have no doubt whatever that his teaching had a most important influence upon the movement [...] I do remember to have received from him an entirely new notion of Catholics and Catholic doctrine [...] In his lectures on the Anglican Prayer Book he made us first acquainted with the Missal and Breviary as the sources from all that is best and noblest in that compilation is derived [...] it may be easily imagined what an outcry these lectures would have created a few years later; but in the peace and security which then reigned controversy was never thought of on any side.¹⁸

Lloyd's emphasis on the distinction between 'Romish' and 'Primitive' catholic doctrine was seen particularly in his 1825 article for the *British Critic* 'A View of the Roman Catholic Doctrines.'¹⁹ This careful differentiation of catholic doctrine would have a striking resonance with Newman's theology of purgatory in *Tract XC*, and which he would later rely upon in justification of the tract.²⁰ Newman also noticed the novelty of Lloyd's methodology, recording in his memoir that the lectures brought him into contact with the works of divines 'of contrary schools' from those he had hitherto read under the direction of Mayers or Whately. However the effect of the lectures on Newman's theology was to be long term rather than immediate. Newman 'left his lecture room in 1824, as I entered it in 1822, a Calvinist.'²¹ Lloyd was well aware of

¹⁸ Frederick Oakeley, *Historical Notes on the Oxford Movement 1833-1845*. London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts and Green, 1865, p. 14.

¹⁹ Charles Lloyd, 'A View of the Roman Catholic Doctrines', *The British Critic*, October 1825, London: Rivington, pp. 94-149. Lloyd published the work anonymously, but later avowed its authorship publicly.

²⁰ See *AW*, p. 70.

²¹ *LD II*, p. 146.

Newman's Evangelical leanings in doctrinal matters and '[...] in consequence bestowed on him a notice, expressive of vexation and impatience.'²²

While the immediate effect of Lloyd's lectures on Newman served merely as an introduction to the classical sources of Anglican theology, the single most decisive step toward his break with Calvinism came through the Provost of Oriel and Vicar of the University church, Edward Hawkins (1789-1882). While an undergraduate in May 1818, Newman heard Hawkins's sermon 'Unauthoritative Tradition', and although it made a 'serious impression upon him', Mayers' Evangelical Calvinism still had its strongest hold on him at this time.²³ However, Newman had not forgotten Hawkins' sermon, and returned to it during the Movement, citing it in *Tract LXXXV* in 1838. The Tractarian appeal to Hawkins' exposition of Tradition was so great that Whately and Thomas Arnold (1795-1842) discussed in correspondence the influence the 'unhappy' sermon had in promoting the Tractarian cause.²⁴ Arnold's insistence eventually convinced Hawkins to rewrite the sermon.²⁵ During the Long Vacation of 1824 Hawkins and Newman had become more closely acquainted. It was at this time that Hawkins not only persuaded him to relinquish the sharp distinction he had made between nominal and 'real' Christians, but introduced him to the doctrine of Tradition.²⁶ Under his guidance Newman read John Bird Sumner's *Apostolical Preaching* (1815) which finally put an end to his struggle over the question of Baptism Regeneration, and eventually brought him to give up the remnants of his Calvinistic

²² AW, p. 71.

²³ See *Apo.*, pp. 22f.; Edward Hawkins, *A Dissertation Upon the Use and Importance of Unauthoritative Tradition as an Introduction to the Christian Doctrine*, Oxford: W. Baxter, 1819.

²⁴ Arthur Penrhyn, *The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold*, Volume II, London: B. Fellowes, 1844, p. 34.

²⁵ See Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context. Anglican High Churchmanship 1760-1857*. Cambridge: CUP, 1994, p. 110. See Oriel College Archives, Hawkins Papers, Letterbook III, no. 218.

²⁶ *Apo.*, p. 22.

theology.²⁷ After 1824 Newman's views became 'less and less concord' with his Evangelical acquaintances in Oxford, and he began to move gradually towards the High Church party:

[...] without giving up much of their belief [the Evangelicals], I grew so high church that Samuel Wilberforce who in 1826 heard me preach at St Clement's, went away wondering. And so it was, when I came to St Mary's — but still I was so far evangelical.²⁸

In 1825 he began to question the validity of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, final perseverance and election. Newman realised that he had simply adopted these doctrines 'on trust' from authors such as Scott, without questioning their Scriptural foundation:

The necessity of composing sermons has obliged me to systematize and complete my ideas on many subjects – on several questions, however, (those connected with regeneration) though I have thought much, and (I hope) prayed much, yet I hardly dare say confidently that my change of opinion has brought me nearer to the truth. At least, however, I may say that I have taken many doctrines almost on trust from Scott &c and on serious examination hardly find them confirmed by Scripture. I have come to no decision of the doctrine of election &c, but the predestination of individuals seems to me hardly a scriptural doctrine.²⁹

In response to these doubts Newman had already begun to conceive an ambitious plan in 1826 which he hoped would lay the 'foundations for something new'. In a letter to his sister Jemima he spoke of his desire to 'trace the sources' from which the 'corruptions of the Church, principally the Romish, have derived.'³⁰ This would entail beginning a systematic reading of the Church Fathers. Prior to 1826 Newman 'knew

²⁷ *Apo.*, p. 21.

²⁸ *LD XXX*, p. 180.

²⁹ *AW*, p. 204.

³⁰ *LD I*, p. 285.

little' of the Fathers, 'except what I had learnt as a boy from Joseph Milner.'³¹ Before Newman began any systematic reading of the Fathers he found himself 'drifting in the direction of the liberalism of the day.' In the *Apologia* he speaks of how he recognised in himself a 'certain distain for Antiquity which had been growing on me now for several years.'³² Newman later described this 'Liberalism' as

[...] false liberty of thought, or the exercise of thought upon matters, in which, from the constitution of the human mind, thought cannot be brought to any successful issue, and therefore is out of place. Among such matters are first principles of whatever kind; and of these the most sacred and momentous are especially to be reckoned the truths of Revelation. Liberalism then is the mistake of subjecting to human judgement those revealed doctrines which are in their nature beyond and independent of it, and of claiming to determine on intrinsic grounds the truth and value of propositions which rest for their reception simply on the external authority of the Divine Word.³³

It was death and illness that eventually caused him to be 'rudely awakened' from the 'dream' of this incipient Liberalism.³⁴ In the summer of 1827 Newman was overly preoccupied with the preparations for public examinations that he fatigued himself so much that he collapsed due to nervous exhaustion. Forced to leave Oxford temporarily, Newman was convinced that his 'memory and mind [had] gone.'³⁵ He underwent further emotional strain the following year with the death of both his youngest sister Mary, and mentor Walter Mayers.

³¹ *Apo.*, pp. 25f.

³² *Apo.*, pp. 25f.

³³ *Apo.*, p. 256.

³⁴ *Apo.*, p. 26.

³⁵ *AW*, p. 212.

In October 1827 Pusey gave Newman a set of volumes of the Fathers which he had acquired whilst travelling to Germany.³⁶ With the works of the Fathers at his disposal Newman set about fulfilling the ‘undertaking’ he had in his mind in 1826. Upon rejecting both the Calvinistic-Evangelicalism he had taken on trust from Mayers and the Liberalism he had adopted from Oriel, Newman turned to the Church Fathers in search for the sources of Tradition:

In proportion as I moved out of the shadow of that liberalism which hung over my course, my early devotion to the Fathers returned; and in the Long Vacation of 1828 I set about to read them chronologically, beginning with St. Ignatius and St. Justin.³⁷

Simultaneously he found himself becoming ‘eagerly, but not very logically, High Church.’³⁸ Pusey had noticed this change as early as 1825.³⁹ By 1829 Newman’s mother and sisters noticed the change in the sermons he was sending them. In November 1829 his sister Harriett wrote to him that she had difficulty understanding some of them which she described as ‘very high Church’, as she did not consider herself ‘near so high.’⁴⁰

While Newman’s first serious reading of the Fathers is significant for his theological development, in 1835 he came to view the ‘systematic’ reading he had undertaken in 1828 as misguided:

I read Justin very careful in 1828 - and made most copious notes - but I conceive most of my time was thrown away. I was like a sailor landed at Athens or Grand Cairo, who stares about - does not know what to

³⁶ *LD II*, p. 30.

³⁷ *Apo.*, p. 35f.

³⁸ *LD II*, p. 25.

³⁹ *AW*, p. 208.

⁴⁰ See *LD II*, p. 174.

admire, what to examine - makes random remarks, and forgets all about it when he has gone.⁴¹

A change in method can be seen in his second concentrated reading of the Fathers in 1831. While researching the ecumenical councils, for what would eventually become *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, Newman studied Patristic texts in conjunction with the writing of 'standard divines' such as George Bull (1634-1710) and Daniel Waterland (1683-1740).⁴² Referring to this period in the *Apologia* he recounted how he used the Anglican divines and 'read the Fathers through their eyes'.⁴³ While he was unsure of when he came to consider Antiquity as 'the true exponent of the doctrines of Christianity and the basis of the Church of England', he took 'it for granted that the works of Bishop Bull, which at this time I read, were my chief introduction to this principle.'⁴⁴ With the birth of the Oxford Movement in 1833, Tractarian publications demonstrated how the appeal to antiquity through a 'direct continuity' with their seventeenth century forefathers such as Bull, was considered an essential part of their theological methodology.⁴⁵ Of the ninety tracts published by the Tractarians six were reprints from the Caroline divines on central points of doctrine. However the return to the Fathers and the great divines, as a classical index for an Anglican theological system, was not wholly the initiative of the Tractarians. The search for a standard of orthodoxy by a strict adherence to antiquity can be seen in Anglican theologians prior to the movement, such as Mant, Routh, Jebb and Lloyd.⁴⁶ However, for Newman this search for continuity was related directly to his attempts at forming a foundation for

⁴¹ *LD V*, p. 133.

⁴² *LD II*, pp. 338, 371

⁴³ *Apo.*, p. 184.

⁴⁴ *Apo.*, p. 36.

⁴⁵ See Drew Morgan, *The Rise and Fall of Newman's Anglican School: From the Caroline Divines to the Schola Theologorum*, 'Newman Studies Journal', Volume 6 Number 1 (Spring 2009), pp. 20-36.

⁴⁶ See Peter B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context*, p. 109.

Anglican theology – the ‘via media’, which he acknowledged had hitherto only existed ‘on paper’.⁴⁷

Newman’s reading of the Caroline divines gave his eschatology greater room for development since his Evangelical years.⁴⁸ This can be seen in two important developments which came after 1828. The first was his acceptance of the doctrine of the intermediate state, which he began to preach from 1830 onward. Secondly, Newman progressively came to accept the legitimacy of prayers for the dead. Both these developments were influenced by the theological tradition of the Caroline and Non-Juror divines. The importance of the theology of the Caroline divines was that their strict adherence to the Fathers and their efforts to avoid the extremes of the continental Reformers and ‘Romanists’, created a singularly unique Anglican position on many matters of doctrine such as the fate of dead in the hereafter. An evaluation of Newman’s views on the intermediate state and prayers for the dead must therefore consider the unique contribution of this theological school.

The question as to Newman’s theological dependence on the Caroline divines has been differently evaluated by scholars. While it is generally undisputed that the Carolines became for the Tractarians the epitome of the golden age of Anglican scholarship, piety and orthodoxy, scholars are divided as to when Newman began to read these theologians, and to what extent he was dependent upon them. Thomas M. Parker claims that there is further ambiguity as to whether Newman’s frequent use of the term ‘the Fathers’, referred to the Caroline divines, the Fathers of the Church, or

⁴⁷ *PO*, I, p. 16.

⁴⁸ Geoffrey Rowell, ‘Newman and the Anglican Tradition: Reflections on the Tractarianism and the Seventeenth Century Anglican Divines’, in Terrence Merrigan (ed.), *John Henry Newman*, *Louvain Studies* 15 (Summer-Fall), 1990, p. 143.

both.⁴⁹ Parker believes Newman used the term interchangeably. He supports this claim by referring to Newman's dedication to Martin Joseph Routh in *The Prophetical Office of the Church* (1837). Here Newman referred to Routh as preserving for 'a degenerate age' the 'theology of *our Fathers*.'⁵⁰ Earlier that year Newman had written to Routh requesting his permission for the dedication, making explicit indication to prominent divines of the Caroline school: 'Hammond, Field, Stillingfleet, Beveridge and others'.⁵¹ Parker also maintains that there is no evidence to suggest that Newman had read the Caroline divines prior to the Oxford Movement in 1833.⁵² H.D. Weidner disputes this, stating that when Newman was reading the Church Fathers in 1828, he was also reading works of the Caroline divines, such as Jeremy Taylor, Ussher and Pearson.⁵³ Correspondence between Newman and Samuel Rickards (1796-1865), show that he was using the Caroline divines already in the mid-1820s. In 1826 Newman speaks of how it would be 'most useful to form a kind of summary of our old worthies'.⁵⁴ At this time Newman understood that a systematic theology of the Via Media could be compiled from the works of the Caroline divines to serve as a unified body of theology for the Church of England:

If then in a calm candid impartial manner their views [the Caroline Divines] were sought out and developed, would not the effect be good in a variety of ways? I would advise taking them *as a whole*, a corpus theologicum et ecclesiasticum, *the English Church* - stating indeed *how far* they differ among themselves, yet distinctly marking out the grand bold scriptural features of that doctrine in which they all agree. - They would then be a band of witnesses for the truth, not opposed to each

⁴⁹ Thomas M. Parker, 'The Rediscovery of the Fathers in the Seventeenth-Century Anglican Tradition', in John Coulson and A. M. Allchin (eds.), *The Rediscovery of Newman: An Oxford Symposium*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1967, p. 31.

⁵⁰ *LD VI*, p. 9. Newman later changed the dedication to the slightly less polemical 'a forgetful generation' and 'their Fathers'.

⁵¹ *LD VI*, pp. 8f. See Thomas M. Parker, *The Rediscovery of the Fathers*, p. 32.

⁵² Thomas M. Parker, *The Rediscovery of the Fathers*, p. 41.

⁵³ H.D. Weidner (ed), *The Via Media of the Anglican Church*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, p. xxv.

⁵⁴ *LD I*, pp. 309f.

other (as they now are) but *one* - each tending to the edification of the body of Christ, according to the effectual working of His Spirit in every one, according to the diversity of their gifts and the variety of circumstances under which each spake his testimony.⁵⁵

While this shows that Newman was already reading the Carolines in 1828, it is not clear if he was reading them in conjunction with Patristic texts.⁵⁶ The citation refutes Thomas M. Parker's claim that there is 'no evidence' to show that Newman knew of the Caroline divines in the 1820's, but it does not demonstrate that these theologians formed an integral part of his theology. Catalogues of the Bodleian Library archives from 1817-1843 reveal that Newman made no consultation of works from the Caroline divines from the university library.⁵⁷ However the limited amount of works he did consult at the Bodleian show that he rarely used the library at all. If Newman was reading the Caroline divines it was probably from Oriel's library. Kenneth L. Parker has undertaken the laborious task of tracing Newman's lending habits from 1824-1842 from the now defunct bibliographical classifications of the library. While the reconstruction of an index of authors may give us a cursory picture of the books Newman was reading at Oriel it cannot hope to provide a conclusive answer as to his dependence on these works.

Despite the limits which one faces in ascertaining the sources Newman used in developing his theology of an intermediate state, there are a limited number of theologians who both advocated this doctrine and with whom Newman was familiar: Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667), George Bull (1634-1710), Henry Hammond (1605-1660) and a number of Non-Juror divines. These theologians held that the doctrine of the

⁵⁵ *LD I*, p. 310.

⁵⁶ See *LD II*, p. 82. See also H.D. Weidner (ed), *The Via Media of the Anglican Church*, p. xxiv.

⁵⁷ Bodleian Library Catalogues, Entry Book 5/13, d.2., 1813 – 1823; Entry Book 5/14, d.3., 1823 – 1832; Entry Book 5/15, d.4., 1832 – 1841.

intermediate state enshrined primitive teaching on the state of the dead without digressing into the errors of the Roman doctrine of Purgatory. The works of George Bull, whom Newman read from 1831 onward, represented the most fully elaborated theology of the intermediate state prior to the Non-Jurors.⁵⁸ While Newman makes no reference to Bull's eschatology, he depended heavily upon his celebrated *Defensio fidei Nicenae* (1685) in his first published work *The Arians of the Fourth Century* (1832). Similarly Jeremy Taylor's overall eschatological contribution was perhaps one of the most significant in Anglican theology.⁵⁹ It is therefore unsurprising that Newman cited Taylor as an authority in his tract 'On Purgatory' of 1837.⁶⁰ Taylor's funeral sermons give us a particularly important insight into the state of Anglican eschatology in the period of the mid-seventeenth century.⁶¹ Of these works Thomas Carroll argues that Taylor's

Vision is not of this world; like the poets Dante and Milton he was at home in the unseen world, and consequently in his funeral sermons we breathe at once the air of *Hell, Purgatory* and *Paradise*; of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. Theologically, he *belonged* both to the world of the early Christian Fathers, who expressed their faith in a Platonic way, and to that of the Schoolmen, who went the way of Aristotle. Mystically he *belonged* to Christ, and was *at home* in his kingdom, for he was no stranger along *the other way*, which the classics of Western spirituality call purgative, punitive [and] unitive.⁶²

⁵⁸ LD II, p. 338. Robert D. Cornwall, 'Bull, George (1634–1710)', *ODNB*, Volume 8, 2004, pp. 583-586.

⁵⁹ John Spurr, 'Taylor, Jeremy (bap. 1613, d. 1667)', *ODNB*, Volume 53, 2004, pp. 921-928.

⁶⁰ See Tract LXXIX, vol. IV, p. 42.

⁶¹ Jeremy Taylor, *A Sermon Preached in Christ-Church Dublin, July 16 1663 at the Funeral of the Most Reverend Father in God John, The Late Lord Archbishop of Armagh and All Ireland*, London: Royston, 1663; *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of that worthy Knight George Dalston, September 28 1657*, London: Martin, Allestrye and Dicas, 1658; *A Funeral Sermon Preached at the Obsequies of the Right Hon. And Most Vertuos Lady Frances, Countesse of Carbery*, London: Royston, 1650.

⁶² Thomas Carroll (ed.), *Jeremy Taylor – Selected Works*. New York: Paulist Press, 1990, p. 75.

Henry Hammond was eminently the embodiment of the seventeenth century High Church tradition.⁶³ To Newman the religion of men like Hammond was to be ‘[...] professed, acted on and maintained [...]’⁶⁴ In *Tract LXXI* of 1836 Newman names him as one of the ‘great teachers, champions, and confessors’ of the Church of England.⁶⁵ The ‘religion’ to which Newman refers was the combination of Hammond’s piety with great scholarship. The resonance which Hammond’s works found among the Tractarians meant that they held him as a continual point of reference for their theology.⁶⁶ In regard to the question of the efficacy of prayers for the dead, the Tractarians looked particularly to the works of James Ussher (1581-1656), as an authority. *Tract LXXII* of 1836 was a reprint of an entire section from Ussher’s *An Answer to a Challenge made by a Jesuit in Ireland* of 1631. In the work Ussher attempted to show that the rejection of the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory did not imply a rejection of the practice of praying for the dead.⁶⁷

II. The Anglican Tradition: The Intermediate State in the Theology of the Caroline Divines and Non-Jurors

The doctrine that the souls of the dead are held in an intermediate state until the Resurrection was by no means a teaching that enjoyed universal acceptance in Anglican

⁶³ See Paul Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church – Theological Resources in Historical Perspective*, London: T & T Clark, 1989, p. 137; Arthur Middleton, *Fathers and Anglicans – The Limits of Orthodoxy*, Leominster: Gracewing, 2001, p. 160; Hugh de Quehen, ‘Hammond, Henry (1605–1660)’, *ODNB*, Volume 24, 2004, pp. 951-955.

⁶⁴ *VM I*, p. 17.

⁶⁵ *VM II*, p. 98.

⁶⁶ Geoffrey Rowell, ‘Newman and the Anglican Tradition: Reflections on the Tractarianism and the Seventeenth Century Anglican Divines’, in Terrence Merrigan (ed.), *John Henry Newman*, Louvain Studies 15, (Summer-Fall), 1990, p. 140. See Henry Robert McAdoo, *The Spirit of Anglicanism: A Survey of Anglican Theological Method in the Seventeenth Century*, London: Black, 1965, pp. 358-368.

⁶⁷ James Ussher, *An Answer to a Challenge made by a Jesuit in Ireland: Wherein the Judgement of Antiquity in the Points Questioned is delivered, and the Novelty of the now Romish Doctrine is Plainly Discovered*, London: R. Young, 1631.

theology.⁶⁸ The Caroline divines and the Non-Jurors were instrumental in the revival of this, and other ‘primitive’ eschatological doctrines, which they believed had been unnecessarily abandoned by the Reformers. However these attempts at revival were often hindered by charges of ‘Popery’. Writing on the doctrine of the intermediate state in 1712, the Non-Juror Bishop of Aberdeen, Archibald Campbell (c.1669–1744), described his ‘very difficult task’ in breaking ‘custom and habit of thinking’ under which the Anglican Church had been ‘in dominion’ for so long in regard to the doctrine of the intermediate state.⁶⁹ Campbell stressed that the teaching on the intermediate state had been accepted and passed down from the ‘purest ages of the Church’, but was now regarded as ‘unmodish, so out of fashion, so much neglected, so forgotten, and at last entirely disbelieved.’⁷⁰ Drawing on Scripture, the witness of the Fathers and the great English divines since the Reformation, Campbell argued that

There is an Intermediate, or Middle State for departed souls to abide in, between death and resurrection, far different from what they are afterwards to be in when our blessed Lord Jesus Christ Shall appear at his second coming.

That there is no intermediate judgement after death.

That to pray and offer for, and to commemorate, our deceased brethren is not only lawful and useful, but also our bounden duty.

That the Intermediate State between death and the resurrection, is a state of purification in its lower, as well as of fired joy and enjoyment in its higher mansions.⁷¹

Campbell and other High Church men blamed the ‘hasty zeal’ of some Anglican theologians who advocated the rejection of this ‘primitive’ doctrine. Campbell argued that by salvaging the teaching of the intermediate state which the Reformers abandoned,

⁶⁸ See Ian Dunelm, *Prayer and the Departed – A Report of the Archbishops’ Commission on Christian Doctrine*, London: SPCK, 1971.

⁶⁹ Archibald Campbell, *The Doctrines of the Middle State between Death and the Resurrection*. London: Tyler, 1721, p. i. See Rowan Strong, ‘Campbell, Archibald (c.1669–1744)’, *ODNB*, Volume 9, 2004, pp. 725-726.

⁷⁰ *DMS*, p. i.

⁷¹ *DMS*, p. ii.

primitive doctrine could remedy the ‘Popish error’ of Purgatory.⁷² Among the Non-Jurors, it was particularly Bishop Jeremy Collier (1650–1726) who championed the restoration of the doctrine of the intermediate state.⁷³ In his *Reasons for Restoring some Prayers and Directions as they stand in the Communion Service of the First English Reform’d* (1717) Collier outlined the subtle differences which had been introduced in *The Prayer Book* that he believed undermined the doctrine:

In the first Reform’d Liturgy [...] the Priest says, ‘Let us pray for the whole State of Christ’s Church’, without the addition of *Militant here on Earth*; which latter Words, in the Common-Prayer now used, seem inserted to exclude Prayer for the Dead. Whereas the first Book, in the Prayer for Christ’s Church, has these Words; -We commend unto thy Mercy (O Lord) all other thy Servants, which are departed hence from us with the Sign of Faith, and now do rest in the Sleep of Peace: Grant unto them, we beseech thee, thy Mercy and everlasting Peace, and that at the Day of the general Resurrection, we and all they which be of the Mystical Body of thy Son, may all together be set on his Right Hand, and hear that his most joyful Voice: Come unto me, &c.⁷⁴

Making appeal to a primitive doctrine of the intermediate state, Collier was convinced that the practice of praying for the dead was held universally in the Church until the sixteenth century. Citing the Fathers, he maintained that praying for the dead was not a restoration of ‘Popery’, but rather a return to a ‘primitive’ practice which taught that prayers for the deceased were necessary to ‘improve’ the condition of those in the intermediate state:

This custom neither supposes the *Modern Purgatory*, nor gives encouragement to Libertinism or vice [...] The custom seems to have gone upon this principle, that supreme happiness is not expected till the

⁷² *DMS*, pp. 78, 44.

⁷³ See Eric Salmon, ‘Collier, Jeremy (1650–1726)’, *ODNB*, Volume 12, 2004, pp. 640–645.

⁷⁴ Jeremy Collier, *Reasons for Restoring some Prayers and Directions as they stand in the Communion Service of the First English Reform’d*, London: J. Bettenham, 1717, p. 10f.

Resurrection: and that the interval between death and the end of the world, is a state of imperfect bliss; the Church might therefore believe her prayers for good people might improve their condition, and raise the satisfaction of this period.⁷⁵

Collier's acceptance that the condition of the souls in the intermediate state could be improved is significant as it not only shows that the nature of this state was not simply conceived as a suspended kind of rest, but also demonstrated how close this doctrine came to the Roman Catholic understanding of Purgatory. Nevertheless the divines who advocated a return to the doctrine of the intermediate state were adamant that it was not a revival of the doctrine of Purgatory. George Bull's rejection of the doctrine of Purgatory in his sermon 'The Intermediate State of Happiness or Misery', was succinct – he held that there can be no repentance in the world to come, but rather only in this life. As unrepentant sins cannot be forgiven after death, neither can satisfaction be made for them in life to come:

Surely if there be no repentance at all for sin in the other world, there can be no satisfactory suffering for sin there. The holy God cannot be satisfied or atoned by the suffering of those men, who have no repentance of those sins for which they suffer. And if the papists will suppose the souls in Purgatory to suffer the most grievous pains of it, without deep repentance for the sins that brought them thither, they must make them very graceless wretches indeed, as like the damned in their wickedness, as they fancy them to be in their torments.'⁷⁶

Bull's rejection of the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory was not founded on the belief in an improvement of the condition of the dead, but rather how this improvement is achieved, namely thorough suffering. The Anglican teaching on the intermediate state was distinguished from the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory particularly on the

⁷⁵ Jeremy Collier, *Reasons for Restoring some Prayers*, p. 16.

⁷⁶ George Bull, *The Works of George Bull. Volume I*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1827, pp. 72-74. Bull's sermon 'The Intermediate State of Happiness or Misery' is not dated.

question of penal satisfaction for sins. Adherents to the doctrine of the intermediate state argued that the Roman ‘corruption’ of Purgatory had arisen due to what they claimed was an erroneous understanding on the immediacy of the *visio beatifica* before the General Resurrection. Anglican divines held that the belief in the Beatific Vision as the definitive and unparalleled experience of God could not be reconciled with the implications of a particular judgment at death. They argued that if disembodied spirits were already to experience the ‘fullness’ of God at the Beatific Vision before the consummation of the world, what could possibly be added to their beatitude at the General Resurrection? The intermediate state was therefore presented as a doctrine of hope for the Beatific Vision, expectation of the fullness of bliss, and holy fear for the perfection which would be given to the soul at the end of time. In 1657 Jeremy Taylor gave an extended analysis on the intermediate state in response to what he understood as the ‘contradictory’ stance of Rome on the state of disembodied spirits:

How can it be that that day [final judgement] should be so formidable and full of terrors, when nothing can affright those that have long enjoyed the beatific presence of God; and no thunder or earthquakes can affright them who have upon them the biggest evil in the world, I mean, the damned who according to this opinion [that the departed either go to heaven or hell at death immediately] have been in hell for many ages: and it can mean nothing but to them that are alive; and then it is but a particular, not a universal judgement; and after all, it can pretend to no piety, to no scripture, to no reason; and only serve the ends of the Church of Rome; who can no way better be confuted in their invocation of the saints than by this truth, that the saints do not enjoy the beatific vision; and though they are in a state of ease and comfort, yet they are not in a state of power and glory, and kingdom till the day of judgement.⁷⁷

Rather than accepting the doctrine of individual judgement at death, Taylor held that the soul gains full knowledge of itself and its destiny: ‘[...] in paradise the soul hath an

⁷⁷ *Tay. Ser.*, p. 24.

intellectual perception both of her self and of those things which were under her.’ For Taylor, the soul, in full knowledge of its condition, knows to where it must be consigned.⁷⁸ Taylor failed to elaborate on the circumstances and nature of the ‘abode’ of the departed.⁷⁹ In his sermons he repeatedly described this state as one in which the ‘[...] godly shall have vast joyes [*sic*] of a certain intuitive hope, according to their several proportions and capacities.’ The condition of the dead in the intermediate state as one of ‘rest’ is reiterated in his devotional works:

Lord, if Thou wilt support me, I will forever praise Thee; if Thou wilt suffer the load to press me yet more heavily, I will cry unto Thee; and complain unto my God; and at last, I will lie and die, and by the mercies and intercession of the Holy Jesus, and the conduct of thy blessed Spirit, and the ministry of angels, pass into those mansions where holy souls rest and weep no more.⁸⁰

The nature of the ‘rest’ and ‘joy’ of the souls in the intermediate state was the subject of frequent speculation among the Caroline divines. The intermediate state was predominantly represented as a temporary existence in which the dead await their perfection at the Resurrection. However both Bull and the Non-Jurors described this state as one in which the dead proceeded by degrees to their final consummate beatitude. Bull referred to Irenaeus’ *Adversus Haereses* v, 36 to support his claim that the dead increase in beatitude after death:

⁷⁸ *Tay. Ser.*, p. 23.

⁷⁹ Jeremy Taylor, *A Funeral Sermon Preached at the Obsequies of the Right Hon. And Most Vertuous Lady Frances, Countesse of Carbery*, London: Royston, 1650, p. 17.

⁸⁰ Jeremy Taylor, *A Selection from The Prayers of Jeremy Taylor*. London: Hatchard and Son, 1830, p. 144.

[...] it is the divine ordination and disposition, that those that are saved should *per gradus proficere*, 'proceed by degrees' to their perfect beatitude.⁸¹

This state was understood not merely in its temporal dimension as the condition of the dead between the parting from their earthly life until the resurrection, but also qualitatively as the 'intermediate' experience of bliss which characterised this transitional state. Bull therefore wrote of 'the *intermediate* joys of paradise, where the souls of the faithful are refreshed until the resurrection'⁸²

Scripturally there were two passages which were generally used in reference to the intermediate state, both of which are found in the gospel of Luke: the parable of Dives and Lazarus (16:19-31), and Christ's promise of 'paradise' to the dying thief (23:43). For Jeremy Taylor and George Bull the use of the term 'paradise' to the dying thief was significant because of its distinction from either *hades* or *sheol*. Taylor attempted to show that the *sitz im Leben* of Christ's words to the dying thief of 'paradise' or 'Eden' would have been understood as the state '[...] where all the good Jews did believe the souls of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to be placed.'⁸³ Taylor's exegesis of the term 'paradise' in Luke 23:43 was based on his reading of the apocryphal books of Esdras. Taylor emphasised that 'paradise' in post-exilic Judaism was connected directly to the protological image of Eden, as a place of bliss and rest, but was incomparable to the bliss which the elect will enjoy after the resurrection.⁸⁴ Taylor suggested that the term 'paradise' was synonymous with references to the Garden of Eden, a term which Israelites used to bless their dead.

⁸¹ *BW*, p. 68.

⁸² *BW*, p. 55.

⁸³ *Tay. Ser.*, p. 15.

⁸⁴ *Tay. Ser.*, p. 14.

By *Paradise* till the time of Esdras it is certain, the Jews only meant the Blessed Garden in which God once placed *Adam* and *Eve*: but in the time of Esdras and so downward when they spake distinctly of things to happen after this life [...] they called the state of souls expecting the resurrection of their bodies by the name the garden of Eden. Hence came that forme of comprecation and blessing of the soul of an Israelite *Sit anima ejus in horto Eden*, let his soul be in the garden of Eden; and in their solemn prayers at the time of death they were wont to say *let his soul rest, and let his sleep be in peace until the Comforter shall come; open the gates of Paradise unto him*, expressly distinguishing *Paradise* from the state of the *Resurrection*.⁸⁵

Taylor also demonstrated how in Eccles. 2:5 the Septuagint renders $\eta\gamma$ as παράδεισος ‘gardens and orchards’ therefore giving weight to his claim. The term can also be used to denote ‘pleasure’ and ‘bliss’.⁸⁶ Taylor therefore associated the Scriptural term ‘paradise’ with the intermediate state. Consequently Christ’s promise of ‘paradise’ to the penitent thief in Luke 23:43, was that he should be admitted to the intermediate state, of the elect who wait in joyful expectation of the resurrection:

[...] that day both [Christ and the thief] were to be in paradise, but Christ himself was not then ascended into heaven, and therefore paradise was no part of that region where Christ now and the hereafter the saints shall reign in glory.⁸⁷

Bull also emphasised that the term ‘paradise’ and the ‘world to come’ were in Old Testament thought two clearly distinguishable realities.⁸⁸ Bull emphasised that ‘*today* you will be with me in paradise’ is evidence of the immediacy of the experience of joy for the disembodied spirit, albeit imperfectly and transitionally:

Into this place our saviour promiseth the thief an admission on the *very day* that he died and was crucified with him. Now to what purpose was it told him, that he should on *that day* that he died be an inhabitant of

⁸⁵ *Tay. Ser.*, p. 14.

⁸⁶ *Tay. Ser.*, p. 16.

⁸⁷ *Tay. Ser.*, p. 14.

⁸⁸ *BW*, p. 59.

paradise, unless then he should be capable of the joys and felicities of that delightful place? Paradise would be no paradise to him, that should have no sense or faculty to taste and perceive the delights and pleasures of it. But that we may not uncertainly, let us consider, that the person to whom our Saviour spake these words was a Jew, and that our blessed Lord, speaking in kindness to him, intended to be understood by him.⁸⁹

Bull's exegesis of the fate of Judas, described in Acts 1:25 as consigned to τὸν τόπον τὸν ἴδιον 'his own proper place', similarly emphasised how the intermediate state was viewed as a place of torment for the wicked.⁹⁰ Bull held that man's condition in the intermediate state is dependent upon his moral conduct on earth:

[...] what avails the difference of place, unless we allow also a difference of state and condition? If the joys of paradise were in hell, hell would be paradise: and if the torments of hell were in paradise, paradise would be hell: Judas therefore is in misery, Peter in happiness. And what happiness or misery can there be, where there is no sense of either? If presently after death, one common gulph of insensibility and oblivion swallowed up the souls of good and bad alike, the state of Judas and Peter would be the same.⁹¹

This contrast between the bliss of the just and the torment of the wicked in the intermediate state, was more fully developed in the parable of Lazarus and Dives in Luke 16:22-25. The most common interpretation of the parable is found in Bull. He demonstrated how the bliss of Lazarus in the 'bosom of Abraham', and the anguish 'in flames' of the rich man, was an expression of the anticipatory condition of their future state after the Resurrection. For the just the intermediate state is but a foretaste of their heavenly bliss, for the damned, of their eternal punishment:

It is true that this is a parable, and accordingly several things in it are parabolically expressed: but though everything in a parable is not yet

⁸⁹ *BW*, p. 58.

⁹⁰ *BW*, p. 49.

⁹¹ *BW*, p. 50.

argumentative, yet the scope of it is, as all divines acknowledge. Now it plainly goes beyond the scope and design of this parable, to show what becomes of the souls of good and bad men after death [...]⁹²

The Non-Juror Bishop, Archibald Campbell, had a quite different interpretation of the parable. In his *The Doctrines of a Middle State between Death and Resurrection* (1721), Campbell interpreted the text from his understanding of the term *hades*, as the general state of the dead which is divided into two ‘sides.’⁹³ Campbell cited numerous Patristic texts to demonstrate how both Lazarus and Dives were in the state *apud inferos* (in Hades), but were separated by a gulf he described as the ‘right’ and ‘left’ of Hades, or the intermediate state. Campbell distinguished between ‘heaven’ and ‘paradise’. He understood heaven as the final state of the blessed and paradise as the middle state which Christ passed after his death until the resurrection. The latter was therefore, for Campbell, also the abode of souls prior to the General Resurrection.⁹⁴

Jeremy Taylor departed from what he called the ‘common opinion’ of the interpretation of the Lazarus-Dives parable.⁹⁵ He held that the reference in Luke 16:22 to Lazarus’ finding rest in the *sinus Abrahae* is a highly peculiar reference in the Old Testament, particularly of Intertestamental eschatology. Taylor’s reading of Jewish practice at this time was that the dead were commonly said to be *μετά το Αβράμ* ‘with Abraham’, yet it was unusual to refer to them in the very intimate position of being ‘in his bosom’, which is usually used in a Jewish cultural setting to donate the privileged

⁹² *BW*, p. 61.

⁹³ See *DMS*, p. 4.

⁹⁴ See *DMS*, pp. xviii, 92.

⁹⁵ *Tay. Ser.*, p. 17.

position of a guest reclining next to his host at a meal.⁹⁶ Taylor argued that the passage gives evidence of the varying degrees of blessedness in the intermediate state:

[...] the analogy of the phrase to the manner of the Jewish feastings, where the best guest did lye in the bosom of the master, that is, had the best place, makes it most reasonable that Abrahams bosom does not signify the general state of separation, even of the blessed; but the choicest place in that state, a greater degree of blessedness.⁹⁷

Henry Hammond (1605-1660) agreed that *hades* ‘[...] cannot [...] be thought to signify the place of the damned.’⁹⁸ He maintained the two states referred to in the parable were that of Heaven and Hell, rather than of the two conditions of the dead in the intermediate state. He did however remark that some may object that one cannot reconcile the torments of Dives in Hell with the fact that the account is clearly represented in a time before the general resurrection of the dead. However he affirmed that parables are symbolic and therefore do not refer merely to the time in which they are set – much in the same way in which the parables of the bridegroom are representative of an eschatological end time.⁹⁹

III. Newman’s Theology of the Intermediate State

Newman’s progression to the High Church tradition coincided with his acceptance of the doctrine of the intermediate state. On the feast of All Saints 1830, Newman preached on the subject for the first time to his congregation at the University

⁹⁶ *Tay. Ser.*, p. 18.

⁹⁷ *Tay. Ser.*, p. 18.

⁹⁸ Henry Hammond, *The Workes [sic] of the Reverend and Learned Henry Hammond*, Volume I, London: Flesher, Royston and Davis, 1674, p. 142.

⁹⁹ Henry Hammond, *A View of the New Directory and a Vindication of the Ancient Liturgy of the Church of England*, in *The Workes*, *op. cit.*, pp. 620f.

Church.¹⁰⁰ Newman was to preach the same sermon on five separate occasions.¹⁰¹ Drawing from the patrimony of the Caroline divines and Non-Jurors, he sought to present an answer to the question of the fate of souls after death. Newman wrote two sermons that dealt specifically with the doctrine of the intermediate state. The first, No. 266 of 1830, was entitled ‘Crowns Given for a Brief Season’, and never published during his lifetime.¹⁰² The second, No. 393, ‘The Intermediate State’, was first preached on the feast of All Saints 1835 and was later included in the third volume of his *Parochial and Plain Sermons*.¹⁰³ Newman preached sermons in cycles, often reworking them. This gives us an insight into the development of his thought. Newman preached Sermon No. 266 on the feast of All Saints in 1833, 1838 and for the last time in 1839.¹⁰⁴ Sermon No. 393 was preached once in 1835.¹⁰⁵

A. An Imperfect State: Waiting in Hope of the Resurrection

Newman’s theology of the intermediate state was for the most part common to the tradition of the Caroline divines which he inherited. Newman’s first sermon on the intermediate state, No. 266 of 1830, expressed his initial theological tentativeness regarding a question in which ‘human words are insufficient’.¹⁰⁶ Newman presented this sermon not as a ‘teaching’, but rather as a ‘question’ in which ‘some persons take a particular interest’ and should therefore be simply left for their ‘consideration.’¹⁰⁷ In so doing Newman gave the impression that he understood the question of the intermediate

¹⁰⁰ *Ser.*, III, p. 88. *LD* II, p. 301.

¹⁰¹ See *LD* II, p. 301; IV, p. 78; V, p. 158; VI, p. 334; VII, p. 174.

¹⁰² *Ser.*, III, pp. 88-94.

¹⁰³ *PPS* III, pp. 367-387.

¹⁰⁴ See *LD* II, p. 30; IV, p. 78; VI, p. 334; VII, p. 174.

¹⁰⁵ See *LD* V, p. 158.

¹⁰⁶ *Ser.*, III, p. 91.

¹⁰⁷ *Ser.*, III, p. 90.

state as a theologoumenon within Anglican tradition, rather than an authoritative teaching.¹⁰⁸ Given its speculative nature, Newman found it appropriate to explain the doctrine from a strictly Scriptural perspective. Needless to say he admitted from the outset that Scripture may not provide a precise answer to this question.¹⁰⁹

In sermon No. 266 Newman drew two positive affirmations from Scripture on the state of the dead in the hereafter. First, he emphasised that Scripture assures us that the spirits of the dead are in ‘in the Lord’s hands’ and in ‘[...] the safety of a Saviour’s protection – a present lodgement near Him in the heavenly mansions.’ One could infer from this that the souls of the dead are entirely preserved from all sin and evil.¹¹⁰ Second, in Sermon 266 Newman emphasised that in Scripture Christian hope is founded on the expectation of the Resurrection as ‘the great event to which we should ever be looking’ and in which ‘we are explicitly told all our hopes for ourselves and our friends will be fulfilled.’¹¹¹ At this time Newman seems to have understood the intermediate state as the general condition of all the dead until the Resurrection. In his sermon ‘The Intermediate State’ of 1835 Newman emphasised that Christian hope for glory is directed to the Parousia, that is, Christ’s glorious return, rather than at the moment of man’s death:

Still, it will be found, on the whole, that death is not the object put forward in Scripture for hope to rest upon, but the coming of Christ, as if the interval between death and His coming was by no means to be omitted in the process of our preparation for heaven.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ *Ser.*, III, p. 90.

¹⁰⁹ *Ser.*, III, p. 91.

¹¹⁰ *Ser.*, III, pp. 90f.

¹¹¹ *Ser.*, III, p. 90.

¹¹² *PPS* III, p. 378.

Newman qualified the intermediate state as ‘intermediate’ or ‘preparatory’ precisely because he characterised it as the state of disembodied spirits after death and before the Resurrection.¹¹³ This teaching differed from the Roman Catholic doctrine on particular judgement at death and the immediacy of the Beatific Vision. The constitution *Benedictus Deus* of Benedict XII in 1336 stated that those who have been duly purified after death will immediately experience the fullness of the Beatific Vision and a state of perfect bliss:

[...] all these souls, immediately (*mox*) after death and, in the case of those in need of purification, after the purification mentioned above, since the ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ into heaven, already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment, have been, are and will be with Christ in heaven, in the heavenly kingdom and paradise, joined to the company of the holy angels. Since the passion and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, these souls have seen and see the divine essence with an intuitive vision and even face to face, without the mediation of any creature by way of object of vision; rather the divine essence immediately manifests itself to them, plainly, clearly and openly, and in this vision they enjoy the divine essence. Moreover, by this vision and enjoyment the souls of those who have already died are truly blessed and have eternal life and rest. Also the souls of those who will die in the future will see the same divine essence and will enjoy it before the general judgment.¹¹⁴

Newman followed the teaching of the Caroline divines in rejecting the Roman Catholic doctrine that disembodied souls should be able to experience a state of perfect bliss before the Resurrection. He emphasised that Scripture provided no proof that the souls of the just, even of the saints, enjoy the Beatific Vision prior to the Resurrection. Rather, he held that a reading of 1Corinthians 15 suggests that the Resurrection is

¹¹³ *Ser.*, III, p. 90.

¹¹⁴ *Benedictus Deus*. See Heinrich Denzinger (ed)., *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, Translated by Roy J. Defferrari. London: Herder, 1957, pp. 197-198.

viewed not only as the final and consummate aim of glory and bliss, but also as the event which introduces the perfect happiness of the Beatific Vision:

So far is told us on the one hand – and on the other hand it is as certainly revealed to us, that the saints are not yet in that state of perfect bliss which they will enjoy after the resurrection. We have no proof in Scripture that they yet see the face of God. – It is impossible to read the fifteenth of I Corinthians, without being convinced, not only that it is our *duty* to look forward chiefly to the resurrection, but (more than this) that that event is the introduction to the perfect happiness of good men. ¹¹⁵

While Newman held to the tradition that the souls of the just in the intermediate state are at rest, in accordance with the Caroline divines he acknowledged that they have not as yet received the fullness of glory nor of the reward of heaven. Rather, these souls

[...] cry out for some relief, for vengeance upon their persecutors. They are told to wait awhile, ‘to rest yet for a little season,’ [...] Meantime they receive some present earnest of the promise, by way of alleviation; ‘white robes were given unto every one of them.’ ¹¹⁶

The state of the souls in the intermediate state is one of peace, but imperfect in glory, holiness and bliss. Newman clearly distinguished the bliss of souls in the intermediate state from that which they will experience at the Beatific Vision. The condition of the disembodied soul is in an ‘incomplete state in every way’ - a condition which will last until the Day of Judgment.¹¹⁷ In sermon No. 393 Newman outlined five general characteristics by which we are to understand the ‘incompleteness’ of the state of the

¹¹⁵ *Ser.*, III, p. 91.

¹¹⁶ *PPS* III, p. 368.

¹¹⁷ *PPS* III, p. 373.

disembodied soul. First, their existence is juxtaposed between rest and the promise of a reward which is withheld from them:

The Angels are serving God actively; they are ministers between heaven and earth. And the Saints, too, one day shall judge the world—they shall judge the fallen Angels; but at present, till the end comes, they are at rest only, which is enough for their peace, enough for our comfort on thinking of them, still, incomplete, compared with what one day shall be.¹¹⁸

While they may experience a degree of bliss in the intermediate state, the souls of the departed still wait in anticipation of their reward. It is therefore a state which comes short of the glory which will be revealed to them at the consummation of the world.¹¹⁹ Second, the condition of the souls between death and the Resurrection is a *disembodied* state and therefore lacks that fullness of union of body and soul. Third, these souls are incomplete insofar as they are ‘neither awake nor asleep.’ By this Newman understood that the cessation of the faculty of will at death meant that these souls are ‘not in full employment of their powers’, unlike the living.¹²⁰ Fourth, Newman described the intermediate state as incomplete because it was a state in which the ‘saints’ could grow in ‘happiness’:

Even now, as it would appear from the text [Rev 6:11], the Blessed, in their disembodied state, admit of an increase of happiness, and receive it. ‘They cried out’ in complaint, - and ‘white robes were given them;’ they were soothed and bid wait awhile.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ *PPS* III, p. 373.

¹¹⁹ *PPS* III, p. 382.

¹²⁰ *PPS* III, p. 373.

¹²¹ *PPS* III, p. 376.

Finally, the description in Rev. 6 of souls kept ‘under the altar’ was for Newman illustrative of the imperfection of the intermediate state, not only in view of the quality of rest, but also of the imperfection of the ‘place’ of rest as a state in which absolute communion with God is impossible. It is a state which falls short of the glory of heaven:

[...] there is incompleteness also as regard their place of rest. They are ‘under the Altar.’ Not in the full presence of God, seeing his face, and rejoicing in his works, but in a safe and holy treasure-house close by, - like Moses, ‘in a cleft of the rock,’ – covered by the hand of God, and beholding the skirts of his glory.¹²²

Newman showed how in Scripture we find various terms to describe the abode of the disembodied spirits as one which falls short of the glory of heaven: it is the ‘Abraham’s bosom’, ‘the garden of Eden’ and ‘paradise.’¹²³ Newman interpreted the term ‘bosom of Abraham’, from the parable of Lazarus and Dives (Lk 16:22-25), as a ‘place short of heaven.’¹²⁴ Similarly, he described the scriptural term ‘paradise’, not in reference to ‘heaven’, but rather in view of the intermediate state, as a place in which God ‘[...] manifests himself, not as on earth dimly, and by material instruments, but by those more intimate approaches which spirit admit of, and our present faculties cannot comprehend.’¹²⁵ Newman reiterated the use of the terms ‘paradise’ and ‘Eden’ in a series of poems that he wrote on *Saints Departed* in the *Lyra Apostolica* in 1835.¹²⁶ In two of these poems, *Removal* and *Rest*, Newman used terminology to describe the state of the dead which was concurrent with the theology of the Caroline divines:

¹²² *PPS* III, pp. 373f.

¹²³ *PPS* III, p. 374.

¹²⁴ *PPS* III, p. 374.

¹²⁵ *PPS* III, p. 374.

¹²⁶ The series *Saints Departed* was first published for the October edition of the *British Magazine* in 1835.

Dear sainted Friends, I call not you
To share the joy serene,
Which flows upon me from the view
Of crag and steep ravine.

Ye, on that loftier mountain old,
Safe lodged in Eden's cell,
Whence run the rivers four, behold
This earth, as ere it fell.¹²⁷

As we have seen, the Caroline divines distinguished 'heaven' from 'Eden' to emphasise the existence of a middle state after death. In *Rest* Newman used the term 'Eden' again to distinguish the dwelling place of the Just in the intermediate state from the future state of the blessed in heaven:

They are at rest:
We may not stir the heaven of their repose
By rude invoking voice, or prayer address
In waywardness of those,
Who in the mountain grotts of Eden lie
And hear the fourfold river as it murmurs by.¹²⁸

B. A State of Rest rather than Punishment

Newman's understanding of how God punishes man for sin defined his understanding of suffering in this life, the state of the dead in the hereafter, and his views on Purgatory. As a fundamental premise Newman held that 'all sin brings affliction' and must be punished either in this life or the next.¹²⁹ Newman rejected the

¹²⁷ *Lyra Apostolica*, Second Edition, London: Rivington, 1837, p. 61.

¹²⁸ In the *British Magazine* the poem appeared under the title of *Rest* and was renamed *Verses on Religious Subjects* as *Enoch and Elias*. In the first edition of *Verses on Various Occasions* it was renamed *Refrigerium*, and in subsequent editions as *Waiting for the Morning*. *Lyra Apostolica*, p. 63.

¹²⁹ *PPS VI*, p. 23.

idea that all suffering man undergoes in his earthly life must be understood as punishment for sins committed.¹³⁰ While there is ‘no question that all misery among us arises in the first instance from sin’ it is however ‘highly erroneous to suppose that the greater sufferings happen to greater sinners.’¹³¹ While he held that punishment is usually reserved for the future life, it is permitted by God in this life as a means of loving discipline.¹³² He distinguished between afflictions as means of ‘correction’ and the ‘extraordinary’ manner in which God punishes man in this life through punishment given in proportion to sins committed.¹³³ In the sermon ‘Bodily Suffering’ of 1835 he described how while all suffering is ultimately a result of our own sins, it is a preparation for heaven rather than a punishment:

[...] let us never forget in all we suffer, that, properly speaking, our own sin is the cause of it, and it is only by Christ's mercy that we are allowed to range ourselves at His side. We who are children of wrath, are made through Him children of grace; and our pains—which are in themselves but foretastes of hell—are changed by the sprinkling of His blood into a preparation for heaven.¹³⁴

We find some variance of his thought in his University Sermon, ‘On Justice, as a Principle of Divine Governance’ of 1832. Here he spoke of how death brings an end to the trials and sufferings which weigh down upon the just man. While the consequences of man’s sins may still continue to affect others after his death, for the sinner the moment of death ‘terminate[s] the punishment of the penitent’.¹³⁵ Newman accepted that while punishment for sins was possible after death, the notion that the just man – ‘the penitent’, must necessarily undergo further trials in the post-mortem state as a

¹³⁰ *Ser.*, V, pp. 260-284.

¹³¹ *Ser.*, V, pp. 262f.

¹³² *Ser.*, V, p. 262.

¹³³ *Ser.*, V, p. 262.

¹³⁴ *PPS* III, p. 155.

¹³⁵ *US*, p. 114.

means for attaining beatitude, was for Newman both unscriptural and unreasonable. In his sermon ‘The Greatness and Littleness of Human Life’ of 1836 he described how death brings a feeling of release for the good Christian. Therefore the transition from the suffering of life to the peace of the intermediate state is the ‘happy contemplation of the disembodied spirit.’¹³⁶ Envisioning the faithful soul’s departure from the trials of life to the rest of the intermediate state he described how:

[...] all is now over; this is what I have so long waited for; for which I have nerved myself; against which I have prepared, fasted, prayed, and wrought righteousness. Death is come and gone,—it is over. Ah! is it possible? What an easy trial, what a cheap price for eternal glory! A few sharp sicknesses, or some acute pain awhile, or some few and evil years, or some struggles of mind, dreary desolateness for a season, fightings and fears, afflicting bereavements, or the scorn and ill-usage of the world,—how they fretted me, how much I thought of them, yet how little really they are! How contemptible a thing is human life,—contemptible in itself, yet in its effects invaluable! for it has been to me like a small seed of easy purchase, germinating and ripening into bliss everlasting.¹³⁷

The question of the necessity of continued suffering after death for the just was foremost in Newman’s mind when writing against the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory. Newman made no criticism of the belief in the purgation of souls in his first sermon on the intermediate state in 1830. It was only after his experiences during his Mediterranean voyage (1832-33) that he began to write on the subject. In his *Apologia* he recounted seeing ‘pictures of souls in flames’ while in Naples.¹³⁸ In correspondence with his sister Jemima while in Rome in 1833, we find his first reference to Purgatory.

¹³⁶ *PPS IV*, p. 221.

¹³⁷ *PPS IV*, p. 221.

¹³⁸ *Apo.*, p. 101.

He wrote of the doctrine as one of the ‘two chief practical delusions of Romanism’.¹³⁹ Newman denied that it could be described as a ‘corruption’, as at this stage he held that there was no primitive doctrine to pervert; rather the doctrine was simply an ‘invention.’¹⁴⁰ In a letter addressed to Mrs. William Wilberforce a year later in November 1834, Newman outlined his grievances against the doctrine.¹⁴¹ In the letter he described Purgatory as a ‘frightful doctrine’, which implied that all men must suffer after death, no matter how holy they were on earth. He maintained that the Roman doctrine of Purgatory suggests that Christ does not remit all punishment for sins on earth. Newman retorted that if Christ *had* promised to do away with all guilt and suffering at death, ‘[...] what a great affront it must be to Him, thus to obscure His mercy’.¹⁴² A year later in 1835 he advocated the Anglican teaching of the intermediate state as an alternative to the ‘depressing prospect’ of the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory.¹⁴³ He reiterated his views that it was ‘frightful notion’ to believe that after the trials and suffering of life Christians should be denied their rest in the hereafter.¹⁴⁴ He understood the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory as ‘a prison beneath the earth’, in which the souls of the dead ‘are kept in fire or other torment, till, their sins being burned away, they are at length fitted for that glorious kingdom into which nothing defiled can enter.’¹⁴⁵ Newman reassured his listeners that in the face of the fear and seemingly hopeless prospect that the Romish doctrine represents, Christ has mercifully intervened to assure us that family and friends are better provided for than the image of Purgatory would have us think.¹⁴⁶ While souls may experience ‘loneliness

¹³⁹ *LD* III, p. 265.

¹⁴⁰ *LD* III, p. 265.

¹⁴¹ *LD* IV, p. 368. Newman did not send the letter.

¹⁴² *LD* IV, p. 368.

¹⁴³ *PPS* III, pp. 371f.

¹⁴⁴ *PPS* III, pp. 371f.

¹⁴⁵ *PPS* III, p. 371.

¹⁴⁶ *PPS* III, p. 372.

and gloom’, Newman held that in contrast to the ‘Romish’ doctrine, they are ‘secured from actual punishment’, and are ‘sustained [...] , soothed, quieted and consoled.’¹⁴⁷ Newman compared their state to that of a restless child which is comforted by a parent, lulled to sleep, and diverted from pain which could agitate it.¹⁴⁸ Yet Newman maintained that the doctrine of Purgatory is neither affirmed nor rejected by Scripture. Further, were the doctrine accepted as ‘primitive’, ‘there would be enough in it reasonably to alarm us’:

[...] though the Bible does not positively affirm it, yet if it did not contradict it, and if the opinion itself was very general in the Church (as it is), and primitive too (as it is not), there would be enough in it reasonably to alarm us; for who could tell in such a case, but probably it might be true?¹⁴⁹

While Newman acknowledged that Scripture shows that the dead are ‘better provided for than this doctrine [Purgatory] would make it appear’, he did not explicitly reject the possibility of some form of purification after death. Rather, he rejected the punitive character which the doctrine of Purgatory suggests. Newman made it clear that the doctrine of Purgatory would be ‘binding on our faith, in spite of any *primâ facie* bearing of certain texts, were it, what our formularies *imply* [my italics] it is not, a doctrine sanctioned by the catholic Church.’¹⁵⁰ This is significant as it shows that Newman believed that the *XXXIX Articles* merely imply, rather than affirm that Purgatory is not a Catholic doctrine.

¹⁴⁷ *PPS III*, p. 372.

¹⁴⁸ *PPS III*, p. 372.

¹⁴⁹ *PPS III*, p. 372.

¹⁵⁰ *PPS III*, p. 372, note 1.

Newman clarified his position on the Scriptural basis of Purgatory a year later, in 1836, in *Tract LXXI*.¹⁵¹ In the tract, which was addressed *ad clerum*, he reiterated the above cited section of sermon 393 on the intermediate state, emphasising that the doctrine was ‘grievous’ and that

[...] if Scripture, as interpreted by tradition, taught it, we should be bound to receive it; but, knowing as we do, that even St. Austin questioned the doctrine in the fifth century, we may well suspect the evidence for it [...] I reply, first, that I have already stated that Scripture, as interpreted by tradition, does not teach the doctrine.¹⁵²

However, Newman allowed that even if one were to take a ‘Romanist’ position by referring to the Tridentine decree on Purgatory, one would find nothing in the decree that explains the nature of purgatorial pains. On the contrary, Newman showed that there is nothing in Tridentine decrees which would seem to disagree with the Anglican teaching on the intermediate state:

[...] the Creed of Pope Pius, which is framed from the Tridentine decrees, and is the Roman Creed of Communion, only says ‘I firmly hold there is a Purgatory, and that souls therein detained are aided by the prayers of the faithful,’ nothing being said of its being a place of punishment, nothing, or all but nothing, which does not admit of being explained of merely an intermediate state. Now supposing we found ourselves in the Roman Communion, of course it would be a great relief to find that we were not bound to believe more than this vague statement, nor should we (I conceive) on account of the received interpretation about Purgatory superadded to it, be obliged to leave our Church.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Tract LXXI, vol. III.

¹⁵² Tract LXXI, vol. III, p. 12.

¹⁵³ Tract LXXI, vol. III, pp. 15f.

C. Spiritual Progress in the Post-Mortem State

By the mid 1830's Newman's understanding of conversion and holiness had developed. His eventual rejection of imputed righteousness and acceptance of baptismal regeneration meant that he came to view baptism as the moment in which an indelible character of holiness is formed within man which lasts until eternity. In March 1831 he clearly distinguished ethical excellence from sanctity of life. In the University Sermon 'Evangelical Sanctity and the Completion of Natural Virtue' he wrote against an absolute and one sided concept of holiness as based either solely on faith or good works:

This necessity of being 'sanctified wholly,' in the Apostle's language, is often forgotten. It is indeed comparatively easy to profess one side only of moral excellence, as if faith were to be all in all, or zeal, or amiableness; whereas in truth, religious obedience is a very intricate problem, and the more so the farther we proceed in it. The moral growth within us must be symmetrical, in order to be beautiful or lasting; hence mature sanctity is seldom recognized by others, where it really exists, never by the world at large.¹⁵⁴

Ian Ker maintains that it was Newman's reading of the Fathers that brought about the change in his understanding of conversion.¹⁵⁵ Rather than looking to the death of Christ to arouse an emotive response of conversion, the Fathers emphasised the contrary, namely, 'to connect the gospel with natural religion, and to mark out obedience to the moral law as the ordinary means of attaining to the Christian faith.'¹⁵⁶ Newman accepted that while man could never reach ultimate perfection in holiness in this present

¹⁵⁴ *US*, pp. 48f.

¹⁵⁵ Ian Ker, *Newman and the Fullness of Christianity*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993, p. 21.

¹⁵⁶ *Ari.*, pp. 46-7. See Ian Ker, *Newman and the Fullness of Christianity*, p. 21.

life, he could obtain some measure of it by degrees through obedience to the Will of God:

To obtain the gift of holiness is the work of *a life*. No man will ever be perfect here, so sinful is our nature. Thus, in putting off the day of repentance, these men are reserving for a few chance years, when strength and vigour are gone, that work for which a *whole* life would not be enough. That work is great and arduous beyond expression [...] I repeat, the separate acts of obedience to the will of God, good works as they are called, are of service to us, as gradually severing us from this world of sense, and impressing our hearts with a heavenly character.¹⁵⁷

Newman therefore understood the transformation which man undergoes in the present life through the dual perspective of man's initiative and the action of God. After death the positive activity of man to strive for God ceases, and the soul is subject to the transforming action of God alone.¹⁵⁸ For Newman holiness is a silent, attractive, urgent and irresistible force which not only transforms those who come in contact with it but also demands conformity with Truth. In the University Sermon 'Personal Influence, the Means of Propagating Truth' of January 1832 he described the transforming character of holiness:

Men persuade themselves, with little difficulty, to scoff at principles, to ridicule books, to make sport of the names of good men; but they cannot bear their presence: it is holiness embodied in personal form, which they cannot steadily confront and bear down.¹⁵⁹

To the sinner, holiness exercises a '[...] sovereign compulsory sway, bidding them fear and keep silence, on the ground of its own right divine to rule them.'¹⁶⁰ While the

¹⁵⁷ *PPS* I, pp. 9, 12.

¹⁵⁸ See *PPS* II, pp. 223ff.

¹⁵⁹ *US*, p. 92.

¹⁶⁰ *US*, p. 95.

presence of holiness also transforms the imperfect in that it ‘[...] persuades the weak, the timid, the wavering, the inquiring [...]’¹⁶¹ Newman understood the transformation in holiness which men experience through personal influence as a reflection of the same transformation Christ wishes to exert upon souls:

Then, at length, with astonishment and fear, they [souls] would become aware that Christ's presence was before them; and, in the words of Scripture, would glorify God in His servant [Gal. i. 24.]; and all this while they themselves would be changing into that glorious Image which they gazed upon, and be in training to succeed him in its propagation.¹⁶²

Newman held that the death of the Christian signifies not only the end of suffering, but also of their growth in holiness. In his sermon ‘The death of a Christian is the close of his trial and else unimportant’ Newman wrote of a ‘character’ of good or evil which determines man’s state in the hereafter:

By that time [the dissolution of the body] a character has been formed within us of some sort, whether good or evil; and that inward character so formed is indelible; it lasts forever, the soul’s happiness in heaven, its worm in hell. At the time of death, God visits us, He weighs us in the balance; and determines our place once for all.¹⁶³

As Newman moved away from the concept of a two-fold receptacle of souls that had dominated his eschatology as a Calvinist, he came to accept that there are varying degrees of moral goodness, and therefore the possibility of spiritual advancement for the just. The development in his understanding of judgement is reflected in the poetry

¹⁶¹ *US*, p. 95.

¹⁶² *US*, p. 96.

¹⁶³ *Ser.*, III, p. 124.

he wrote in 1832. In *Memory*, he described judgement in terms of an ultimate and final conversion before the majesty of God:

And so, upon Death's adverted day,
As I speed upwards, I shall on me bear,
And in no breathless whirl, the things that were,
And duties given, and ends I did obey.
And, when at length I reach the Throne of Power,
Ah! Still unscared, I shall in fullness see
The vision of my past innumerable deeds,
My deep heart-courses, and their motive seeds,
So to gaze on till the red dooming hour.
Lord, in that strait, the Judge! Remember me!¹⁶⁴

By 1835 Newman had rejected the concept that man's spiritual development ends at death. In the sermon 'The Intermediate State' he wrote of death as a 'line of distinction' in the 'extended course of our purification':

This indeed, is our Saviour's usual doctrine as well as his apostles. I mean, it is His custom to insist on two events chiefly, his first coming and his second – our regeneration and our resurrection – throwing into the background the prospect of our death, as it were but a mark of distinction (however momentous a one), not of division, in the extended course of our purification.¹⁶⁵

In the sermon Newman emphasised that just as man can grow and mature in holiness upon earth, so also in the afterlife. All Christians, even those who have lived in exemplary sanctity, die with their 'work unfinished.' The intermediate state is therefore a place of spiritual development in '[...]' which what has been sown on earth may be

¹⁶⁴ *VVO*, p. 81.

¹⁶⁵ *PPS* III, p. 379.

matured and completed.’¹⁶⁶ God acts on the soul in the intermediate state, forming it and making it more like himself. Newman therefore described the intermediate state with connotations of patient ‘waiting’, ‘maturing that fruit of grace’, and of a ‘school-time of contemplation’:

Who can tell then, but, in God’s mercy, the time of waiting between death and Christ’s coming, may be profitable to those who have been His true servants here, as a time of maturing that fruit of grace, but partly formed in them in this life,—a school-time of contemplation, as this world is a discipline of active service? Such, surely, is the force of the Apostle’s words, that ‘He that hath begun a good work in us, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,’ until, not at, not stopping it with death, but carrying it on to the Resurrection.¹⁶⁷

The soul therefore remains in the intermediate state so that it ‘may have time for growing in all things holy’, bringing to perfection that which they have begun on earth. Newman maintains that the growth in holiness after death means that there is hope for tepid Christians and those who left ‘repentance to the death-bed’, so that this ‘season at a distance from heaven’ becomes a time of ‘silent growth in holiness.’¹⁶⁸

While Newman accepted by 1835 that the period between death and the Resurrection could be understood as a time of purification, *Tract LXXI* of 1836 shows that he did not view this purification in punitive terms. In the tract Newman argued against the concept that the purification of Purgatory must inevitably imply suffering. Such a doctrine could provide no comfort for the good man who dies in pain. Rather the doctrine of Purgatory would only bring comfort to ‘bad men’ who repented on their

¹⁶⁶ *PPS* III, p. 382.

¹⁶⁷ *PPS* III, pp. 377f.

¹⁶⁸ *PPS* III, pp. 376f

deathbed. He held that the belief in the pains of Purgatory is therefore more in line with the ‘ultra-Protestantism of [the] day’ which tended to ‘sacrifices the better part of the community to the less deserving’:¹⁶⁹

Now what a light does this throw upon the death of beloved and revered friends! [...] There is no one who can for himself look forward to death with hope and humble thankfulness. Tell the sufferer upon a sick-bed that his earthly pangs are to terminate in Purgatory, what comfort can he draw from religion?¹⁷⁰

D. Reconciling the Notions of ‘Rest’ and the ‘Consciousness’

Newman’s understanding of the condition of disembodied spirits who are in a state of tension between attainment of rest and anticipation of reward led him to one of the most fundamental questions in regard to the intermediate state: whether the dead are conscious or not.¹⁷¹ From the outset of his first sermon on the intermediate state Newman acknowledged that we can know very little of the nature of the human soul. While we are inclined to think that the departed soul exists either in a state of consciousness or unconsciousness, it may be possible that their state is neither, but rather ‘is in some such unknown wonderful state – which God knows but which human words cannot describe.’¹⁷² Newman denied that the question of the disembodied spirits in a state of ‘rest’ should simply be understood figuratively.¹⁷³ He admitted that there is an apparent inconsistency in expressions of Scripture as to whether one should understand the souls of the dead as either conscious or unconscious.¹⁷⁴ Despite terminological limitations and the ambiguity which the Scriptural term ‘rest’ presents,

¹⁶⁹ Tract LXXI, p. 111.

¹⁷⁰ Tract LXXI, p. 111.

¹⁷¹ *Ser.*, III, p. 91.

¹⁷² *Ser.*, III, p. 92.

¹⁷³ *PPS* III, p. 368; *PPS* IV, p. 183.

¹⁷⁴ *Ser.*, III, p. 92.

Newman maintained that this description of the state of the dead is not contradictory. To support this Newman described how in God the attributes of repose, almighty power and self-sufficiency are united, and that God may impart, by degree, this to his chosen ones.¹⁷⁵ In conclusion Newman held that one can validly claim that the dead in the intermediate state can be said to be both asleep and yet be awake, or alternatively, to be both active and passive at once:

It is no contradiction in terms that God should rest and yet work, that the Son of God should die and yet have an eternal essence, that the Son of man should be in heaven while he spoke to Nicodemus, it may be no contradiction that the soul of man should sleep in the intermediate state, and yet be awake.¹⁷⁶

The mysterious manner in which disembodied spirits are at rest yet simultaneously active is expressed by the scriptural term ‘sleep.’ Newman held that one can only understand this concept when one compares it with God’s nature, in which contradicting attributes are reconciled. Newman understood the passivity of the departed to consist in their own sanctification and growth in holiness, and their activity to consist in their intercession for the Church on earth. The departed are said to be at ‘rest’ in that they no longer act against God through sin, so that though they ‘live unto God, and have power with Him, this does not imply that they act, or that they are conscious of their power.’¹⁷⁷ The dead ‘[...] have vanished from us with all their their [*sic*] goodness and their active powers’ and ‘implies an entire deliverance and preservation from all sin and evil.’¹⁷⁸ It is this condition of consciousness, which

¹⁷⁵ *PPS IV*, p. 182.

¹⁷⁶ *PPS IV*, p. 182.

¹⁷⁷ *PPS IV*, p. 181.

¹⁷⁸ *Ser.*, III, pp. 90f.

implies a ‘passivity’ of the will, which Newman understood as ‘rest’ in the intermediate state:

[...] the word *sleep* is the very term applied in Scripture to the state of Saints departed – and though, we cannot and need not argue from this, that it resembles sleep and dreaming, or that from experiencing sleep we can form a notion what it is, (for that would be running into the very error I have been exposing, of attempting to judge of things unknown by things known), yet so far may be gathered from the use of the word, that it *is* an unknown state, (neither of perfect consciousness nor of unconsciousness); not like anything on earth, not a state of insensibility, but a state of rest.¹⁷⁹

Newman believed the dead are ‘active’ in their intercession for the Church on earth. We have seen that Newman rejected the claim that the faithful can make intercession for the dead, but he did not believe the contrary to be so. In the sermon ‘The Communion of Saints’ he talks of the dead as ‘active promoters of the Church’s welfare.’¹⁸⁰ In the sermon ‘The Kingdom of the Saints’ Newman held that the angels and the souls in the intermediate state have a deeper perception of reality than man. It is this depth of knowledge of the departed who ‘view of His wonderful works seen as a whole from first to last’ that urges them to give greater praise to God (Rev. 15:3,4). It is this ‘contemplation of the providences of God’ which may be one of the ‘blessed occupations of God’s elect in the intermediate state.’¹⁸¹

The concept of man’s two-fold purification – active and passive, is found in the writing of the Non-Juror Bishop, Archibald Campbell. Campbell explained how before and after death the nature of man’s purification changes. During his earthly life man is

¹⁷⁹ *Ser.*, III, p. 93.

¹⁸⁰ *PPS* IV, p. 183.

¹⁸¹ *PPS* II, p. 232.

actively purified through setting wilful acts to conform himself to God's designs. After death, in the disembodied state God alone acts upon the soul to purify it. In this passive form of purification which takes place after death, Campbell described how God 'pierces' the soul with his light uncovering the shame of its evils:

Thus is the soul doth go on to resignation, it receives new additional divine light from him who lighteth everyone that cometh into the word, and this is the Logos, the Word. And as this light is the purifier, so the effect of it upon the soul which is susceptible of it, is the second form of purification, this divine light (which is God himself) is the principal agent and acts in and upon the soul, I some more directly and more sensibly and in and upon others, yet even when its actings are least perceived and least sensible, the secret spring of God's providence, of his love and light, do guard the soul from returning like a dog to his own vomit, or the sow that washed to her wallowing in the mire.¹⁸²

The result of this process is that God takes dominion over the soul, ruling and governing over 'all faculties and senses, and disposing the will, inclinations, and affections.'¹⁸³ In a similar manner, the ineffable holiness of God is for George Bull the most reasonable argument for the doctrine of purification after death.¹⁸⁴ Campbell rejected the premise that death concludes man's purification. Rather purification before and after death is intrinsically related, so that they condition each other:

[...] true change or conversion of the mind from Sin to God, hath first been attained to before death, for that is the general work of purification, whether before or after death. And therefore let no man flatter himself with being capable of purification after death, unless he have been a real true penitent before death [...] Therefore whoever by trusting to a future purification after death, wilfully neglects his duty before death, has no title to the purification after death [...]¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² *DMS*, p. 109.

¹⁸³ *DMS*, p. 109

¹⁸⁴ *DMS*, pp. 137ff.

¹⁸⁵ *DMS*, p. 113.

E. A Dream Like State

In his attempts at reconciling the Scriptural term ‘rest’ with the belief that the disembodied souls of the intermediate state are conscious and active, Newman used the analogy of dreaming. He described how while the souls of the dead ‘sleep’, they are not insensible to people, places or to human affairs, but even exert a certain ‘power’ over them:

[...] as in dreams a mysterious connection is kept up in our minds now with places and times far removed from us, so in the sleep of the soul, visions of the soul of the past and present, as well as the future, may be presented to the thoughts – and thus an intercourse kept up on earth even in paradise, and some knowledge of the successive fortunes and doings of those whom they knew and valued in the flesh. – And the texts, which speak of the disembodied soul’s consciousness, certainly connect it with a knowledge too of human affairs. Nay and a power over them.¹⁸⁶

Newman’s analogy of dreaming is important particularly in view of the successive developments of his eschatology. Clearly Newman was aware that while there is no intermediary stage of the soul between being and non-being, the phenomenon of dreaming represents an in-between state which can be called neither total consciousness nor unconsciousness. The very fact that we do dream and know very little about its true nature allows us to infer that at least the notion of a ‘twilight’ state of consciousness to describe this phenomenon seems reasonable.¹⁸⁷ Despite our lack of knowledge on the subject Newman finds that the most suitable analogy for the soul in the intermediate

¹⁸⁶ *Ser.*, III, p. 93.

¹⁸⁷ Colm McKeating, ‘Eschatology in the Anglican Sermons of John Henry Newman’, Pontifical Gregorian University Rome: Doctoral Thesis, 1992, p. 227.

state is that of sleep or ‘dreaming’ which reflects the condition of man who is between the state of consciousness and unconsciousness. Following this analogy Newman described how the difficulty in explaining the state of the dead in the intermediate state is similar to trying to explain our understanding of consciousness in sleep to someone who had no experience of it:

Supposing a person who had never known this state [the state of sleep], or who had never *dreamt*, were to interrogate us about it. What should we answer? He might say to us ‘Tell me in a word – what do you mean by dreaming? Are you yourself or not? Do you think or not? Have you consciousness? If so, is it the same as if you were awake – what is the difference between the feeling of being awake, and the state of feeling in what you call dreaming? And so he might go on for ever, and we could never make him the wiser – for we should have no words in which to convey our meaning – and, when we had for a time attempted to do so, he would turn round and begin to accuse us of inconsistency, as if we said one thing at one time and another at another.’¹⁸⁸

In these references we can see that thirty years prior to the composition of the *Dream of Gerontius*, Newman was using the analogy of dreaming to describe the state of the disembodied spirit.

IV. Prayers for the Dead

Newman’s belief in the efficacy of prayer for the dead was more gradual than his acceptance of the doctrine of the intermediate state. His sermons prior to 1835 demonstrate that he believed that death brought an end to both suffering and growth in holiness. However sermon No. 393 on the intermediate state shows that by 1835 his

¹⁸⁸ *Ser.*, III, p. 92.

views on spiritual development after death had changed. He understood the intermediate state not merely as the temporal space between death and resurrection, but also as a time of maturing in which ‘He that hath begun that good work in us, will perform it until the day of Christ Jesus, *until*, not at, not stopping it with death, but carrying in on to the Resurrection.’¹⁸⁹ The belief in spiritual development after death therefore meant that the practice of praying for the dead seemed more feasible. It was a series of events in 1836, which Newman spoke of as a ‘cardinal point of time’ in his life that led to him to accept the efficacy of praying for the dead.¹⁹⁰

Some months after Newman preached sermon No. 393 on the intermediate state he prefaced, and wrote a conclusion to a reprint of James Ussher’s (1581-1656) *Of Prayers for the Dead* in *Tract LXXII* in January 1836.¹⁹¹ Here he spoke of how one of the greatest injustices practiced by ‘Roman controversialists’ was to construe primitive practice with their own Romish doctrines:

One great unfairness practiced by Roman controversialists, has been to adduce, in behalf of their own peculiarities, doctrines or customs, of the Primitive Church, which, resembling them in appearance, are really different in character [...] But in no instance is this fallacious procedure more strikingly seen than as regards their doctrine of *Purgatory*, which they defend by notions and usages in the early Church, quite foreign to the distressing tenet which they challenge them to prove.¹⁹²

Ussher’s work, originally called *An Answer to a Challenge made by a Jesuit in Ireland* (1631), was reproduced by the Tractarians in an attempt to show that it was erroneous to hold that ‘commemoration and prayer for the dead, used by the ancient Church, had

¹⁸⁹ *PPS* III, p. 377.

¹⁹⁰ *LD* V, p. 246.

¹⁹¹ Alan Ford, ‘Ussher, James (1581–1656)’, *ODNB*, Volume 56, 2004, pp. 6-14.

¹⁹² *Tract LXXII*, vol. III, preface, pp. 1ff.

any relation with their [Romanist] Purgatory.’¹⁹³ The tract therefore sought to prove that the practice of praying for the dead did not consequently necessitate a belief in the doctrine of Purgatory. Seeking to highlight the ‘erroneous’ manner in which Purgatory has been associated to the primitive practice of praying for the dead, Ussher argued that an acceptance of the doctrine of Purgatory cannot of itself admit the necessity of praying for the dead, as the nature of the doctrine implies that it is the dead themselves who must pay for the temporal punishment of their sins through purgation, rather than the living with their prayers.¹⁹⁴ In his *An Answer to a Challenge made by a Jesuit in Ireland* Ussher argued that the commemoration and prayers for the dead in the early Church was not associated with a belief in the purgation of souls after death. He emphasised that the wording of prayers for the dead in liturgies of the Roman Church supported the Anglican conviction that the souls awaiting eternal bliss already experience peace and joy immediately after death rather than pain. Ussher highlighted the prayer *memento etiam* in the *Canon Missae in officio Ambrosiano et Gregoriano* in which the priest prays:

Remember, O Lord, thy servants and handmaids, which have gone before us with the ensign of faith, and sleep the sleep of peace. To them, O Lord, and to all that are at rest in Christ, we beseech thee that thou wouldst grant a place of refreshing, light and peace.¹⁹⁵

Here Ussher argued that the prayer showed that ‘the souls unto which everlasting bliss was wished for, were yet acknowledged to rest in peace, and consequently not yet disquieted with any purgatorie [*sic*] pains.’¹⁹⁶ He concluded that the Church has therefore always prayed for the glorification of the bodies of those who will rise, and

¹⁹³ Tract *LXXII*, vol. III, p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ *Us. Ans.*, p. 194.

¹⁹⁵ *Us. Ans.*, p. 213.

¹⁹⁶ *Us. Ans.*, p. 209.

not for their souls, for they were considered as already in a state of beatitude or damnation:

[...] the primary intention of the Church in her supplications for the dead: [...] was, that the whole man (not the soul of the separated only) might receive publike [*sic*] remission of sins and the solemn acquittal in the judgement of that great day; and so obtain both a full escape from all the consequences of sin and a perfect consummation of bliss and happiness.¹⁹⁷

It is significant that the republication of Ussher's work in *Tract LXXII* also contained in the concluding section, a detailed analysis of the omissions and alterations which the made in the *Book of Common Prayer* regarding the commemoration of the dead. Following the tradition of the Old High Church party and the Non-Jurors the Tractarians consistently gave prominence to the *Prayer Book* of Edward VI (1549) which they believed contained an undiluted expression of Catholic doctrine.¹⁹⁸ The question of the omissions which were made to the *Prayer Book* was dealt with in detail by Hurrell Froude in *Tract LXIII* - 'The Antiquity of the Existing Liturgies' of 1835.¹⁹⁹ The death of Froude in February 1836 occasioned the publication of his papers, which Keble and Newman set about arranging. The work, *Remains of the late Hurrell Froude*, emphasised the return to the first edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*.²⁰⁰ In March 1836 Newman published an article in *British Critic*, entitled 'Home Thoughts Abroad', in which he spoke of 'preserving the Prayer Book's majestic simplicity'.²⁰¹ Similarly, in 1837 Edward Bouverie Pusey published *Tract LXXXI* in which he expressed his desire

¹⁹⁷ *Us. Ans.*, p. 224.

¹⁹⁸ See Alf Hårdelin, *The Tractarian Understanding of the Eucharist*, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1965, pp. 252ff.

¹⁹⁹ *Tract LXIII*, vol. II part II.

²⁰⁰ John Keble and John Henry Newman (eds.), *Remains of the late Hurrell Froude*, Two Volumes, London: J.G. and F. Rivington, 1838-39.

²⁰¹ *DA*, p. 39.

not only for its restoration but also a reprimand for the abuses which its revision brought:

And the revisers of our own Liturgy, in the latter part of the reign of Edward VI, would have acted with greater wisdom and a firmer faith, had they continued to retain the explicit statements of the Catholic doctrine, and sought other means of averting its abuse [...]²⁰²

The first *Book of Common Prayer* under Edward VI was promulgated with the specific intention of gaining unity (linguistically as well as theologically) in liturgical practice among the diversity of usages which were in place in mid sixteenth century England. Horton Davis has shown that the *Book of Common Prayer* was necessary for very practical reasons. It was composed in the vernacular, used by priests and faithful alike and was aimed at the religious unification of the English people.²⁰³ No sooner had the first *Book of Common Prayer* been promulgated and published than it was put under scrutiny. A year after its appearance critical voices claimed that ‘[...] there were some things in this book, which were thought to favour too much superstition.’²⁰⁴ The first revision of the book in 1552 contained small yet very theologically significant changes. Thomas Carroll held that ‘Cranmer’s *Second Prayer Book* [...] unlike the *First Prayer Book* of 1549, was capable of a Zwinglian or Protestant interpretation of the sacraments in general and of the Eucharist in particular.’²⁰⁵ Apart from the very obvious changes in the theology of the Eucharist, many of the more minor changes were directed towards a more Reformed theology of eschatological themes. In the original Office of the Dead of

²⁰² Edward Bouverie Pusey, Tract LXXXI in *Tracts for the Times*, Volume IV, London: Rivington, 1839, p. 3.

²⁰³ See Horton Davis, *Worship and Theology in England I: From Cranmer to Baxter and Fox 1534-1690*. Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1970, pp. 174f.

²⁰⁴ Charles Whately, *A Rational Illustration of the Common Prayer of the Church of England*, London: Hitch & Co., 1759, p. 23.

²⁰⁵ Thomas Carroll (ed.), *Jeremy Taylor – Selected Works*. New York: Paulist Press, 1990, p. 39.

1549 allowance was made for ‘the celebration of Holy Communion when there is a burial of the dead.’ In the first edition, prayers were made to the Lord with whom

[...] do live the spirits of them that are dead: and in whom the souls of them that be elected, after they be delivered from the burden of the flesh, be in joy and felicity: Grant unto this thy servant, that the sins which he committed in this world be not imputed unto him, but that he, escaping the gates of hell, and pains of eternal darkness: may ever live in the region of light, wit Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the place where there is no weeping, sorrow or heaviness [...]²⁰⁶

This was however eliminated from the Burial Order of the 1552 revision along with references to an intermediate state. Rather than directly praying and supplicating for the dead, the second revision of the *Prayer Book* in 1552 simply eulogises their lives. As well as this, petitions which were made in the 1549 *Prayer Book* for the faithful to be spared the punishment for sins of the flesh after death, was changed in the 1552 revision, that the dead may be delivered from the burden of the flesh on earth:

Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and in whom the souls of them that be elected, after they have been delivered from the burden of the flesh, be in joy and felicity: *we give thee hearty thanks*, for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this [...] our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world [...]²⁰⁷

One of the most significant eschatological changes appeared in the Canon of the Mass. The prayer for consecration in the 1549 *Prayer Book* reads: ‘Let us pray for the whole state of Christ’s Church’. This was changed to: ‘Let us pray for the whole state of Christ’s Church *militant here on earth.*’²⁰⁸ A similar digression in regard to intercessory

²⁰⁶ *The First Prayer Book of Edward VI 1549*, London: Everyman, pp. 275f.

²⁰⁷ William Keatinge Clay (ed.), *Private Prayers: Put Forth by Authority During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I*, Cambridge: Parker Society, 1851, p. 236.

²⁰⁸ William Miles Myres, *The Book of Common Prayer Compared 1549-1886*, London: Griffith, Farran Okeden and Welsh, 1887, p. 376. My italics.

prayers for the dead can be seen by comparing the bidding prayers found in the injunctions of 1547 and 1559, where a more radical change can be observed. Here again only thanks is given for the dead, rather than any direct supplication for their comfort, which demonstrates a very important shift in understanding of their state after death. The 1547 form reads:

Ye shall pray for all them that be departed [...] in the faith of Christ, that they with us, and we with them at the day of judgement, may rest, both in body and soul, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.²⁰⁹

With the later injunctions under Elizabeth in 1559, we see very clearly that direct prayer has given way to praise:

Finally, let us praise God for all those that are departed [...] in the faith of Christ, and pray [...] and after this life, we with them may be made partakers of the glorious resurrection in the life everlasting.²¹⁰

The theology of *The Homilies* belongs to the general direction which the revisions in the *Book of Common Prayer* were aimed. *The Homilies* were to accompany *The Articles* as a point of reference and commentary. The seventh homily of the *Second Book of Homilies* of 1562 deals with Christian prayer, of which the third part deals with the question of the validity of praying for the dead and their state in the hereafter.²¹¹

In April 1836 Newman wrote to Hugh James Rose stating that he agreed with ‘independent additions, not alterations’ to the *Prayer Book*, arguing that the only way to stop parties such as Evangelicals and Liberals from changing the liturgical services

²⁰⁹ Thomas Wortley Drury, *Prayer for the Dead. An Historical Review of Church of England Formulations from AD 1536 to AD 1662*. London: Elliot Stock, 1909, p. 9.

²¹⁰ Thomas Wortley Drury, *Prayer for the Dead*, p. 9.

²¹¹ *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches in the Time of Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory together with the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion*, Dublin: Whitestone, 1767, pp. 260ff.

(notably baptism) was ‘to talk of King Edward’s first book.’²¹² A month later Newman wrote in confidence to Hugh James Rose on the subject of prayers for the dead and their omission from the subsequent revisions of the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*:

To speak in confidence I even [or, ever] do, what others before me have done, silently make an offering and pray for the dead in Christ. Now you see on this point I am off the ground of expediency — therefore do not wonder at my pressing the doctrine of prayer for the dead in Christ; though not *on our Church*, which is not yet worthy of it, but on such among us as acknowledge and intercede for her sin. I have thought it best to be quite open towards you — Not above one or two of my friends, not even Pusey (till now) has ever heard me say this.²¹³

While Newman’s correspondence with Rose in 1836 shows that he believed in the efficacy of praying for the dead, he was wary of advocating the practice in his sermons. In his preaching Newman took a moderate position on praying for the dead. He bemoaned that his contemporaries thought too little of the dead, and held that a loss of perception of the ‘unseen world’ had led to change in the popular understanding of death:

There have been times, we know, when men thought too much of the dead. That is not the fault of our own age. We now go to the opposite extreme. Our fault, surely is, that we think too little of them.²¹⁴

Similarly he contested the view by which man tended to overestimate the value of his present life by viewing the dead almost as half contemptuous, weak and vulnerable.²¹⁵

Yet while it is a Christian duty to remember the dead, Newman warned against giving

²¹² *LD*, V, p. 276.

²¹³ *LD* V, p. 306.

²¹⁴ *PPS* III, p. 383.

²¹⁵ *PPS* IV, p.179.

them ‘undue honour’.²¹⁶ Rather the Christian is ‘silently to contemplate them’, so as to grow in virtue and to keep their sights set on the things eternal:

Therefore is it good to throw ourselves into the unseen world, it is ‘good to be there,’ and to build tabernacles for those who speak ‘a pure language’ and ‘serve the Lord with one consent;’ not indeed to draw them forth from their secure dwelling-places, not superstitiously to honour them [the dead], or wilfully to rely on them, lest they be a snare to us, but silently to contemplate them for our edification; thereby encouraging our faith, enlivening our patience, sheltering us from thoughts about ourselves, keeping us from resting on ourselves, and making us seem to ourselves (what really we ought ever to be) only followers of the doctrine of those who have gone before us, not teachers of novelties, not founders of schools.²¹⁷

²¹⁶ *PPS IV*, p. 183.

²¹⁷ *PPS III*, pp. 386f.

Chapter Three

Newman's Anglican Doctrine of Purgatory 1837-1845

I. *Tract LXXIX*: Purgatorial Suffering - the Distinction between the Tridentine and the 'Received' Doctrine of Purgatory

The writing of tracts was a familiar method in the area of theological controversy and religious propaganda in the nineteenth century. The publication of anonymous theological tracts was central to the Tractarians' method of contributing to a renewal of 'obsolete' and 'neglected' doctrines. In the advertisement to the first volume of the *Tracts for the Times* (1834) Newman described his intention of

contributing something towards the practical revival of doctrines, which, although held by the great divines of our Church, at present have become obsolete with the majority of her members, and are withdrawn from public view even by the more learned and orthodox few who still adhere to them.¹

From 1833 onward Newman was at the forefront in the production of the tracts. By 1841 he had authored more tracts than any other member of the Oxford Movement. The question of Purgatory merited Newman's attention sufficiently for him to write on the subject in three separate tracts: *LXXI* (1836), *LXXIX* (1837) and *XC* (1841). Among these tracts number *LXXIX* was unique in that it was dedicated solely to the subject of Purgatory. *Tract LXXIX* was a culmination and fusion of previous research that he had undertaken on the subject. Most of the material in the tract was taken from his first

¹ Tract I, Advertisement, Volume I.

volume of *The Prophetical Office of the Church* which he had been working on since 1834 and published in January 1837, several months before *Tract LXXIX*. More importantly, in *Tract LXXIX* he outlined in detail the difference between the Tridentine and the ‘received’ doctrine of Purgatory, a distinction he had already made in *Tract LXXI* in 1836.² By the ‘received’ doctrine of the Roman Church he understood ‘the popular belief, which clergy and laity acted on, not that [which] was necessarily contained in any particular doctrinal formulary.’³ In the *Apologia* Newman singled out the teaching on ‘sensible pains’ in Purgatory as an example of the difference between the formal dogmas of the Roman Church and its ‘received’ interpretation:

First I saw, as all see who study the subject, that a broad distinction had to be drawn between the actual state of belief and of usages in the countries which were in communion with the Roman Church, and her formal dogmas; the latter did not cover the former. Sensible pain, for instance, is not implied in the Tridentine decree upon Purgatory; but it was the tradition in the Latin Church.⁴

In *Tract LXXI* Newman had argued that if the doctrine of Purgatory amounted to no more than a literal adherence to the decree of the Council of Trent he would find no difficulty in reconciling the Anglican teaching of the intermediate state with the Tridentine doctrine of Purgatory.⁵ He demonstrated how the Creed of Pope Pius V, which is framed from the Tridentine decrees, made no reference whatsoever to the nature of the pains suffered in Purgatory, one of the chief ‘corruptions’ which Anglican theologians rejected:

² Tract LXXI, pp. 15f. Volume III.

³ Tract XLI, p. 2. Volume I.

⁴ *Apo.*, pp. 100f.

⁵ Tract LXXI, pp. 15f.

nothing being said of its being a place of punishment, nothing, or all but nothing, which does not admit of being explained of merely an intermediate state.⁶

Newman emphasised that the decrees of the twenty-fifth session of the council elaborated little on the nature of Purgatory. The Tridentine decree on Purgatory outlined three main points on the doctrine: it affirmed first the existence of the state of Purgatory; second, that souls were ‘detained there’ (*animasque ibi detentas*); and third, that these souls were assisted by the prayers of the faithful and the sacrifice of the Mass:

Cum Catholica Ecclesia, Spiritu Sancto edocta ex sacris litteris et antiqua patrum traditione, in sacris conciliis et novissime in hoc œcumenica synodo docuerit, purgatorium esse, animasque ibi detentas, fidelium suffragiis, potissimum vero acceptabili altaris sacrificio, juvari; præcipit sancta synodus episcopis, ut sanam de purgatorio doctrinam a sanctis patribus et sacris conciliis traditam, a Christi fidelibus credi, teneri, doceri et ubique prædicari diligenter studeant.

As the catholic church, instructed by the Holy Spirit, has taught from holy scripture and the ancient tradition of the fathers in its holy councils and most recently in this ecumenical council that purgatory exists, and that the souls detained there are helped by the prayers of the faithful and most of all by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar; the holy council charges bishops to ensure the sound teaching on purgatory, handed down by the holy fathers and sacred councils, is believed and held by the Christian faithful and everywhere preached and expounded.⁷

While Newman held the first affirmation to be rather ‘presumptuous’, he found the Tridentine decree on Purgatory agreeable to the extent that if he were in communion with Rome ‘it would be a great relief to find that we were not bound to believe more than this vague statement.’⁸ Notwithstanding the vagueness of the decree on the specific

⁶ Tract LXXI, p. 115.

⁷ Norman P. Tanner (ed), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume II – Trent to Vatican II*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1990, p. 774.

⁸ Tract LXXIX, p. 5, Volume IV; Tract LXXI, p. 115.

nature of purgation Newman emphasised that members of the Anglican Communion were equally bound to consider the received doctrine of Purgatory, that is, the general statements of the doctrine of a non-magisterial nature.⁹ In the *Prophetical Office* Newman accused Romanist theologians of interpreting the Church Fathers' references to Purgatory simply to suit their own 'received' understanding of the doctrine:

A Romanist then cannot really argue in defence of Roman doctrines; he has too firm a confidence in their truth, if he is sincere in his profession, to enable him critically to adjust the due weight to be given to this or that evidence. He assumes his Church's conclusions are true; and the facts or witnesses he adduces are rather brought to receive an interpretation than to furnish a proof.¹⁰

At the beginning of *Tract LXXIX* Newman explained that his exposition of Purgatory was intended to be of relevance to the question of prayers for the dead following the re-publication of a section of Ussher's *An Answer to a Challenge made by a Jesuit in Ireland* in *Tract LXXII* (1836). Newman developed more fully his argument on the differences between the 'received' doctrine of Purgatory and the magisterial definition in the decree of Trent. He also cited at length an Anglican author, whom did not name, as representative of the authentic Anglican position on Purgatory. He simply referred to 'the work already cited.'¹¹ This can only feasibly be a reference to Jeremy Taylor's two volume work *Dissuasive from Popery* (1664, 1667) whom Newman cited towards the end of the tract.¹² He repeated the opinions expressed in *Tract LXXI* that 'taken in the mere letter there is little in it [the decree of Trent] which we shall be able

⁹ Tract LXXI, p. 115.

¹⁰ *PO I*, pp. 68f.

¹¹ Tract LXXIX, p. 29.

¹² Tract LXXIX, p. 47. Cf. Jeremy Taylor, *Works, Volume VI*. Charles Page Eden (ed)., London: Longman, 1849.

to sustain formal objections.’¹³ Newman believed that Romanism, the system of belief and praxis in the Roman Church, often displayed disparity between how a doctrine was held magisterially and how it was received and taught in the life of the Church. Newman believed that the disparity between the Magisterial teaching on Purgatory and its reception in the life of the Church was a common trait of what he understood as the ‘spirit of Romanism’:

But again there is another reason, peculiar to the Roman controversy, which occasions a want of correspondence between the appearance presented by the Roman theology in theory, and its appearance in practice. The separate doctrines of Romanism are very different, in position, importance, and mutual relation, in the abstract, and when developed, applied, and practised [...] Romanism in the theory may differ little from our own creed; nay, in the abstract type, it may even be identical, and yet in the actual framework, and still further in the living and breathing form, it might differ essentially.¹⁴

For Newman the definition of Trent had little to do with the piety and religious expression of the doctrine of Purgatory so commonly seen in countries in communion with the Roman Church.¹⁵ The manner in which the doctrine of Purgatory was received by both clergy and faithful in the Roman Church therefore ‘afford a strange contrast to the simple wording and apparent innocence of the decree by which it is made an article of faith.’¹⁶ Newman compared the difference of the doctrine of Purgatory in theory, and its appearance in practice to ‘the contrast between a drug in its lifeless seed, and the same developed, thriving, and rankly luxuriant in the actual plant.’¹⁷

¹³ Tract LXXIX, p. 5.

¹⁴ Tract LXXIX, p. 2.

¹⁵ Tract LXXIX, p. 3.

¹⁶ Tract LXXIX, p. 3.

¹⁷ Tract LXXIX, p. 3.

On the authority of the Tridentine definition Newman argued that the doctrine of Purgatory ‘need only mean, what its name implies, a place of purification’ and nothing more.¹⁸ As this was not the case in the Roman Church, Newman felt bound to distinguish between the ‘comparatively innocent’ doctrine which we find in the ‘letter of the decree’ from the ‘universal and uniform doctrine taught and received *in* the Roman Communion.’¹⁹ Newman therefore found it unfortunate that while the conciliar decrees of Trent could be reconciled, and even accepted as agreeable to the Anglican teaching on the intermediate state, one cannot ignore the ‘taught and received’ doctrine. Newman made particular reference to the adoption of the concept of the *ignis purgatorius* – the use of the term ‘purgatorial fire’ in the Tridentine Catechism. Newman believed the concept of the *ignis purgatorius* was the main aberration of the doctrine which epitomised that ‘spirit of Romanism’ which free from the ‘rules and shackles’ of the conciliar definition freely interpreted and added to the doctrine.²⁰ In the Tridentine Catechism we read:

Est Purgatorius ignis, quo piorum animæ ad definitum tempus cruciatæ expiantur, ut eis in æternam patriam ingressus patere possit, in quam nihil coinquinatum ingreditur.

There is a Purgatorial fire, in which the souls of the pious are tormented for a certain time, and cleansed, in order that an entrance may lie open to them into their eternal home, into which nothing defiled enters.²¹

Newman outlined how the authors of the Catechism amplified the definition of the decree of Trent from ‘There is a Purgatory’ to ‘There is a *Purgatorial fire*.’ Similarly Newman cited Robert Bellarmine’s *De Purgatorio* where the same passage is

¹⁸ Tract LXXIX, p. 5.

¹⁹ Tract LXXIX, p. 5.

²⁰ Tract LXXIX, p. 5.

²¹ Tract LXXIX, pp. 5-6.

interpreted as ‘There is a *sort of prison*.’ Further, where the Tridentine decree stated that souls are simply ‘detained there’ (*detentas*), the Catechism of Trent expanded upon this by stating that they are also ‘tormented and cleansed.’²² In the *Prophetical Office* Newman explained that the introduction of the concept of purgatorial fire was the result of ‘private judgement, exerted, in defect of Tradition, upon the text of Scripture.’²³ Newman does not deny that the image of fire is used in Scripture to represent spiritual purification, and that it was ‘sometimes’ used by the primitive Christian community to describe ‘the instrument of recovering those who had sinned after their baptism.’²⁴ What he disputed was the manner in which the concept of purifying fire was applied in the life of Christians, whether it was understood figuratively or literally and if it was universally accepted:

Now the texts to which the minds of primitive Christians seem to have been principally drawn, and from which they ventured to argue on behalf of these vague notions [on purgatorial fire], were these two: - ‘the fire shall try every man’s work,’ &c., and ‘He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.’ These texts, with which many more were found to accord, directed their thoughts one way, as making mention of *fire*, whatever is meant by the word, as the instrument of trial and purification; and that, at some season between the present time and the Judgement, or at the Judgement. And accordingly, without, perhaps, any distinct or consistent meaning in what they said, or being able to say whether they spoke literally or figuratively, and with an indefinite reference to this life as well as to the intermediate state, they sometimes named fire as the instrument of recovering those who had sinned after their baptism.²⁵

²² Tract LXXIX, p. 6.

²³ *PO I*, p. 177.

²⁴ *PO I*, p. 177.

²⁵ *PO I*, pp. 176f.

The question of whether Purgatory was a punitive state was central to Newman's distinction between the Tridentine and the received doctrine of Purgatory. For Newman the question of purgatorial suffering was a prime example of how a doctrine can be made untenable by its own corruptions.²⁶ The Tridentine definition described how souls are detained (*detentas*) in Purgatory. This may possibly suggest a certain punitive character, that the souls kept there would be happier if they were not in that state. However Newman disagreed that *detentas* could mean anything more than simply that souls in Purgatory cannot willingly leave this state.²⁷ This may also explain why the received doctrine often compared the state of Purgatory to a prison. Newman also emphasised that Trent acknowledged that there had been 'corruptions' of the doctrine, specifically regarding the subject of purgatorial sufferings:

as regards the doctrine of Purgatorial suffering, there have been for many ages in the Roman Church gross corruptions of its own doctrine, untenable as that doctrine is even by itself. The decree of the Council of Trent, which will presently be introduced, acknowledges the fact. Now we believe that those corruptions still continue; that Rome has never really set herself in earnest to eradicate them.²⁸

While the Roman Church defined nothing *de fide* on the nature of the punishment suffered in Purgatory, Newman demonstrated in *Tract LXXIX* that the scholastic opinion was commonly accepted that there are two forms of punishment inflicted upon souls in Purgatory – a positive one, *poena sensus*, and a negative one, the *poena damni*.²⁹ He explained how it is commonly held by the Romanists that the *poena damni*, the pain of the absence of God, is only suffered by the just who lived before Christ and by

²⁶ Tract LXXIX, p. 3.

²⁷ Tract LXXIX, p. 5.

²⁸ Tract LXXIX, p. 3.

²⁹ Tract LXXIX, p. 11.

unbaptised infants. All other souls are tormented by material fire – the *poena sensus*.³⁰

While the pains of Purgatory are considered as ‘far exceeding any in this life’, Newman held that the pain of the *poena damni* could possibly represent a greater torment than any physical pains:

Some consider the chief misery to consist in the *pœna damni*, or absence of God’s presence, which to holy souls, understanding and desiring it, would be as intolerable as extreme thirst or hunger to the body; and in this way seem to put all purgatorial pain on a level, or rather assign the greater pain to the more spiritually-minded.³¹

Newman accused Roman Catholic theologians, most notably Bellarmine, of interpreting isolated passages from the Church Fathers on the punishment of souls by ‘fire’ to express what they ‘ought’ to mean rather than what they ‘might’ mean. In so doing, Newman held that Romanists sought to align the opinions of the Church Fathers with the present teachings of Rome.³² After providing an array of Patristic citations which Romanists propose in favour of the doctrine of Purgatory Newman explained that these passages were neither unanimous among the Fathers nor presented a comprehensive teaching on the doctrine of Purgatory:

[...] it is obvious, if we wished to believe them, we could not; for *what* is it we are to believe? If, as I shall show, various writers speak various things, which of their statements is to be taken? If this or that, it is but the language of an individual: if all of them at once, a doctrine results, discordant in its details, and in general outline, if it have any, vague and imperfect at the best.³³

³⁰ Tract LXXIX, pp. 11f.

³¹ Tract LXXIX, p. 12.

³² Tract LXXIX, p. 27.

³³ Tract LXXIX, p. 25.

Newman insisted that for a given notion expressed by the Fathers to be considered authoritative, it must be universal – that is ‘all the writers who mention the subject, must agree together in their view of it, or the exceptions, if there be any, must be such as *probare regulam*.’³⁴ Newman pointed out two positions which a number of Church Fathers held in regard to the doctrine of Purgatory. However he did not accept that these Fathers accepted that these notions of purgation by fire should be considered articles of faith.³⁵ First he reviewed a teaching which is found in Origen, Ambrose and Hilary on the final conflagration of fire at the general judgement.³⁶ The Fathers’ theory on final conflagration, or as Newman called it ‘judgement Purgatory’ and ‘last day Purgatory’, was based on an exegesis of 1Cor 3:12-15. In *Tract LXXIX* he quotes Ambrose’s interpretation on the passage:

‘If any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man’s work shall be made manifest; for the Day shall declare it, because it (the Day) shall be revealed in fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.’³⁷

Newman held that the distinction between the final conflagration and the Roman doctrine of Purgatory was that rather than understanding it as ‘definite in period, place, and subjects’, the final conflagration was understood as an ‘ordeal by fire which *all* Christians must undergo at the last day.’³⁸ Further, rather than viewing the nature of this ordeal of ‘fire’ as a material torment such as represented in the Roman doctrine,

³⁴ Tract LXXIX, p. 37.

³⁵ Tract LXXIX, pp. 38f.

³⁶ Tract LXXIX, pp. 33-38.

³⁷ Tract LXXIX, pp. 33.

³⁸ Tract LXXIX, p. 33.

Newman understood the pain of the final conflagration as the shame of the ‘searching’ trial associated with the final judgment at the end of the world:

Doubtless there is a mystery in the word *fire*, as there is a mystery in the words *day of judgment*. Yet it any how has reference to the *instrument* or *process* of judgment. And in this way the Fathers seem to have understood the passage; referring it to the last Judgment, as Scripture does, but at the same time religiously retaining the use of the word *fire*, as not affecting to interpret and dispense with what seems some mysterious economy, lest they should be wiser than what is written.³⁹

Second, Newman demonstrated how the Fathers accepted a notion of Purgatory which originated in the African Church, especially in Augustine, Tertullian and Cyprian.⁴⁰ It was in the context of how lapsed Christians were to expiate for their infidelity that this notion of purgation evolved. In contrast to the theory of conflagration at the general judgement this purgation was seen as being of a ‘certain duration’ in proportion to the sins committed of each individual, and was therefore closer to the Roman doctrine of Purgatory.⁴¹

II. Can Satisfaction for Sins be made after Death?

In *Tract LXXIX* Newman described how the writings of both Bellarmine and the Tridentine Catechism imply that Purgatory is the ‘ordinary mode of attaining heaven.’⁴² Newman found it reasonable to accept the Romanist opinion that many Christians die in the ‘double state’ of being both in God’s favour yet still bearing the burden of unforgiven sin, therefore making some form of purification in the afterlife necessary:

³⁹ Tract LXXIX, p. 34.

⁴⁰ Tract LXXIX, p. 38.

⁴¹ Tract LXXIX, pp. 38, 40.

⁴² Tract LXXIX, p. 6.

If for sins committed after Baptism we have not yet received a simple and unconditional absolution, surely penitents from this time up to the day of judgment may be considered in that double state of which the Romanists speak, their *persons* accepted, but certain sins uncanceled.⁴³

Newman believed that the opinion that souls die in a ‘double state’ was not only a reasonable assumption, but also one which is testified in Scripture. He made particular reference to the misfortunes of David in 2 Sam 13-14 as an example of ‘a penitent restored to God’s favour at once, yet his sins afterwards visited’:

Such a state is plainly revealed to us in Scripture as a real one, in various passages, to which we appeal as well as the Romanists. Let the case of David suffice. On his repentance Nathan said to him, ‘The Lord also *hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die; howbeit*, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.’ 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14. Here is a perspicuous instance of a penitent restored to GOD’S favour at once, yet his sin afterwards visited; and it needs very little experience in life to be aware that such punishments occur continually, though no one takes them to be an evidence that the sufferer himself is under God’s displeasure, but rather accounts them punishments even when we have abundant proofs of his faith, love, holiness, and fruitfulness in good works. So far then we cannot be said materially to oppose the Romanists.⁴⁴

While Newman accepted that one may ‘hesitantly allow’ the basic premise of the Roman doctrine of Purgatory that the majority of Christians die in God’s favour yet are still bound in some way to the consequences of sin they committed in their lives, he rejected the teaching that ‘temporal punishments’ should be of a certain and fixed proportions for every sin:

⁴³ Tract LXXIX, p. 7.

⁴⁴ Tract LXXIX, p. 7.

As far as this then we have no violent difference of *principle* with the Romanists; but at this point we separate from them: *they* say these temporal punishments on sin are inflicted on the faults incurring them, in a certain fixed proportion; that every sin of a certain kind has a definite penalty or price; in consequence, that if it is not fully discharged in this life, it must be hereafter; and that Purgatory is the place of discharging it.⁴⁵

Newman's evaluation of the Romanist opinion was that there are two kinds of sins which are expiated by disembodied spirits in Purgatory: first, repented mortal sins, such as those given in the above example of David, and second, venial sins.⁴⁶ Romanist theologians held that unrepented mortal sins could not be expiated in Purgatory as they represented an absolute and wilful rejection of God, and therefore merited eternal damnation in hell.⁴⁷ Some months after he published *Tract LXXIX* Newman returned to the question of how the consequences of sin may be remedied after death. In the sermon 'Chastisement and Mercy' in August 1837 Newman cited 2 Sam 12:13-14 again. Here he continued to deal with the problem of men who die in the 'double state' of being in God's favour yet still bearing the burden of unrepented sin. In the sermon Newman's description of David in 2 Sam12 is formulated more precisely - he is an example of one who had 'the prospect of a punishment for his sin after it was remitted'.⁴⁸ He wrote of how

few persons, comparatively speaking, would maintain that a man once in a state of grace cannot fall away; now here in a like manner, it might be asked how can God at present love one whom He has appointed to everlasting punishment? As, then, souls may be at present in God's favour, whom he foresees to be His impenitent enemies, and companions of devils for ever, so others also much more may be in His

⁴⁵ Tract LXXIX, p. 7.

⁴⁶ Tract LXXIX, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁷ Tract LXXIX, pp. 8-10

⁴⁸ *PPS* IV, p. 103.

favour, against whom an unsettled reckoning lies, the issue of which is future, who have certain sins as yet unforgiven, and certain consequences of sins as yet unprovided for.⁴⁹

Newman showed that it cannot be contradictory to claim that God's love must exclude his anger, nor communion with him the experience of his severity and justice.⁵⁰ However he was convinced that sin 'leaves a burden on the soul' which must be removed if man is to live in God's presence.⁵¹ The only remedy for past sins is a 'long repentance:'

I would say, then, that a man may be in God's favour, yet his sins not absolutely forgiven; that faith brings him, that is, his person, into God's favour, yet a long repentance may be the only remedy for his past deeds; that faith brings him into God's favour at once, that he may receive grace to repent continually.⁵²

In the sermon he spoke of how the Christian who dies with sins unrepented awaits 'some remnant of displeasure' after death.⁵³ For despite the grace of forgiveness, there is 'still a question whether a debt is not standing against them for their past sins, and is not now operating or to operate to their disadvantage.'⁵⁴ Newman explained how the New Testament has several passages which 'allude' to 'acts of penitence and satisfaction' as necessary means for obtaining pardon for sins.⁵⁵ While Newman accepted that some sins must undergo punishment in order to be pardoned, he emphasised that the manner in which each soul brings satisfaction for their sins in the next life is hidden from us. Newman's understanding of the intermediate state began to accommodate his growing acceptance that purification and satisfaction for sins can be

⁴⁹ *PPS IV*, p. 102.

⁵⁰ *PPS IV*, p. 102.

⁵¹ *PPS IV*, p. 96.

⁵² *PPS IV*, p. 101.

⁵³ *PPS IV*, p. 101.

⁵⁴ *PPS IV*, p. 114.

⁵⁵ *PPS IV*, p. 105.

made in the hereafter. In 'Chastisement and Mercy' he spoke of how the intermediate state may be one means by which God prepares the soul for his presence by diminishing the peace and rest which is normally enjoyed in this state. In this manner the sins of the departed may be remitted:

What its payment consists in, and how it will be exacted, is quite another question, and a hidden one. It may be such, if they die under it, as to diminish their blessedness in heaven; or it may be a sort of obstacle here to their rising to certain high points of Christian character; or it may be a hindrance to their ever attaining one or other particular Christian grace in perfection,—faith, purity, or humility; or it may prevent religion taking deep root within them and imbuing their minds; or it may make them more liable to fall away; or it may hold them back from that point of attainment which is the fulfilment of their trial; or it may forfeit for them the full assurance of hope; or it may lessen their peace and comfort in the intermediate state.⁵⁶

This is significant as it shows us that while Newman does not equate the 'diminishing of rest' with the torments which were commonly associated with Purgatory, he had come to accept that the intermediate state could be viewed not only in terms of spiritual growth, but also as a state in which the burden of past sins is remitted. However Newman did not believe that one could make positive affirmations, as 'Romanist' theologians did, on the existence or nature of these punishments. Newman held that the question on how each soul makes good their sins in the afterlife should be considered 'secrets of the Lord God, not to be pried into.'⁵⁷

In 'Chastisement and Mercy' Newman posed the central question which he also made in *Tract LXXIX*: if one has to make amends for sins in the afterlife how can one

⁵⁶ *PPS IV*, pp. 114f.

⁵⁷ *PPS IV*, p. 115.

claim that the merits of Christ's passion are sufficient for the remitting of all sins?⁵⁸ In 'Chastisement and Mercy' Newman explained how the merits of Christ's death are sufficient for the remission of all sins, yet the application of the merits of his sacrifice is only granted to those who ask of it, that is, to those who ask for mercy and repent of past sins.⁵⁹ In *Tract LXXIX* he agreed with the Roman opinion that 'Christ's death *might*, if God so willed, be applied for the removal even of these specific punishments of sins which they call *temporal* punishments, as fully as it really is for the acceptance of the *soul* of the person punished, or the removal of eternal punishment.'⁶⁰

III. A Primitive Doctrine of Purgatory: *Tract XC*

Despite his distinction between the Tridentine and the 'received' doctrine of Purgatory in *Tracts LXXI* and *LXXIX* from 1836-1837, Newman believed that neither represented a primitive doctrine. While he all but accepted the Tridentine decree on Purgatory, he considered the received interpretation as embodying 'the spirit of Romanism'.⁶¹ Yet during the course of 1837 Newman began reading the Church Fathers more carefully, and as he did so his 'confidence in the Anglican divines was more and more shaken.'⁶² He soon found himself in a position similar to that in 1828 when he realised that he had accepted statements from Evangelical divines simply on trust. In 1837 he recognised that he had relied too heavily upon the Anglican divines' interpretation of the Fathers:

⁵⁸ *PPS* IV, p. 98. Cf. *Tract LXXIX*, p. 7.

⁵⁹ *PPS* IV, p. 98.

⁶⁰ *Tract LXXIX*, p. 7.

⁶¹ *Tract LXXIX*, p. 5.

⁶² *PO* I, p. xxxiii.

I had read the Fathers with their eyes; I had sometimes trusted their quotations or their reasonings; and from reliance on them, I had used words or made statements, which by right I ought rigidly to have examined myself. I had thought myself safe, while I had their warrant for what I said. I had exercised more faith than criticism in the matter. This did not imply any broad misstatements on my part, arising from reliance on their authority, but it implied carelessness in matters of detail. And this of course was a fault.⁶³

Rather than using the writings of the Church Fathers selectively to suit his own theological opinions, Newman allowed himself to be led and formed by them. This change in direction can be seen in an article he wrote for the *British Critic* in January 1839:

Whatever then be the true way of interpreting the Fathers, and in particular the Apostolical Fathers, if a man begins by summoning them before him, instead of betaking himself to them, - by seeking to make them evidence for modern dogmas, instead of throwing his mind upon their text, and drawing from their own doctrines, - he will certainly miss their sense.⁶⁴

His study of the Monophysite heresy in the summer of 1839 cast further doubts on the validity of the *Via Media*. He now realised that Antiquity was working against him:

My stronghold was Antiquity; now here, in the middle of the fifth century, I found, as it seemed to me, Christendom of the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries reflected. I saw my face in that mirror, and I was a Monophysite. The Church of the *Via Media* was in the position of the Oriental communion, Rome was, where she now is; and the Protestants were the Eutychians.⁶⁵

⁶³ *Apo.*, p. 184.

⁶⁴ 'Jacobson's Apostolical Fathers – Ignatius', *The British Critic*, XXV, January 1839, p. 54.

⁶⁵ *Apo.*, p. 108.

A fresh assault of doubts was to follow. In August 1839, the rector of the English College in Rome, Nicholas Wiseman (1802–1865), published ‘The Anglican Claim to Apostolical Succession’ in the *Dublin Review*.⁶⁶ In the article Wiseman described how he believed it his ‘painful duty of proving that the Anglican Church is fundamentally and essentially a schismatical Church, and, as such, has no place in the apostolical succession.’⁶⁷ Wiseman wanted to take a case from the history of the early Church ‘which we consider parallel, even to an extraordinary degree, with that of the English Established Church.’⁶⁸ Wiseman therefore presented an extensive analysis of the Donatist controversy of the fourth century. Wiseman paralleled the position of the Donatists to a national church which made claims to orthodoxy by an appeal to Antiquity and the Fathers. A single but pregnant statement from Augustine against the Donatists brought Newman to the realisation that a theology of a *Via Media* was untenable:

‘Securus judicat orbis terrarum.’ [...] they kept ringing in my ears. ‘Securus judicat orbis terrarum;’ they were words which went beyond the occasion of the Donatists: they applied to that of the Monophysites. They gave a cogency to the Article, which had escaped me at first. They decided ecclesiastical questions on a simpler rule than that of Antiquity; nay, St. Augustine was one of the prime oracles of Antiquity; here then Antiquity was deciding against itself. What a light was hereby thrown upon every controversy in the Church! [...] ‘Securus judicat orbis terrarum!’ By those great words of the ancient Father, interpreting and summing up the long and varied course of ecclesiastical history, the theory of the *Via Media* was absolutely pulverized.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Nicholas Wiseman, ‘The Anglican Claim to Apostolical Succession’, in *The Dublin Review*, Vol. VII (Aug-Nov., 1839), London: Dolman, 1839, pp. 139-180.

⁶⁷ Nicholas Wiseman, ‘The Anglican Claim to Apostolical Succession’, p. 141.

⁶⁸ Nicholas Wiseman, ‘The Anglican Claim to Apostolical Succession’, p. 143.

⁶⁹ *Apo.*, pp. 110f.

Newman now began to fear for the ‘onward progress’ of the movement.⁷⁰ Newman confessed to J.W. Bowden on 5th January 1840 that Wiseman had ‘fixed on our weak point.’⁷¹ Newman tried to counter Wiseman’s article by writing on the ‘Catholicity of the English Church’ in the *British Critic* in order to ‘stop up the leak in our boat which he has made’.⁷² Despite his efforts, the article was not enough to convince younger sympathisers of the Oxford Movement who were left uneasy by Wiseman’s article. In the summer of 1840 Newman came face to face with the crisis of conscience of Robert Williams.⁷³ Not only was Williams unsettled by Wiseman’s article, he could not share Newman’s views that the decrees of Trent could be reconciled with the *XXXIX Articles* of the Church of England. On the contrary, Williams believed that the Tridentine decrees held a truth which opposed *The Articles*, and therefore an acceptance of *The Articles* would not only be impossible but heretical.⁷⁴ On 22nd September Newman wrote of his concerns to Frederic Rogers. Wiseman's articles was, he said, the first real ‘hit from Romanism which has happened to me.’⁷⁵ Newman drafted a letter to Williams on 10th November 1839 (which he did not send), in which he implied possible doubts of the Catholicity of the Church of England:

I really believe I say truly that, did I see cause to suspect that the Roman Church was in the right, I would try not to be unfaithful to the light given me. And if at any future time, I have any view opened to me, I will try not to turn from it, but will pursue it, wherever it may lead. I am not aware of having any hindrance, whether from fear of clamour, or regard for consistency, or even love of friends, which could keep me from joining the Church of Rome, were I persuaded I ought to do so.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ *LD VII*, p. 169.

⁷¹ *LD VII*, p. 202.

⁷² ‘Catholicity of the Anglican Church’, *British Critic*, Volume XXVII, Jan 1840. See *LD VII*, p. 202.

⁷³ *LD VIII*, pp. 180, 190f.

⁷⁴ *LD VII*, pp. 371f.

⁷⁵ *LD VII*, p. 154.

⁷⁶ *LD VII*, p. 180.

Williams' crisis was to be defining in the subject matter dealt with by Newman in *Tract XC*, particularly in regard to the Tridentine decrees.⁷⁷ Newman felt bound to try to legitimize *The Articles* by reconciling them to the teaching set forth at Trent. Newman wrote to Pusey in 1840 on the concern and responsibility he felt toward Williams:

... what is to be done with a man who begins with assuming as a first principle which is incontrovertibly borne in upon his mind that the Roman is the Catholic Church, that therefore the Tridentine Decrees are eternal truth, that to oppose them is heresy, that all who sign the 39 Articles do oppose them, and that it is a sin to be in communion with heretics?⁷⁸

Some twenty-five years later Newman would confirm that *Tract XC* had been published after the 'deliberation of a year.'⁷⁹ On 7th March 1841 he wrote to Thomas Mozley setting out why he thought it necessary to write *Tract XC* on *The Articles*:

I have just published a Tract No. 90 which people fear will get me into a scrape – it is on the Articles. It has been sent off by enemies to various Bishops, and is selling very fast here. *I* think people are *sick* of the subject, and will weariness let us rest. They have cried wolf till they have no voice. The Tract was necessary to keep our young friends etc from stumbling at the Articles and going to Rome.⁸⁰

Unaware of the degree of controversy it would cause, Newman wrote to Mrs. Thomas Mozley that he had 'just published a Tract (90) which I did not feel likely to excite attention. I sent it to Keble before publishing - he too made no remark upon it. But people are taking it up very warmly, thanks (I believe) entirely to Golightly.'⁸¹ Newman

⁷⁷ LD VIII, p. XVI.

⁷⁸ LD VII, pp. 371-2

⁷⁹ LD XXII, p. 206.

⁸⁰ LD VIII, p. 58.

⁸¹ LD VIII, p. 61.

had also sent the tract to Pusey, who had ‘implicit’ confidence in all that he did, but warned him that the tract may be startling to some:

I have just read thro' your tract; the whole object of it as well as particular parts will be startling to people who have not felt the need of such views of the articles, or met with those to whom they would be a comfort. People will be annoyed too at having their broad i.e. vague notions of what is Romish taken away from them. I suppose it will be a considerable trial for the time, tho' good in the end. We must bid our time with patience until the storm be over, and pray it damage not the truth. I should hardly have thought people in general ripe for it tho' some may need it, and they ought to be regarded; I hope this will not put you out of heart; I have an implicit confidence in all you do.⁸²

Newman's increasing loss of confidence in his Anglican sources and his reinterpretation of the *XXXIX Articles* in *Tract XC* radically changed his understanding of the doctrine of Purgatory. In his 1835 sermon ‘The Intermediate State’ Newman rejected the belief that there could be such a thing as a ‘primitive doctrine of Purgatory.’⁸³ He reaffirmed this position again in *Tracts LXXI* and *LXXIX* in 1836 and 1837. Newman then held that if one were to accept the doctrine of Purgatory as ‘primitive’ it would ‘cause a considerable amount of alarm’ in the Anglican Church.⁸⁴ Newman continued to hold this position until 1839, when he preached on the intermediate state for the last time.⁸⁵ However, when he came to publish *Tract XC* in 1841 his opinions on the doctrine of Purgatory had changed considerably. In the *Tract* he showed how the formulation of *Article XXII* on ‘Purgatory, pardons, worshipping of

⁸² *LD VIII*, p. 62.

⁸³ *PPS III*, pp. 371.

⁸⁴ *PPS III*, pp. 371.

⁸⁵ See entry on 1st November 1839, *LD VII*. 174. Sermon 266, ‘Crowns Given for a Brief Season’, *Ser.*, III, pp. 88-94.

images and relics' of the *XXXIX Articles* meant that the Church of England did not intend to reject the doctrine of Purgatory in its primitive form, but rather only the 'Romish' extremes of popular theology which had corrupted her teaching. *Article XXII* defined that

The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well as of Images and Relics, and also invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty on Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.⁸⁶

Newman also changed the position he held previously in *Tract LXXIX* (1837), that the doctrine of Purgatory was not primitive in origin. Speaking of *Article XXII* on 'Purgatory, Pardons, Images, Relics and Invocation of Saints', he argued in *Tract XC* that

[...] the first remark that occurs on perusing this Article is, that the doctrine objected to is 'the *Romish* doctrine.' For instance, no one would suppose that the *Calvinistic* doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, and image-worship, is spoken against. Not every doctrine on these matters is a fond thing, but the *Romish* doctrine. Accordingly, the *Primitive* doctrine is not condemned in it, unless, indeed, the *Primitive* doctrine be the *Romish*, which must not be supposed. Now there *was* a primitive doctrine on all these points, - how far Catholic or universal, is a further question, - but still so widely received and so respectably supported, that it may well be entertained as a matter of opinion by a theologian now; this, then, whatever be its merits, is not condemned by this Article.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ *Articles Agreed Upon by the Archbishops 1562*, London, 1689, p. 8.

⁸⁷ *Tract XC*, p. 23.

The importance of his change of opinion on Purgatory in *Tract XC* lay not only in his acceptance of a primitive form of the doctrine, but also in his conviction that *Article XXII* of the *XXXIX Articles* was essentially in agreement with Trent on the condemnation of the ‘corruptions’ of the doctrine of Purgatory, rather than of the doctrine itself. Newman’s attempts at constructing a ‘primitive Purgatory’ represented his boldest attempt at reconciling *The Articles* with Catholic doctrine. The row that *Tract XC* caused within the university and wider ecclesiastical context, demonstrated that Newman’s thesis on the nature of *The Articles* was hardly a commonly received interpretation within Anglican tradition.

In *Tract XC* Newman questioned what he considered an exclusively Protestant interpretation of the *XXXIX Articles*.⁸⁸ In the *Apologia* he described how he wished to reinterpret them in a Catholic sense:

[...] the great stumbling block lay in the 39 Articles. It was urged that here there was a positive Note *against* Anglicanism: - Anglicanism claimed to hold, that the Church of England was nothing else than a continuation in this country [...] of that one Church of which in old times Athanasius and Augustine were members. But, if so, the doctrine must be the same; the doctrine of the Old Church must live and speak in the Anglican formularies, in the 39 Articles. Did it? Yes it did [...] I considered that those grounds of justification, which I gave above, when I was speaking of Tract 90, were sufficient for the purpose; and therefore I set about showing it at once.⁸⁹

Fearing the untimely defection of some of the younger followers of the movement, Newman was eager to show that *The Articles* were consistent with the ‘Catholic faith.’⁹⁰ In the *Apologia* he argued that while the ‘Catholic sense’ of *The Articles* was implied

⁸⁸ Tract XC, p. 2.

⁸⁹ *Apo.*, p. 122.

⁹⁰ Tract XC, p. 2.

by High Anglican divines, it had never been publically recognized.⁹¹ Despite the history of the Articles' composition from an 'uncatholic age'⁹², he was certain that they could be reconciled to Catholic doctrine: 'Man had done his worst to disfigure, to mutilate, the old Catholic Truth; but there it was, in spite of them, in *The Articles* still.'⁹³ The aim of his *experimentum crucis* (*Tract XC*) was

[...] merely to show that, while our Prayer Book is acknowledged on all hands to be of Catholic origin, our Articles also, the offspring of an uncatholic age, are through God's good providence, to say the least not uncatholic, and may be subscribed by those who aim at being catholic[*sic*] in heart and doctrine.⁹⁴

While other Tractarians sought to revive doctrines which they saw as either threatened or at risk of being forgotten within an increasingly Protestantising Church of England, *Tract XC* was unique. After its publication Newman was resolute that the position he had taken could be validly held within the Church of England. He therefore argued that he 'would not hold office in a Church' that refused to accept the opinions expressed in *Tract XC* as legitimate.⁹⁵

In the tract Newman outlined five points in argument for the validity of a 'Catholic' interpretation of *The Articles*. First he maintained that one has no duty whatsoever to the framers of *The Articles* or their intentions, whether they are Protestant or not:

'[...] we have no duties towards their framers [...]' I would say that the Articles are received, not in the sense of their framers, but (as far

⁹¹ *Apo.*, p. 122.

⁹² *Tract XC*, p. 4.

⁹³ *Apo.*, p. 122.

⁹⁴ *Tract XC*, p. 4.

⁹⁵ *Apo.*, p. 123.

as the wording will admit or any ambiguity requires it) in the one Catholic sense.⁹⁶

Newman argued that we do not receive *The Articles* from their original framers, but rather from successive convocations after their time.⁹⁷ If *The Articles* are not to be interpreted according to their framers, by which standard are they to be understood? Newman held that one is bound to interpret *The Articles* in the ‘most Catholic sense’ possible.⁹⁸ It is ‘a duty which we owe to the Catholic Church, and our own, to take our reformed confession in the most Catholic sense they will admit.’⁹⁹ Newman believed there was widespread misunderstanding in regard to the intention of the framers of *The Articles*. He compared the framers to a politician who draws up state papers in time of war, but writes them moderately in view of his successor who is for peace, and who can therefore act on them without compromising his own principles.¹⁰⁰ Second, Newman pointed out that by giving *The Articles* a Catholic sense one also brings them into harmony with *The Book of Common Prayer*. Third, Newman showed that the declaration which prefixed *The Articles* decreed that they should be understood in a ‘literal and grammatical sense’, which freed them from an interpretation according to their framers. Newman stressed that the prefix of *The Articles* also forbade any ‘new sense’ to be applied to *The Articles*.¹⁰¹ Fourthly, Newman argued in defence of his own position that Melancthon, from whose writings *The Articles* are principally drawn, was also charged with ‘Popery’ for his ‘Catholic’ tendencies. However Newman does not explain what he understood by these ‘Catholic’ tendencies.¹⁰² Newman fifthly reiterated his previous observation that *The Articles* were written with the view of leaving a

⁹⁶ *Apo.*, p. 123. Cf. Tract XC, p. 80.

⁹⁷ Tract XC, p. 80.

⁹⁸ Tract XC, p. 80.

⁹⁹ Tract XC, p. 80.

¹⁰⁰ Tract XC, 83.

¹⁰¹ Tract XC, pp. 80f.

¹⁰² Tract XC, pp. 80f.

number of questions open. He maintained that rather than giving specific parameters for doctrine they ‘state broadly extreme truths and they are silent about their adjustments.’¹⁰³ Newman rejected the view that *The Articles* simply condemned the doctrine of Purgatory unconditionally. Rather, *The Articles* specifically condemned the ‘Romish’ doctrine of Purgatory as erroneous:

What is opposed is the *received doctrine* of the day, and unhappily of this day too, or the doctrine of the *Roman Schools*; a conclusion which is still more clear, by considering that there are portions of the Tridentine statement on these subjects, which the Articles, far from condemning, by anticipation approves, as far as they go.¹⁰⁴

This distinction is important as Newman could therefore claim that if one could show that a primitive and therefore ‘catholic’ doctrine of purgatory existed, it would be also be legitimately acceptable in view of *The Articles*.

In *Tract XC* Newman argued that *The Articles* cannot condemn a ‘primitive’ doctrine of Purgatory, as it was antecedent to the ‘Romish’ doctrine. Nor can one claim that *The Articles* condemn the ‘Tridentine’ doctrine of Purgatory, which was formulated after *Article XXII* had been written in its present form.¹⁰⁵ In the *Apologia* Newman explained how in 1841 he formed these distinctions when asked if *The Articles* were directed against Rome:

... thus the question of the Articles came before me. It was thrown in our teeth; ‘How can you manage to sign the Articles? They are directed against Rome.’ ‘Against Rome?’ I made answer, ‘What do you mean by Rome?’ and then I proceeded to make distinctions [...] ¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Tract XC, p. 81.

¹⁰⁴ Tract XC, p. 24.

¹⁰⁵ Tract XC, p. 24.

¹⁰⁶ *Apo.*, pp. 78-79

Newman believed there was ambiguity as to what *The Articles* meant when they referred to ‘Romish’ doctrines.¹⁰⁷ He explained that the term, which was so central to the formulation of *The Articles*, could only mean one of three things: either the ‘Catholic teaching’ of the early centuries, the ‘formal dogmas’ of Rome (such as those of Trent), or the ‘actual popular beliefs and usages’ sanctioned by Rome in the countries in communion with her.¹⁰⁸ Newman believed that the problem of interpreting *The Articles* was that Protestants believed that the ‘Roman doctrine’ was condemned in all three senses. However Newman insisted that only the third interpretation, the ‘received’ doctrine, was what *The Articles* condemned as ‘Romish’.¹⁰⁹ This distinction was essential if one was not to brand primitive doctrines as Roman corruptions. The application of this principle meant that while prayers for the dead were primitive, and not condemned by *The Articles*, the ‘prison of Purgatory’ was a received doctrine, and was condemned by *The Articles*. Further he argued that the teaching on the ‘fire of Purgatory’ was an ‘authorized and popular error’, not a dogma, which was therefore also condemned by *The Articles*.¹¹⁰ Newman initially gleaned the distinction between the Romish and the primitive doctrines from Charles Lloyd (1784-1829). Newman was impressed by an article which Lloyd had published in the *British Critic* in October 1825, ‘A View of the Roman Catholic Doctrines’.¹¹¹ In his *Apologia* Newman referred to Lloyd’s article specifically in regard to the Roman teaching on the sensible pain of Purgatory:

¹⁰⁷ *Apo.*, p. 79.

¹⁰⁸ *Apo.*, p. 79.

¹⁰⁹ *Apo.*, p. 79.

¹¹⁰ *Apo.*, p. 79.

¹¹¹ Charles Lloyd, ‘A View of the Roman Catholic Doctrines’, *The British Critic*, October 1825, London: Rivington, pp. 94-149.

... I saw, as all see who study the subject, that a broad distinction had to be drawn between the actual state of belief and of usage in the countries which were in communion with the Roman Church, and her formal dogmas; the latter did not cover the former. Sensible pain, for instance, is not implied in the Tridentine decree upon Purgatory; but it was the tradition of the Latin Church, and I had seen the pictures of souls in flames in the streets of Naples. Bishop Lloyd had brought this distinction out strongly in an Article in the *British Critic* in 1825; indeed, it was one of the most common objections made to the Church of Rome, that she dared not commit herself by formal decree, to what nevertheless she sanctioned and allowed.¹¹²

With these distinctions in place Newman set out three ‘primitive doctrines’ of Purgatory in *Tract XC* which he did not consider ‘Romish’, and could therefore be freely held by Anglicans. First Newman advocated the doctrine of conflagration or ‘fire of judgement’ which he had previously discussed in *Tract LXXIX*.¹¹³ Newman described this ‘primitive’ purgatorian doctrine as a ‘conflagration of the world’ through which all must pass save ‘the great saints, such as St. Mary.’¹¹⁴ Second he introduced the doctrine that was held by the Greeks at the Council of Florence which he had not previously held as a ‘primitive’ and had only summarized in *Tract LXXIX*.¹¹⁵ Newman accepted in *Tract XC* that while the nature of pain in Purgatory was punitive, it was a *poena damni*, a pain felt by the absence of God, rather than the physical *poena sensus* which was associated with material fire:

Another doctrine, purgatorian, but not Romish, is that said to be maintained by the Greeks at Florence, in which the cleansing, though a punishment, was but a *poena damni*, not a *poena sensus*; not a positive sensible affliction, much less a torment by fire, but the absence of God’s presence.¹¹⁶

¹¹² *Apo.*, pp. 100-101

¹¹³ *Tract XC*, p. 25.

¹¹⁴ *Tract XC*, p. 25.

¹¹⁵ *Tract LXXIX*, pp. 55-61.

¹¹⁶ *Tract XC*, p. 25.

Newman appealed to the position of the Greeks at the Council of Florence for a number of reasons. Primarily he wished to show that the doctrine of Purgatory could be legitimately held in different forms outside the Roman Church. Many aspects of the individual eschatology of the soul in the East had similarities with the Anglican High Church eschatology. The East held the state of the soul in its post-mortem condition as ‘Purgatory’ in as much abhorrence as Anglican divines so that they used the term μέσος or ‘middle state’ to describe it.¹¹⁷ The Greeks avoided the use of the term ‘Purgatory’ and the rendering of the term - *purgatorium* as *perkatorion* or *pourgatorion* was simply a clumsy attempt at a transliteration of the Latin word.¹¹⁸ The East and West wrangled for centuries on the question of the doctrine of Purgatory, and the doctrine was often a hindrance to the various attempts of union. In *Tract LXXIX* Newman explained the Greek understanding of Purgatory as

a place of darkness and sadness, where they [the souls of imperfect Christians] were for some time in affliction and deprived of the light of God’s countenance, in which state they were benefited by Eucharistic offerings and by alms.¹¹⁹

Newman explained how, unhappy with this formulation, the Latin Fathers wished to add two clauses to the Greek doctrine of Purgatory: the immediacy of the Beatific Vision of those who did not merit purgatory, and the torment of fire for those who had repented of their sins but had not brought sufficient satisfaction for these sins. The Greek conceded to this and the council decreed a strongly ‘satisfactory’ perspective of purgatorial pains:

¹¹⁷ Robert Ombres, ‘Latins and Greeks in Debate over Purgatory 1230-1439’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 35, Issue 1, 1984, p. 11.

¹¹⁸ Andrew Louth, ‘Eastern Orthodox Eschatology’, in Jerry I. Walls (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 242.

¹¹⁹ *Tract LXXIX*, p. 59.

Item, si vere penitents in Dei caritate decesserint, antequam dignis penitentiae fructibus de commissis satisfecerint et omissis, eorum animas poenis purgatoriis post mortem purgari, et, ut a penis huiusmodi releventur, prodesse eis fidelium vivorum suffragia, missarum scilicet sacrificial, orationes et elemosinas et alia pietatis official, que a fidelibus pro aliis fidelibus fieri consueverunt, secundum ecclesie insituta.

Also, if true penitents people die in the love of God before they have made satisfaction for acts and omissions by worthy fruits of repentance, their souls are cleansed after death by cleansing pains; and the suffrages of the of the living faithful avail them in giving relief from such pains, that is, sacrifices of masses, prayers, almsgiving and other acts of devotion which have been customary performed by some of the faithful for others of the faithful in accordance with the Church's ordinances.¹²⁰

The decree of Florence clearly reiterated the teaching of *Benedictus Deus* (1336) on the immediacy of the Beatific Vision for the souls who have been cleansed of all sin who 'are straight away received into heaven and clearly behold the triune God as he is', yet in varying degrees of perfection in accordance with their merits.¹²¹ Despite the concession of the Greek Fathers, Newman emphasised that the East traditionally rejected the satisfactory character of Purgatory advocated by the West, and tended to stress the nature of post-mortem purification as one of growth in self-knowledge, enlightenment and divinisation.¹²² It is therefore unsurprising that until the fifteen century no Greek term existed which corresponded to the Latin *satisfactio*. A Greek rendering of the word was only developed by Patriarch Gennandios II (1405-1473) who

¹²⁰ Norman P. Tanner (ed), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume I – Nicaea I to Lateran V*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1990, p. 527.

¹²¹ Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees, Volume I*, p. 528.

¹²² For the East's theology of Purgatory see Robert Ombres, 'Latins and Greeks in Debate over Purgatory 1230-1439', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 35, Issue 1, 1984, p. 12.

translated *satisfactio* as *ikanopoiesis* in an attempt to explain the differences between the Eastern and Western understanding of penance.¹²³ Finally Newman also proposed a notion of Purgatory which had nothing whatsoever to do with pain, but was rather simply a process of progressive purification – a teaching which has a constant resonance in the teaching of the intermediate state among the Caroline Divines.¹²⁴

IV. The Reception of *Tract XC* - The Pamphlet War on Newman's 'Primitive' Purgatory

The controversy over *Tract XC* was not an abrupt or isolated event but rather a culmination of the growing resistance to the doctrinal views of the Tractarians. In the mid 1830's controversy between the polarised religious parties in the university sparked fierce debate. The reactions to *Tract XC*, which Newman described as 'violent', were also the result of a 'smouldering, stern energetic animosity' which was directed towards the Tractarians.¹²⁵ Newman was aware that the 'sudden storm of indignation', that was raised almost immediately against him, suggested that others were aware of his opinions before he made them public in *Tract XC*:

In the sudden storm of indignation with which the Tract was received throughout the country on its appearance, I recognize much of real religious feeling, much of honest and true principle, much of straightforward ignorant common sense. In Oxford there was genuine feeling too; but there had been a smouldering, stern, energetic animosity, not at all unnatural, partly rational, against its author. A false step had been made; now was the time for action. I am told that, even before the publication of the Tract, rumours of its contents had got into the hostile

¹²³ Karen Hartnup, *On the Beliefs of the Greeks*, Leiden: Brill, 2004, p. 211.

¹²⁴ *Tract XC*, p. 25.

¹²⁵ *Apo.*, p. 87.

camp in an exaggerated form; and not a moment was lost in proceeding to action ...¹²⁶

In November 1839 the Vice-Chancellor of the University stopped attending the University Church Sunday services after a controversial sermon of one of Newman's assistants, the eccentric J. B. Morris (1812-1880). Morris, whom Newman later described as 'a man of versatile genius but little judgement'¹²⁷, preached on the 'Roman doctrine of the Mass, and, not content with that, added in energetic terms that every one was an unbeliever, carnal, and so forth, who did not hold it.'¹²⁸ The Vice-Chancellor promptly wrote to the Bishop upon which the sermon was examined and Newman's curate reprimanded.¹²⁹ Some two weeks after this event news was circulating that one of Newman's curates had attended a Roman Catholic Mass and had 'had bowed down at the elevation of the Host.'¹³⁰ Again Newman was forced to write to the bishop on another rumour 'of propensity towards Romanism.'¹³¹

It was *Tract XC* that ignited a prolonged controversy of a hitherto unprecedented scale in the history of the Oxford Movement, and which eventually lead Newman's resignation from Oriel and retirement to Littlemore in 1842. When *Tract XC* was published on 27th February 1841, sixteen days later it was censured by the Hebdomadal Board as contravening the statutes of the University that the *XXXIX Articles* should be taught to every student. The board, made up of the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Philip Wynter (1793-1871), the Heads of Houses and the Proctors agreed that *Tract XC*

¹²⁶ *Apo.*, pp. 87f.

¹²⁷ *LD XIV*, p. 267.

¹²⁸ *LD VII*, p. 176.

¹²⁹ *LD VII*, p. 176.

¹³⁰ *LD VII*, p. 185.

¹³¹ *LD VII*, pp. 185f.

was to be censured as it had been ‘reconciling subscription’ to the *XXXIX Articles* with ‘the adoption of errors’:

Considering that it is enjoined in the statutes of this University, (Tit. Sect. 2. Tit. IX Sect. II §. 3. Sect. V. §. 3.) that every student shall be instructed and examined in the Thirty-nine Articles, and shall subscribe to them; considering also that a Tract has recently appeared, dated from Oxford, and entitled ‘Remarks on certain passages in the Thirty-nine Articles,’ being No. 90 of the Tracts for the Times, a series of Anonymous publications purporting to be written by members of the University, but are in no way sanctioned by the University itself; Resolved, that modes of interpretation such as are suggested in the said Tract, evading rather than explaining the sense of the Thirty-nine Articles and reconciling subscription to them with the adoption of errors, which they were designed to counteract, defeat the object, and are inconsistent with the due observance of the above mentioned statutes.¹³²

It was Newman’s theology of Purgatory which occasioned the first written protest against *Tract XC* in *The Letter of the Four Tutors*. Ironically, one of Newman’s fellow Tractarians, W.G. Ward, exacerbated the controversy by giving *Tract XC* to A.C. Tait of Balliol College. Tait, a staunch Presbyterian, who was initially only mildly concerned by what he read, was ‘suddenly awakened by lighting’ when he read Newman’s interpretation of *Article XXII* on Purgatory:

On the morning of the 27th of February, [W.G.] Ward burst excitedly into [A.C.] Tait's rooms. ‘Here,’ he cried, ‘is something worth reading,’ and threw No. 90 on the table. Tait described to [A.P.] Stanley how he ‘sate, half-asleep,’ over the pamphlet, ‘rather disturbed from time to time’ by sentences about ‘working in chains,’ and ‘stammering lips,’ till, on turning over the pages, he was suddenly awakened by lighting on the commentary on the Twenty-second Article. He immediately rushed to Ward's rooms to know whether he

¹³² Peter B. Nockles, ‘Lost Causes and ... Impossible Loyalties: The Oxford Movement and the University’, in M.G. Brock and M.C. Curthoys (eds), *The History of the University of Oxford*, Volume VI part I, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, p. 241. See Oxford University Archives WPγ/24(5), no.78. Cf. *LD VIII*, p. 77.

had rightly understood it; and from that moment the sensation began. He showed No. 90 to one person after another; the excitement increased, but still unknown to Newman ...¹³³

Tait gathered the support of like-minded tutors – H.B Wilson, T.T. Churton and J. Griffiths, who set about repudiating the tract. *The Letter of the Four Tutors* was published on 8th March and distributed throughout the university. While the letter made no appeal to university authorities it quickly came to the attention of the Hebdomadal Board who discussed *Tract XC* for the first time on 10th March 1841.¹³⁴ The publication of the *Letter of the Four Tutors* in effect meant that ‘war had been declared against the Tractarians in good earnest.’¹³⁵ Citing *Article XXII* on Purgatory *The Letter of the Four Tutors* addressed ‘The Editor of the Tracts for the Times’ demanding that the author of the tract come forward as it contains ‘a highly dangerous tendency, from its suggesting that certain very important errors of the Church of Rome are not condemned by *The Articles* of the Church of England.’ The letter outlined ‘Purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration of images and relics, innovation of saints and Mass’ as instances which are condemned as erroneous by *The Articles*.¹³⁶

The publication of *The Letter of the Four Tutors* was not an isolated reaction to *Tract XC*. In the months following the appearance of *Tract XC* a flurry of pamphlets appeared in response to its publication. It was particularly Newman’s reinterpretation of *Article XXII* on Purgatory, and his method of distinguishing the Tridentine doctrine from the ‘Romish’ that contributed to the scandal of *Tract XC*. Newman’s idea of a ‘Primitive’ doctrine exacerbated this scandal all the more. The doctrine of Purgatory

¹³³ R. E. Prothero, *The Life and Correspondence of A. P. Stanley*, I, London: John Murray, 1893, I, p. 292. See *LD VIII*, p. 45, note 1.

¹³⁴ See letter from R.W. Church of March 10th 1841, *LD VIII*, pp. 65f.

¹³⁵ Henry Parry Liddon, *The Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey*, Volume II, London: Longman, Green and Co., 1893, p. 167.

¹³⁶ *Some Documents Connected with Tract for the Times No. XC*, Oxford: Baxter, 1841, p. 5.

therefore formed the subject of many of the theological pamphlets written in response to *Tract XC*.

A. Reactions from the High Church Party

In the early stages of the movement it was clear that the Tractarians shared some fundamental theological principles with the High Church Party. In 1833 the danger of disestablishment and the common dependency on the tradition of the Caroline Divines and Non-Jurors, meant that both parties agreed on central doctrinal questions such as Apostolic succession and Baptismal Regeneration. However the Patristic research of the Tractarians often raised questions which members of High Church Party were uncomfortable with. This can be seen in the correspondence between Hugh James Rose and Newman. Rose, a typical old High Church man, supported Newman and the Tractarians, but was wary of the *Tracts'* objective in bringing to light 'neglected' Catholic doctrine. Writing to Newman he insisted that

We know exactly what truth is. We are on no voyage of discovery. We know exactly the extent of the shore. There is a creek there, and a bay there, - all laid down in the charts; but not often entered or re-surveyed. We know all this beforehand, and therefore can lay down our plans, and not (as I think), feel any uncertainty where we are going, or feel it necessary or advisable to spread our sails, and take our chance of finding a new Atlantis.¹³⁷

The Tractarians and High Church Party lacked consensus on the place and interpretation of *The Articles*. Despite this, many High Churchmen joined forces with

¹³⁷ Hugh James Rose to Newman, 13 May 1835., in J. W. Burgon, *Lives of Twelve Good Men, I*. London: Murray, 1889, p. 219. See Peter Nockles, 'Oxford, Tract 90 and the Bishops', in David Nicholls and Fergus Kerr, (eds.), *John Henry Newman: Reason, Rhetoric and Romanticism*, Bristol: The Bristol Press, 1991, pp. 40-41.

the Tractarians against the Liberals during the Subscription Controversy of 1834. However, the posthumous publication of Hurrell Froude's two volume *Remains* in 1838-1839, that revealed his deep sympathy for Roman Catholic doctrine and vehement dislike of the Reformers, aroused alarm in the High Church Party as to the ultimate direction and motive of the movement. In response to the publication of Froude's *Remains* Godfrey Faussett, who was initially supportive of the Tractarians, preached *On the Revival of Popery* (1838). Here he spoke of how

...The zealous efforts to revive a due respect for Ecclesiastical and properly Catholic principles, has been far too little connected with the requisite caution regarding their inveterate abuse by the Church of Rome; and that amidst much of important truth elicited and displayed, an alloy of Popish error and superstition has undeniably insinuated itself.¹³⁸

The publication of *Tract XC* further alienated High Church sympathisers such as Faussett. Faussett's *The Thirty-Nine Articles Considered as the Standard and Test of the Doctrines of the Church of England Chiefly with Reference to the Views of No. 90 of the Tracts for the Times* (1841) attacked Newman's acceptance of the doctrine of Purgatory. Faussett rejected Newman's call for recourse to a 'primitive Purgatory'. He argued that any variation of the doctrine of Purgatory betrays the spirit of a 'Pagan original in an infidel distrust of that blood of Jesus Christ, which will cleanse us all from sin ...'¹³⁹ Faussett renewed the criticisms he had made of the Tractarians in 1838 by criticising Newman's theology of Purgatory as nothing more than an over-zealous and misdirected attempt at trying to reconcile 'Catholicity' with Protestant Articles.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Godfrey Faussett, *The Revival of Popery: A Sermon Preached Before the University of Oxford*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1838, p. 12-13.

¹³⁹ Godfrey Faussett, *The Thirty-Nine Articles Considered as the Standard and Test of the Doctrines of the Church of England Chiefly with Reference to the Views of No. 90 of the Tracts for the Times*, Oxford: Rivington, 1841, p. 35.

¹⁴⁰ Godfrey Faussett, *The Thirty-Nine Articles Considered*, p. 35f.

An anonymous pamphlet, *The Controversy Between Tract XC and the Oxford Tutors* (1841), reflected how High Churchmen, such as Faussett, believed that Newman's stance on Purgatory was inadequate.¹⁴¹ Discussing other topic in *Tract XC*, the author singled out Newman's analysis of Purgatory as 'the most important in our present examination'.¹⁴² His main objection was that Newman and other Tractarians advocated a 'primitive' Purgatory without properly distinguishing from the 'Romish' doctrine:

[The Tractarians] long ago announced their belief in at least the possibility of a state of existence, in which the souls of the faithful departed would receive benefit from the prayers of the Faithful. They assert loudly enough that this belief differs from the Romish doctrine of Purgatory, though they have not condescended to explain the distinction very minutely. Mr. Newman has not advanced one step beyond Dr. Pusey, for he gives his readers a choice of some half a dozen purgatories, any of which might be believed without incurring the imputations of Romanism.¹⁴³

The author of *The Controversy* was also concerned at Newman's position on the efficacy of prayers for the dead and his gloss on *The Homilies*. *The Homilies* were a selection of anonymous homilies added in appendix to *The Articles* as a point of reference and commentary. The theology of *The Homilies* accorded with the general direction of the revisions in the *Book of Common Prayer*. The seventh homily of the *Second Book of Homilies* of 1562 dealt with Christian prayer.¹⁴⁴ The homily on prayer taught the faithful 'not deceive ourselves, thinking that either we may help others or

¹⁴¹ *The Controversy Between Tract XC and the Oxford Tutors*, London: How and Parsons, 1841.

¹⁴² *Controv.*, pp. 13-15

¹⁴³ *Controv.*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁴ *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches in the Time of Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory together with the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion*, Dublin: Whitestone, 1767, pp. 260ff.

others may help by good and charitable prayers in time to come.’¹⁴⁵ The question of the efficacy of prayers for the dead was also a concern which was shared by one of the authors of the *Letter of the Four Tutors*, H. B. Wilson. Wilson believed that the danger of Newman’s thesis on Purgatory in *Tract XC* was that it advanced a change in the soteriological condition of souls after death, namely, that the damned could eventually attain heaven through purgation. Wilson objected that the homily on prayer ‘contemplates only a purgatory in which our state would be changed, so that they who have died in God’s wrath may gain pardon.’¹⁴⁶ However, in his *Letter to Jelf*, Newman emphasised that the difference between the ‘Primitive’ and the ‘Romish’ doctrine was that according to the ‘Romish’ doctrine ‘temporary punishment [of purgatory] is a substitute for hell in the case of the unholy.’¹⁴⁷

Other members of the High Church Party were moderately supportive of *Tract XC*. But William Palmer of Worcester College and M.J. Routh of Magdalen were the only prominent figures of the High Church party in Oxford who expressed support for Newman. Neither went into the relative discussions on the tract, but Routh ‘protested very strongly against the resolution of the Heads of Houses’,¹⁴⁸ and Palmer expressed his ‘gratification’ at the publication *Tract XC*.¹⁴⁹ Palmer believed the tract would

shake people out of their *traditional interpretations* which impose human opinions as little less than articles of faith. It will lead to a really *critical* system of interpreting the Articles, and will ultimately produce more union on the articles of *Catholic faith*, and

¹⁴⁵ *Controv.*, pp. 14f.

¹⁴⁶ H. B. Wilson, *A Letter to the Rev. T.T. Churton*. Oxford: Rivington, 1841, p. 10.

¹⁴⁷ *Jelf.*, p. 26.

¹⁴⁸ *LD VIII*, p. 157.

¹⁴⁹ *LD VIII*, p. 63.

more toleration of *opinions*, which have been at all times tolerated in the Universal Church.¹⁵⁰

Walter Farquhar Hook, whose High Church principles brought him into contact with Newman and Pusey while he was at Oxford, had great esteem for the movement and even distributed tracts to his congregation while at Coventry in the 1830s. However, Hook gradually became disillusioned by the ‘Roman tendencies’ of some members of the movement.¹⁵¹ Hook wrote to Newman on 17th March 1841 to express both support for what he had attempted in *Tract XC*, but also to criticise his representation of the High Church party:

...If these were piping Times of peace I should have little quarrel with you for some things in Tract 90. I do not like your *seeming* to assert that High Churchmen generally have found a difficulty in holding Catholic Principles consistently with the subscription of the Articles: I do not like your asserting that our Reformers were uncatholic when Manning and other High Churchmen contended for the contrary: your question is different but the question is not decided among us: and I do not like your insinuating that while repudiating the *Romish* Doctrine with reference to Images Relics etc we wish to maintain *some* doctrine on these points on which I assume no *Catholic* Doctrine exists.¹⁵²

However, Hook did write in support of Newman in his *A Letter to the Bishop of Ripon on the State of Parties in the Church of England* (1841).¹⁵³ The Bishop of Ripon, Charles Thomas Longley (1794-1868), had written a letter to the clergy of his diocese

¹⁵⁰ LD VIII, p. 63.

¹⁵¹ See George Herring, ‘Hook, Walter Farquhar’ (1798–1875), *ODNB*, Volume 27, 2004, pp. 945-948.

¹⁵² LD VIII, p. 98.

¹⁵³ Walter Farquhar Hook, *A Letter to the Bishop of Ripon on the State of Parties in the Church of England*, London: Rivington, 1841.

criticising *Tract XC* in the months following its publication.¹⁵⁴ In his letter Longley dealt predominantly with Newman's interpretation of *Article XXII* on Purgatory. Longley rejected Newman's call for 'latitude' in the interpretation of *The Articles*, stating that there could only be 'one true and legitimate meaning to an Article, and that must be the meaning intended by the framer.'¹⁵⁵ Longley agreed that the question which the formulation of *Article XXII* posed was whether all teaching on Purgatory was condemned, or merely the 'Romish'. He maintained that while it may be 'literally true', that, as Newman pointed out, *Article XXII* could not have referred to the Tridentine decree on Purgatory as *The Articles* were published before its promulgation, 'it nevertheless does not appear to leave a correct impression as to the real bearing of the case.'¹⁵⁶ Bishop Longley emphasised that, while previous versions of *The Articles* condemned teaching on Purgatory from specific theological schools, the framers of the *XXXIX Articles* decided to enlarge the scope of this condemnation with the use of the term 'the Romish doctrine':

Looking therefore at *animus* with which the Article was formed, it would seem that its authors, conceived that they had sufficient evidence that the church of Rome had identified itself with errors, which through Christian forbearance had been laid at the doors of others, proceeded to condemn the doctrine of Purgatory &c. As thus far sanctioned by that church.¹⁵⁷

Referring to Jeremy Taylor, Longley accepted that *The Articles* did not however condemn one 'from holding *any* opinion respecting the intermediate state, in which, *possibly*, the spirits of just men may repose from their labour *without suffering*.'¹⁵⁸ The

¹⁵⁴ Charles Thomas Longley, *A Charge Delivered to Clergy of the Diocese of Ripon at his Triennial Visitation in July and August 1841 by the Right Rev. Charles Thomas Lord Bishop of London*. See *LD VIII*, Appendix 5, p. 579.

¹⁵⁵ *LD VIII*, Appendix 5, p. 579.

¹⁵⁶ *LD VIII*, Appendix 5, p. 579.

¹⁵⁷ *LD VIII*, Appendix 5, p. 579.

¹⁵⁸ *LD VIII*, Appendix 5, p. 579.

Bishop of Oxford, Richard Bagot, who had been generally supportive of the Tractarians, did not address any of the doctrinal questions raised in the tract, but rather seemed more concerned with the general unrest it had caused. Bagot wrote to Pusey advising him that it was necessary that ‘steps should be promptly taken for removing all grounds of alarm and offence.’¹⁵⁹ Bagot thought it

absolutely necessary that steps should be promptly taken for removing all grounds for the alarm and offence, which I have reason to believe are extensively felt in the Church [...] I would not, of course, wish Mr Newman or any one to put forth any opinion which he does not heartily believe;—but I am convinced there are opinions spoken of in the Tract, as not Catholic, yet not incompatible with subscription to the Articles, which Mr Newman does not himself hold, and which he would not desire to see taught by the Clergy.¹⁶⁰

While he could see that the object of the tract was ‘to make our Church more Catholic’, it was expedient for the ‘peace of the Church’ that all discussion on the interpretation of *The Articles* should be discontinued.¹⁶¹

A moderate voice of support came from Richard Pretyman, whose High Churchmanship made him an early supporter of the movement. As the third son of the influential Sir George Tomline Pretyman, bishop of Winchester and political adviser to William Pitt, Pretyman’s opinion had considerable weight for both the political and theological implications of *Tract XC*. In his *A Review of No. 90 of The Tracts for the Times with Observations upon the Articles to which it relates* (1841)¹⁶² Pretyman agreed with Newman that notwithstanding the abuses which were historically

¹⁵⁹ *LD VIII*, p. 94.

¹⁶⁰ *LD VIII*, p. 94.

¹⁶¹ *LD VIII*, pp. 94-95.

¹⁶² Richard Pretyman, *A Review of No. 90 of The Tracts for the Times with Observations upon the Articles to which it relates*. Oxford: Rivington, 1841.

associated with the doctrine, one could not disagree that there are similarities between the doctrine of *The Homilies* and the directives of the Council of Trent on the subject of worshipping images and relics.¹⁶³ He agreed with Newman's argument in *Tract XC* that the doctrine condemned in *Article XXII* was the Romish and not the Tridentine.¹⁶⁴ It was therefore plausible to suggest that *Article XXII* censured the abuses of Purgatory rather than the doctrine itself. However Pretyman believed that Newman had not sufficiently demonstrated that the 'Romish' doctrine spoken of in *Article XXII* was not the same as that described in the Tridentine decrees.¹⁶⁵

B. The Tractarian Response

Before publishing *Tract XC* Newman gave it to Pusey and Keble to read.¹⁶⁶ Pusey immediately noticed that it would be 'startling' to some people who have broad notions of what they consider 'Romish' doctrine, and that it may cause a 'considerable trial for a time'.¹⁶⁷ It was on the advice of Pusey that Newman wrote an open letter to R.W. Jelf of Christ Church in clarification and response to the objections raised by *The Letter of the Four Tutors*, particularly on his interpretation of *The Articles*.¹⁶⁸ Pusey advised Newman to show how if *The Articles* 'speak of the Romish doctrine of purgatory, they do not mean the Greek purgatorial fire at the Day of Judgment.'¹⁶⁹ In the *Letter to Jelf* Newman argued for a latitude of interpretation of *The Articles*. He emphasised that *The Articles* were 'wide enough' to admit various views, provided they do not mutually

¹⁶³ *Observ.*, p. 28.

¹⁶⁴ *Observ.*, p. 28.

¹⁶⁵ *Observ.*, p. 31.

¹⁶⁶ *LD VIII*, pp. 38, 62.

¹⁶⁷ *LD VIII*, p. 62.

¹⁶⁸ *LD VIII*, pp. 63, 76.

¹⁶⁹ *LD VIII*, p. 75.

contradict each other or the wording of Article in question.¹⁷⁰ Newman believed that his position on Purgatory could not contradict *The Articles*, which condemned ‘corruptions’ rather than whole doctrines. Rather, he emphasised that his position represented the teaching of the ‘Catholic Church’:

The only peculiarity of view that I advocate, if I must so call it, is this, - that, whereas it is usual at this day to make the particular belief of their writers their true interpretation, I would make the belief of the Catholic Church such ... For instance as to purgatory, I consider (with the Homily) that the Article opposes the main idea really encouraged by Rome, that temporary punishment is a substitute for hell in the case of the unholy, and all the superstitious consequent thereupon.¹⁷¹

Newman argued that *The Articles* should not be closed to interpretation, discouraging ‘rigid’ interpretations to *The Articles* which he believed would do disservice to the High Church by driving many to Rome.¹⁷² In the *Letter to Jelf* Newman drew attention to his central argument used in *Tracts LXXI* and *LXXIX* that the decrees of the Council of Trent gave no definition to the meaning of the term ‘Purgatory’, but simply affirmed that the state exists. References in *The Catechism of Trent* which described the pains of purgatory as ‘a purgatorial fire’ were, according to Newman, not what *The Articles* intended when it referred to ‘Roman Corruptions’. Rather it was the ‘popular notions’ of Purgatory which *The Articles* referred to as ‘corruptions’.¹⁷³ Newman objected that the differences of opinion on whether the state of the dead in the disembodied state be

¹⁷⁰ *Jelf*, p. 25.

¹⁷¹ *Jelf*, p. 28.

¹⁷² *Jelf*, pp. 28f.

¹⁷³ *Jelf*, p. 8.

one of imperfect bliss (intermediate state) or purification (Purgatory), was an example of the legitimate latitude of the interpretation which the *XXXIX Articles* allow:

I consider that the wording of the Articles is wide enough to admit persons of very different sentiments from each other in detail, provided they agree in some broad general sense of them, (e.g. as differing from each other whether or not there is any state of purification after death, or whether or not any addresses are allowable to Saints departed, so that they one and all condemn the Roman doctrine of Purgatory and of Invocation as actually taught and carried out into effect,) yet I do not leave the Articles without their one legitimate sense in preference to all other senses.¹⁷⁴

After advising Newman to write his *Letter to Jelf*, Pusey wrote to the Vice-Chancellor, Philip Wyner, on 12th March to clarify any ambiguities on Newman's position on Purgatory, before the question of *Tract XC* went to Convocation.¹⁷⁵ Pusey showed how the Church condemns nothing 'Catholic', but only 'Romish' errors. However clarification on some doctrines is needed as there are 'certain opinions and practices, more or less prevailing in Catholic antiquity, having some relation to later Romish error, which might seem to be condemned by our Articles, as are often popularly understood.'¹⁷⁶ For this reason the tract advocated 'several opinions of there being some Purgatorial process before or at the Day of Judgement, whereby those who departed out of this life in an imperfect state, would be fitted for the presence of God.'¹⁷⁷ In the light of his observations Pusey questioned whether all opinions on a Purgatorial process were condemned by the Church of England. Pusey was eager to point out to the Vice-Chancellor that on some points of doctrine a genuine latitude of

¹⁷⁴ *Jelf*, pp. 25, 26.

¹⁷⁵ Newman had not yet admitted authorship of *Tract XC* when Pusey wrote to the Vice-Chancellor.

¹⁷⁶ *LD VIII*, p. 73.

¹⁷⁷ *LD VIII*, p. 74.

opinion is tolerated with the Church of England, while for other doctrines a breadth of opinion is ignored:

On other points we are content (and I think rightly) to allow our formularies to be construed laxly (I can have no doubt contrary to the meaning to their writers). Were, e.g., the strict meaning of the Baptismal Service enforced at once, how many valuable persons would forsake the Church! In the imperfect state in which we are they are, they are patiently borne with. Why should we not deal equally patiently with another class, equally valuable? Why, if a person do not hold the 'Romish doctrine of Purgatory to be Catholic, should look upon himself as condemned by our Articles, if he hold the Greek view, or if he suppose that, at the Day of Judgement, those who are saved should pass through fire, in which those stained with much sin should suffer? [...] The rejection of the doctrine of baptismal Regeneration is tolerated; why may not the belief in some sort of Purgatorial process?¹⁷⁸

These sentiments were echoed in a pamphlet by the Tractarian William George Ward, (1812-1882), *A Few Words in Support of No. 90 of the Tracts for the Times Partly with Reference to Mr. Wilson's Letter* (1841). Ward believed that it was 'long habit', rather than adherence to the wording of *Article XXII* that had led to the condemnation of *all* teaching on Purgatory:

I am not denying that in parts of the Tract interpretations are given which to me do not seem obvious, but I cannot consider that of the twenty-second article as in the number. On the contrary, it does seem that nothing but long habit could have made us imagine, e.g. that 'doctrina Romanensium de Purgatorio' means *all* teaching of Purgatory.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ LD VIII, p. 74.

¹⁷⁹ William George Ward, *A Few Words in Support of No. 90 of the Tracts for the Times Partly with Reference to Mr. Wilson's Letter*, Oxford: Parker, 1841, p. 9.

In order to distinguish more clearly the ‘Romish’ doctrine of Purgatory from other variations of the doctrine, Pusey outlined the corruptions of the ‘Romish’ doctrine which were condemned. He made particular reference to the physical pain of the *poena sensus* and the punitive and satisfactory character of the doctrine.¹⁸⁰ He argued that the view that the doctrine of satisfaction is intimately connected with the doctrine of Purgatory is contrary to the teaching of the Church Fathers. While the Fathers held there would be suffering in the next life, this was not to be considered a lasting and definitive state of suffering.¹⁸¹ *The Articles* did not, therefore, condemn *all* teaching on purification after death, but rather only the teaching of the *poena sensus*:

Our Article does not then condemn all notions of a purifying process after this life, but one distinct system; and our Church has evidently taken the more humble line, not presuming to affirm or deny what has not been revealed, but denying the only view of Purgatory contrary to Holy Scripture, which for our consolation declares our departed to be at ‘rest’, whereas this exhibits them in intense suffering. If any collect from the impression of Antiquity, a general awe of what may pass between death and judgement, it may be that he will acquire more relevant thoughts of the exceeding holiness of God’s presence, and reflect more earnestly as to the fruits of actions or courses of action, and learn to speak less peremptorily, one way or the other, when Holy Scripture is silent; but our Article leaves him free, so long as he maintain not that one doctrine is ‘repugnant to the word of God.’¹⁸²

Pusey also wrote in support of Newman’s position in the *Letter to Jelf* in his *The Articles Treated in Tract 90 reconsidered and their Interpretation Vindicated in a Letter to the Rev. R.W. Jelf*.¹⁸³ Here Pusey argued for the reconciliation between

¹⁸⁰ *Vindic.*, pp. 87f.

¹⁸¹ *Vindic.*, pp. 80f

¹⁸² *Vindic.*, pp. 89f.

¹⁸³ E.B. Pusey, *The Articles Treated in Tract 90 reconsidered and their Interpretation Vindicated in a Letter to the Rev. R.W. Jelf*. Oxford: Parker, 1841.

Newman's thesis on Purgatory and *Article XXII*. Similar to his call for latitude in his letter to the Vice-Chancellor, here Pusey emphasised that the question of the intention of *The Articles* was not about what was permissible to teach, but what private opinions one may or may not hold consistently with the tenor of *The Articles*.¹⁸⁴ Pusey agreed with Newman that the intention of the framers of *The Articles* was unimportant, as their intention was not to set up a comprehensive 'system of faith', but rather to set 'definite marks against certain corruptions':

What opinion any of the framers of the Articles may have had as to any doctrine on these points, not *Romish*, or whether they had formed to themselves any definite views, is altogether beside the question; they are not drawing up a system of faith, which should comprehend the whole compass of the subject on which they spoke, but setting definite marks against certain corruptions existing and maintained in their own times, and before their eyes; they are practically providing against a certain existing practical evil; they are not concerned to trace the origin of existing corruptions, but to warn against them as they existed; everything else lay beyond their horizon, and they were not contemplating it; it was not their concern, whether such or such a doctrine, approximating in whatever degree to the *Romish*, were found here and there in the early Church; rather, with their practical veneration for the first ages of the Gospel, the writers of those times, when they do touch upon any such points, point out the difference sooner than the resemblance, rather shew that what is found in primitive Antiquity is not *Romish*, than seek to identify it with the form, into which (if it were so) it, in later ages, passed.¹⁸⁵

For Pusey the opinion that the wording of *The Articles* condemned anything more than simply the *Roman* corruptions of the doctrine of Purgatory would be 'an arbitrary stretch of their meaning.'¹⁸⁶ It was, he believed, so clear that *The Articles* only

¹⁸⁴ *Vindic.*, p. 71.

¹⁸⁵ *Vindic.*, pp. 73f.

¹⁸⁶ *Vindic.*, p. 74.

condemned the ‘Romish’ doctrine of Purgatory, that it was ‘almost a truism.’¹⁸⁷ Pusey emphasised that the very wording of *The Articles*, with the use of either ‘Romish’ or ‘schoolmen’, demonstrated that the framers of *The Articles* did not mean to condemn every doctrine of purgatory. If this was the case the framers would not have restricted their condemnation to the wording ‘Romish’:

No one could seriously contend, that while they spoke against the ‘Romish’ doctrine of purgatory, they meant to include any views held by the ‘Greeks,’ or the belief in any purgatorial process, distinct from the Romish, whether supposed to take place at the entrance of Paradise or at the day of Judgement.¹⁸⁸

Keble, who had carefully proof read *Tract XC* in February 1841 before it went to print, wrote to Newman that ‘I am much obliged to you for the Tract, and should think it very likely to answer its purpose with such as can be content ...’¹⁸⁹ After the tract’s publication and censure, Keble came to the support of Newman by writing an open letter to Judge John Taylor Coleridge, *The Case of Catholic Subscription of the Thirty-Nine Articles Considered*¹⁹⁰, in which he admitted that it was Newman’s interpretation of *Article XXII* on Purgatory which ‘excited most displeasure’ and was ‘chiefly in the minds of the censors’ when it was condemned.¹⁹¹ Keble particularly argued against those who suggested that Newman’s explanation of *Article XXII* on Purgatory was ambiguous. Rather than avoiding the question of what *Article XXII* meant when it condemned the *doctrina Romanensium*, Keble insisted that Newman

¹⁸⁷ *Vindic.*, p. 73.

¹⁸⁸ *Vindic.*, p. 74.

¹⁸⁹ *LD VIII*, p. 38.

¹⁹⁰ John Keble, *The Case of the Catholic Subscription of the Thirty-Nine Articles Considered*. London: Rivington, 1841.

¹⁹¹ *Subscrip.*, pp. 15f.

clarified in *Tract XC* what the Article did not condemn.¹⁹² In the pamphlet Keble argued against the narrowness of doctrinal interpretation that condemned ‘the notion of Purgatory in every sense in which it has been held.’¹⁹³

While he gained support from Pusey and Keble who had read his arguments in *Tract XC* before it was published, some fellow Tractarians struggled with Newman’s theology of Purgatory. J.W. Bowden, a long time friend since Trinity and fellow Tractarian, questioned some of Newman’s most fundamental arguments for a Primitive Purgatory in *Tract XC*: the application of the term ‘purgatory’ for the conflagration or ‘fire judgement’, and the distinction between the ‘Romish’ and Tridentine doctrine of Purgatory. In a letter 15th March 1841 Bowden wrote to Newman to express these concerns:

About Purgatory, I cannot go along with you in your facts—was the substantive 'Purgatory' ever applied to the Judgment fire?—Had the noun, in fact, been ever used, down to the Reformers' time, to express anything but that for which it was (was it not?) invented?—the definitely taught and understood Roman Purgatory?—Again the date of the decrees of Trent surely does not prevent the possibility of the Tridentine doctrine being condemned by the Article—this depends on the fact whether the Trent Fathers confirmed, or not, the teaching before—And I do not suppose any Romish theologian will tell you that they in any way modified the teaching of the Church upon this point.—I think—(and this is an instance of the clearness I desiderate)—that if you maintain that by the Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory, the Article framers did not mean the doctrine commonly so known you should definitely, and in terms, tell us what they did mean; and not leave us to gather it from illustrations of a vague nature.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² *Subscrip.*, p. 16.

¹⁹³ *Subscrip.*, p. 11.

¹⁹⁴ *LD VIII*, p. 71.

C. The Liberal Party: Charges of Romanism

The opposition between the Liberals and Tractarians had come to a head with the appointment of R.D. Hampden as Regius Professor of Divinity in 1836. Newman and the Tractarians openly opposed the appointment, and petitioned against it.¹⁹⁵ In response Thomas Arnold, a liberal and friend of Hampden, wrote a scathing attack on the Tractarians, *The Oxford Malignants* (1836), in the *Edinburgh Review*. During the Hampden controversy other pamphlets appeared such as *The Pastoral Epistle from His Holiness the Pope to Some Members of the University of Oxford*, (1836).¹⁹⁶ Written as a mock epistle of the Pope to the Tractarians, this pamphlet was filled with citations from the *Tracts*, and presumably circulated by Hampden's supporters. It occasioned a sharp response from Pusey who in his *An Earnest Remonstrance* (1836) defended the theology and motivation of *The Tracts for the Times*.¹⁹⁷

When *Tract XC* was published Newman confided to Pusey that he feared that members of the Liberal Party, Noetics such as Arnold, would use the occasion to launch an attack on him.¹⁹⁸ The most detailed Liberal refutation of Newman's theology of Purgatory came from another former colleague, Richard Whately (1787-1863). Whately had been Newman's mentor in his early years at Oriel, affording him the opportunity to write some of his earliest pieces of research for the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*. However their relationship soured after 1828 when it became apparent that Newman's separation from the Noetics meant that both men were developing very different

¹⁹⁵ See *LD V*, p. 229.

¹⁹⁶ Anon (Charles Dickenson). *Pastoral Epistle from His Holiness The Pope to Some Members of the University of Oxford*. London: B. Fellows, 1836.

¹⁹⁷ Edward Bouverie Pusey. *An Earnest Remonstrance to the Author of the 'Pope's Pastoral Letter to Certain Members of the University of Oxford.'* London: Rivington, 1836.

¹⁹⁸ *LD VIII*, p. 103.

theological opinions. Whately derogatorily referred to the Tractarians as ‘Tractators.’¹⁹⁹ In 1841 he anonymously published *Remarks on Mr. Newman’s Doctrine of Purgatory by a Country Clergyman*.²⁰⁰ From the outset Whately was determined to discredit Newman’s thesis of a ‘primitive doctrine’ by proving that the teaching of Purgatorial fire was, and always has been, intrinsically connected to the doctrine of Purgatory. In so doing Whately wished to show the error in claiming that the doctrine of Purgatory could be accepted as anything else but ‘Romish.’ Whately claimed that Newman’s position was that since the Reformation the doctrine of Purgatorial fire had simply been abrogated by ‘all branches of the Catholic Church’ including the Church of England:

Now, at present, Mr. Newman’s position is this: - purgatory, in any sense whatever, whether as meaning a now existing local place of torment, or referred to that ‘ignis purgatorius’ which is to destroy the world; or as applied to fire ‘vere et proprie,’ bringing with it ‘poena damni;’ is and has been denied during three hundred years, totally and without mental reservation of any kind by Lutherans, Zuinglians, and Calvinists. It has been denied by the Church of England, whose opinion has been expressed not so much by any formal decree, as by the successive teaching of her ministers; it has been denied by the Greek Church, whose farthest concession, even according to Romanists, never extended beyond the ‘ignis metaphoricè dictus’ spoken of at the Council of Florence, and whose clergy at the present deny, for the most part, this ‘vox et præterea nihil,’ extracted from the fears of their forefathers. In short, all the branches of the Catholic Church throughout the world, under whatever discipline existing, have either by positive decree, or by continual teaching, denied all purgatory – present, final, or metaphorical – for more than three hundred years.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ R. Whately to E. Hawkins, 17th December 1849. See E.J. Whately, *The Life and Correspondence of Archbishop Whately, I*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1866, p. 418. See Peter Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship 1760-1857*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 36.

²⁰⁰ Richard Whately, (Published anonymously), *Remarks on Mr. Newman’s Doctrine of Purgatory by a Country Clergyman*. Oxford: J. Vincent, 1841.

²⁰¹ *Purg.*, p. 5.

Whately believed Newman had isolated himself in ‘private judgement’ by creating a doctrinal position that could not be accepted by Anglicans or by another other ‘branch of the Catholic Church throughout the world.’²⁰² Whately argued that it was inconceivable that the doctrine could be considered Anglican. Rather, the doctrine of Purgatory, because it must involve purgatorial fire, could only be accepted by Roman Catholics:

The Romish branch alone holds a doctrine on the point which the author of No. 90 clearly rejects. So that he stands alone, holding an opinion not allowed by the orthodox branches of the Church, and which he professes to be at variance with that of Rome. He has abandoned Catholicity, and has betaken himself to private judgement.²⁰³

Newman argued in *Tract XC* that ‘it is not a point of faith’ (*non est de fide*) that the fire of purgatory is ‘fire truly and properly so called’, (*vere et proprie dictum ignem*). But Whately argued that the decrees of Florence spoke of a fire of purgatory which is ‘real’ and ‘material’, and not simply a metaphorical fire (*sed non ponere ignem verum et corporeum ignem*).²⁰⁴ However Whately’s interpretation of the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatorial fire was subsequently refuted by Nicholas Wiseman. In his *A Letter Respectfully Addressed to Rev J.H. Newman Upon Some Passages in His Letter to the Rev. Dr. Jelf* (1841), Wiseman agreed with Newman’s thesis that one was free to speculate on the nature of purgation.²⁰⁵ He held that one could legitimately hold to a doctrine of Purgatory which did not include a purgative fire. Wiseman explained that the teaching on purgation by fire was traditionally associated with the doctrine, but was not an authoritative teaching:

²⁰² *Purg.*, pp. 5f.

²⁰³ *Purg.*, pp. 5f.

²⁰⁴ *Purg.*, p. 9.

²⁰⁵ Nicholas Wiseman, *A Letter Respectfully Addressed to Rev J.H. Newman Upon Some Passages in His Letter to the Rev. Dr. Jelf*, London: Dolamn, 1841, p. 16.

From the time of Augustine it has been usual to call purgatory, whatever its purgation may consist of, a fire, a cleansing fire, etc. But to say, that the incidental use of such a term expresses an authoritative teaching, at variance with the cautious phraseology of a dogmatical definition, is clearly a straining of facts for the sake of an argument.²⁰⁶

Whately was keen to brand other arguments put forward by Newman as ‘Romish.’ He suggested that Newman’s identification of Purgatory with ‘conflagration’ was not a primitive teaching but rather a ‘Romish’ corruption:

‘Now here there *was* a primitive doctrine, whatever its merits, concerning the fire of judgment, which is a possible or a probable opinion, and is *not* condemned. That doctrine is this: that the conflagration of the world, or the flames which attend the Judge, will be an ordeal through which all men will pass; that great saints, such as St. Mary, will pass it unharmed; that others will suffer loss; but none will fail under it who are built upon the right foundation. Here is one purgatorian doctrine not ‘Romish.’

‘Not Romish;’ let us look at that. If my reader will take the trouble to turn to Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol. Supp. pars iii. quaest. Lxxxiv. Art. viii. Sect. 5.* he will read thus ‘That fire of final conflagration (I omit, for the present, quantum ad hoc quod iudicium praecedet) will act as an instrument of divine justice, and also with the natural powers of fire. As far as its natural powers are concerned, it will act alike upon bad and good who shall be found alive, by reducing the bodies of both to ashes.’²⁰⁷

Whately associated Newman’s description of conflagration with that of Aquinas, who stated that the fire of conflagration ‘shall act as an instrument of divine justice, it will

²⁰⁶ Nicholas Wiseman, *A Letter Respectfully Addressed to Rev J.H. Newman*, p. 15.

²⁰⁷ *Purg.*, p. 6.

act differently upon different people, with regard to the feeling of pain.’²⁰⁸ Whately concluded that the teaching of universal conflagration, which Newman described as a primitive doctrine of purgation, was in fact a Roman doctrine.²⁰⁹ Whately claimed that the teaching was based on what he described as a ‘progress of error’ in passages from Augustine (De Civ. Dei, xx. 25. xxi. 24. 26). He believed these errors derived from Augustine’s early education which was ‘disposed to take the Platonic view of the purification of souls by fire.’²¹⁰ Subsequently, Whately rejected the reading of the Council of Florence that cited Augustine on a final purgatorial fire and the possibility of an intermediate Purgatory as erroneous.²¹¹ Newman did accept that one can question how far a primitive doctrine of Purgatory was considered ‘widely received’ and ‘respectably supported’ in the early Church. However he believed that it was beyond reasonable doubt that what he described as a ‘primitive’ doctrine of Purgatory should be distinguished from what *The Articles* condemn as ‘Romish’

Whately also argued that Newman had misconstrued the teaching of the Council of Florence on Purgatory to support his own opinion on the doctrine. He charged Newman with erroneously representing the Greek position at Florence as favouring the teaching of the *pœna damni* as a primitive doctrine, rather than the teaching of the *pœna sensus*, which the Greeks considered ‘Romish’:

I again quote the Tract: ‘Another doctrine, purgatorian, but not Romish, is that said to be maintained by the Greeks at Florence, in which the cleansing, though a punishment, was but a *pœna damni*, not a *pœna sensus*; not a positive sensible infliction, much less the torment of fire, but the absence of God’s presence.’²¹²

²⁰⁸ *Purg.*, p. 6.

²⁰⁹ *Purg.*, p. 6.

²¹⁰ *Purg.*, p. 7.

²¹¹ *Purg.*, pp. 7f.

²¹² *Purg.*, pp. 8f.

In support of the position that the *pœna damni* was ‘Romish’ rather than a primitive doctrine, Whately cited an unnamed Roman author, presumably Bellarmine, who quoted Augustine’s *Enchiridion* to show that he considered the pain of loss of God (*pœna damni*) as a greater affliction than physical pains (*poena sensus*):

Notandum duplicem esse poenam purgatorii, sc. Poenam sensus et poenam damni. Poena sensus est, dolor seu affliction proveniens ex aliquot objecto creato: ut enim qui peccat avertit se a summo bono, et convertit se inordinate ad creaturam; ita postea puniri debet, non solum carentia summi boni, sed etiam afflictione inflictâ ab aliquot objecto creato. Poena damni ‘est dolor seu tristitia proveniens ex carentia fruitionis summi boni.’ – Juxta quem sensum loquitur S. Augustinus (Enchir. 102.) dicens, ‘Perire a regno Dei, exulare a civitate Dei, tam grandis est poena ut nulla ei possent tormenta quae novimus comparari.’

It should be noted that there is a punishment of purgatory, namely, physical pain and the pain of loss. The physical pain is a suffering arising from the created objects themselves, so that, for the sinner who turns himself away from the highest good, turns himself to disorder and to the created, and therefore should be punished, not only by privation of the highest good, but also from the pain which has been inflicted by created objects. The pain of loss ‘is the pain or sadness resulting from the lack of enjoyment to be good.’ In the same manner Augustine speaks of this (Enchir. 102.), saying, ‘We have lost the Kingdom of God, are banished from the City of God, such that no penalty is so great they could be compared to the torments with which we must suffer.’²¹³

Whately disagreed with Newman's theory that the pain of the loss of God (*poena damni*) was a primitive doctrine. For Whately ‘the doctrine, that purgatory is a deprivation of God’s presence, (*poena damni*) is a Romish doctrine, and reprobated by

²¹³ *Purg.*, p. 9.

our Article.²¹⁴ Finally, Whately rejected Newman's third attempt at presenting a primitive doctrine of Purgatory as unfounded:

'Another purgatory is that in which the cleansing is but a progressive sanctification, and has no pain at all.' Can Mr. Newman shew any authority for this remarkable state, in which a man gets rid of his sins without (since he feels no pain at all) either repentance or contrition for them?²¹⁵

Whately's conclusion on Newman's theology of Purgatory in *Tract XC* is that he simply created a 'caricature of Romish doctrine', and advocated that which *The Articles* condemned.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ *Purg.*, p. 10.

²¹⁵ *Purg.*, p. 10.

²¹⁶ *Purg.*, pp. 11f.

Chapter Four

The Development of the Roman Catholic Newman's Theology of Purgatory 1845-1853

In this chapter I contextualise the position on Purgatory in English Roman Catholicism, using sources contemporaneous to Newman in the 1830-50s. The work of his fellow Oratorian, Frederick William Faber's *All for Jesus* (1853), is particularly revealing. Faber identified two forms of the doctrine, the punitive model, associated with the writing of Alphonsus Liguori; and the ameliorative model, made popular through the writings of St. Francis of Sales and St. Catherine of Genoa. I show how both models can be found in Newman's works as a Roman Catholic, but that his later sermons and poems give prominence to the understanding of Purgatory as a voluntary process produced by the painful awareness of one sinfulness under the light of God's holiness.

I. The Doctrine of Purgatory in Nineteenth Century Roman Catholic Theology

As an Anglican, Newman argued in *Tracts LXXI, LXXIX* and *XC* that careful study of the decrees of the councils of Florence and Trent show that the Roman Catholic Church provided no definitive teaching on the contentious subject of the nature of the pains suffered in Purgatory.¹ Prior to his conversion Newman accepted that 'a broad distinction had to be drawn between the actual state of belief and of usage in the

¹ Tract LXXI, p. 115, Tract LXXIX, p. 5, Tract XC, p. 24.

countries which were in communion with the Roman Church, and her formal dogmas.² Purgatorial pains was exemplary of this distinction. ‘Sensible pains’, he insisted, ‘is not implied in the Tridentine decree upon Purgatory; but it was the tradition of the Latin Church, and I had seen the pictures of souls in flames in the streets of Naples.’³ The Fathers at the Council of Florence (1445) decreed that ‘souls are cleansed after death by cleaning pains - *animas penis purgatoriis post mortem purgari*’, yet they gave no explanation of what these ‘pains’ are or how they are caused.⁴ Similarly, at the twenty-fifth session of the Council of Trent, over a century after Florence (1563), the Council Fathers decreed nothing on purgatorial pains at all, but simply that souls are ‘detained’ there.⁵ At Trent the abuses which had become associated with the doctrine were also addressed. The clergy were to discourage ‘uncertain speculation’ of the doctrine in homilies, and ‘prohibit all that panders to curiosity and superstition’ among the faithful.⁶ The decree on Justification, promulgated at the council’s sixth session in 1547, taught that, while the justification of baptism and sacramental confession forgives sins and remits the eternal punishment of sin, temporal punishment remains and must be ‘discharged’ even after personal sins have been forgiven sacramentally. The belief in a state of purgation in which this ‘debt’ for sin can be remitted is therefore necessary:

If anyone says that once the grace of justification has been received, the fault of the repentant sinner is forgiven and the debt of eternal punishment is wiped out, in such a way that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged, either in this world or later in purgatory, before entry to the kingdom of heaven can lie open: let him be anathema.⁷

² *Apo.*, p. 100

³ *Apo.*, pp. 100-101

⁴ Norman P. Tanner (ed), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume I - Nicaea I to Lateran V*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1990, p. 527.

⁵ Norman P. Tanner (ed), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume II – Trent to Vatican II*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1990, p. 774.

⁶ Norman P. Tanner (ed), *Decrees, Volume II – Trent to Vatican II*, p. 774.

⁷ Norman P. Tanner (ed), *Decrees, Volume II – Trent to Vatican II*, p. 681.

The implications of the Tridentine decree on Justification meant that the ‘discharging’ of sin, either in this life through penance, or after death through purgation, was understood both as ‘punishment’ as well as purification. The *Catechismus Romanus* is the only example of Roman Catholic Magisterial teaching where the nature of this punishment is described.⁸ The catechism, published in 1566 for the implementation of the Tridentine decrees, was intended for the instruction of the clergy. It gave a broad overview of Roman Catholic teaching structured around four general themes: the articles of the Creed, the seven sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord’s Prayer. Purgatory is mentioned twice: in the Creed’s article on Christ’s descent into Hell, and in the petition of the Lord’s prayer, ‘Deliver us from Evil.’⁹ In the former, Purgatory is described as one of three ‘secret abodes’ in which are ‘detained the souls that have not been admitted to the region of bliss.’¹⁰ These abodes include the ‘Hell’ of the damned, the ‘Hell of the righteous’ of those who had died before Christ, and ‘the fire of Purgatory, in which the souls of just men are cleansed by temporary punishments, in order to be admitted into their eternal country.’¹¹ In the latter, the Catechism speaks of the ‘fire’ of Purgatory. It admonishes the faithful to

beg of God that we be not cut off by a sudden death; that we provoke not his anger against us, that we be not condemned to suffer the punishments reserved for the wicked; that we be not sentenced to endure the fire of purgatory, from which we piously and devotedly implore the liberation of others.¹²

⁸ *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, (translated by J. Donovan). Dublin: Richard Coyne, 1829.

⁹ *Cat. Rom.*, pp. 51, 384.

¹⁰ *Cat. Rom.*, p. 51.

¹¹ *Cat. Rom.*, p. 51.

¹² *Cat Rom.*, p. 384.

Writing in 1837, Newman was critical of these additions to the Tridentine decree on the doctrine which characterised the punishment of Purgatory as ‘fire.’ The mention of ‘fire’, he said, meant that ‘a painful light is at once cast by these comments on the Synodal Decree.’¹³ When Newman became a Roman Catholic in 1845 he said nothing more on the contentious subject of the additions made by the Catechism on the Tridentine decrees. As a Roman Catholic he accepted that the Catechism was of the ‘highest authority’, but warned that ‘not everything contained in it is a strict matter of faith.’¹⁴ Nothing in Newman’s Roman Catholic writings contradicts the view he held as an Anglican, that, according to the strict letter of the councils, the question of whether the souls of the departed are cleaned by material fire ‘remains open, that is it is not determined either way *de fide*.’¹⁵

To evaluate Newman’s theology of Purgatory in his early Roman Catholic years it must be appropriated within the context of mid-nineteenth century Roman Catholic theology in England. The reception of the doctrine is described in a number of sources contemporaneous to Newman. One work which had informed Newman’s understanding of Roman Catholic doctrine was Nicholas Wiseman’s *Lectures on the Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Roman Catholic Church* (1836).¹⁶ Newman read the work in 1836, and wrote a lengthy review on it later that year in the October edition of the *British Critic*.¹⁷ Nicholas Wiseman, the first Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster after the Roman Catholic hierarchy was restored in 1850, gave the lectures in 1835 on a number of ‘controversial subjects’, in an attempt at dispelling misconceptions on

¹³ Tract LXXIX, p. 6.

¹⁴ *LD XXI*, p. 225.

¹⁵ Tract LXXIX, p. 12.

¹⁶ Nicholas Wiseman, *Lectures on the Principle Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church*, volume II, New York: O’Shea, 1836.

¹⁷ ‘Dr. Wiseman’s Lectures on the Catholic Church’, *The British Critic*, Volume XIX, October 1836, London: Rivington, pp. 373-403. See *LD VI*, p. 121.

Roman Catholic doctrine.¹⁸ In the lectures, Wiseman admitted the widespread unpopularity of the doctrine of Purgatory among both Roman Catholics and Anglicans. ‘No doctrine’, he wrote, ‘has been so often held up to public dislike.’¹⁹ He believed the causes for its unpopularity was that it was often misunderstood as unscriptural, and that there was prejudice that the doctrine was taken as a means by which the clergy could control the faithful through ‘working on their fear’.²⁰ Wiseman was therefore careful to hold back from an illustration of purgatorial pains. Instead, he limited his description to the general tone of the Tridentine decree, describing it as ‘a middle and temporary state, in which those who are not sufficiently guilty for severer condemnation, nor sufficiently pure to enjoy the vision of his face, are for a time punished and purged, so as to be qualified for this blessing.’²¹ Wiseman challenged insinuations of superstition by emphasising the rationale of the doctrine with the rest of Catholic teaching. He emphasised that Roman Catholics accept that the state of Purgatory exists because it expresses the logical consequence of our common belief that God requires satisfaction for sins. For Wiseman, Purgatory is therefore principally a matter of justice, rather than of punishment. Wiseman argued against an eschatology in which the dead were in one of either two states of either beatitude or damnation. Such a view implied that all sins, whether grave or venial, would be as qualified equally as meriting punishment which was eternal, namely Hell. But just as there are varying degrees of offences, not all of which merit eternal condemnation, so there must be some equally corresponding punishments. It is therefore just to conclude that there should be some means whereby

¹⁸ Nicholas Wiseman, *Lectures on the Principle Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church*, volume I, New York: O’Shea, 1836, preface.

¹⁹ *Princ. Doc.*, p. 44.

²⁰ *Princ. Doc.*, p. 45.

²¹ *Princ. Doc.*, p. 45.

satisfaction can be made, after this life, for offences committed which do not merit eternal punishment.²²

The non-definitive character of Magisterial teaching on the nature of purgation led to a greater freedom in how the doctrine was developed in Roman Catholic theology and devotion. There was generally two schools of thought. The first was the punitive, juridical model, which emphasised that souls were punished by a material fire to bring satisfaction for their sins. The second was the ameliorative model, in which Purgatory was represented not so much as a punishment, but more a process of divinisation and purification, in which soul wilfully suffers out of love for their lack of conformity with God. The differences in these two models was described in detail by one of Newman's fellow Oratorian priests, and former Tractarian, Frederick William Faber (1814-1863).²³ In *All for Jesus* (1853) Faber described these two contrasting concepts of Purgatory as the prevalent notions of the doctrine in the Roman Catholic theology of the nineteenth century:

One is the view met with in by far the greater number of the lives and revelations of the Italian and Spanish saints, the works of the Germans of the Middle Ages, and the popular delineations of Purgatory in Belgium, Portugal, Brazil, Mexico, and elsewhere. The other is the view which has been made popular by St. Francis of Sales, though he drew it originally from his favourite treatise on purgatory by St. Catherine of Genoa [...]²⁴

²² *Princ. Doc.*, p. 45.

²³ Frederick William Faber, *All for Jesus or The Easy Ways of Divine Love*. London: Richardson and Son, 1853. For a summary on the importance of literary works of Roman Catholic eschatology in the nineteenth century see Jill Muller, *Gerard Manley Hopkins and Victorian Catholicism*, London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 101-136.

²⁴ *AFJ*, p. 360.

While these two models of Purgatory were not mutually exclusive doctrinally, different analogies were used, and both models exhibited contrasting forms of piety and religious expression. Faber described the punitive view of Purgatory in much the same way as Newman viewed the popular images he encountered during his Mediterranean voyage in the 1830s, which ‘so often provoke the fastidiousness of the English traveller.’²⁵ Faber described this as one which ‘represents Purgatory simply as a hell which is not eternal’, and therefore tended to over emphasise the physical torments of purgatorial pains by fire.²⁶ In this view of Purgatory ‘violence, confusion, wailing, horror, preside over its descriptions.’²⁷ The punitive concept of purgation was the dominant view in British Roman Catholic preaching and theology. In 1870, the most authoritative voice of Roman Catholicism in England, Archbishop Manning of Westminster (1808-1892), insisted that Purgatory is

fire and pain – most piercing, most acute, and most terrible – there is no pain like it save the pain of Hell, and that is eternal, hopeless, and desperate, where ‘the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched’ ... Besides purgatory being physical pain, it is fire. Every soul, besides being purified, must bear the punishment due to its sin. But what is the fire of purgatory? It is the burning up of all stains of sin. What causes the pains? All the pains are due to mortal sins. Even after absolution mortal sin has its debt and its pain. Although we are absolved from the sin, the debt of pain for every sin still remains – it is to be borne, suffered, and expiated to the last farthing before one can see God. And to speak of venial sins – how frequently we commit them ... The guilt and the pain still remains with us, and we shall have to suffer for each one of them unless we pay the debt of them in another way here.²⁸

²⁵ *AFJ*, p. 360. *Apo.*, p. 101.

²⁶ *AFJ*, p. 360.

²⁷ *AFJ*, p. 360.

²⁸ Francis M. Wyndham, *Archbishop Manning on Purgatory: A Sermon Preached at the Church of SS. Anselm and Cecilia on 13 November 1870*. London: Burns and Oats, 1898, pp. 17-21.

In England the punitive view of Purgatory was drawn principally from the works of the founder of the Redemptorists, Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787), who had been canonised by Pope Gregory XVI in 1839. With his efforts at re-establishing the Roman Catholic hierarchy in England, Cardinal Wiseman had strongly promoted the work of the Redemptorists, who were ‘the chief instrument of their introduction into England.’²⁹ R.A. Coffin (1819-1885) was instrumental in disseminating Liguorian eschatology in England through the translation of his works in 1857 - *The Eternal Truths: Preparation for Death*. Coffin, a close associate of Manning, and former novice of Newman’s Oratory before he joined the Redemptorists in 1850, was not always on amicable terms with Newman.³⁰ Newman appreciated Redemptorist theology as an ‘advantageous reaction from the rigour of the French School of theology’³¹ but considered it an essentially ‘negative’ theology:

About St Alfonso I hear this, that the praise given him is not really praise, perhaps the contrary, viz that there is *nothing wrong* in his writings. The truth is that so much *has* been said wrong, as by Baius, the Jansenists, and others, it was a very great thing to find a writer who could be praised *negatively*. And that his doctrine *is* negative — that it contains no idea, but is a make up of different systems, and very much what I described in a former letter as the theology of the day generally.³²

The Eternal Truths - Preparation for Death is made up of 36 ‘considerations’ which were intended as material for sermons and spiritual retreats.³³ Liguori’s understanding of Purgatory placed great emphasis on the physical pains endured by disembodied souls. In his work, Liguori used horrifically graphic descriptions on death and the

²⁹ LD XXI, p. 139.

³⁰ LD XXI, p. 113; LD XXIII, p. 9; *Apo.*, pp. 249, 302-311.

³¹ LD XXI, p. 139.

³² LD XII, p. 6.

³³ Alphonsus Liguori, *The Eternal Truths - Preparation for Death or Considerations on Eternal Maxims*. Translation: R.A. Coffin, London: Burns and Lambert, 1857, pp. 1-2

terrors of the punishments of the future state to produce ‘remarkable conversions.’³⁴ In his first consideration on death Liguori reminded his readers of the transitory nature of life through a morbid description of the decaying corpse:

Consider that thou art dust, and to dust thou shalt return. The day will come when thou shalt die, and rot in a grave, where ‘worms will be thy covering’ ... Behold that corpse lying on the bed, the head fallen on the chest, the hair disordered and bathed in the sweat of death ... Behold how the corpse first becomes yellow, and then black. Afterwards the whole body is covered with a white and disgusting mould. Then there issues forth a clammy, fetid slime, which flows to the earth. In that corruption a multitude of worms are generated, which feed on the flesh. The rats feast on the body; some on the outside, others enter into the mouth and bowels ... See, then, what man is, - a little dust on the barn floor, which is carried away by the wind.³⁵

Liguori described the importance of the final moments before death, which decide the condition of the soul in the hereafter, as an almost arbitrary judgement by God:

And what shall a Christian say, who knows by faith that at the moment of his death eternity begins; so that in that moment he grasps one of two wheels which draws with it either eternal happiness or eternal suffering? If there were two tickets in a lottery, on one which was written Hell, and on the other Heaven, what care would you not take to find out how to draw that of Heaven! O God, how those unhappy wretches tremble who are condemned to throw the dice upon which depends their life or their death!³⁶

For Liguori the pain of sense is a fire which ‘is created by God expressly to torment.’ The pain of loss is described as ‘torment’ of mind, understanding and will.³⁷ For Faber a particular set of theological premises motivated these images of Purgatory. It was the

³⁴ *Prep. Death*, p. vii.

³⁵ *Prep. Death*, pp. 3-6.

³⁶ *Prep. Death*, p. 20.

³⁷ *Prep. Death*, p. 189.

inner disposition of a 'holy fear of offending God' coupled with an 'extreme horror of sin' that gave rise to an excessively punitive understanding of the doctrine. This emphasis on the divine justice of God which must be satisfied through the torments of Purgatory was reinforced by 'a great value put on indulgences', and a spirituality which emphasised a 'desire for bodily austerities.'³⁸

The second prevalent notion of Purgatory referred to by Faber was very different to the Liguorian eschatology which Coffin and the Redemptorists had so vigorously advocated in England. Faber associated this, lesser known view, with the writing of Francis of Sales and Catherine of Genoa.³⁹ The works of Catherine of Genoa, a fifteenth century Italian mystic, were first made available in English in 1858 when Manning translated her *Treatise on Purgatory* from Italian.⁴⁰ Faber referred to her understanding of Purgatory as one which, devoid of the images of fire, as a 'sweet prison' in which souls abide in 'the most perfect contentment and the most unutterable love.'⁴¹ While adherents to this ameliorative concept of purgation did not deny the theological implications of the debt of sin and the justice of God, they tended to emphasise more the aspect of the soul's gradual configuration to God, rather than the necessity of its punishment. In this conception of the doctrine the soul entered Purgatory 'eyes fascinated, and its spirit sweetly tranquilized, by the face of Jesus, its first sight of the sacred Humanity at the Particular Judgement it has undergone.'⁴² Here Purgatory has a Christocentric emphasis, that is, the personal encounter of the soul with Christ its judge. In this encounter the soul is comforted by the sight of 'the face of Jesus', so much so that this vision 'beautifies the uneven terrors of its prison ... In the

³⁸ *AFJ*, p. 361.

³⁹ *AFJ*, p. 360.

⁴⁰ H.E. Manning, *The Treatise on Purgatory of Catherine of Genoa*, London: Burns and Lambert, 1858.

⁴¹ *AFJ*, pp. 363-4.

⁴² *AFJ*, p. 362.

sea of fire it [the soul] holds fast to that image.⁴³ The authors of the ameliorative concept of the doctrine stress that the pain endured in Purgatory is not the reluctant punishment for sin which is inflicted upon the soul, but rather the painful self-realisation of one's own 'unfitness' for heaven and a 'voluntary flight' from the unbearable sanctity of God.⁴⁴ In this perception of the doctrine it is the yearning of the soul to be with God and the simultaneous realisation of its own unworthiness which impedes this union. It is this tension between union and separation which is understood by these authors as purgatorial pains. The soul is

in punishment, true; but it is in unbroken union with God ... Its sweet prison, its holy sepulchre, is in the adorable will of its heavenly Father, and there it abides the term of its purification with the most perfect contentment and the most unutterable love ... It can do nothing whatever which will in the least displease God. It loves God above all everything, and it loves him with a pure and disinterested love. It is constantly consoled by angels, and cannot but rejoice in the confirmed assurance of its own salvation. Nay, its very bitterest agonies are accompanied by a profound unbroken peace.⁴⁵

II. Purgatory in the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*: 1845

In the years leading up to his conversion in 1845, Newman's research on the doctrine of Purgatory was linked to the question of doctrinal development. After leaving Oxford for Littlemore in 1842 Newman devoted a considerable amount of his time to the latter. By 1844 he had decided to gather this research into a publishable form. The theory of doctrinal development was a question that Newman had been

⁴³ *AFJ*, p. 362.

⁴⁴ *AFJ*, p. 362.

⁴⁵ *AFJ*, pp. 363f.

thinking of as early as 1832 when he started writing *The Arians of the Fourth Century*.⁴⁶ Newman explicitly stated that he had been considering the question since *The Arians*: ‘From the time I wrote the Arians, or at least from 1836, I have had in my thoughts, though I could not bring it out, that argument or theory, which at last appeared in my closing University Sermon.’⁴⁷ His research into the development of doctrine was to be crucial to his decision to be received into the Roman Catholic Church: ‘I came to the resolution of writing an Essay on Doctrinal Development; and then, if, at the end of it, my convictions in favour of the Roman Church were not weaker, of talking the necessary steps for admission into her fold.’⁴⁸ Similarly, the viability of his thesis on the development of doctrine was essential to his acceptance of the doctrine of Purgatory, as he was chiefly concerned with how one could distinguish authentic doctrinal developments from what Anglicans identified as ‘Romish Corruptions’.⁴⁹ This was a concern he shared with the Caroline Divines, who applied the dictum of the *Commonitory* of Vincent of Lerins to identify authentic doctrine by means of that which was *always* believed, *everywhere* and by *all*. But for Newman the application of the Vincentian Canon for distinguishing ‘corruptions’ from authentic doctrine seemed insufficient. The principle *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus* was unable to explain why a doctrine such as that of Purgatory, which Anglicans rejected as a corruption, displayed a similar process of development to a doctrine which they accepted, such as the Trinity:

⁴⁶ The question of when Newman first began to reflect on doctrinal development has been disputed by a number of Newman scholars. Aidan Nichols, Owen Chadwick and James Periero all give it a later date than his *Arians*. See Aidan Nichols, *From Newman to Congar: The Idea of Doctrinal Development from the Victorians to the Second Vatican Council*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990, p. 35; Owen Chadwick, *From Bossuet to Newman*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 89; James Pereiro, *Ethos and the Oxford Movement: At the Heart of Tractarianism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 165. For a vindication of Newman’s claim that he had grasped the concept of doctrinal development as early as 1833 see Ian Ker’s *Newman on Vatican II*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 45-8.

⁴⁷ *LD X*, p. 297. See also *Apo.*, p. 178.

⁴⁸ *Apo.*, p. 205.

⁴⁹ *Dev.*, p. 10.

It is true indeed that the subsequent profession of the doctrine [of the Trinity] in the Universal Church creates a presumption that it was held even before it was professed; and it is fair to interpret the early Fathers by the later. This is true, and admits of application to certain other doctrines besides that of the Blessed Trinity in Unity; but there is as little room for such antecedent probabilities as for the argument from suggestions and intimations in the precise and imperative *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, as it is commonly understood by English divines, and is by them used against the later Church and the see of Rome.⁵⁰

Newman began his case for the doctrinal development of Purgatory by addressing one of the principal arguments used to challenge the doctrine - its Scriptural foundation. He gave two reasons why so little is spoken on the subject in Scripture. First, all doctrinal definitions and received judgements of the Early Church, not only those on Purgatory, rest upon definite, yet often obscure passages from Scripture. It is therefore legitimate, he claimed, to appeal to rather unspecific passages such as 'saving by fire,' and 'entering through much tribulation into the kingdom of God', as indirect allusions to the doctrine of Purgatory.⁵¹ Newman accepted that these passages do not prove the doctrine explicitly. Rather, he compared them to the mustard seed and leaven in Gospel parables, that contain 'an internal element of life', which, already in germ, anticipates the development of Christianity 'both as a polity and as a doctrine.'⁵² Second, he claimed that the apparent silence in Scripture on the state of souls in the period between death and resurrection was not intended by New Testament authors to discourage further developments or speculation on the subject of the afterlife,

⁵⁰ *Dev.*, pp. 11-12.

⁵¹ *Dev.*, p. 72.

⁵² *Dev.*, p. 73.

rather it was a consequence of the early Christian belief in the immediacy of the Parousia:

There is another subject, though not so immediately practical, on which Scripture does not, strictly speaking, keep silence, but says so little as to require, and so much as to suggest, information beyond its letter,—the intermediate state between death and the Resurrection. Considering the long interval which separates Christ's first and second coming, the millions of faithful souls who are waiting it out, and the intimate concern which every Christian has in the determination of its character, it might have been expected that Scripture would have spoken explicitly concerning it, whereas in fact its notices are but brief and obscure. We might indeed have argued that this silence of Scripture was intentional, with a view of discouraging speculations upon the subject, except for the circumstance that, as in the question of our post-baptismal state, its teaching seems to proceed upon an hypothesis inapplicable to the state of the Church after the time when it was delivered. As Scripture contemplates Christians, not as backsliders, but as saints, so does it apparently represent the Day of Judgment as immediate, and the interval of expectation as evanescent. It leaves on our minds the general impression that Christ was returning on earth at once, 'the time short,' worldly engagements superseded by 'the present distress,' persecutors urgent, Christians, as a body, sinless and expectant, without home, without plan for the future, looking up to heaven.⁵³

The realisation that the Parousia was not immediate meant that the Christian understanding of the period between death and resurrection changed and gradually became a more important subject among believers. The decline in the belief in the immediacy of the Parousia meant that the question of the condition of the souls of the dead became a more urgent one. The doctrine of Purgatory therefore developed as a necessary and reasonable explanation of what happens to the souls of the dead in the interval between death and resurrection:

⁵³ *Dev.*, pp. 62-63.

When the nations were converted and offences abounded, then the Church came out to view, on the one hand as a temporal establishment, on the other as a remedial system, and passages of Scripture aided and directed the development which before were of inferior account. Hence the doctrine of Penance as the complement of Baptism, and of Purgatory as the explanation of the Intermediate State.⁵⁴

Newman argued that ‘vague forms’ of the doctrine of Purgatory, notions such as ‘suffering’ and ‘disadvantage or punishment’ for the faithful departed, had been held almost unanimously in the first four centuries of the Church.⁵⁵ Among the Church Fathers Newman spoke of two schools of the doctrine of Purgatory, the Greek and the African. Among the Greek Fathers Purgatory was conceived as a ‘trial of fire’ through which all must pass at the consummation of the world. In contrast, the African doctrine had a close affinity to what Newman called the ‘present doctrine of the Roman Church.’⁵⁶ Despite these variations, Newman’s reading of the Fathers revealed that the doctrine of Purgatory was linked closely to the penance which was applied to post-baptismal sins. The Fathers distinguished between sins committed before and after baptism. Citing Clement of Alexandria Newman demonstrated how post-baptismal sins must be remitted by ‘purifying discipline’ either in this life or the next:

The necessity of this purifying discipline is such, that if it does not take place in this life, it must after death, and is then to be effected by fire, not by a destructive, but a discriminating fire, pervading the soul which passes through it.⁵⁷

Newman explained how the penal concepts commonly used to describe the doctrine of Purgatory, such as being ‘sent to prison’ and ‘purged a long while by fire’, were drawn

⁵⁴ *Dev.*, p. 63.

⁵⁵ *Dev.*, p. 21.

⁵⁶ *Dev.*, p. 21.

⁵⁷ *Dev.* p. 386.

from Patristic images used to describe the punishment imposed on lapsed Christians.⁵⁸ But Newman believed that the terms *missum in carcerem* (sent to prison) and *purgari diu igne* (to be long purged by fire), seemed to go beyond the mere description of ecclesiastical discipline for lapsed Christians, to a narrative of how God remits sins, and a description of the nature of purgation after death:

There is a celebrated passage in St. Cyprian, on the subject of the punishment of lapsed Christians, which certainly seems to express the same doctrine [Purgatory]. St. Cyprian is arguing in favour of readmitting the lapsed, when penitent; and his argument seems to be that it does not follow that we absolve them simply because we simply restore them to the Church. He writes thus to Antonian: 'It is one thing to stand for pardon, another to arrive at glory; one to be sent to prison (*missum in carcerem*) and not to go out till the last farthing be paid, another to receive at once the reward of faith and virtue; one thing to be tormented for sin in long pain, and so to be cleansed and purged a long while by fire (*purgari diu igne*), another to be washed from all sin in martyrdom; one thing, in short, to wait for the Lord's sentence in the Day of Judgment, another at once to be crowned by Him.' Some understand this passage to refer to the penitential discipline of the Church which was imposed on the penitent; and, as far as the context goes, certainly no sense could be more apposite. Yet ... the words in themselves seem to go beyond any mere ecclesiastical, though virtually divine censure; especially '*missum in carcerem*' and '*purgari diu igne*.'⁵⁹

The understanding that the doctrine of Purgatory developed in response to the problem of the remission of post-baptismal sins, was a development Newman saw as a parallel to the practice of infant baptism for the remission of Original Sin.⁶⁰ He cited St. John Fisher's *Assertionis Lutheranae Confutatio* to explain how in the Primitive Church, where Christians were frequently exposed to the threat of persecution and martyrdom, the doctrine of Purgatory as a 'punishment' for post-baptismal sins seemed

⁵⁸ *Dev.*, p. 386.

⁵⁹ *Dev.*, pp. 386-7.

⁶⁰ *Dev.*, p. 388.

unnecessary.⁶¹ Referring to his *Tract LXXIX* Newman held that the ‘Christian mind’ was gradually prepared for the doctrine of Purgatory as the threat of persecution subsided and was replaced by penance. Given the varying degrees of moral goodness among men, the majority of Christians were ‘too little formed in religious habits either for heaven or hell.’ The interval between death and resurrection is therefore a time in which the spiritual character in man is made complete:

... it is obvious to have recourse to the interval before His coming, as a time during which this incompleteness may be remedied; as a season, not of changing the spiritual bent and character of the soul departed, whatever that be, for probation ends with mortal life, but of developing it in a more determinate form, whether of good or of evil.⁶²

As the fact of post-baptismal sins led to the doctrine of Purgatory, Newman held that the practice of penance was evidence of how the teaching on Purgatory led to doctrinal developments beyond itself. Newman described this ‘logical sequence’ of doctrinal truths as one of the tests of authenticity of development as opposed to a corruption. The practice of penance for post-baptismal sins and the development of the doctrine of Purgatory was an instance of ‘one doctrine leading to another; so that, if the former be admitted, the latter can hardly be denied, and the latter can hardly be called a corruption without taking exception to the former.’⁶³ Writing to J. M. Capes in December 1848, on a paper Capes had written on Protestant Hagiology, Newman advised him to emphasise the consistency of penance with the doctrine of Purgatory. He believed that a repugnance for one usually lead to a denial of the other:

⁶¹ *Dev.*, p. 388.

⁶² *Dev.*, p. 388.

⁶³ *Dev.*, p. 381.

... It might be well to show how closely the doctrine of purgatory is connected with the historical accounts of the Saints' penances. *Of course* they, who deny purgatory, are shocked at these penances — but *how is it consistent* in Catholics, who confess that doctrine, to exclaim against what is not only in keeping with it, but may be *the means* of their having less to do personally with it? As (according to Bellarmine) they who deny purgatory will never go there, so they who deny the Saints' vicarious penances, will never get out of it (i.e. till the day of doom) — It's like quarrelling with one's bread and butter. This is fact, not supposition — e.g. some years ago, before (I think) I was a Catholic, I heard, *entre nous*, that Lord S. [Shrewsbury?] made very light of the prospect of purgatory — no wonder that the penances of the Saints throw an uncomfortable light on that prospect.⁶⁴

Since the doctrine of Purgatory implies that sin must be accounted for in the next life it developed into a spirituality of penance for sins, and also shed an entirely new light on man's present life, forming his character in endurance and sacrifice:

... A conviction that sin must have its punishment, here or hereafter, and that we all must suffer, how overpowering will be its effect, what a new light does it cast on the history of the soul, what a change does it make in our judgment of the external world, what a reversal of our natural wishes and aims for the future! Is a doctrine conceivable which would so elevate the mind above this present state, and teach it so successfully to dare difficult things, and to be reckless of danger and pain? He who believes that suffer he must, and that delayed punishment may be the greater, will be above the world, will admire nothing, fear nothing, desire nothing. He has within his breast a source of greatness, self-denial, heroism. This is the secret spring of strenuous efforts and persevering toil, of the sacrifice of fortune, friends, ease, reputation, happiness [...] It is in vain to look out for missionaries for China or Africa, or evangelists for our great towns, or Christian attendants on the sick, or teachers of the ignorant, on such a scale of numbers as the need requires, without the doctrine of Purgatory.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ *LD XII*, p. 37.

⁶⁵ *Dev.*, p. 392.

Newman did not elaborate a theology of Purgatory in the *Essay on Development*, but he did suggest a number of notions by which one could conceive of purgation after death. First he spoke of a ‘momentary ordeal to be undergone by all men after this life’, which was more or less severe according to the spiritual state of the soul.⁶⁶ This type of purgation could be understood as the type of universal conflagration which he had already spoke of in *Tract LXXIX* in 1837.⁶⁷ In his second example, Newman suggested, for the first time, that the sight of the ‘perfection of God’ could constitute a suffering so great as to purify the soul: ‘The very sight of Divine Perfection in the invisible world will be in itself a pain, while it constitutes the purification of the imperfect but believing soul.’⁶⁸ While Newman did not develop this idea, the concept of purgation through a *visio Dei* would become a central to his later theology of Purgatory.

III. The Roman Catholic Sermons and Poems 1849-1853

The development of Newman’s understanding of Purgatory, which we find in his sermons after his conversion in 1845, cannot be compared to the development of his eschatology during his Anglican years. The sources we have for his preaching in his Roman Catholic years are limited. From 1849 Newman followed the usage among Roman Catholic priests of preaching spontaneously, using only the aid of notes, rather than writing sermons out fully.⁶⁹ These brief, unelaborated notes, together with his published *Discourses to Mixed Congregations* (1849), form the majority of the sources for Newman’s preaching on Purgatory in his Roman Catholic years. One sermon, ‘Preparation for Judgement’, of a series of eight sermons preached in 1848, *Catholic*

⁶⁶ *Dev.*, pp. 389-90.

⁶⁷ *Tract LXXIX*, pp. 33-38.

⁶⁸ *Dev.*, p. 390.

⁶⁹ *LD XII*, p. 165.

Sermons of Cardinal Newman or Faith and Prejudice and other unpublished sermons, is also significant.⁷⁰ The majority of his sermons which deal with Purgatory are predominantly from the late 1840s and early 1850s. Another important source for tracing the development of his theology of Purgatory can be found in his poetry. In 1853 Newman began to publish religious poetry for a Roman Catholic audience. *Verses on Religious Subjects* contains his early Roman Catholic poems on Purgatory prior to the publication of the *Dream of Gerontius* in 1865.

Upon his reception into the Roman Catholic Church Newman accepted the doctrine of Purgatory *unequivocally* and was reluctant to enter into the theological controversies which had occupied him as an Anglican. When he published his *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions* in 1857, he explained why he had held back from subjects which would draw him into doctrinal controversy:

When the Author was preparing for the serious step, which he took nearly twelve years ago, of embracing the Catholic Religion, it was, if not his intention, at least his expectation, that he should never write again on any doctrinal subject. He was able to fancy himself, in the time then before him, discussing questions of philosophy or ecclesiastical history; nor did he exclude religious controversy, criticism, or literature, from his view; but it seemed to him incongruous that one, who had so freely taught and published error in a Protestant communion, should put himself forward as a dogmatic teacher in the Catholic Church.⁷¹

Newman's reluctance to put himself forward as a 'dogmatic teacher' on subjects which could prove contentious is evident in his early Roman Catholic Sermons on Purgatory.

⁷⁰ LD XII, p. 160.

⁷¹ OS, p. v. See also *Apo.*, p. 214.

In the 1840-50s he was careful to adhere to the traditional Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, attempting to strike a balance between the punitive and ameliorative notions of the doctrine. His sermon 'Purgatory', of November 1849 is an example of this. Here we find Newman's earliest Roman Catholic theology of Purgatory. He emphasised that while Purgatory is not a state for the condemned, it cannot be described as a 'joyful place'. While he did not speak of Purgatory as a kind of lesser hell, he used terms reminiscent of St. Alphonsus Liguori, describing it as 'near hell' and 'at worst flame, at best and always desolation.'⁷² Souls in Purgatory are 'downcast, miserable, dreary, as being hungry, like the feeling of sinking – fainting to the body.'⁷³

While much of the eschatology in his 1849 sermon 'Purgatory' was punitive and satisfactory in theology, in the same sermon Newman was also keen to stress its consolations, rather than dwelling exclusively on the punitive aspect of the doctrine. Using St. Francis de Sales' reflections on the consolations of Purgatory he outlined six points to describe how the soul is consoled in the state of purgation.⁷⁴ First, the disembodied spirits in Purgatory are 'holy souls', as they are unable to sin anymore, and have been freed from the compulsion of concupiscence. Second, they have a heightened sensitivity for sin and hate it to such a degree that they 'have greater pleasure in suffering than in not suffering with the feeling of sin.' Third, the souls of Purgatory fully resign themselves to God's will in suffering. Newman described this as the self 'plunging' of the soul into a state of purgation.⁷⁵ This idea is also found in 'On the Particular Judgement', which he preached a year later in 1850.⁷⁶ The concept became

⁷² SN, pp. 24-5.

⁷³ SN, pp. 24-5

⁷⁴ See Robert Ornsby, *The Life of St. Francis de Sales*, London: Burns and Lambert, 1856, pp. 264-5.

⁷⁵ SN, p. 25.

⁷⁶ SN, p. 270.

central to the theology of Purgatory in the *Dream*.⁷⁷ Newman described the fourth consolation of the souls of Purgatory as the assurance the disembodied has that they have finished the struggle with sin. Newman described this as a ‘resignation in the storm’, and an ‘ecstatic feeling.’⁷⁸ Fifth, these souls, while not yet in a state of beatitude, are buoyed by the assurance of salvation. Finally the souls of Purgatory are assisted and consoled by the angels, a theme which figures prominently in Newman’s poems on Purgatory.⁷⁹

Despite careful attempts at striking a balance between the two divergent views of Purgatory in Roman Catholic theology, Newman’s preference for the ameliorative view is evident. As early as 1849 one of Newman’s sermons, ‘Purity and Love’, which does not deal directly with Purgatory, displays a very clear understanding of a ‘voluntary purgation’, which would, in later years, form one of the key aspects for his understanding of the doctrine in the *Dream of Gerontius*. At the end of the ‘Purity and Love’, he reflected on the death of the faithful soul. Newman described how, despite the soul’s awareness of its own unworthiness, it has a sure hope being comforted through ‘seeing His face, though for a moment!’⁸⁰ In the sermon, the pains of Purgatory are described not in terms of physical torments, but as the mental distress of both pining to attain God and the urgency to flee his presence, motivated by an awful sense of shame and unworthiness:

⁷⁷ See *VVO*, pp. 362f.

⁷⁸ *SN*, p. 25.

⁷⁹ *SN*, p. 25. See ‘Guardian Angel’, *VVO*, pp. 296-298; ‘The Dream of Gerontius’, *VVO*, pp. 297f; and ‘Purgatory’, *VRS*, pp. 52f.

⁸⁰ *Mix.*, p. 81

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? whom have I desired on earth, whom have I had on earth, but Thee? whom shall I have amid the sharp flame but Thee? Yea, though I be now descending thither, into 'a land desert, pathless and without water,' I will fear no ill, for Thou art with me. I have seen Thee this day face to face, and it sufficeth; I have seen Thee, and that glance of Thine is sufficient for a century of sorrow, in the nether prison. I will live on that look of Thine, though I see Thee not, till I see Thee again, never to part from Thee.⁸¹

The subject of the purgatorial pains was one that Newman dwelt on often. In the sermon 'Purgatory' (1849) Newman accepted that some form of pain, whether physical or mental, belonged to the received tradition of the doctrine in the Roman Catholic Church, for God 'might have saved us without pain, yet he saves us with pain.' However he also acknowledged another 'received tradition' which taught that there are 'many mansions' in Purgatory of which some admit no pain of sense at all.⁸² Despite the horrific descriptions of physical pains which one finds in authors who emphasised the punitive model of Purgatory, Newman insisted that the 'pain of loss' was greater than any physical pain or suffering. In the sermon 'On our Lord's Agony' of March 1850, he described how the 'Pain of mind [is] greater than that of body, though we are more conversant in bodily pain - grief, fear, anxiety, terror, despair, disappointment - *poena damni* of the lost greater than *poena sensus*.⁸³ Again in 'Mental sufferings of Our Lord in his Passion' of 1849, the gravity of mental suffering is considered far greater and intense than any physical pain. Newman's emphasis on the mental pains of Purgatory, rather than the physical, is because he held that there can be no real pain if there is no inward sensibility or spirit to be the seat of it.⁸⁴ Each created thing suffers pain according to its nature. A tree has life, growth and decay, it can be injured and

⁸¹ *Mix.*, pp. 81-82

⁸² *SN*, pp. 23-25.

⁸³ *SN*, p. 39.

⁸⁴ *Mix.*, p. 326.

killed, but it cannot suffer as it does not have an ‘immaterial principle.’⁸⁵ An animal may suffer, but its pain is non-reflective, and is endured unselfconsciously. Man, on the other hand, is a rational being, who can reflect on his sufferings, and therefore feels its full extent. Distinct from animals, the human person can feel mental pain quite distinct from any physical pain: loss of dignity, embarrassment, humiliation. It is man’s awareness of himself and his ‘intellectual comprehension of pain’, which makes him so acutely sensitive to suffering:

Hence, I repeat, that brute animals would seem to feel so little pain, because, that is, they have not the power of reflection or of consciousness. They do not know they exist; they do not contemplate themselves; they do not look backwards or forwards; every moment as it succeeds is their all; they wander over the face of the earth, and see this thing and that, and feel pleasure and pain, but still they take everything as it comes, and then let it go again, as men do in dreams. They have memory, but not the memory of an intellectual being; they put together nothing, they make nothing properly one and individual to themselves out of the particular sensations which they receive; nothing is to them a reality, or has a substance, beyond those sensations; they are but sensible of a number of successive impressions. And hence, as their other feelings, so their feeling of pain is but faint and dull, in spite of their outward manifestations of it. It is the intellectual comprehension of pain, as a whole diffused through successive moments, which gives it its special power and keenness, and it is the soul only, which a brute has not, which is capable of that comprehension.⁸⁶

This ‘intolerable’ mental suffering which the souls in Purgatory suffer is described in the sermon ‘Preparation for the Judgement’ (1848). Here Newman showed how man is never fully aware of his own sins and their consequences during his life. It is only at

⁸⁵ *Mix*, pp. 325-326.

⁸⁶ *Mix*, p. 328.

death that the soul gains full awareness of the consequences of his actions and the extent of his sinfulness:

Who will be able to bear the sight of himself? And yet we shall be obliged steadily to confront ourselves and to see ourselves. In this life we shrink from knowing our real selves. We do not like to know how sinful we are. We love those who prophesy smooth things to us, and we are angry with those who tell us of our faults. But then, not one fault only, but all the secret, as well as evident, defects of our character will be clearly brought out. We shall see what we feared to see here, and much more. And then, when the full sight of ourselves comes to us, who will not wish that he had known more of himself here, rather than leaving it for the inevitable day to reveal it all to him!⁸⁷

Detached completely from all inclination to commit sin, the souls in Purgatory gain a clear perception of the gravity of sin committed in their lives. This knowledge causes the disembodied soul intolerable mental pain.

Further developments of Newman's understanding of the purgatorial pains prior to the *Dream of Gerontius* are evident particularly in the poetry he published in the 1850s. In May 1853 Newman wrote to Isaac Williams expressing his intention to print a volume of poetry for his 'own people.'⁸⁸ The work, *Verses on Religious Subjects*, included verses taken from his Anglican contributions in the *Lyra Apostolica* (1835). In the 'Purgatory' (1853), he described the pains of Purgatory with contrasting images of both penance and glory.⁸⁹ In the poem he shows how souls in the state of purgation must undergo penance, but their pain is tempered with rest that comes from the security that they are assured heaven:

⁸⁷ CS, p. 36.

⁸⁸ LD XV, p. 367.

⁸⁹ VRS, pp. 47-54.

But let it be thy best prayers,
That I may find the grace
To reach the holy house of toll,
The frontier penance place, -

To reach that golden palace bright,
Where souls elect abide,
Waiting their certain call to Heaven,
With angels at their side⁹⁰

In the fifth stanza Newman expressed an idea we also find in the sermons ‘Preparation for the Judgement’ (1848), and ‘Purgatory’ (1849), namely, that purgation after death is a trial that souls willingly undergo, rather than a punishment which God inflicts upon them. The double character of penance is described as the ‘willing agony’ the soul accepts, and the comfort and bliss which accompanies it:

Where hate, nor pride, nor fear torments
The transitory guest,
But in willing agony
He plunges, and is blest.⁹¹

Again, the penal expressions ‘holy house of toll’ and the ‘frontier penance-place’ are used simultaneously with the description of Purgatory as the ‘halt mid-way’ of Elijah in 1Kings 19:5-8, where the patriarch was refreshed and strengthened before ascending to the mountain of God’s presence:

But let it be thy best of prayers,
That I may find grace
To reach the holy house of toll,
The frontier penance-place,

⁹⁰ *VRS*, pp. 52f.

⁹¹ *VRS*, p. 53.

To reach that golden palace bright,
Where souls elect abide,
Waiting their certain call to Heaven,
With angels at their side;

Where hate, nor pride, nor fear torments
The transitory guest,
But in willing agony
He plunges, and is blest.

And, as the fainting patriarch gained
His needful halt mid-way,
And then refreshed pursued his path,
where up the mount it lay,

So pray, that, rescued from the storm
Of Heaven's eternal ire,
I may lie down, then rise again,
Safe, and yet saved by fire.⁹²

When Newman republished 'Purgatory' in *Verses on Various Occasions* in 1868, he changed its title to 'The Golden Prison.'⁹³ Newman's understanding of Purgatory as a type of prison is explained in a correspondence he had in June 1878 with the Dante scholar, Edward Moore (1835-1916), of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, who had a number of questions on the doctrine of Purgatory.⁹⁴ For Newman the notion of imprisonment was essential to the understanding of purgatorial pains. Newman explained to Moore that while the decree of the Council of Trent did not define 'pain' as an essential element of the doctrine of Purgatory, it did decree that souls are 'imprisoned' there - *detentas*. Newman emphasised that it cannot be denied that the concept of 'imprisonment' does imply a disadvantage, but cannot imply 'pain' any more than if one were to say 'the Pope is now in pain, because confined to the Vatican

⁹² *VRS*, p. 53.

⁹³ *VVO*, pp. 299-300.

⁹⁴ *LD XXVIII*, p. 369.

and its garden.⁹⁵ However he agreed that the idea of some form of pain, as a general accompaniment to the notion of imprisonment, has entered into the received teaching of the Church.⁹⁶

The concept of Purgatory represented as both a state of glory and suffering was repeated again in ‘Guardian Angel’ (1853), where he described Purgatory as a ‘golden furnace.’⁹⁷ The ending of this poem has similarities to *The Dream of Gerontius*. In ‘Guardian Angel’, as in the *Dream*, Newman described how an angel accompanied the soul before the judgement seat of God. In the *Dream* the soul is given leave to approach the throne of God to experience a *visio Dei* which ‘scorches’ it. In ‘Guardian Angel’, the soul is taken to ‘the golden furnace’ where ‘sin is burned away’:

And thou wilt hang about my bed,
When life is ebbing low;
Of doubt, impatience, and of gloom,
The jealous sleepless foe.

Mine, when I stand before my Judge;
And mine, if spared to stay
Within the golden furnace, till
My sin is burn’d away.⁹⁸

‘Guardian Angel’ was not the first time Newman had made direct reference to Purgatorial fire in his poetry. In the final stanza of ‘The Golden Prison’ Newman spoke of being ‘Safe, yet saved by fire’, but it is only in ‘For the Dead’, which Newman wrote in 1857, four years after ‘Guardian Angel’ and ‘The Golden Prison’, that he began to

⁹⁵ *LD XXVIII*, p. 369.

⁹⁶ *LD XXVIII*, p. 369.

⁹⁷ *VVO*, pp. 296-298.

⁹⁸ *VVO*, pp. 297f.

develop what he understood by purgatorial ‘fire’.⁹⁹ In the fourth stanza of ‘For the Dead’ Newman referred to the souls in Purgatory and ‘their fire of love, not less in keenness than the flame’, which ‘burn away disfigurement and stain.’¹⁰⁰ Here the image of purgatorial fire is understood as the fire of love, rather than according to the classical material connotation of physical fire. However Newman retained the ‘detentas’ description used at Trent by emphasising that that souls were ‘in prison’ in Purgatory for ‘debts unpaid’:

Help, Lord, the souls which Thou hast made,
The souls to Thee so dear,
In prison for the debt unpaid
Of sins committed here [...]

Oh, by their patience of delay,
Their hope amid their pain,
Their sacred zeal to burn away
Disfigurement and stain;
Oh, by their fire of love, not less
In keenness than the flame,
Oh, by their very helplessness,
Oh, by Thy own great Name,

Good Jesu, help! sweet Jesu, aid
The souls to Thee most dear,
In prison for the debt unpaid
Of sins committed here.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ *VVO*, pp. 311f.

¹⁰⁰ *VVO*, p. 311.

¹⁰¹ *VVO*, pp. 311-12

Chapter Five

The Enduring Significance of *The Dream of Gerontius* for Roman Catholic Eschatology

This chapter outlines how *The Dream of Gerontius* represents the fruition of Newman's theology of Purgatory. Since the publication of *Tract XC* in 1841, Newman had tried to show how the doctrine of Purgatory need not be understood solely according to a punitive model commonly associated with images of physical torture by fire. By the early 1850's Newman's theology of Purgatory combined elements of both the ameliorative and the punitive models of the doctrine. However by 1865, when Newman wrote the *Dream*, the ameliorative view, which Faber and Pusey had identified with the works of Catherine of Genoa and Francis de Sales, had a greater resonance with Newman's understanding of purgation. This ameliorative emphasis is seen particularly in Gerontius's 'vision of God' which forms the climax of the *Dream*. In the poem he successfully represented what Ian Ker calls a doctrine of Purgatory understood as a 'supremely spiritual reality.' In so doing he avoided images 'popularly conceived of in crudely physical terms.'¹

I. The Genesis of *The Dream of Gerontius*

Newman was not commissioned to write the *Dream*, nor did he plan to write a poem on Purgatory. Rather, the composition of the work was motivated by the events and circumstances of his life in the mid 1860s. By the late 1850s Newman had become

¹ Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman: A Biography*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1988, pp. 575-6.

increasingly aware of the disappointments and burden of his years. He also began to seriously contemplate the prospect of death. His private journal, which he took up writing again in 1859 after a gap of twelve years, overflows with feelings of physical and spiritual loss of vigour:

I am writing on my knees, and in God's sight. May he be gracious to me! as years go on, I have less sensible devotion and inward life [...] The Greek poet, himself an old man, speaks (in the Chorus of the Oed. Col.) of the unamiable state of the aged. old men are in soul as stiff, as lean, as bloodless as their bodies, except so far as grace penetrates and softens them.²

Ill-health and depression had beset Newman for several years, and was exacerbated by numerous problems in the 1850s-1860s. J.J. Gordon of the Oratory, to whom Newman dedicated the *Dream*, was instrumental in gathering evidence against Giacinto Achilli, who in 1850 was suing Newman for libel.³ As a result of his work on the trial, Gordon's health severely deteriorated, and he died in 1853.⁴ Gordon's premature death was a shock for Newman, but it was the trial of a different kind that made Newman reflect more seriously on the question of his death. During the difficult months from December 1863 until March 1864, Charles Kingsley accused Newman of teaching that 'Truth, for its own sake, had never been a virtue with the Roman clergy', a statement which would eventually motivate Newman to write his *Apologia pro vita Sua*.⁵ The strain of the controversy over the Kingsley affair made Newman reflect not only on the course of his own life, but also of his death. On Passion Sunday, 13th March 1864, he wrote a profession of faith that was published posthumously in *Meditations and Devotions*,

² AW, p. 249.

³ LD XXII, p. 141; LD XIV, p. 363.

⁴ LD XV, p. 299.

⁵ See LD XX, p. 571.

under the title 'Written in Prospect of Death'. In the profession he was convinced that his death was imminent:

I write in the direct view of death as in prospect. No one in the house, I suppose, suspects anything of the kind. Nor anyone anywhere, unless it be the medical men.

I write at once - because, on my own feelings of mind and body, it is as if nothing at all were the matter with me, just now; but because I do not know how long this perfect possession of my sensible and available health and strength may last...⁶

The thought of his death lingered with Newman in the months following the controversy with Kingsley, and into 1865. In January 1865, a month before he wrote the *Dream*, Newman's attention was almost continually on the thought of approaching death. On New Year's day 1865 he preached 'Eternity', dwelling on the passing of this life and the prospect of eternity:

We pass in the course of 365 days the day of our death - like walking over our gravestone. What does it end in? - a state in which time ceases, or rather time, it may be said, stops. Time in this world is marked by motion. Motion, or what is commonly called change, is the very fulfilment of this state of things. [...] But the day will come when time brings with it no changes - (past, present, and future because [there is] change) - when all is the same - day after day, age after age - in short, when time stops - *an eternal now*. This we call eternity.⁷

As well as his preoccupation with death, his correspondence with Pusey from December 1864 to February 1865 was occupied with questions on Purgatory. Their letters in December to January deal with the theological implication of indulgences and

⁶ *MD*, pp. 607f.

⁷ *SN*, pp. 194f.

how they may be able to remit the pains of Purgatory.⁸ Newman wrote several letters in response to questions that Pusey raised concerning the doctrine.⁹ On 1st February Pusey asked ‘How far it is a received opinion that the Blessed Virgin Mary is Queen of Purgatory, and what does it mean?’¹⁰ Newman replied that the title may be applied to the Blessed Virgin Mary, in so far as she is understood as an example of intercessory prayer.¹¹ During this theological correspondence, the thought of death became more immediate when on 15th January 1865 Newman recorded in his diary that Cardinal Wiseman was dying and had received the ‘last sacraments.’¹² Two days after the news that the aged Cardinal was dying, he began to write the poem of the death of the old man Gerontius, ‘till it was finished, on small bits of paper.’¹³

It was coincidental that in April of the same year Newman was approached by Henry James Coleridge, who was to take over the Jesuit periodical *The Month*. Coleridge was desperate to find contributors, and, although hesitant, Newman agreed to have the *Dream* published in two sections from May-June 1865.¹⁴ Encouraged by the success of the *Dream*, Coleridge persuaded Newman to publish it separately.¹⁵ Newman also included it in his *Verses on Various Occasions* in 1868.¹⁶ Several months after it appeared in *The Month* Newman explained in correspondence with Lady Charles Thynne how it first came to be published:

⁸ LD XXI, p. 361.

⁹ LD XXI, pp. 366, 369ff, 377.

¹⁰ LD XXI, pp. 401f.

¹¹ LD XXI, pp. 401f.

¹² LD XXI, p. 388.

¹³ LD XXII, p. 72.

¹⁴ LD XXI, pp. 451f. See ‘The Dream of Gerontius’, *The Month*, II, May 1865, pp. 415-25, and June 1865, pp. 532-44.

¹⁵ LD XXII, p. 108; *The Dream of Gerontius*, London: Burns and Oates, 1865.

¹⁶ VVO, pp. 319-366.

I am much pleased, and half surprised, that you and others should like the *Dream of Gerontius*. It was written by accident - and it was published by accident. But now that I am encouraged by friends such as yourself, deliberately to commit myself to it, I dare say I shall print it by itself.¹⁷

While Newman did not explain who he was thinking of when he composed the *Dream*, the review of the poem following its publication in *Verses on Various Occasions* in 1868 by J. M. Capes (1813-1889), the founder of the *Rambler*, suggested that its content was autobiographical. In *The Fortnightly Review* Capes wrote, ‘Under the guise of Gerontius, Dr. Newman has imagined dying, surrounded by friends, then passing into new life beyond the veil, and speedily enter into the purgatorial state, to rest there in repose and happy sadness.’¹⁸ Newman wrote to Capes on 16th March in agreement:

I have seen your article on my *Verses* in the *Fortnightly*, and hope you will take my words as kindly as they are meant, when I say I sincerely thank you for it. Some parts of it struck me as very just. I have often been puzzled at myself, that I should be both particularly fond of being alone, and particularly fond of being with friends. Yet I know both the one and the other are true, though I can no more reconcile them than you can. You are the first, as far as I know, who have noticed an apparent inconsistency to which I can but plead guilty. I have said above that some parts of your review struck me as just, because I hardly know how to take to myself the special encomiums contained in other parts, which read more like the composition of a friend than of a critic.¹⁹

¹⁷ *LD XXII*, p. 86.

¹⁸ J. M. Capes, ‘Critical Notices’, *The Fortnightly Review*, Volume III, London: Chapman and Hall, Jan-Jun 1868, p. 344.

¹⁹ *LD XXIV*, p. 53.

II. The Theology of *The Dream*

Newman's *Dream* consists of two distinct parts which are divided by Gerontius's death. The first of these is a dramatic description of the final moments of Gerontius's life in which Newman expresses the intercessory role of the visible Church. The second part, which recounts the soul's journey to judgement and purgation, is formed largely of a dialogue between 'the soul' and his 'guardian angel.' The role of the guardian angel is key to this section. The dialogue between Gerontius and his angel in the second section forms the framework for Newman's theology of Purgatory. Here he describes some key elements of Roman Catholic eschatology, particularly those enumerated by the Council of Trent, such as the efficacy of prayer for the dead, particular judgement, and purgation. Newman imagines particular judgment and purgation as the soul's experience of the sight of God after Paul's 'For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known' (1Cor 13:12). Gerontius's experience of the sight of God is linked to two other key aspects of Newman's eschatology in the *Dream*: the temporal and spatial perception of the disembodied soul, and the voluntary departure of the soul from God's presence to be fully purged.

A. The Communion of Saints: The Efficacy of Prayers for the Dead

The first section of the *Dream* is set within the liturgical framework of *ordo commendationis animae* of the *Rituale Romanum*.²⁰ In his final moments Gerontius is surrounded by 'assistants' who recite a series of litanies invoking the saints. Overcome

²⁰ See *Rituale Romanum*, Rome: Mechliniae, 1859, pp. 166-190.

by fear and doubts of desolation at death, Gerontius expresses anxious pleas for mercy and a confession of faith before dying and the priest prays the *Proficiscere*, a prayer said at the moment of death for the departing soul:

Novissima hora est; and I fain would sleep.
The pain has wearied me ... Into Thy hands,
O Lord, into Thy hands ...

Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo!
Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul!
Go forth from this world! Go, in the Name of God
The Omnipotent Father, who created thee!²¹

Newman did not feel the need to add anything on who the dying man was, or what bearing the decisions and actions of his life would have after death. Rather, he wanted to show the importance of dying in communion with the Church and in her sacraments. Newman viewed these final moments of earthly life as a ‘dire summons’, crucial to the soul’s future salvation. Gerontius therefore eagerly implores the aid of the praying assistants to overcome this final trial:

Pray for me, O my friends; a visitant
Is knocking his dire summons at my door,
The like of whom, to scare me and to daunt,
Has never, never come to me before;
‘Tis death, - O loving friends, your prayers! - ‘tis
he! ...
As though my very being had given way,
As though I was no more a substance now,
And could fall back on nought to be my stay,
(Help, loving Lord! Thou my sole Refuge,
Thou,)
And turn no wither, but must needs decay
And drop from out the universal frame

²¹ *VVO*, p. 326.

Into that shapeless, scopeless, blank abyss,
That utter nothingness, of which I came:
This is it that has come to pass in me;
Oh, horror! this it is, my dearest, this;
So pray for me, my friends, who have not strength
to pray.²²

Newman chose a liturgical setting for the opening scene to underline the importance of the visible community of the praying Church. Commenting on Newman's use of liturgical text and hymns at the beginning of the *Dream*, Michael Wheeler claimed that Newman was inspired by Dante's *Purgatorio*.²³ However, in 1884 Newman wrote to Edward Hayes Plumptre expressing his difficulty in understanding the allusions in Dante's *Purgatorio*. Moreover, Newman admitted that he was 'not enough of an Italian scholar to read the original.' While he wished 'many times' to take up H.F. Cary's translation of the work, he was 'forced to lay the book down again', as he found it 'intolerably dry.'²⁴ When in 1868, a review in *The Guardian* made the parallel with Dante, Newman insisted:

One thing made me blush, if an old man can blush - that about the bow of Dante. I will tell you the parallel which struck myself. Do you recollect the story of humdrum and bashful Tom Churton? how at some great Ashmolean gathering he gently breathed into something that looked like a wind instrument - and what followed?²⁵

Rather than being inspired by Dante's use of liturgy as a theological motif, Newman used images of liturgy and church to express the eschatological doctrines such as the Communion of Saints. In one of his earliest Anglican sermons on the future life,

²² *VVO*, p. 320.

²³ Michael Wheeler, *Death and the Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 305.

²⁴ *LD XXX*, p. 402.

²⁵ *LD XXIV*, p 42.

‘Holiness Necessary for Future Blessedness’, he spoke of heaven as ‘a church’, in which ‘no language of this world is heard’:

We praise Him, worship Him, sing to Him, thank Him, confess to Him, give ourselves up to Him, and ask His blessing. And therefore, a church is like heaven.²⁶

Similarly, the scene of Gerontius’s final struggled words ‘Hora novissima est; and I would fain sleep’,²⁷ before the priest pronounces the *Proficiscere*, are strikingly similar to Newman’s own contemplation of death in his 1833 poem ‘Hora Novissima’, where he implored for prayers to ‘sustain my labouring breath’ and ‘absolving words be said’:

I pray not, Lord, that friends may be,
Or kindred, standing by, -
Choice blessing! which I leave to Thee
To grant me or deny.

But let my failing limbs beneath
My Mother’s smile recline;
And prayers sustain my labouring breath
From out her sacred shrine.

And let the Cross beside my bed
In its due emblems rest:
And let the absolving words be said,
To ease a laden breast.

Thou, Lord, where’er we lie, canst aid;
But he, who taught His own
To live as one, will not unbraid
The dread to die alone.²⁸

²⁶ *PPS* I, pp. 4-5.

²⁷ *VVO*, p. 326.

²⁸ *VVO*, pp. 175-6.

The emphasis on the Communion of Saints is not confined to the deathbed scene at the beginning of the *Dream* rather Newman continued the theme throughout the poem. Gerontius's accompanying guardian angel emphasises that the soul does not face the journey to the afterlife alone, but is supported by the visible communion of the Church on earth, and the invisible Church of heaven. The praying Church on earth intercedes for Gerontius, so that even after his death he still 'hears' the prayers of those around his bed.²⁹ As he enters the state of purgation, Gerontius's angel reassures him that the prayers of the Church will continue to guide him to beatitude:

And Masses on the earth, and prayers in heaven
Shall aid thee at the throne of the Most
Highest.³⁰

The intercessory role of the Church for the souls of the dead is not limited to the praying assistants who surround Gerontius on earth, rather the soul is also aided by the prayers of angels after death. Before he is judged, the 'Angel of Agony', who strengthened Jesus in his last hours, stands before the throne of God imploring for the souls of the dead:

Jesu! by that shuddering dread which fell on Thee;
Jesu! by that cold dismay which sicken'd Thee;
Jesu! by that pang of heart which thrill'd in Thee;
Jesu! by that mount of sins which crippled Thee;
Jesu! by that sense of guilt which stifled Thee;
Jesu! by that innocence which girdled Thee;
Jesu! by that sanctity which reign'd in Thee;
Jesu! by that Godhead which was one with Thee;
Jesu! spare these souls which are so dear to Thee;
Who in prison, calm and patient, wait for Thee;

²⁹ *VVO*, pp. 328, 360-61.

³⁰ *VVO*, p. 366.

Hasten, Lord their hour, and bid them come to
Thee,
To that glorious Home, where they shall ever gaze
on Thee.³¹

Angels featured frequently in Newman's descriptions of Purgatory. In the *Dream* he rejected the punitive role often ascribed to angels in the Roman Catholic eschatology of the nineteenth century, which portrayed them as 'active executioners of God's justice'.³² Rather, he viewed them as guides and intercessors of disembodied souls. Newman described how the 'Angels of Purgatory' are given the 'willing task' to 'nurse and lull' Gerontius in his state of Purgation.³³ This positive angelology, is found not only in the *Dream*, but also in his preaching. In September 1860, in a series of four sermons on angels, he described their ministry as 'tenderness and sweetness' for the care of soul.³⁴ It was, he admitted in his *Apologia*, to Patristic sources, particularly those of the Alexandrian Fathers, that he had gained much of his angelology:

It was, I suppose, to the Alexandrian school and to the early Church, that I owe in particular what I definitely held about Angels. I viewed them, not only as ministers employed by the Creator in the Jewish and Christian dispensations, as we find on the face of Scripture, but as carrying on, as Scripture also implies, the Economy of the Visible World.³⁵

³¹ *VVO*, pp. 361-62.

³² *AFJ*, p. 361.

³³ *VVO*, p. 366.

³⁴ *SN*, pp. 164, 161-66. See also *PPS II*, pp. 358-67.

³⁵ *Apo.*, p. 37.

B. Gerontius's Judgement and Purgatory: The Sight of God

Newman reveals his understanding of particular judgement in the *Dream* immediately after Gerontius has died, when the soul anticipates its destiny with an intense feeling of either terror or joy. After the struggle with death, in which Gerontius pleads for mercy and is overcome by a feeling of desolation, he is filled with a 'strange refreshment' and 'inexpressive lightness':

I went to sleep; and now I am refresh'd,
A strange refreshment: for I feel in me
An inexpressive lightness, and a sense
Of freedom, as I were at length myself,
And ne'er had been before. How still it is!
I hear no more the busy beat of time,
No, nor my fluttering breath, nor struggling pulse;
Nor does one moment differ from the next.
I had a dream; yes: - some one softly said
'He's gone;" and then a sigh went round the
room.³⁶

Gerontius asks why the fear of the prospect of imminent judgement he had before death, have not only disappeared, but have been transformed into a joyful anticipation of future judgement:

Dear Angel, say,
Why have I now no fear at meeting Him?
Along my earthly life, the thought of death
And judgment was to me most terrible.
I had it aye before me, and I saw
The Judge severe e'en in the Crucifix.
Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled;

³⁶ *VVO*, pp. 327-28

And at this balance of my destiny,
Now close upon me, I can forward look
With a serenest joy.³⁷

The angel explains that the joy that Gerontius feels within himself after death is a ‘pre-sage’ of the judgement to come - the ‘first fruit’ of heaven:

Thou hast forestall'd the agony, and so
For thee the bitterness of death is past.
Also, because already in thy soul
The judgment is begun. That day of doom,
One and the same for the collected world -
That solemn consummation for all flesh,
Is, in the case of each, anticipate
Upon his death; and, as the last great day
In the particular judgment is rehearsed,
So now, too, ere thou comest to the Throne,
A presage falls upon thee, as a ray
Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy lot.
That calm and joy uprising in thy soul
Is the first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,
And heaven begun.³⁸

Despite the joy Gerontius feels for his approaching judgement, Newman accepted unequivocally that the state of purgation involved some form of suffering. While Christ the judge is represented as ‘lover of souls’, of which Gerontius has ‘no fear at meeting Him’, in the dialogue with his guardian angel Gerontius anticipated that his journey to beatitude would nevertheless be a painful process, which he described as an ‘avenging flame.’³⁹ Several months before he wrote the *Dream* Newman explained, in correspondence with John F. Perrin in September 1864, why the Roman Catholic Church taught that souls undergo some form of suffering in Purgatory:

³⁷ *VVO*, p. 337.

³⁸ *VVO*, p. 338.

³⁹ *VVO*, p. 319, 347.

...punishment in Purgatory is in place of those ‘temporal punishments which had not been inflicted on earth.’ ‘There is nothing of atonement in it,’ in the sense in which you use the word; i.e. of reconciling man to his Maker. The death of our Lord is the only reconciliation, and no one suffers purgatory except those who have been *already* reconciled in this world, before they go there. No unholy, unjustified soul can go to Purgatory.⁴⁰

Since his Anglican days he held to the principle that the consequences of sins are remitted either in this world or the next. In 1865 he wrote to Pusey explaining that

we go upon the principle ‘Sin is ever punished in this world or the next’ - and again ‘The later the punishment, the heavier.’ Purgatory then is the substitute or equivalent for present penance - and therefore to pardon is indirectly to remit the pains of purgatory.⁴¹

While Newman accepted that souls undergo some form of suffering in the state of purgation, he was concerned that the subject seemed to dominate any discussion raised on the doctrine. Moreover, Newman was aware that little had been defined on the nature of this suffering. According to Trent, ‘pain’, he said, was not ‘the essential attribute of Purgatory’, rather, it had entered Roman Catholic theology as part of its ‘received teaching.’⁴² While one can say that Purgatory is characterised *primarily* as a place of ‘painful penance’, Newman emphasised that the Roman Catholic Church does not teach *de fide* that all souls in the state of purgation suffer to the same degree:

That it should *primarily* be a place of punishment can hardly be a difficulty to you, considering that in so many cases, in most cases, of

⁴⁰ LD XXI, p. 224.

⁴¹ LD XXI, p. 361.

⁴² LD XXVIII, p. 369.

the souls who enter it, it is a substitution of temporal punishment for eternal. The only point which you would be disposed to contest, is its being a place of painful penance for *all* who go to it; but this is not held by us *de fide*. It is the teaching of various Saints that, even those whose first experience of Purgatory is that of a painful penance, end their abode there with a state of calm enjoyment, having that refrigerium and requies, which in our prayers we daily ask for them.⁴³

Newman repeated his belief that there were varying degrees of suffering in Purgatory, and even a mitigation of ‘positive suffering’ on the occasion of the death of his closest friend, Ambrose St. John, some ten years after he wrote the *Dream*:

We believe that there are different degrees of purgatory - and various priests write to me to express their hope, that our dear friend has by this time escaped whatever there has awaited him of positive suffering, and either is in heaven, or at least out of pain.⁴⁴

Newman was careful to qualify the pains suffered in Purgatory as different from those suffered in Hell. If purgatorial pains are ‘temporal punishments’ suffered in view of spiritual development, they must differ from the eternal punishment of Hell, in which no spiritual development is possible. For Newman the prospect of suffering divorced from any prospect of spiritual development is enough to cause unequalled anguish far beyond those which a temporal punishment could inflict:

Eternity, or endlessness, is in itself mainly a negative idea, though the idea of suffering is positive. Its fearful force, as an element of future punishment, lies in what it excludes; it means never any change of state, no annihilation or restoration; but what, considered positively, it adds to suffering, we do not know. For what we know, the suffering of one moment may in itself have no bearing, or but a

⁴³ LD XXVIII, p. 369.

⁴⁴ LD XXVII, p. 311.

partial bearing, on the suffering of the next; and thus, as far as its intensity is concerned, it may vary with every lost soul. This may be so, unless we assume that the suffering is necessarily attended by a consciousness of duration and succession, by a present imagination of its past and its future, by a sustained power of realizing its continuity.⁴⁵

While he did not identify the pains suffered in Purgatory with those in Hell, Newman defended the doctrine of eternal punishment, that there are some souls who suffer eternal and unremitting separation from God in Hell.⁴⁶ In his 1849 sermon, 'Neglect of Divine Calls and Warnings', he gave a stern warning against the complacency of Universalists who denied that this separation from God was everlasting:

Thousands are dying daily; they are waking up into God's everlasting wrath; they look back on the days of the flesh, and call them few and evil; they despise and scorn the very reasonings which then they trusted, and which have been disproved by the event; they curse the recklessness which made them put off repentance; they have fallen under His justice, whose mercy they presumed upon; - and their companions and friends are going on as they did, and are soon to join them. As the last generation presumed, so does the present. The father would not believe that God could punish, and now the son will not believe; the father was indignant when eternal pain was spoken of, and the son gnashes his teeth and smiles contemptuously.⁴⁷

In the *Dream* Newman's understanding of the suffering of Purgatory is firmly set within the tradition of Catherine of Genoa and St. Francis de Sales, represented as

⁴⁵ *GA*, p. 422.

⁴⁶ The controversy of eternal punishment in the Nineteenth century is dealt with in detail by Geoffrey Rowell in *Hell and the Victorians*, Oxford, Clarendon press, 1974. For a review of the doctrine of eternal punishment of Hell in Newman's Anglican sermons see Colm McKeating, 'Eschatology in the Anglican Sermons of John Henry Newman', Pontifical Gregorian University Rome, Doctoral Thesis, 1992, pp. 93-110.

⁴⁷ *Mix*, p. 41.

suffering from love and shame of self, rather than of punishment and physical pains. As Gerontius approaches his judgement the ‘Third Choir of Angelicals’ sing of Gerontius’ ‘double agony’ of ‘body and soul’:

Yet still between that earth and heaven -
His journey and his goal -
A double agony awaits
His body and his soul.

A double debt he has to pay -
The forfeit of his sins:
The chill of death is past, and now
The penance-fire begins.

Glory to Him, who evermore
By truth and justice reigns;
Who tears the soul from out its case,
And burns away its stains!⁴⁸

However Gerontius’s Guardian Angel explains that these pains, are not sensible torments, rather it is the sight of God which will afflict his soul and purge it:

They sing of thy approaching agony,
Which thou so eagerly didst question of:
It is the face of the Incarnate God
Shall smite thee with that keen and subtle pain;
And yet the memory which it leaves will be
A sovereign febrifuge to heal the wound;
And yet withal it will the wound provoke,
And aggravate and widen it the more.⁴⁹

Gerontius’s experience of ‘the face of the Incarnate God’ which will ‘smite’ him with a ‘keen and subtle pain’, is central to Newman’s theology of purgation in the *Dream*. Gerontius is aware that he must undergo some form of pain before he enters beatitude.

⁴⁸ *VVO*, p. 354.

⁴⁹ *VVO*, pp. 354-5

Believing it to be an like an ‘an avenging flame’ he begs his Guardian Angel to have a glimpse of God to ‘strengthen him’ before this trial:

His will be done!
I am not worthy e’er to see again,
The face of day; far less His countenance,
Who is the very sun. Natheless in life,
When I looked forward to my purgatory,
It ever was my solace to believe,
That, ere I plunged amid the avenging flame,
I had one sight of Him to strengthen me.⁵⁰

Gerontius is unaware that his request to ‘have one sight of Him’ will be his judgement and beginning of a process of purgation. Gerontius’s angel explains that the sight of God will ‘gladden’, ‘pierce’, and stir him to a painful process of examination and self-examination:

Yes, - for one moment thou shalt see thy Lord.
Thus will it be: what time thou art arraign’d
Before the dread tribunal, and thy lot
Is cast for ever, should it be to sit
On His right hand among His pure elect,
Then sight, or that which to the soul is sight,
As by a lightning-flash, will come to thee,
And thou shalt see, amid the dark profound,
Whom thy soul loveth, and would fain approach,-
One moment; but thou knowest not, my child,
What thou dost ask: that sight of the Most Fair
Will gladden thee, but it will pierce thee too.⁵¹

⁵⁰ *VVO*, p. 347.

⁵¹ *VVO*, pp. 347f.

The initiation of the soul's purgation through this brief and instantaneous encounter with God is described in dramatic terms by Newman. Gerontius is 'seized ... scorched and shrivelled' before the sight of God:

The eager spirit has darted from my hold,
And, with intemperate energy of love,
Flies to the dear feet of Emmanuel;
But, ere it reach them, the keen sanctity,
Which with its effluence, like a glory, clothes
And circles round the Crucified, has seized,
And scorched and shrivelled it; and now it lies
Passive and still before the awful Throne.
O happy, suffering soul! For it is safe,
Consumed, yet quicken'd, by the glance of God.⁵²

At this climatic moment in the poem, Gerontius experiences a brief but intense encounter with God in which he is judged, thereby initiating a process of purgation. Newman makes no reference to material fire in his description of Gerontius's purgation, rather, the soul is purged through an encounter with Christ. The development of Newman's understanding of purgation can be seen by comparing the central stanza of the *Dream* with that of 'The Golden Prison' of 1853. In the *Dream* the sight of God replaces the idea of purgation through physical torments of fire:

(The Golden Prison, 1853)
I may lie down, then rise again,
Safe, and yet saved by fire.⁵³

(*The Dream* 1865)
O happy, suffering soul! For it is safe,
Consumed, yet quicken'd, by the glance of God.⁵⁴

⁵² *VVO*, p. 362.

⁵³ *VVO*, p. 300.

While the idea of purgation through an encounter with God is explicit in the *Dream*, there is evidence of a gradual development of the thought throughout Newman's Roman Catholic years. The first reference Newman made to the soul's purgation through 'the very sight of the Divine Perfection' was in his *Essay on Development* in 1845.⁵⁵ Newman spoke of the consolatory hope of having a momentary glimpse of God before judgement as early as 1849. In his sermon 'Purity and Love' he spoke of the 'loving soul' approaching the judgement seat of God:

It knows how great a debt of punishment remains upon it, though it has for many years been reconciled to Him; it knows that purgatory lies before it, and that the best it can reasonably hope for is to be sent there. But to see His face, though for a moment! to hear His voice, to hear Him speak, though it be to punish! [...] I have seen Thee this day face to face, and it sufficeth; I have seen Thee, and that glance of Thine is sufficient for a century of sorrow, in the nether prison. I will live on that look of Thine, though I see Thee not, till I see Thee again, never to part from Thee. That eye of Thine shall be sunshine and comfort to my weary, longing soul; that voice of Thine shall be everlasting music in my ears. Nothing can harm me, nothing shall discompose me: I will bear the appointed years, till the end comes, bravely and sweetly.⁵⁶

Newman returned to the topic again in a meditation on 'Mental Suffering of Our Lord' in 1855 when he spoke of the terror of 'a purgatory to endure the sight of Thee, the sight of myself':

I cannot look on Thee; I shrink from Thee; I throw my arms round my face; I crouch to the earth. Satan will pull me down if Thou take not pity. It is terrible to turn to Thee; but oh turn Thou me, and so

⁵⁴ *VVO*, p. 362.

⁵⁵ *Dev.*, p. 392.

⁵⁶ *Mix.*, pp. 81-82.

shall I be turned. It is a purgatory to endure the sight of Thee, the sight of myself - I most vile, Thou most holy. Yet make me look once more on Thee whom I have so incomprehensibly affronted, for Thy countenance is my only life, my only hope and health lies in looking on Thee whom I have pierced. So I put myself before Thee; I look on Thee again; I endure the pain in order to the purification. O my God, how can I look Thee in the face when I think of my ingratitude, so deeply seated, so habitual, so immovable - or rather so awfully increasing!⁵⁷

The theology of purgation by a sight of God has its foundation in the concept of connaturality, that is, the soul must become like God if it is to dwell in his presence. Newman began to develop this in his Anglican sermon ‘Holiness Necessary for Future Blessedness’, where he emphasised that without this process of connaturality, the unholy soul would experience God’s presence as ‘Hell.’⁵⁸

The effect of the sight of God on the soul is portrayed with contrasting images of pain and bliss: Gerontius is happy yet suffering, ‘consumed yet quickened’. For Ian Ker this description of the soul’s purgation is a ‘superbly concentrated and poised image.’⁵⁹ It is also reminiscent of Newman’s Roman Catholic poems on Purgatory of 1853, where the soul experiences both bliss and pain simultaneously in the state of purgation.⁶⁰ While the vision of the perfection of God ‘gladdens’ the soul, it is the ‘keen sanctity’ of God which ‘pierces’ in an act of anticipatory judgement and self-reflection. It is therefore clear that what Newman’s described as ‘two pains, so counter and so keen’, does not represent the traditional Roman Catholic teaching of the *poena sensus* and the *poena damni*.⁶¹ Rather the two pains which Gerontius suffers are both of a mental kind. The first pain is Gerontius’s pining to be with God. The second is very

⁵⁷ *MD*, p. 411.

⁵⁸ *PPS* I, p.7.

⁵⁹ Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman: A Biography*, p. 576.

⁶⁰ See *VVO*, p. 299, *VRS*, pp. 47-54.

⁶¹ *VVO*, p. 356.

different, but related to the first. It is a loathing of one's sinfulness and a feeling of compulsion to flee from God. It is the combination of these conflicting feelings which cause the mental anguish which 'pierce' and 'trouble' Gerontius, and become, as Newman described, his 'veriest, sharpest purgatory':

There is a pleading in His pensive eyes
Will pierce thee to the quick, and trouble thee.
And thou wilt hate and loathe thyself; for, though
Now sinless, thou wilt feel that thou hast sinn'd,
As never thou didst feel; and wilt desire
To slink away, and hide thee from His sight:
And yet wilt have a longing aye to dwell
Within the beauty of His countenance.
And these two pains, so counter and so keen,-
The longing for Him, when thou seest Him not;
The shame of self at thought of seeing Him,-
Will be thy veriest, sharpest purgatory.⁶²

In 1867, two years after the *Dream* was first published, Pusey asked Newman if he could use these words for a publication he was preparing with Bishop Forbes of Brechin on the *XXIX Articles*.⁶³ Offended by the Roman Catholic punitive model of Purgatory, Pusey found Newman's description in the *Dream* as the most adequate exposition of *Article XXII* on Purgatory:

I am on Article 22 Purgatory, Some lines in the Dream of Gerontius, exactly express my thought Should you think them an adequate exposition of Purgatory ... I mean about 10 lines describing the soul's longing to see Him it sees not and ending with some words that such was the soul's real Purgatory.⁶⁴

⁶² *VVO*, pp. 355f.

⁶³ Alexander Forbes, *An Explanation of the XXXIX Articles, Volume II*. Oxford: Parker, 1868.

⁶⁴ *LD XXIII*, p. 256.

Newman replied on 19th June 1867, explaining to Pusey that while the two fold pains of Purgatory are described as physical and mental, the image of purgatorial fire, commonly associated with the *poena sensus* of physical pain, is a tradition which is not of dogmatic character:

The pains of Purgatory are made up of the *Pœna sensus* and the *Pœna damni* - the *Pœna sensus* is held by Latin tradition to be fire - but it is not a Catholic dogma - nor is it clear that the fire, in the Latin tradition, is more than metaphorical. And secondly the *Pœna sensus* is considered to be the lesser *pœna* - and the *pœna damni* far to surpass it.⁶⁵

While Newman accepted the received tradition in the Roman Catholic Church that the pains of Purgatory are twofold, the *poena sensus*, physical pains, and the *poena damni*, the pain of loss, his decision to leave out any reference to physical suffering in the *Dream* is significant. In an open letter to Newman in 1870 Pusey wrote of the excessive concentration on physical suffering in Roman Catholic theologies of Purgatory. ‘It has been common among your writers’, Pusey claimed, ‘to dwell excessively upon the suffering, whether of the temporary privation of God, or of fire.’⁶⁶ Pusey considered the description F.W. Faber had given of the common ‘punitive’ view was precisely that which the *Articles* rejected as ‘Romish’, and gave such offense to Anglicans. Faber spoke of this austere view as one which

loves to represent purgatory simply as a hell which is not eternal. Violence, confusion, wailing, horror preside over its descriptions. It dwells, and truly, on the terribleness of the pain of sense which the

⁶⁵ LD XXIII, p. 256.

⁶⁶ E. B. Pusey, *Is Healthful Reunion Possible? A Second Letter to the Very Rev. J. H. Newman*. Oxford: Parker, 1870, pp. 96-97.

soul is mysteriously permitted to endure. The fire is the same fire as hell, created for the single and express purpose of giving torture.⁶⁷

Pusey complained that Roman Catholic theologians give ‘some most harrowing descriptions of physical sufferings, but [do] not allude to any consolations.’⁶⁸ In contrast, Pusey spoke favourably of the ameliorative view of Purgatory advocated by Catherine of Genoa and Francis de Sales:

S. Catherine of Genoa must have been raised up by God, and carried through those unutterable sufferings which were penetrated with that unspeakable, God-infused love, in order to exhibit in a new light that preparation for the sight of God, whereby imperfect souls, amid inexpressible joy and felicity, are taught by an unendurable pining for Him, amid delay of that sight, what a misery it is for the soul to have had any object but the Living God.⁶⁹

Pusey held that the difference between the ameliorative view of Purgatory and the commonly held punitive notion of the doctrine was not whether the *poena sensus* was emphasised more than the *poena damni*, but rather that the punitive notion was essentially inadequate. He held that it exhibited the ‘dark side of the doctrine’, which emphasised solely ‘the awfulness of sin and the strict justice of God.’⁷⁰ Pusey was in agreement with Faber’s comments that:

This, then, is a true view of Purgatory, but not a complete one. Yet it is not one which we can safely call coarse or grotesque. It is the view of many saints and servants of God, and it is embodied in the popular celebrations in several Catholic countries.⁷¹

⁶⁷ *AFJ*, pp. 360-361. See *Reunion*, pp. 99-100.

⁶⁸ *Reunion*, p. 99.

⁶⁹ *Reunion*, p. 106.

⁷⁰ *Reunion*, pp. 106-7.

⁷¹ *AFJ*, p. 380.

While Newman claimed not to know the works of Catherine of Genoa directly, Faber had given him a copy of his *All for Jesus* which summarised her theology of Purgatory.⁷² Newman also referred Pusey to Francis de Sales's theology of the consolation of Purgatory in a work by Robert Ornsby:

As to the alleviations of Purgatory, you know the chapter in Bellarmine, in which the visions of some Saints concerning them are reported. Also, St Francis de Sale's doctrine about them - contained, where *I* have seen them, in his 'Thoughts,' or 'Teachings,' or whatever the collection is called. It is contained in Ornsby's *Life of St Francis*, (Burns). Also, I dare say you know, what I am sorry to say I don't know, Manning's translation of the work or treatise on Purgatory by St Catherine of Genoa.⁷³

Francis de Sales was dependant on the theology of Purgatory of Catherine of Genoa, whose treatise he recommended.⁷⁴ Like Catherine of Genoa, Francis de Sales placed greater emphasis on the consolations that the disembodied souls gain while in that state, rather than the terrors of sensible purgation. Purgatory is described as a 'Happy state, more to be desire than dreaded, since its flames are flames of love and charity.'⁷⁵ Ornsby sets out Francis de Sales's theology in twelve points, emphasising how the souls of Purgatory are so perfectly resigned to the Will of God, that 'were Paradise thrown open to them, they would rather plunge into hell than appear before God with the stains they still beheld upon themselves.'⁷⁶ Francis de Sales's view of Purgatory is one of a 'loving and voluntary purification.'⁷⁷ While Liguori described angels as 'accusers' of

⁷² James Tolhurst refers to a signed copy of Faber's *All for Jesus* to Newman in the library at Rednal. See 'A Blessed and Ever Enduring Friendship: The Development of John Henry Newman's Thought on Death and the Life Beyond', *Recusant History*, 22, 1994-95, p. 434.

⁷³ *LD XXIII*, p. 256. See Robert Ornsby, *The Life of St. Francis de Sales*, London: Burns and Lambert, 1856.

⁷⁴ *Ornsby*, p. 265.

⁷⁵ *Ornsby*, pp. 264-265.

⁷⁶ *Ornsby*, p. 264.

⁷⁷ *Ornsby*, p. 264.

the souls in Purgatory, in Francis de Sales view of Purgatory souls are ‘comforted’ by angels.⁷⁸

C. The Temporal and Spatial Perception of the Disembodied Soul

In order to avoid any representation of the ‘physical’ pains of Purgatory Newman developed at length the limitation of the soul’s temporal and spatial perception. This forms the foundation of his theology of purgation by the sight of God. At the moment of death Newman portrays Gerontius’s feeling of lightness, accompanied by a ‘peremptory severance’ of the body and soul.⁷⁹ Gerontius’s initial uncertainty whether he is dead or not is confirmed by an intense feeling of self-possession which ‘no temptation can intoxicate.’⁸⁰ A dialogue between Gerontius and his guide follows in which the angel explains that ‘what is long is short, and swift is slow’, and equally that ‘near is distant.’ This change in the souls perception of space is also true in regard to time. Anxious to see God, Newman explains that it is not linear time which keeps Gerontius from God, but rather what he described as his ‘energy of thought’:

For spirits and men by different standards mete
The less the greater in the flow of time.
By sun and moon, primeval ordinances -
By stars which rise and set harmoniously -
By the recurring seasons, and the swing,
This way and that, of the suspended rod
Precise and punctual, men divide the hours,
Equal, continuous, for their common use.
Not so with us in the immaterial world;

⁷⁸ *Prep. Death*, p. 173.

⁷⁹ *VVO*, p. 329.

⁸⁰ *VVO*, pp. 328-9, 334.

But intervals in their succession
Are measured by the living thought alone
And grow or wane with its intensity.
And time is not a common property;
But what is long is short, and swift is slow,
And near is distant, as received and grasp'd
By this mind and by that, and every one
Is standard of his own chronology.
And memory lacks its natural resting-points
Of years, and centuries, and periods.
It is the very energy of thought
Which keeps thee from thy God.⁸¹

Gerontius only gradually becomes aware of the change that death has caused. Assailed by the clamour of demons, Gerontius realises that he cannot see.⁸² This limitation of sense is described by Newman as a kind of 'introversion', in which the soul is unable to converse with anyone else but itself, with no 'touch, nor taste, nor hearing.'⁸³ This feeling of increasing introversion overcame Gerontius at his death, when he spoke of a sensation of peace, but also of the feeling that he is 'feeding' upon himself:

This silence pours a solitariness
Into the very essence of my soul;
And the deep rest, so soothing and so sweet,
Hath something too of sternness and of pain.
For it drives back my thoughts upon their spring
By a strange introversion, and perforce
I now begin to feed upon myself,
Because I have nought else to feed upon.⁸⁴

The theme of introversion had been a subject that Newman had dwelt on in his Roman Catholic sermons on the Particular Judgement. In the sermon 'On the Particular Judgement' (1850) he emphasised that

⁸¹ *VVO*, pp. 336-7.

⁸² *VVO*, pp. 344-5.

⁸³ *VVO*, pp. 345-346.

⁸⁴ *VVO*, p. 328.

We shall be obliged steadily to confront ourselves and to see ourselves. In this life we shrink from knowing our real selves [...] But then, not one fault only, but all the secret, as well as evident, defects of our character will be clearly brought out. We shall see what we feared to see here, and much more.⁸⁵

In this state of introversion the soul exists in a dream-like state of ‘signs and types’, having only ‘some lower measures of perception’. For Newman, any sensation the soul has of physical pain through fire, or of refreshment, may seem to be mediated through the body, but these are simply impressions similar to those one receives in dreams:

Nor touch, nor taste, nor hearing hast thou
now;
Thou livest in a world of signs and types,
The presentations of most holy truths,
Living and strong, which now encompass thee.
A disembodied soul, thou hast by right
No converse with aught else beside thyself;
But, lest so stern a solitude should load
And break thy being, in mercy are vouchsafed
Some lower measures of perception,
Which seem to thee, as though through channels
brought,
Through ear, or nerves, or palate, which are
gone.
And thou art wrapp’d and swath’d around in
dreams,
Dreams that are true, yet enigmatical;
For the belongings to thy present state,
Save through such symbols, come not home to
thee.
And thus thou tell’st of space, and time, and
size,
Of fragrant, solid, bitter, musical,
Of fire, and of refreshment after fire;
As (let me use similitude of earth,

⁸⁵ CS, p. 36.

To aid thee in the knowledge thou dost ask) -
As ice which blisters may be said to burn.
Nor hast thou now extension, with its parts
Correlative, - long habit cozens thee, -
Nor power to move thyself, nor limbs to move.
Hast thou not heard of those, who after loss
Of hand or foot, still cried that they had pains
In hand or foot , as though they had it still?
So it is now with thee, who hast not lost
Thy hand or foot, but all which made up man.⁸⁶

Newman carefully dissociated the concept of material fire from the disembodied soul's perception of suffering. He emphasised that the experience of a burning heat of need not be necessarily associated with material fire, as one can also speak of the sensation of 'burning' from, for example, ice which blisters and burns. Newman does not deny that the soul may experience sensations which one could associate with material phenomena, but these are no more than 'symbols'. This state of perception which perceives reality not through the senses but by 'symbols', is described as a dream-like state by Newman:

And thou art wrapp'd and swath'd around in
dreams,
Dreams that are true, yet enigmatical;
For the belongings of thy present state,
Save through such symbols, come not home to
thee.⁸⁷

Newman had the conviction as early as 1821 that 'out of dreams often so much good can be extracted.'⁸⁸ The affinity Newman saw between dreaming and human

⁸⁶ *VVO*, pp. 345-6

⁸⁷ *VVO*, p. 346.

⁸⁸ *AW*, p. 167.

existence in this world was an idea one he began to develop in his Anglican sermons. In 1836 he wrote in ‘On the Greatness and Littleness of Human Life’ that

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.⁸⁹

In his first Anglican sermon on the intermediate state he used the dream analogy to describe the disembodied state.⁹⁰ In the sermon he described how the phenomenon of dreaming was a kind of revelatory channel through which God taught man the mysteries which were beyond either Scripture or human language:

In the sleep of the soul, visions of the soul of the past and present, as well as the future, may be presented to the thoughts – and thus an intercourse kept up on earth even in paradise, and some knowledge of the successive fortunes and doings of those whom they knew and valued in the flesh.⁹¹

Newman believed the analogy of dreaming was most suitable when talking about difficult eschatological questions of a highly speculative nature, such as Purgatory. When pressed to write more on Purgatory after publishing the *Dream*, Newman refused, saying:

⁸⁹ *PPS* IV, pp. 221-22.

⁹⁰ *Ser.*, III, p. 93.

⁹¹ *Ser.*, III, p. 93.

I have said what I saw. Various spiritual writers see various aspects of it; and under their protection and pattern I have set down the dream as it came before the sleeper. It is not my fault, if the sleeper did not dream more. Perhaps something woke him. Dreams are generally fragmentary. I have nothing more to tell.⁹²

D. The Voluntary ‘Plunging’ of the Soul into the Purgatorial State

Newman accepted that the soul suffers in the state of Purgation, but distanced himself from the idea that Purgatory was a punishment in which the soul was tortured for their sins. The theology of the ‘sight of God’ is that the soul is so utterly ‘consumed’ by the holiness of God that it despises itself to such an extent that it cannot bear to be in God’s presence. Newman described this state of the soul as being ‘scorch’d’, ‘shrivell’d’ and ‘passive’:

... the keen sanctity,
Which with its effluence, like a glory, clothes
And circles round the Crucified, has seized,
And scorch’d, and shrivell’d it; and now it lies
Passive and still before the awful Throne.⁹³

In the *Dream* Gerontius is both blest and horrified by this experience of the ‘keen sanctity’ of God. Disgusted with his own unworthiness he pleads his guardian angel to be drawn down to ‘the lowest deep’:

Take me away, and in the lowest deep
There let me be,
And there in hope the lone night-watches keep,

⁹² *LD XXI*, p. 498.

⁹³ *VVO*, p. 362.

Told out for me.
 There, motionless and happy in my pain,
 Lone, not forlorn, -
 There will I sing my sad perpetual strain,
 Until the morn.
 There will I sing, and soothe my stricken breast,
 Which ne'er can cease
 To throb, and pine, and languish, till possest
 Of its Sole Peace.
 There will I sing my absent Lord and Love: -
 Take me away,
 That sooner I may rise, and go above,
 And see Him in the truth of everlasting day.⁹⁴

The image of the soul being drawn down, as if down into a pit, was one that Newman had used in some of his earliest sermons on Purgatory. In 1849 Newman, in his first Roman Catholic sermon on Purgatory, likened it to a whirlpool which absorbs.⁹⁵ Newman took the concept of *absorbeo* from the Offertory prayer of the Requiem Mass, which spoke of how souls are ‘drawn down’, ‘submerged’, or figuratively speaking ‘swallowed’:

Domine Jesu Christe, Rex gloriae,
 libera animas omnium fidelium
 defunctorum de poenis inferni
 et de profundo lacu.
 Libera eas de ore leonis,
 ne absorbeat eas tartarus,
 ne cadant in obscurum.

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory,
 liberate the souls of the faithful,
 departed from the pains of hell
 and from the bottomless pit.
 Deliver them from the lion's mouth,
 lest the abyss swallow them up,
 lest they fall into darkness.

⁹⁴ See *VVO*, pp. 362f.

⁹⁵ *SN*, p. 24.

Inspired by the prayer, Newman associated the effects of *visio Dei* on the soul with images of ‘plunging’ or being drawn down into the ‘abyss’ (tartarus), or a ‘bottomless pit’ (profundo lacu). However he used the concept of the being absorbed as a ‘willing’ plunging, and not according to the negative connotations which we find in the Requiem. We find this idea as early as 1848, in his sermon ‘Preparation for the Judgement’:

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 see what they really are and the sins which lie against them. And hence some writers have said that their horror will be such that of their own will, and from a holy indignation against themselves, they will be ready to plunge into Purgatory in order to satisfy divine justice and be clear of what is to their own clear sense and spiritual judgement so abominable.⁹⁶

He returned to the concept of the willing plunging again in the poem ‘Purgatory’ of 1853, where he described how the soul ‘plunges and is blest.’⁹⁷ In the *Dream*, Newman used the image of a ‘lake’, over which Gerontius is poised, to describe the sinking of the soul into the state of purgation after the vision of God. Gerontius’s angel is given charge over him in his passive state after he is paralyzed by the sight of God and gently takes him to the ‘lowest deep’.⁹⁸ Newman ends the poem with this comforting image of the soul being absorbed in the arms of the angel into ‘penal waters’, into which he sinks ‘deep, deeper’:

⁹⁶ CS, p. 37.

⁹⁷ VRS, p. 53.

⁹⁸ VVO, pp. 362, 365.

Softly and gently, dearly-ransom'd soul,
In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,
And, o'er penal waters, as they roll,
I pose thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee.

And carefully I dip thee in the lake,
And thou, without sob or a resistance,
Dost through the flood thy rapid passage take,
Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim distance.⁹⁹

III. Literary Influences in *The Dream*

Despite the very carefully formulated dogmatic expressions in the *Dream* on subjects such as the immortality of the soul, particular judgement and purgatorial pains, Newman did not write the work as a theological tract, but as a piece of poetry. Yet without the use of the doctrines of judgement and purgation much of the dramatic effect of the poem would be lost. Despite his use of the poetic form, the *Dream* enabled Newman to speak on a contentious theological subject such as Purgatory to a large audience of people, many of whom had little or no interest in Roman Catholic eschatology. When Newman wrote the *Dream*, questions of eschatology were becoming increasingly open to scepticism among English theologians, due largely to the debate on the validity of the doctrine of Eternal Punishment.¹⁰⁰ Despite the controversial nature of its subject matter, Newman's *Dream* was hugely popular. At the time of his death in 1890, it had gone through 27 editions and had been translated into German and

⁹⁹ *VVO*, p. 365.

¹⁰⁰ See Jill Muller, *Gerard Manley Hopkins and Victorian Catholicism*, New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 112-113.

French.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, it was appreciated by both Anglicans and Roman Catholics. In the first review of the *Dream* in 1868, J. M. Capes suggested that the popularity of the poem was because it struck at the core of every person's question on the afterlife, and even put 'into shape the convictions of innumerable men and women who are fervently Protestant':

To appreciate the poetic beauty and the surpassing imaginative power of this short drama, it is not at all necessary to accept the distinctly Roman doctrine on Purgatory ... I suspect in substance this 'Dream' only puts into shape the conviction of innumerable men and women who are fervently Protestant as can be convinced, but who had in some such belief as is here embodied the only possible solution of the mystery of life and death ... It is an expression of thoughts and emotions common alike to Anglican and Roman.¹⁰²

Newman believed that it was the subject of the poem which made it so popular, rather than the eloquence of its versification:

As to my own *Gerontius*, it was not the versification which sold it, but the subject. It is a *religious* subject which appeals strongly to the feelings of every one. I heard of one farmer, who was a most unlikely man to care about poetry, who took to it, when he was ill - it was to him a prayer or meditation. It directed his thoughts to the next world, from no merit of its, but from its subject.¹⁰³

Gladstone, who said that he had read the poem 'several times', praised it as 'the most remarkable production in its own very high walk since the unapproachable *Paradiso* of

¹⁰¹ Percy M. Young, *Elgar, Newman and the Dream of Gerontius in the Tradition of English Catholicism*, Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995, p. 97.

¹⁰² J. M. Capes, 'Critical Notices', *The Fortnightly Review*, Volume III, London: Chapman and Hall, Jan-Jun 1868, p. 345.

¹⁰³ *LD XXV*, p. 209.

Dante.¹⁰⁴ Gladstone's comparison to Dante was echoed by notable Protestant Churchman such as Alexander Whyte (1836-1921):

Had Dante himself composed *The Dream of Gerontius* as his elegy on the death of some beloved friend, it would have been universally viewed as altogether worthy of supreme genius, and it would have been a jewel altogether worthy of his peerless crown. There is nothing of its kind outside of the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso* at all to the *Gerontius* for solemnising, ennobling, and sanctifying power. It is a poem that everyman should have by heart who has it before him to die.¹⁰⁵

The popularity of an explicitly eschatological poem, which seemed to go beyond the confessional divide, demonstrated how sensitive Victorian society was to questions on the afterlife. Other works of 'eschatological poetry', contemporaneous to the *Dream*, such as Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, and Bailey's *Festus*, were also very popular.¹⁰⁶ However *The Dream* was very different to any other poem Newman had written before. Despite the obvious difference of its length, it was the first poem where he used large sections of liturgical texts and hymns in both Latin and English. It was also the first piece which Newman wrote which had a very specific dogmatic theme as its subject. This combination of poetics and dogma in the *Dream* show how important literary influences were in shaping Newman's theology of Purgatory. While Newman's poetry did change when he became a Roman Catholic, particularly in terms of content, the way in which he understood poetry in relation to dogma was already formed while he was an Anglican. In this section I will look at three literary influences in Newman's life which became central to the formation of his theological views, particularly those of eschatology. First, the *Dream* viewed as a piece of 'dogmatic poetry' according to the

¹⁰⁴ LD XXIX, p. 7.

¹⁰⁵ Alexander Whyte, *Thirteen Appreciations*, Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1914, p. 358.

¹⁰⁶ See Charles Frederick Harrold, *John Henry Newman - An Expository and Critical Study of his Mind, Thought and Art*, London: Longman, Green and Co., 1945, pp. 277-278.

Tractarian principles of reserve and economy. Second, Newman's use of Romantic imagination, particularly its emphasis on the invisible world and the afterlife. Finally, I will review the *Dream* in the context of the highly popular death-bed literature of mid-nineteenth century England.

A. Reserve and Economy: Transmitting Doctrine through Poetry

Newman's understanding of how doctrine should be most effectively communicated as an Anglican developed and changed when he became a Roman Catholic. As an Anglican the Principle of Reserve formed a 'universal influence' over his whole theological thought.¹⁰⁷ This principle was understood by the Tractarians as the means by which doctrine was communicated, or withheld. In the *Apologia* Newman explained that this was a principle founded on the nature of the divine dispensation:

As Almighty God did not all at once introduce the Gospel to the world, and thereby gradually prepared men for its profitable reception, so, according to the doctrine of the early Church, it was a duty, for the sake of the heathen among whom they lived, to observe great reserve and caution in communicating to them the knowledge of the 'whole counsel of God'. This cautious dispensation of the truth, after the manner of discreet and vigilant steward, is denoted by the word 'economy'. It is a mode of acting which comes under the head of Prudence, one of the four Cardinal Virtues.¹⁰⁸

Reserve and Economy are related principles, but not identical. Reserve safeguarded doctrine by withholding it, while the Principle of Economy accommodated 'the feeling and prejudices of the hearer, in leading him to the reception of novel or unacceptable

¹⁰⁷ See Robin C. Selby, *The Principle of Reserve in the Writing of John Henry Newman*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ *Apo.*, p. 299.

doctrine.¹⁰⁹ Influenced by the early Christian practice of the *disciplina arcani*, whereby truths of the Christian faith were only communicated after sacramental initiation, the Tractarians held that Catholic doctrine should be communicated to those who could receive it, and not simply proclaimed to the masses:

The word Economy is often used by the Fathers to denote that necessary and religious prudence in the use of words and conduct, which marked their dealing with the Heathen – and which we feel is a duty to observe still towards children, or ignorant persons or scoffers. But it is so difficult to hinder Christian prudence from degenerating into craft, that oftentimes what is intended to be an economy, would become artifice or deceit – or at least would reach the very limits of what was allowable, even if it did not pass them.¹¹⁰

Newman understood poetry as one of most effective ways in which the Principle of Reserve could be used to transmit Catholic doctrine. Works of devotional poetry, such as Keble's *Christian Year*, had an enormous didactic influence upon their readers. Setting out his purpose for the first volume of Tractarian poetry in the *Lyra Apostolica*, Newman explained to Hugh James Rose how he wanted to use the idea of using poetry for didactic purposes to 'bring out certain truth [...] with greater freedom':

We propose, if you will let us, on our return to systematize a poetry department for you [...] Our object is, to bring out certain truths and facts, moral, ecclesiastical, and religious, simply and forcibly, with greater freedom, and clearness than in the *Christian Year*. I will not go on to say, with greater poetry. If it answered on trial, we should be content to carry it on ad infinitum – It might be called *Lyra Apostolica*.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ *Ari.*, p. 71. See Selby, *The Principle of Reserve*, p. 22.

¹¹⁰ *LD XXI*, p. 154.

¹¹¹ *LD III*, pp. 119f. Newman wrote 109 of the 179 poems in the *Lyra Apostolica*.

Newman intended the *Tracts for the Times*, the *Lyra Apostolica* and the *Church of the Fathers* as three complementary works advocating and renewal. In the 1879 advertisement which he added to the *Lyra Apostolica*, he spoke of using a combination of theological, historical, and poetical works for transmitting doctrine:

[The poems] were contemporaneous, on their first appearance in 1833, with the 'Tracts for the Times,' and the 'Church of the Fathers,' being contributions month by month [...] All these three had one object, that of enforcing what the authors considered to be the Apostolical or Primitive Christianity, at a time when its principles, doctrines, disciplines, usages, and spirit seemed, in the length and breadth of the Anglican Communion, to be nigh forgotten. The 'Lyra Apostolica,' on the whole, took the ethical side of Christianity; the Tracts the theological and controversial; while the 'Church of the Fathers' was mainly historical.¹¹²

Newman's view of economy and reserve changed when he became a Roman Catholic. He no longer felt constrained by the cautiousness he had practiced as Tractarian, and now felt free to speak clearly and openly on matters of doctrine. In the *Apologia* he went so far as to repudiating the principle of economy:

As to the Catholic Religion in England at the present day, this only will I observe, - that the truest expedience is to answer right out, when you are asked; that the wisest economy is to have no management; that the best prudence is not to be a coward; that the most damaging folly is to be found out shuffling; and that the first of virtues is to 'tell truth, and shame the devil.'¹¹³

¹¹² *LA*, pp. vi, vii. See G. B. Tennyson, *Victorian Devotional Poetry: The Tractarian Mode*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981, pp. 120f.

¹¹³ *Apo.*, p. 301. See Selby, *The Principle of Reserve*, p. 32.

While he rarely felt the need to use the Principle of Reserve and Economy as a Roman Catholic, his attitude toward questions which were considered theologically ambiguous, such as purgatorial pain, was one in which still practised a certain degree of economy. By presenting a theology of Purgatory in poetic form in the *Dream*, he was able to address the highly speculative theological question of purgatorial pains without the repercussion of misinterpretation. An example of his use of the principle of economy in regard to the *Dream* can be seen in April 1867 in correspondence with Ambrose St. John. Newman warned him that if his theology came under scrutiny in Rome, some ‘prosaic minds’ may find something in the *Dream* which they would consider heretical, and that he should therefore not show it to them:

It is not advisable you should get into any dispute about faith - and you might refer to my *works*. By the bye, I doubt whether it will be prudent to show to any one my *Gerontius*, as prosaic minds may find heresy in my poetry.¹¹⁴

The method of transmitting doctrine through poetry, as in the *Dream*, is deeply rooted in the principles of reserve and economy. Influenced by Origen and Clement of Alexandria, Newman believed that the communication of God’s transcendence was such that it was beyond the capacity of the human mind, and therefore could only be understood in veiled, poetical language. The idea that doctrines which were but images and symbols of their transcendent reality gave them a sacramental quality. This concept of sacramentality was at the very core of how he viewed the hidden nature of Christ in the Church and the world. In the *Apologia* Newman spoke of the ‘Sacramental Principle’ to mean

¹¹⁴ LD XXIII, p. 176.

that the exterior world, physical and historical, was but the [outward] manifestation <to our senses> of realities greater than itself. Nature was a parable, Scripture was an allegory: pagan literature, philosophy, and mythology, properly understood, were but a preparation for the Gospel. The Greek poets and sages were in a certain sense prophets; 'for thoughts beyond their thought to those high bards were given.' [...] The visible world still remains without its divine interpretation; Holy Church in her sacraments and her hierarchical appointments, will remain, even to the end of the world, only a symbol of those heavenly facts which fill eternity. Her mysteries are but the expressions in human language of truths to which the human mind is unequal.¹¹⁵

Newman's 'sacramental' understanding of poetry can be seen as early as 1829 in an article he wrote for the *London Review*.¹¹⁶ In the article he argued for the moral responsibility of the poet and the inherently religious nature of this literary form.¹¹⁷ Following Aristotle, he argued that while other literary forms such as biography and history represent characters and facts, poetry is essentially a representation of an 'ideal', that goes beyond the visible and empirical observation to form a suggestion of the perfection of reality.¹¹⁸ The object of the poet's mind is concerned with eternal forms of beauty and perfection. In turn, Scripture, as divine Truth, therefore represents the epitome of the poetry, as it 'presents us with those ideal forms of excellence in which a poetical mind delights.'¹¹⁹ By depicting of revealed truth as the highest form of poetical expression, Newman understood it is a duty for the Christian to view the poetic value of reality, but also that the quality of poetic expression was dependent upon its author's moral character: 'With Christians a poetical view of things is a duty - we are bid to

¹¹⁵ *Apo.*, p. 36.

¹¹⁶ 'The Theatre of the Greeks; or the History, Literature, and Criticism of the Grecian Drama. With an Original Treatise on the Principal Tragic and Comic Meters.' *London Review*, 1:1, January 1829.

¹¹⁷ See Norman Friedman, 'Newman, Aristotle, and New Criticism: On the Modern element in Newman's Poetics', *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (Jun., 1966), p. 261.

¹¹⁸ *Thea. Gre.*, p. 160.

¹¹⁹ *Thea. Gre.*, p. 169.

colour all things with hues of faith, to see divine meaning in every event, and a super-human tendency.’¹²⁰ The ‘right moral state of heart’, he held, ‘is the formal and scientific condition of a poetical mind.’¹²¹

B. Aspirations for Other-Worldliness: The Role of the Romantic Movement

As a eighteen year old undergraduate in 1819, Newman wanted to write a poem describing the departure of the soul from the body to the afterlife. In his private journal he wrote under ‘casual thoughts set down as they occurred’:

Make a poem on faith. Bring in the plague of Athens as one of the examples; a maid dying over her cursing and blaspheming lover. The eastern philosopher. To end with a faint imagination of the soul just freed from the bonds of the mortal body.¹²²

The thought of writing a poem on the afterlife was an idea he had mused on for several years before he wrote the *Dream*. In another journal entry from 1821 he wrote that ‘I dreamed a spirit came to me, and we discoursed about the other world. I had several meetings with it.’¹²³ Newman’s early fascination with literature which described the ‘other worldliness’ of human existence made him a keen follower of Romantic authors. The Romantics formed one of the major influences in his early literary development.¹²⁴ Romantic authors represented a movement away from the ‘dry superficial character of the religious teaching and literature of the last generation.’¹²⁵ The freshness of Romantic thought gave the Oxford Movement an important inspiration for renewal. The

¹²⁰ *Thea. Gre.*, p. 169.

¹²¹ *Thea. Gre.*, p. 168.

¹²² *AW*, p. 161.

¹²³ *AW*, p. 166.

¹²⁴ Charles Frederick Harrold, *John Henry Newman – An Expository and Critical Study of his Mind, Thought and Art*. London: Longman, Green and Co., 1945, p. 266.

¹²⁵ *Apo.*, p. 93.

works of Scott, Coleridge, Southey and Wordsworth inspired Newman and his contemporaries, ‘stimulated their mental thirst’, turning their minds to ‘nobler ideals.’¹²⁶ It was the ideal of ‘other worldliness’ and the value of antiquity which attracted the Tractarians to the romantic movement, rather than an emotive religiosity which they shunned. This was made clear by John Keble, in the advertisement for the collection of poems in *The Christian Year*, who spoke of how ‘next to a sound rule of faith, there is nothing of so much consequence as a sober standard of feeling in matters of practical religion.’¹²⁷ The combination of the sacramental principle of Anglican divines with the Romantic ideal of antiquity contributed to the Tractarian emphasis on a rehabilitation of Catholic dogma through the medium of poetry. The Romantic influence on the Tractarians was literary as much as it was theological. Newman’s 1829 essay on Aristotelian poetics was not only an apology of theological aesthetics, but also a defence of the validity of the European romantic movement amid the ever dominant Rationalistic spirit of his day.¹²⁸ His description of the poetical mind in the essay as ‘imaginative or creative, from the originality and independence of its modes of thinking, compared with the commonplace and matter-of-fact conceptions of ordinary minds’, shows how closely he followed the ideals of Romanticism¹²⁹

Robert Southey was unquestionably the most important poetical influences in Newman’s life. In his essay on ‘Catholic Literature in the English Tongue’, compiled in his *The Idea of a University*, Newman fondly spoke of ‘the musical eloquence of

¹²⁶ *Apo.*, p. 94.

¹²⁷ John Keble, *The Christian Year, Lyra Innocentium and Other Poems*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914, advertisement of first edition.

¹²⁸ See Hans Dennerlein, *Newman als Dichter*, in *Newman Studien*, Heinrich Fries and Werner Becker (eds.), Nürnberg: Glock und Lutz, 1948, pp. 106-107.

¹²⁹ *Thea. Gre.*, p. 160. See Mary Kiener, *John Henry Newman – The Romantic, The Friend, The Leader*, Boston Mass.: Collegiate Press Corporation, 1933, p. 100.

Southey.¹³⁰ Southey's work not only formed Newman's *aesthetical taste*, but also the development of his religious views. As an undergraduate in 1819, Newman used the example the Gothic king in Southey's *Roderick, the Last of the Goths* as an instance of how one could 'rouse those around him to nobler views and feelings.'¹³¹ At the beginning of the Oxford Movement he spoke of how 'Southey's beautiful poem of Thalaba, for which I had an immense liking, came forcibly to mind. I began to think I had a mission.'¹³² More importantly, Southey influenced Newman's views on the afterlife. 'It is scarcely possible for a poet satisfactorily to connect innocence with ultimate happiness', Newman wrote in his article on Aristotelian Poetics, 'when the notion of the future life is excluded.' It was this perspective of a 'future life' which drew Newman to Southey's work:

In his use of the doctrine of the future life Southey is admirable. Other writers are content to conduct their heroes to temporal happiness – Southey refuses present comfort to his Ladurlad, Thalaba, and Roderick, but carries them on through suffering to another world.¹³³

Southey often used eschatological themes in his poetry. The themes of death and judgement figure prominently in *St. Patrick's Purgatory, A Vision of Judgement, Carmen Nuptiale – The Lay of the Laureate, The Curse of Kehama* and *Thalaba*. Newman read these works, and made passing reference to *The Curse of Kehama* and *Thalaba* in his novel *Loss and Gain*.¹³⁴ Southey's *The Vision of Judgement* (1821), which described the death, judgement and 'beatification' of King George III,

¹³⁰ *Idea*, p. 324.

¹³¹ *LD I*, p. 64.

¹³² *Apo.*, pp. 42f.

¹³³ *Thea. Gre.*, p. 164.

¹³⁴ 'recollect the words in *Thalaba*' and 'like Kehama he had a charmed life.' *LG*, pp. 305, 315.

occasioned a public dispute with Byron, who ridiculed Southey's representation of the afterlife. Weeks later Byron published his satirically entitled *A Vision of Judgement*. Newman, who no doubt followed the dispute, also composed a poem in Latin on the occasion of the king's death.¹³⁵ Several verses from Southey's *The Vision of Judgement* that have a marked resemblance to *The Dream*, suggest that the Southey-Byron controversy may have brought the idea of composing a poem on death and the afterlife to Newman's mind.¹³⁶ In *The Vision of Judgement*, before the king is judged, Southey described a 'mutinous uproar', and a 'hubbub of senseless sounds' of demons.¹³⁷ Newman used similar words in the *Dream* to describe how Gerontius is assailed before judgement by the clamour of demons:

But hark! upon my sense
Comes a fierce hubbub, which would make me fear
Could I be frightened.¹³⁸

Similarly, Newman's description of Gerontius's dream-like state resembles the first section of Southey's work which talks of the 'trance' of King George. Theologically there are also parallels between the *Dream* and *The Vision of Judgement*. In the fourth section of *The Vision of Judgement* Southey makes explicit reference to the purification of souls after death:

From the Souls of the Blessed
Some were there then who advanced; and more from the
skirts of the meeting,
Spirits who had not yet accomplish'd their purification,
Yet being cleansed from pride, from faction and error

¹³⁵ *LD I*, p. 74.

¹³⁶ See Alan G. Hill, 'Three Visions of Judgement: Southey, Byron and Newman', *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, Volume 41, No. 163, August 1990, p. 336.

¹³⁷ Robert Southey, *The Vision of Judgement*, London: William Dugdale, 1824, pp. 17-18.

¹³⁸ *VVO*, p. 338.

deliver'd,
 Purged of the film wherewith the eye of the mind is
 clouded,
 They, in their better state, saw all things clear; and discerning
 Now in the light of truth what tortuous views had
 deceived them,
 They acknowledged their fault, and own'd the wrong
 they had offer'd;
 Not without ingenuous shame, and a sense of compunction,
 More or less, as each had more or less to atone for,
 One alone remain'd, when the rest had retired to their
 station:
 Silently he stood still, and still unmoved and in silence,
 With a steady mien, regarded the face of the Monarch.¹³⁹

Parallels in the versification of the *Dream* are to be found in other works by Southey, particularly *The Curse of Kehama* (1810).¹⁴⁰ Newman liked the *Curse of Kehama* to such an extent that he once wrote that he knew the poem almost by heart.¹⁴¹ Despite the different contextual theme of Hindu mythological figures in *The Curse of Kehama*, similarities can be seen between the protagonist's (Ladurlad) cry for mercy from the wrath of Kehama and the prayer for mercy by Gerontius and the Assistants at the beginning of *The Dream*:

The Curse of Kehama

Ladurlad rous'd his soul;
 Ere yet the voice of destiny

Mercy! Oh Mercy! only in defence

The Dream of Gerontius

Rouse thee, my fainting soul, and play the man;
 And through such waning span

Be merciful, be gracious; spare him, Lord.

¹³⁹ Robert Southey, *The Vision of Judgement*, p. 22.

¹⁴⁰ Robert Southey, *The Curse of Kehama*, London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1812. See W.F.P. Stockley, 'Some Influences of Newman's Dream of Gerontius', *The Irish Monthly*, Vol. 44, No.517, July 1916, pp. 425. Jane M.C. James, 'The Genesis of The Dream of Gerontius – A Study in the Poetry of John Henry Newman', MA Thesis, 1989. See also Alan G. Hill, 'Three Visions of Judgement: Southey, Byron and Newman', pp. 334-350.

¹⁴¹ *LD XIII*, p. 449.

Only instinctively, ...
King of the world, be merciful!
Crush me, ... but torture not!¹⁴³

Be merciful, be gracious; Lord, deliver him.¹⁴²

Parallels can also be drawn between the litanies prayed over the dying Gerontius with the incantation spoken over Ladurlad by Kehama at the funeral of his son Arvalan,:

The Curse of Kehama

I charm thy life
From the weapons of strife,
From stone and from wood,
From fire and from flood,
From the serpent's tooth,
And the beast of blood:
From sickness I charm thee,
And time shall not harm thee;
But Earth, which is mine,
It's fruits deny thee;
And Water shall hear me,
And know thee and fly thee;
And the Winds shall not touch thee
When they pass by thee,
And the Dews shall not wet thee,
When they fall nigh thee.¹⁴⁵

The Dream of Gerontius

From the sins that are past;
From Thy frown and Thine ire;
From the perils of dying;
From any complying
With sin, or denying
His God, or relying On self, at the last;
From the nethermost fire;
From all that is evil;
From power of the devil;
Thy servant deliver,
For once and for ever.¹⁴⁴

Southey's *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, published in the year Newman was born in 1801, and reprinted in 1838, is a romantic ballad in which a knight dreams he dies and goes through Purgatory before being admitted to beatitude.¹⁴⁶ The innovative way in which Southey represents Purgatory makes it very similar to the *Dream*. Like the

¹⁴² VVO, p. 321.

¹⁴³ Robert Southey, *The Curse of Kehama*, p. 17.

¹⁴⁴ VVO, pp. 321-22.

¹⁴⁵ Robert Southey, *The Curse of Kehama*, pp. 18-19.

¹⁴⁶ Robert Southey, *The Poetical Works of Robert Southey*, London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1845, pp. 425-427.

opening scene of the *Dream*, in which Assistants pray over Gerontius, Southey's *Purgatory* begins with the image of monks surrounding Sir Owen, chanting the 'Service of the Dead.'¹⁴⁷ In contrast to Gerontius's accompanying angel, Sir Owens descends to Purgatory alone. Both Southey and Newman used images of Purgatory which did not conform to the traditional analogies of fire. Newman spoke of Gerontius's purgation through the concept of the sight of God, and of being poised over 'penal waters' and dipped in a 'lake', while Southey portrayed Purgatory with the image of a landscape, not of fire, but of ice, in which souls of the dead are bound frozen:

But colder now he felt the cell,
Those heavy drops no longer fell,
Thin grew the piercing air;
And now upon his aching sight
There dawn'd far off a feeble light,
In hope he hasten'd there.

Emerging now once more to day
A frozen waste before him lay,
A desert wild and wide,
Where ice rocks in a sunless sky,
On ice-rocks piled, and mountains high,
Were heap'd on every side.¹⁴⁸

Southey's depiction of Purgatory is novel, but the emphasis in the poem is clearly literary rather than a theological. This difference in emphasis is expressed in the final demise of Gerontius and Sir Owen. While Newman's Gerontius freely submits to the process of purgation, and longs for it, Southey's understanding of Purgatory lacks these theological overtones. Rather than submit to purgation, Sir Owen is warned by a voice,

¹⁴⁷ Robert Southey, *The Poetical Works*, p. 425, stanzas 3-6.

¹⁴⁸ Robert Southey, *The Poetical Works*, pp. 426, stanzas 12, 13.

and escapes from the perils of the frozen landscape before he is consumed and paralysed by it.¹⁴⁹

C. The Victorian Death-Bed Genre

The third literary genre the *Dream* resembles is the death-bed literature which enjoyed huge popularity during Newman's life time. By the nineteenth century the experience of death, as a common occurrence of daily life, was being mitigated by the gradual development of medical practice and sanitation. In turn, the Victorians became increasingly sensitive to the reality of death. This growing sensitivity gave rise to a sophisticated culture of the celebration of death, and an accompanying industry, which not only provided the immediate needs for burial, but also devotional literature, clothes, jewellery and so on.¹⁵⁰ In the Victorian family, the family bed had a very important significance, representing the focal point of death and mourning, but also of birth and rest. The connotations of the bed as a place of both death and birth carried important theological implications which we could be easily used in death-bed literature.¹⁵¹ The reading of accounts of death-bed scenes became a central part of Victorian piety, and many of these works, such as John Warton's three volume *Death Bed Scenes and Pastoral Conversations* (1828-30), formed popular views on eschatological questions such as the state of the soul between death and the resurrection.¹⁵² Newman was also

¹⁴⁹ Robert Southey, *The Poetical Works*, p. 426.

¹⁵⁰ James Stevens Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, London: David and Charles, 1972, p. 8. See Michael Wheeler, *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 29.

¹⁵¹ See Michael Wheeler, *Heaven, Hell and the Victorians*, p. 36.

¹⁵² John Warton, *Death-bed Scenes and Pastoral Conversations*, 3 Volumes, London: John Murray, 1828-1830. See Michael Wheeler, *Death and the Future life in Victorian Literature and Theology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 29.

informed by this form of piety, and began reading Warton's *Death-bed Scenes* in September 1828, several months after the death of his sister Mary and mentor Walter Mayers.¹⁵³ He was also familiar with a similar work by Christopher Sutton's *Disce Mori*, and edited the new edition of its sequel, *Disce Vivere*.¹⁵⁴

The death-bed literature of the nineteenth century is generally to be found in two forms: first, diary accounts of a 'good' death intended for didactic purposes, which often included a description of the journey of the soul to the afterlife; and second, devotional-poetical works which deal with the subject of the afterlife, that were read directly to the dying in their last moments.¹⁵⁵ The rise of Evangelicalism and Romanticism brought about both a renewal and transformation of the death-bed genre through their appeal to emotion. For Evangelicals the moral incentive of the death-bed was paramount.¹⁵⁶ The moral appeal of death was so important for the Evangelical movement that they produced thousands of didactic death-bed scenes in tracts and journals. The *Evangelical Magazine*, which ran from 1793-1892, usually included a memoir of the life and death of a recently deceased Evangelical Christian at the start of each monthly issue.¹⁵⁷ Newman also used this didactic method in making an appeal to death. In his sermon on the occasion of Walter Mayers' death in 1828, he admonished the congregation:

Think then of the coming of that dreadful day, and now even now, before it is too late be melted by the exhortation of him who so faithfully for

¹⁵³ LD II, pp. 94-95.

¹⁵⁴ See Christopher Sutton, *Disce Vivere. learn to Live. A new edition*, Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1839. Cf. LD VI, p. 180, note 1.

¹⁵⁵ See Patricia Jiland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 10.

¹⁵⁶ See Geoffrey Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 7.

¹⁵⁷ See Patricia Jiland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, p. 21.

years besought you to turn to the living God. Oh let his death effect, what his life could not effect [...] to save souls is the only end worth living for, it is worth dying for. I cannot wish my dear friend a greater glory and joy at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ than a multitude of souls ascribing to his efforts under grace their conversion and growth in heavenly things.¹⁵⁸

Many death-bed scenes found in Victorian fictional literature were heavily influenced by the Evangelical ideals of dying. The Evangelicals, for whom personal conversion to Christ was central, represented the death-bed as the final opportunity and summons for salvation.¹⁵⁹ This moral dimension of death can be seen very clearly, for example, in Thomas Scott's *The Force of Truth*, which had a huge influence on the religious development of the young Newman. In the book Scott attributed his conversion to the 'affecting sight' of death which brought about in him 'clamorous remonstrances of conscience' :

...the affecting sight of one person already dead, and another expiring, in the same chamber, served more deeply to impress my serious convictions [...] All these things increased the clamorous remonstrances of my conscience [...] My convictions would no longer be silenced or appeased, and they became so intolerably troublesome, that I resolved to make one more effort towards amendment.¹⁶⁰

Evangelical death-bed literature was adapted and modified by the members of the High-church tradition. Where the Evangelicals emphasised the expression of personal faith before death, the High Church tradition stressed the administration of

¹⁵⁸ *Ser.*, IV, p. 137.

¹⁵⁹ Patricia Jiland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, p. 21.

¹⁶⁰ Thomas Scott, *The Force of Truth*, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1984, p. 34.

sacraments before death and the value of dying in the Communion of Saints.¹⁶¹ Central eschatological tenets such as these, from works such as Warton's *Death Bed Scenes*, found their way into Tractarian eschatology. Warton's work is significant in that it was representative of both the didactic form of Tractarian death-bed literature and the High Church vision of death.¹⁶² It exercised an important influence on Newman's sermon writing, particularly from 1828 until the 1840's, when he was using examples from the work.¹⁶³ It was the ecclesiological context of administration of sacraments before death, and the theological emphasis on the Communion of Saints, that distinguished the Tractarians from their Evangelical counterparts.¹⁶⁴

One work of the death-bed genre, contemporaneous with Newman's *Dream*, was Edward Henry Bickersteth's *Yesterday, Today and Forever*.¹⁶⁵ Bickersteth's poem, published a year after the *Dream* in 1866, proved very popular, going through 16 editions. *Yesterday, Today and Forever* is significant as it represents not only an important contemporary example of Victorian death-bed literature which deals specifically with the question of the intermediate state, but it is also the closest Evangelical parallel to Newman's *Dream*. Bickersteth gave Newman a copy of the poem, which he read in part.¹⁶⁶ Both men corresponded with each other in the 1870's, and after the premature death of Bickersteth's daughter Alice, Newman wrote to him in 1873 saying how, despite their theological differences, through their poetry they had found a common appreciation for 'the great mystery':

¹⁶¹ See Patricia Jiland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, p. 25. Geoffrey Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 8.

¹⁶² See Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians*, p. 8. Leon Litvach, *John Mason Neale and the Quest for Sobornost*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 198.

¹⁶³ See James Tolhurst, 'A Blessed and Ever Enduring Fellowship: The Development of John Henry Newman's Thought on Death and the Life Beyond', *Recusant History* 22, no. 3, May 1995, p. 425.

¹⁶⁴ Leon Litvach, *John Mason Neale and the Quest for Sobornost*, p. 198.

¹⁶⁵ Edward Henry Bickersteth, *Yesterday, Today and Forever*, London: Rivingtons, 1866.

¹⁶⁶ Of the 435 pages of Newman's copy of *Yesterday, Today and Forever* 140 have been cut. See *LD* XXVII, p. 88.

I gladly bear witness to the imagination, the powers of language and easy eloquence, and the beautiful spirit which are characteristic of your poem as a whole; and I can but bow before the great mystery, that those are divided here and look for the means of grace and glory in such different directions, who have so much in common in faith and hope.¹⁶⁷

While similarities between the *Dream* and Bickersteth's work are striking, the subtle differences in approach emphasise the importance Newman gave to doctrinal content in the *Dream* such as the Communion of Saints and liturgical setting of the death-bed scene. *The Dream* begins with Gerontius on his deathbed surrounded by a priest and 'Assistants'. Newman presents Gerontius's death as accompanied by temptations and experiences 'never felt before', and a 'new feeling' in which he senses a 'strange innermost abandonment'.¹⁶⁸ While the protagonist of Bickersteth's poem also struggles in his last moments, the scene is punctuated by scenes of tearful farewells and words of comfort and advice. The *Dream*, however, makes no mention of the reaction of those around the death-bed, apart from the recitation of litanies and prayers. By situating the death of Gerontius specifically within a liturgical setting Newman avoided the Evangelical emphasis on death as a moral incentive of conversion. Gerontius's death scene is therefore very different from the common representation of death within the Evangelical movement, which did much to idealize the role of the family as the core of religious practice in the home.¹⁶⁹ Bickersteth's work reflects this. It begins with a similar scene of the dying man's dream-like vision of his final moments. However the dying man in *Yesterday, Today and Forever* is surrounded not by a cleric and assistants, but by his family. Rather than the invocations and responses of the litany which are

¹⁶⁷ *LD XXVII*, p. 89.

¹⁶⁸ *VVO*, p. 319.

¹⁶⁹ See Patricia Jiland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, p. 4.

prayed over Gerontius, there is a dialogue between the dying man and his wife and moral instructions given to his children:

The sunset glory on the hills grew pale,
The burning fever left me – I was free
From pain – albeit my strength was ebbing fast.
And quickly as dreams, though not confusedly,
The landscapes of my life before me rose,
From the first breath of dewy morn to that
Its sultry afternoon. Nor seemed my past,
As often heretofore in retrospect,
A fragmentary discontinuous whole,
But one and invisible, - a brief,
Short journey, only steepest at the last. [...]

Our children cluster'd round my bed [...]
Each on the other look'd;
And every lip trembled; and tears, hot tears,
Gush'd forth, and quickly
Would have drenched all eyes,
But fearing their most innocent distress
Would, like an irresistible tide, break down
The barrier of their mother's holy calm,
I raised my head upon the pillow, saying,

'Weep not, my children, that your father's work
Is over, and his travelling days are done.
For I am going to our happy home,
Jerusalem the golden, of which we
On Sabbath evenings have so often sung,
And wished the weary interval away
That lay betwixt us and its pearly gates.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ *YTF*, pp. 1, 7, 8.

Bickersteth represented the transition of life to death with the image of entering the Jordan river, in which still hearing the remnants voices of his wife and family about his bed he is fully immersed and then hears the voice of another:

‘Be of good comfort. It is I, fear not.’
And whether now the waters were less deep,
Or I was borne upon invisible arms,
I know not; but methought my mortal robes
Now only brushed the smoothly gliding stream,
And like the edges of a sunset cloud
The beatific land before me lay.
One long last look behind me: gradually
The figures faded on the shore of time,
And the passing bell of midnight struck,
One sob, one effort, and my spirit was free.¹⁷¹

Bickersteth also gave an intriguing account of the intermediate state after death.¹⁷² As in the *Dream*, the disembodied soul in *Yesterday, Today and Forever* is led by a ‘guardian angel’ who is commissioned to guide him to his ‘Father’s bosom.’ Bickersteth described the place they travel to as a ‘borderland of heaven and earth and earth and hell’, where both the lost and the elect are detained.¹⁷³ The guardian angel explained to the soul that this ‘borderland’, which he calls ‘paradise’, is a state in which souls rest beneath the ‘beaming sunlight of his [Christ] countenance’:

Nor think that paradise, though situate in the deep
Which lieth under, is not real heaven:
Heaven is where Jesus is, and he is there.
Even as in those mysterious temple courts
Built on mount Zion, figures of the true,
There was the outer court, the holy place,
The holiest of holiest, and yet all

¹⁷¹ *YTF*, p. 15.

¹⁷² *YTF*, p. 16.

¹⁷³ *YTF*, p. 19.

Were but one house, one Father's house of prayer,
 So it is in the heaven of heavens. And now
 The veil is rent forever, and he walks
 Who bears thy name engraven on his heart
 Before the throne of mercy, and amid
 The golden candlesticks, and where the souls
 Beneath the altar cry 'How long, O Lord?'
 Fear not; there thou shalt see him as he is,
 There clasp his sacred feet, and rest beneath
 The beaming sunlight of his countenance,
 And follow there where he leads through fairer fields
 Than Eden, by the gushing springs of life
 Fresh watered. He makes heaven: and every part
 Of his great temple with his glory shines.¹⁷⁴

Bickersteth also represented the judgement and purgation of the soul through the experience of the sight of God, in which the unbearable holiness of God refines and purifies, so much so that the soul cries out that it must be experiencing hell:

And then and there upon that guilty man
 The eye of everlasting righteousness
 Open'd. God look'd upon him. Through and through
 His naked spirit, searching its darkened depths,
 Passed like a flame of fire, that dreadful eye,
 Passed and repassed, and passing still abode
 Upon him; till the very air he breathed
 Seemed to his sense one universal flame
 Of wrath, eternal wrath, the wrath to come.
 And yet the glory of that majesty,
 That burning brightness, shone not then full orb'd,
 But veiled in part; for disembodied souls,
 Dismantled of the proper robe of flesh,
 Could neither suffer nor sustain the weight
 Of that unclouded holiness divine,
 Which in the age of ages will subdue
 All foes beneath the footstool of his throne.
 So half-eclipsed it shone: and a low wail
 Ere long brake from those miserable lips –

¹⁷⁴ *YTF*, pp. 25-26.

O God, and is this hell?¹⁷⁵

Bickersteth's description of the journey of the soul to the intermediate state and the purgation of souls by the sight of God is a common theme shared with Newman's vision of post-mortem purification in the *Dream*. In what seems to be the representation of a belief in post-mortem purgation Bickersteth explains how the soul of the unjust man must now await his judgement in the presence of God and endure the pain of 'scorching ray', as 'flames that burns the sins in thee with fire unquenchable'. This purgation is effected by the 'intolerable Eye of Holiness', 'his scorching Eye', and the 'Eye which lights thy darkness with intolerable flame.' Similarly he describes the 'prison' of the unjust souls in which 'there is no sentinel but God; his Eye alone is jailor.'¹⁷⁶

Both Bickersteth's *Yesterday, Today and Forever* and Newman's *Dream* share common traits of a personal encounter with Christ the judge, but have also differing emphases of their respective religious traditions. Bickersteth's poem strikes at the heart of the Evangelical ideal of a religion based at home and centred on the family, of 'good moral living' which is followed by an exemplary death. Gerontius, on the other-hand is an 'every man', of which the reader knows nothing. Who Gerontius was, and what he had done during his life seems unimportant. For Newman death represents the ultimate moment of decision of faith, and therefore is one which involves struggle and temptation. Rather than imparting moral discourses at his last moments, Gerontius relies totally on those around him to pray. It is this liturgical and sacramental setting, at

¹⁷⁵ *YTF*, pp. 86-87

¹⁷⁶ *YTF*, p. 89

the beginning of the *Dream*, that signalises the theological distinction of Newman's *Dream* from the popular death-bed poetry of his time.

IV. Isolated Reflections after 1865

In the years following the publication of the *Dream* in 1865 there were no significant developments in Newman's theology of Purgatory. However there are a number of isolated reflections after 1865 in which he continued to address aspects of the doctrine. The first relates to the debate on the eternal punishment of hell during the 1870-80, in which Newman became concerned with misconceptions which had a bearing on the doctrine of Purgatory. Secondly, there are two isolated reflections on the doctrine of Purgatory which Newman wrote in the 1870's, and were published posthumously in his *Philosophical Notebook*.

A. Confronting Misconceptions: Purgatory and Eternal Punishment

The *Dream* received a favourable reception after its publication in 1865, and reached a wider audience when it was included in Newman's collection of poetry, *Verses on Various Occasions*, in 1868. In April 1871 Edward Hayes Plumptre (1821-1891) quoted a section of the *Dream* in a sermon he gave at St Paul's Cathedral. Plumptre sent a copy of the sermon to Newman explaining that he 'owed much to trains of thought which the poem suggested', and that his aim was to show that 'there is a

primitive Apostolic truth underlying what Protestantism has commonly rejected *en masse* as a vain imagination.¹⁷⁷ In the sermon he said that

May we not believe, rejecting with a righteous abhorrence the dark dreams of the popular theology of Rome, that there (as one has said whose thoughts are higher than his system) the memory of the past, with all its shame and sadness - the prospect of the future, with all its hope and brightness - will work together to an issue which no purgatorial fires could accomplish -

‘That these two pains, so counter and so keen,
The longing for Him, when thou see’st Him not,
The shame of self at thought of seeing Him.’

Shall act to purify what is base in us, and illuminate what is dark?¹⁷⁸

Using the citation from the *Dream*, Plumptre had misinterpreted the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory by suggesting that just as man’s purification continues after death, so equally does the ‘probation for his eternal destiny.’¹⁷⁹ Plumptre implied that death was not a decisive moment in man’s future destiny, and that it was during Purgatory that man’s fate was definitively decided. He spoke of the state which the soul enters after death, not only as progress and change, but also as ‘repentance’.¹⁸⁰ Newman rejected this view, emphasising that the doctrine of Purgatory is based on the prerequisite of ‘present faith and future repentance’, and was not a kind of second chance after death where faith was lacking:

¹⁷⁷ LD XXV, p. 362, note 1.

¹⁷⁸ Edward Hayes Plumptre, *The Spirits in Prison and other Studies on the Life after Death*, London: Isbister, 1884, p. 24.

¹⁷⁹ LD XXV, p. 362.

¹⁸⁰ Edward Hayes Plumptre, *The Spirits in Prison*, p. 23.

Catholics are able to hold purgatory without accepting it [the idea of repentance after death], merely by holding that there are innumerable degrees of grace and sanctity among the saved, and that those who go to purgatory, however many, die one and all with the presence of God's grace, and the earnest of eternal life, however invisible to man, already in their hearts: - an assumption, not greater than yours, for it is quite as great an assumption to believe, as you do, in the *future happiness* of those who die and make no sign, <as to believe,> as I may do, in the *present faith and repentance* of those who die and make no sign.¹⁸¹

Newman argued that if, as Plumptre suggested, the period of 'probation' for deciding man's ultimate destiny was extended beyond the point of death, it must be extended to not just to die without faith, but to all. Rather than being an expression of God's magnanimity, Newman found such this idea a 'cruel prospect' for all of those who die trying to live a good life. Moreover Newman believed that if death did not signal a decisive moment in man's future then other related truths must also be put into question:

... the barriers being once broken down between our present state and our future, are we not at once forced on to the conclusion, to which the present day so much inclines already, that our future state is only a continuation, that is, as long as the soul endures, of the same sort of world as that in which we are now, to the disavowal of that series of catastrophes (resurrection, general judgment, heaven and hell,) which in physical matters is so contrary to the ideas of some of the most eminent physical philosophers of the day, who refer every thing to the action of gradually operating laws? But if miraculous (supernatural) agency has no place even in the future world, who will believe that it exists, or has existed, in this? and so Christianity ceases to be a direct divine revelation.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ LD XXV, p. 362.

¹⁸² LD XXV, p. 368.

Plumptre's misinterpretation of Purgatory as lesser type of temporal hell, was not the first time that Newman's became involved in a national debate on the doctrine of eternal punishment. In 1877 Newman became embroiled in the public debate on the doctrine of eternal punishment between the Archdeacon of Westminster, Frederic W. Farrar, and Pusey. In a series of five sermons Farrar questioned the commonly perceived conception of Hell.¹⁸³ Unauthorised shorthand notes of the sermons were published and circulated, forcing Farrar to clarify his position by compiling them in his *Eternal Hope*.¹⁸⁴ He insisted that the sermons were not intended to excite controversy, and should be considered informal reflections and not theological treatises which deal with the subject of eternal punishment comprehensively. Farrar's claimed his argument could be summed up by saying that God's mercy can be extended beyond the grave, and that 'the ways of God's salvation do not necessarily terminate with earthly life.'¹⁸⁵ Rather than denying the doctrine of 'retribution', he believed the concept should be reconsidered as both merciful and just. He admitted that, 'It is quite true that I do not believe, - and no Christian ought to believe, - in any hell, which can be proved to imply something much more inconceivable, and something very much more inconceivable, and something very much more revolting to the reason and to conscience, than anything which is alluded to in Scripture.'¹⁸⁶ Farrar argued against common misinterpretations of scriptural references to 'hell', derived from the terms *gehenna* and *hades*, which he insisted have a different meaning than that which is popularly understood by hell. In his sermons he suggested that there were four main prevalent views on the subject of punishment after death: Universalism, Annihilationism, retributive punishment - in which the wicked will be destroyed, and finally what he called 'The Common View' –

¹⁸³ See Geoffrey Rowell, *Hell and the Victorians*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974, p. 139.

¹⁸⁴ Frederic W. Farrar, *Eternal Hope – Five Sermons Preached in Westminster Abbey November and December 1877*, London: Macmillan, 1892.

¹⁸⁵ *EH*, p. xii.

¹⁸⁶ *EH*, p. xiii.

that at death (a) there is passed on every impenitent sinner an irreversible doom to endless tortures, either material or mental, of the most awful and unspeakable intensity, and, (b) this doom awaits the majority of mankind.¹⁸⁷

It was Pusey who rather reluctantly took on Farrar's Universalism in his *What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment – In Reply to Dr. Farrar's Challenge in his 'Eternal Hope'*, (1880). Concerned about the validity of the Roman Catholic sources Farrar had quoted in support of his argument, Pusey wrote to Newman asking him about the Church's position on the teaching of the *poena sensus* of the souls committed to eternal punishment in hell. Newman replied that even if one were to accept that the souls in hell suffer material pain, such a pain cannot be eternal, as the intensity of suffering which has not prospect of an end, 'destroys the recognition of time':

We know that material pain cannot continue intense - the martyrs at Lyons did not feel the red-hot chair a second time - men do not fear the rack after several applications of it - a spiritual pain may be living and enduring. An eternity of physical fire would perhaps be no eternity of physical suffering - it might so shatter the material constitution of our nature, as to make us incapable of suffering. Certainly, judging by such experience as I have had, I should say that intense pain destroys the recognition of time, or a succession of minutes and hours.¹⁸⁸

Newman believed that there was no contradiction between the belief in an ameliorative model of Purgatory, God's mercy and justice, and the doctrine of Eternal Punishment. If beatitude is conditioned by connaturality with God, those who reject communion with God continually until death, would simply not be capable of heaven, as a matter of

¹⁸⁷ *EH*, p. xxii.

¹⁸⁸ *LD XXIX*, p. 4.

necessity. In a letter to an unknown correspondent in 1867 he wrote that in regard to the terrible state of the damned, he could be certain that is a condition which is ultimately both self inflicted and irreversible:

In all these matters I speak under correction of divines, and the infallible decision of Holy Church, but for myself I discern clearly but one thing, viz that the state of the lost is never reversed, that they never will see the face of God, or enter heaven, that they never will be annihilated, yet never be in company with the Saints. These are awful *negatives* — but they are negatives which are inflicted by lost souls on themselves — for it would be but an increase of misery for an unholy soul to be brought into heaven, and it remains unholy by its own act. No positive infliction of pain is necessary for the fulness of the second death. Sinners are self condemned, self punished.¹⁸⁹

While Newman tried to make sense of eternal punishment ‘less terrible to the imagination’, he held it with the same inner conviction as the belief in eternal happiness.¹⁹⁰

B. The Posthumously Published *Philosophical Notebook*

In 1868 Newman began rereading and preparing his *Parochial and Plain Sermons* for republication. In a letter to W.J. Copeland he said that he preferred that sermon No. 393, ‘The Intermediate State’, should not be included in the re-publication of volume three:

Though my Parochial and Plain Sermons are altogether in the hands of yourself and your Publishers, and it is, as I know, inconsistent with your plan of publication to make any change or omission in the text,

¹⁸⁹ *LD XXIII*, p. 261.

¹⁹⁰ *Apo.*, p. 19.

nevertheless I hope you may be able to find me an opportunity of stating publicly, that there are passages, as, for instance, in Sermons 21 and 31 of volume ii which I could wish altered, and that there is one whole Sermon, that on the Intermediate State, the last of Volume iii, which, if it were left to me, I certainly should not republish, as it enforces doctrinal views, which I altogether disown and condemn.¹⁹¹

Yet despite his ‘condemnation’ of the doctrine of the intermediate state, Newman continued to use the term in the 1870’s in the private philosophical notes he had been compiling, ‘Discursive Enquiries on Metaphysical Subjects.’ During his lifetime the work remained unknown and never came to print. It was published posthumously in two volumes under the title of *The Philosophical Notebook*.¹⁹² These notes are significant as they contain three brief reflections on ‘The Intermediate State’, a term which Newman used interchangeably with Purgatory. The first of these reflections, of August 1875, dealt with the subject of the ‘activity’ of disembodied spirits. Newman recounts how an elderly Protestant lady, some days before her death, had a ‘...very remarkable dream, as being unlike what would occur to a Protestant.’¹⁹³ She dreamt of her deceased child in ‘shining light’, saying she was

‘Not yet in heaven [...] but O so happy! Busy, busy for God - doing work for him.’ Her mother asked what work? ‘Not employments as on earth - we see and know so differently’ - and she added, ‘I cannot tell you more, than I am permitted by God.’ Her mother asked if she knew what passes here; she said ‘No - nothing since I left the earth; I remember my own life perfectly, but nothing after.’ Then she asked by name after her husband and children, and each of her brothers and sisters.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ LD XXIV, p. 50.

¹⁹² Edward J. Sillem and A.J. Boekraad, (eds.), *The Philosophical Notebook II*, Louvain: Nauwelaerts Publishing House, 1970.

¹⁹³ PN II, p. 181.

¹⁹⁴ PN II, p. 181.

The description which the woman gave of her dream confirmed for Newman a number of points which he had 'either long or at least lately held about the intermediate state.'¹⁹⁵ First, there is individual judgement immediately after death. The soul of the disembodied spirit is not admitted immediately to heaven but exists in another state. Second, Newman says that while nothing is said of penal suffering, there is a definite mention of the 'quoddam quasi pratum', of a region 'like a meadow' where there is no suffering. Third, there is mention of activity which cannot be described, which for Newman 'is a metaphysical thought strange as occurring in an old lady.' Fourth, the soul's ignorance of earthly events is 'against the grain of Protestant, not to say Catholic anticipations.' Fifth, the soul's contemplation of its past life is not commonly attributed to Protestants. Finally there is no mention of the joy of communion among dead relatives and friends which is popularly held by Protestants.¹⁹⁶

The second reflection of December 1878 is an extract from a letter Newman inserted, on Purgatory, from an unknown recipient.¹⁹⁷ The letter describes the fear and pain of a Purgatory of ignorance of one's own state and destiny - a pain greater than any physical suffering:

I think what a severe purgatory it would be, tho' is there were no pain at all, but darkness, silence and solitude, - an ignorance where you were, how you were held together, on what you depended, all you knew of yourself being that you *thought*, and no possible anticipation how long this state would last, and in what way it would end, and with a vivid recollection of every one of your sins from birth to death, even tho' you were no more able to sin, and knew this, and though you also knew you were saved.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ *PN II*, p. 183.

¹⁹⁶ *PN II*, pp. 181ff.

¹⁹⁷ The letter has not been traced. *PN II*, p. 185, note 1.

¹⁹⁸ *PN II*, pp. 185-187.

Newman compared this state to the helplessness one experiences during sleep. Just as the phenomenon of dreaming arises from the absence of the brain's action during sleep, so 'the intermediate or disembodied state, before the elect soul goes to heaven, is a helpless dream, in which it neither can sin on the one hand, any more than when a man [...] but on the other cannot be said to exercise intellect or to have knowledge.'¹⁹⁹ In his last, and most concise of his three reflections, dated September 1876, Newman anticipated that the intermediate state will exceed any expectations we may have of it. Our experience of it will seem as if nothing of it has ever been revealed to us before: 'it will be like our first sensations on personally knowing a man whom we had known hitherto only by his writings, when we are led to say that he is so unlike, yet still like what we anticipated.'²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ *PN* II, p. 187.

²⁰⁰ *PN* II, p. 187.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have traced the development of Newman's theology of Purgatory from the 1820's to the 1860's, culminating in the publication of the *Dream of Gerontius* in 1865. As a Roman Catholic Newman believed that the doctrine of Purgatory was founded on the fundamental Christian vocation to an intimate union with God through a continuing and gradual process of conversion, holiness and divinisation, both in this life and after death. His acceptance of the doctrine, as an Anglican, was based on his adherence to three theological principles: the sanctity of God and man's vocation to participate in it, the irrevocable nature of death, and finally, the dilemma of what he called the 'innumerable degrees of grace and sanctity among the saved', which means that some die in union with God but with the burden of unexpiated sin.¹ Central to Newman's understanding of Purgatory was that the Roman Catholic Church's teachings on the doctrine need not be understood from a punitive perspective, but rather as a process of the soul being made 'capable' of God.

As an Evangelical, Newman rejected the possibility of a 'third state' after death, but argued that it was the connaturality of the soul with God in holiness, rather than satisfaction for sins, which constituted the necessary condition for future beatitude. In 1826 Newman was preaching that there could be no greater punishment one could inflict upon a soul than to admit it unprepared to beatitude: it could 'not *bear* the face of the Living God; the Holy God would be no object of joy to him', but would cry, 'Let us alone! What have we to do with thee?', for 'none but the holy can look upon the Holy

¹ LD XXV, p. 362.

One; without holiness no man can endure to see the Lord.’² The concept of beatitude based on a connaturality of the soul with God, which Newman began preaching during his Evangelical years, became a continuing element of his doctrine of Purgatory. It was Edward Hawkins, his predecessor at the University Church, who convinced Newman that his strict distinction between the elect and the damned was theologically untenable. Newman understood that rather than dividing mankind into categories of the just and the damned, that there were various degrees of moral goodness.

The doctrine of the intermediate state which Newman discovered whilst reading the Caroline Divines in the early 1830s provided a framework for his eschatology after his rejection of Evangelicalism. This development led Newman to a theological inquiry into the state of the soul after death and before the resurrection. Newman began speculating on the scriptural evidence of the condition of souls after death. The teaching of the intermediate state raised numerous questions for Newman: were these souls conscious in this middle state or were they ‘asleep’? If these souls were in a state of bliss, how did this bliss differ from the beatitude that would be conferred on them at the resurrection? There was a progressive change in Newman’s understanding of the intermediate state from a belief that this was simply a temporal period between death and resurrection, to a state in which souls undergo a progressive growth in holiness.

Newman’s initial acceptance of Purgatory in 1837 was caused by the tension he observed between the magisterial doctrine and its reception by the majority of the Roman Catholic faithful, particularly through reading the decrees of the Council of Trent. He accepted that while the basis of the doctrine was sound, its theological

² *PPS I*, pp. 5-7.

expression had, within its long history in Roman Catholicism, become embellished with other speculative claims, many of which are non-magisterial, unscriptural, and theologically problematic. The most controversial of these claims was that the souls in Purgatory are not only purified and made ready for the Beatific Vision of God, but that this purification consists in souls being tormented and punished by material fire. Other claims include the localisation of Purgatory as a place (often subterranean), and the association of Purgatory with a 'lesser' type of hell. Despite these embellishments Newman believed that there was nothing in the Tridentine decree on Purgatory which contradicted the Anglican belief in the intermediate state:

... the Creed of Pope Pius, which is framed from the Tridentine decrees, and is the Roman Creed of Communion, only says 'I firmly hold there is a Purgatory, and that souls therein detained are aided by the prayers of the faithful,' nothing being said of its being a place of punishment, nothing, or all but nothing, which does not admit of being explained of merely an intermediate state. Now supposing we found ourselves in the Roman Communion, of course it would be a great relief to find that we were not bound to believe more than this vague statement, nor should we (I conceive) on account of the received interpretation about Purgatory superadded to it, be obliged to leave our Church.³

From 1837 onward Newman highlighted the inconsistencies of the received teaching from its magisterial form, emphasising how little the Roman Catholic Church had actually defined on the doctrine. Newman emphasised that the crucial question on purgatorial pains, which made the doctrine an epitome of what was considered a 'Romish' corruption among Anglicans, was essentially an open question upon which the Roman Catholic Church had in fact made no definitive declaration. After expressing his views on Purgatory publically several years later in *Tract XC* (1841), he received

³ Tract LXXI, vol. III, pp. 15f.

widespread criticism. I demonstrate, from the numerous pamphlets published immediately after *Tract XC*, that his acceptance of a ‘primitive’ form of Purgatory was a crucial argument in the process which led to the censoring of the tract.

When Newman became a Roman Catholic he adopted the commonly held punitive model of Purgatory, diffused in England primarily through the preaching of the Redemptorists. However even in the early stages of his Roman Catholic years he tempered the penal representation of the doctrine with images of rest and joy. His sermon notes show that by 1849 and 1850 he was using the writings of St. Francis de Sales to speak about the ‘consolations of Purgatory.’⁴ St. Francis’ theology of Purgatory was largely dependent on the *Treatise on Purgatory* by St. Catherine of Genoa, who developed an ameliorative model for the doctrine. Although St. Catherine’s work had been translated into English in 1858 by Manning, Newman never read the work.⁵ However the ameliorative conception of Purgatory that we find the writing of St. Francis de Sales and St. Catherine of Genoa is reflected in the *Dream of Gerontius* (1865), particularly in regard to the question of purgatorial pains. The question of how the soul suffers in Purgatory was a one which Newman dealt with at length. His theology of Purgatory in the *Dream* was one in which it was the love of God which purifies the soul, rather than the abstract concept of material fire as a physical torture inflicted by God for satisfaction of sins. The ‘depersonalisation’ of Purgatory as a torture by fire often depicted as being administered by angels in a subterranean prison, seems to have little to do with the joy and anticipation which Newman described the soul has after death in expectancy of the encounter with Christ the judge who purifies.

⁴ See *SN*, pp. 25, 270.

⁵ H.E. Manning, *The Treatise on Purgatory of Catherine of Genoa*, London: Burns and Lambert, 1858.

Newman's avoidance of traditional images of torture by fire, together with his understanding of purification as a voluntary and necessary process of development after death, removed the main points of contention which had been brought against the doctrine by his Anglican contemporaries. Relying on the Tridentine synthesis, Newman avoided an over-categorization of aspects of the doctrine which were not defined *de fide*. He accepted as a basic premise that the transformative state which souls pass through after death is one which involves suffering. However Newman did not view this suffering as an inflicted punishment, but rather as a condition in which the soul finds itself being torn by a desire to be with God and the shame at its own inadequacy. Purgatory is therefore a state of conflicting attributes, of joy and suffering, desire and shame. His theology of Purgatory is closely linked to his understanding of the particular judgement, which are portrayed in the *Dream* simultaneously. For Newman particular judgement is revelatory: the veil covering man's understanding is removed and the soul becomes fully aware of himself and of God, which is never fully possible during his earthly life. The full revelation of himself before God initiates the painful process of transformation. Newman also accepted that all sin has consequences, known in Roman Catholic theology as 'temporal punishments', which must be remitted either by penance in this world or the next. For Newman these 'temporal punishments' are nothing more than the burden of sin which has blinded man throughout his life. Purgatory is necessary not because God's justice must be satisfied, but rather because the soul, who is called to an intimate communion with God, must become connatural with him in holiness. For Newman an authentic interpretation of the doctrine corresponds to the central Christian vocation of transformation and renewal.

The contribution which Newman can make to the questions of the contemporary debate on Purgatory is significant. Using the framework set out by the Trent, Newman's theology of Purgatory provides alternative images and analogies upon which to build a renewed understanding of the doctrine. While his theology of Purgatory is not unique within the history of theology, it represents an alternative to the commonly accepted doctrine of Purgatory in Victorian England. Soon after the publication of the *Dream*, theologians contemporaneous to Newman's recognised the value of Newman's ameliorative model of Purgatory. The *Dream* inspired this new direction in the Roman Catholic theology of Purgatory in works such as Henry Coleridge's *Prisoners of the King* (1878), and Henry Nutcombe Oxenham's *Catholic Eschatology and Universalism*.⁶ Oxenham spoke of Newman's *Dream* 'like a new revelation' of the doctrine:

No theologian, in truth, could have more forcibly summed up the philosophy of Purgatory than he has in the beautiful lines describing the condition of the 'happy suffering soul,' which is 'safe' in that middle home, 'consumed, yet quickened, by the glance of God.'⁷

The genius of the *Dream* is that its reception is valued both for its theological and poetic brilliance. By the 1880's the *Dream* had become one of the most valued contemporary poems on the afterlife in Victorian society. It was publically praised by prominent public figures such as by Gladstone, General Charles Gordon and Edward Elgar. Despite the influence of the *Dream*, Newman did not expect or anticipate further magisterial pronouncements on questions related to the doctrine. While he was concerned for a rehabilitation of the doctrine, Newman did not feel the need to address

⁶ Henry Coleridge, *Prisoners of the King - Thoughts on the Catholic Doctrine of Purgatory*, London: Burns and Oates, 1878. Henry Nutcombe Oxenham, *Catholic Eschatology and Universalism*, London: Basil, Montagu and Pickering, 1876.

⁷ Henry Nutcombe Oxenham, *Catholic Eschatology and Universalism*, pp. 35-36.

the question systematically or comprehensively. The poetic form of Newman's most significant discourse on Purgatory may appear to limit the value of the work for a systematic treatment of the subject. However Newman was aware that he was dealing with a contentious subject which could be open to misinterpretation. By developing his theology of Purgatory in poetic form he had greater freedom of expression which he would not have had in a theological tract. As a Roman Catholic he accepted that there is always a speculative dimension to some areas of eschatological enquiry which are beyond dogmatic categorization. It is the 'dream' motif, as a reoccurring theme of his theology of Purgatory, which expresses the limitations of theological research in this area of eschatology. When probed to develop further on what he had already written on Purgatory, he replied to a correspondent:

...you do me too much honour, if you think I am to see in a dream every thing that *has* to be seen in the *subject* dreamed about. I have said what I saw. Various spiritual writers see various aspects of it; and under their protection and pattern I have set down the dream as it came before the sleeper. It is not my fault, if the sleeper did not dream more. Perhaps something woke him. Dreams are generally fragmentary. I have nothing more to tell.⁸

⁸ LD XXI, p. 498.

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