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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF FOUR OF
JOHN HENRY NEWMAN'S SERMONS

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In Matthew Arnold's Emerson lecture of 1883, he describes a presence that permeated his early years at Oxford University some forty years before. This presence was John Henry Newman, who preached to the undergraduate students every Sunday from St. Mary's pulpit. Arnold asks:

Who could resist the charm of that spiritual apparition, gliding in the dim afternoon light through the aisles of St. Mary's, rising into the pulpit, and then, in the most entrancing of voices, breaking the silence with words and thoughts which were a religious music,--subtle, sweet, mournful?¹

John Henry Newman, who was an Anglican minister, and then, in turn, a Roman Catholic priest and cardinal, was also a scholar, theologian, philosopher, and prolific writer in the nineteenth century who continues to influence individuals today with his theological and philosophical writings. Newman's main vocation, however, was that of a preacher and priest, and it was through his vocation of preaching that he touched the hearts and minds and souls of the Victorian people. We are concerned in

¹Matthew Arnold, Discourses in America (New York: Macmillan Co., 1924), pp. 139-40.

this study not only with the literary appeal Newman's sermons had on his generation, but also with whether or not these published sermons have survived the test of time and exhibit perennial literary qualities that establish Newman's writing, and specifically his sermons, within the ranks of classical literature.

Justification for the Analysis

Before we can critically examine Newman's sermons for literary qualities, we must first explain why John Henry Newman was chosen for this study. A short, biographical review of Newman's life and his contributions to Victorian England may serve this purpose.

John Henry Newman was born February 21, 1801, in London, England, the son of a banker and the eldest of six children. His family was an Evangelical, middle-class family, and his biographer Charles Frederick Harrold tells us that in his youth Newman "was surrounded with early nineteenth-century gentility." At the age of fifteen, Newman experienced a private, religious conversion, where he "fell under the influences of a definite creed and dogma."²

²Charles Frederick Harrold, John Henry Newman: An Expository and Critical Study of His Mind, Thought and Art (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1945), pp. 2-4.

It was during this same time period in his life, in 1816, that Newman matriculated into Trinity College, one of the many colleges in the Oxford University system. In 1822 he was elected to a Fellowship at Oriel College and became one of the public tutors in the college. Newman's Oriel fellowship opened up a theological career for him, and in 1824 he was ordained a deacon in the Anglican Church. In 1825, he was ordained an Anglican priest, and in 1828 he became the Vicar of the Oxford University Church of St. Mary the Virgin.³

In the intellectual climate of Oxford, Newman and his friends became quite interested in the politics of Victorian England. There was a growing dissatisfaction among Newman and others at Oxford with what they felt was the growing political Liberalism and Radicalism in Great Britain.⁴ On Sunday, July 14, 1833, John Keble, an Anglican priest and Newman's close friend, preached his famous Assize Sermon from the pulpit at St. Mary's and the Oxford Movement was born.⁵ The Oxford Movement was

³Harrold, Newman, pp. 6-8.

⁴R. W. Church, The Oxford Movement (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. xiv.

⁵Ibid., p. 68.

an attempt to reawaken the conscience of the Anglican community and to remind them of long forgotten religious principles. The members of the Movement, with Newman as their leader, wrote a series of "Tracts for the Times" to convey the Movement's religious messages to the people.⁶ The Tracts, combined with Newman's powerful Sunday afternoon sermons, kept the Movement alive for some eight years.⁷

In 1839, during the Long Vacation at Oxford, Newman began reading the history of the Monophysites,⁸ trying to comprehend the doctrinal question. It was during this reading, Newman tells us in his Apologia Pro Vita Sua, that "for the first time a doubt came upon me of the tenableness of Anglicanism."⁹ His defection to Rome, however, was slow. On February 21, 1841, his fortieth birthday, Newman published the famous "Tract Ninety," in which "he tried to show how every one of the Thirty-Nine

⁶Ibid., p. 79.

⁷Denis Gwynn, "John Henry Newman," in John Henry Newman: Centenary Essays (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1945), p. 21.

⁸The Monophysite heresy held that Christ had a single divine nature rather than a double nature, divine and human, as discussed by John Henry Newman, Apologia Pro Vita Sua (1864; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 108.

⁹Ibid.

Articles (of the Church of England) could be interpreted in a 'Catholic' sense."¹⁰ The storm that broke was the beginning of the end for Newman, but it was not until September 25, 1843, when he preached his last sermon as an Anglican, that Newman did officially leave the Church of England.¹¹

Newman spent the next two years in seclusion at Littlemore, a village near Oxford when he had constructed a chapel some years before. On October 9, 1845, Newman was formally accepted into the Catholic Church by Father Dominic, a Passionist priest, and continued to live a monastic life at Littlemore with a few of his fellow converts.¹² Newman left Littlemore and the Oxford vicinity in 1846, and traveled to Rome, where he began his studies in the religious Oratory system.¹³

On May 30, 1847, Newman was ordained a Catholic priest, and in 1848 he returned to England where he set up the English Congregation of the Oratory. His Catholic

¹⁰Stephen Prickett, Romanticism and Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 153.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Newman, Apologia, p. 293.

¹³Charles Stephen Dessain, John Henry Newman (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1966), pp. 91-92.

years were spent quietly until 1864, when he wrote his famous autobiography, Apologia Pro Vita Sua, in rebuttal to criticism generated by Charles Kingsley regarding his religious principles. His Apologia brought him once again into the limelight of English religious and intellectual life, and on May 12, 1879, Newman was made a Cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church. He died on August 11, 1890, at the age of eighty-nine, his lifetime having spanned almost the entire nineteenth century.¹⁴

John Henry Newman's religious influence on Victorian England was considerable. Critic R. D. Middleton writes that Newman's fifteen years in the pulpit at St. Mary's had considerable influence on Oxford, and "to influence Oxford, then at any rate, was to influence religious life throughout the country." Furthermore, Newman's sermons contain "a power which has influenced and still influences the spiritual life of the Church of England."¹⁵

His influence as a Roman Catholic has been quieter, but is just as important. A religious writer, Armel J. Coupet, writing in the 1960s, has this to say about

¹⁴Geoffrey Tillotson, Newman: Prose and Poetry (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957), pp. 28-29.

¹⁵R. D. Middleton, Newman at Oxford (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 93.

Newman's influence on the Roman Catholic Church:

Because some questions raised at the Second Vatican Council are already answered in his writings, Newman has been called 'the invisible peritus.' A Mexican bishop said in Rome that 'Ecumenism has its roots in the work of Newman and the Tractarians who, among other things, made a great deal of the liturgy.'¹⁶

Newman's influence on the literature of the nineteenth century was also considerable. Modern critic David J. DeLaura advances the theory that Newman's style shaped Pater's own concept of style and that it was Newman's style that became the "appropriate 'new' mode . . . in the 1860's."¹⁷ DeLaura calls Newman's sermons the "spiritual and emotional heart" of the Oxford movement, and the influence both "literary and spiritual" that Newman exerted on Pater, Matthew Arnold, and others in the nineteenth century can only be described, DeLaura says, as phenomenal.¹⁸ A review of Newman's sermons in this study will perhaps identify some of the reasons for his literary appeal and influence.

¹⁶Armel J. Coupet, A Newman Companion to the Gospels (London: Burns & Oates, 1966), p. vii.

¹⁷David J. DeLaura, "Newman and the Victorian Cult of Style," The Victorian Newsletter 51 (Spring 1977): 6.

¹⁸David J. DeLaura, "'O Unforgotten Voice': The Memory of Newman in the Nineteenth Century," Sources for Reinterpretation: The Use of Nineteenth-Century Literary Documents (Austin: n.p., 1975), pp. 43-44.

Basic Assumptions and Definitions

In order for any piece of literary analysis to be properly understood, it is first necessary to define the terminology used and to explain the basic assumptions that are implied in the analysis. This is particularly true when one applies a modern day perspective to a selection of nineteenth century sermons. The following definitions will clarify some of the terminology used in the present investigation.

One of the main objectives of this study is to determine whether or not John Henry Newman's sermons exhibit perennial literary qualities. What is meant by perennial literary qualities requires some explanation. It is not sufficient to say that because a piece of prose appeals to the reader's mind, the prose has perennial literary qualities. Many individuals will argue the merits of a literary work based on their own individual, intuitive sense. However, when pressed for an explanation, they are unable to cite specific qualities other than the fact that the work strikes some responsive chord in their psyche.

The present writer thinks in terms of a classic when confronted with defining perennial literary qualities. Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, a nineteenth century French

critic and a contemporary of Newman's, wrote a definition of a classic in 1850 which is still applicable today:

A true classic, as I should like to hear it defined, is an author who has enriched the human mind, who has really augmented its treasures, who has made it take one more step forward, who has discovered some unequivocal moral truth, or has once more seized hold of some eternal passion in that heart where all seemed known and explored; who has rendered his thought, his observation, or his discovery under no matter what form, but broad and large, refined, sensible, sane, and beautiful in itself; who has spoken to all in a style of his own which yet belongs to all the world, in a style which is new without neologisms, new and ancient, easily contemporaneous with every age.¹⁹

We shall approach the analysis of four of Newman's sermons with this definition in mind, and determine whether or not these sermons, which are representative of Newman's sermon style, still have literary merit today.

Another objective of this study is to identify those literary devices that characterize a selected group of Newman's sermons. Literary devices, for the purpose of this study, are those figures of speech or rhetorical

¹⁹Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, "What Is a Classic?" Select Essays of Sainte-Beuve, trans. A. J. Butler, quoted in Paul Robert Lieder and Robert Withington, The Art of Literary Criticism (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1941), p. 474.

devices that Newman uses in his sermons. The most familiar devices are similes, metaphors, analogy, personification, and antithesis; however, this is by no means a complete list. A closer look at Newman's sermons will reveal many other figures of speech.

Though unrelated to the literary aspects of this study, an explanation is necessary regarding the use of the terms "Anglican" and "Catholic." During Newman's time, a reference to the Catholic Church could mean either the Anglican Catholics of the Church of England, or the Roman Catholics, who had as their head the pope in Rome. For the sake of simplicity and in keeping with modern terminology, the use of the term "Anglican" in this study will refer to the Anglican Catholic members of the Church of England, and the term "Catholic" will refer to the Roman Catholic Church and its members.

Methods Used in the Study

To analyze Newman's sermons, it was necessary first to review all of Newman's works and to identify the primary sources necessary for the study. Although Newman published over forty books and articles in addition to the tracts of the Oxford Movement, his sermons were limited to approximately twelve volumes.²⁰ These volumes

²⁰Harrold, Newman, p. 333.

fall into four major groups, based on the time periods when they were written and preached. From the four major divisions a representative sermon has been selected by the present writer for analysis, based on its particular style and popularity.

In addition to reviewing the sermons, it was necessary to read Newman's autobiography, Apologia Pro Vita Sua, in order to gain an understanding of Newman himself. From this point, a review of the biographies that have been written about Newman was also undertaken.

The next step in the process was to consult all references for Newman, as listed in the "Nineteenth Century English Literature" section of the MLA International Bibliography of Books and Articles. A review of the last thirty years of citations on Newman for pertinent books, articles, or dissertations was conducted. After scanning each article or book referenced, a decision was made as to its relevance to the analysis.

It was also necessary to consult several books and articles that have been written about literary analysis and criticism, to assure that the study of the sermons was being properly conducted.

After compiling and reviewing the necessary background materials, a close analysis of each sermon was

conducted, with the goal of identifying those literary qualities that account for the sermons' appeal.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

Because of Newman's prominence during the Victorian period and the effect his writings have had on religious thinking, literally hundreds of books and articles have been written about Newman, both from a religious and a literary standpoint. However, for the purposes of this study, only those works that deal directly with the Victorian sermon style, influences on Newman's style, or analyses of the sermons being studied are included in this review.

Newman in the Pulpit

Newman's popularity in the pulpit first began during his years at St. Mary's, where he served as Vicar from 1828 until his famous leave-taking in 1843.¹ A perception of why Newman became so popular as a preacher can be better had if one understands the Anglican service of Newman's day.

Louis Bouyer, in his biography of Newman, describes the Anglican service of Evensong, which was a part of Newman's Sunday evening service:

¹Harrold, Newman, pp. 12, 68.

Evensong is made up of a combination of Vespers, Compline, and passages from some of the old Vigils. After the singing of the Psalms comes a lengthy lesson from the Old Testament. Then comes the 'Magnificat'. Another equally long lesson, this time from the New Testament, precedes the singing of the 'Nunc Dimittis', after which some night prayers bring the service to a close.²

It was to this service, Sunday after Sunday, that Newman came to his parishioners to deliver his sermon. His dress, Lewis Brastow tells us, was that "of the Oxford clergyman of his day, which was sufficiently distinctive but not extreme."³ Brastow describes Newman as having a slight stoop in his shoulders. True to the Anglican tradition, he read his sermons⁴ with the lights around him turned low, in order to spare his eyes.⁵ In the beginning years at St. Mary's Newman's parishioners consisted almost solely of a few "shopkeepers, charwomen, and college servants."⁶ Using the simplest language possible, Newman would preach from a text taken from one of the

²Louis Bouyer, Newman: His Life and Spirituality, with a Preface by H. Francis Davis (London: Burns & Oates, 1958), p. 187.

³Lewis O. Brastow, Representative Modern Preachers (New York: Macmillan Co., 1904), p. 308.

⁴Ibid., p. 307.

⁵Bouyer, Newman, pp. 176-177.

⁶Ibid.

lessons of the day. Bouyer describes Newman in the pulpit:

Almost entirely without gesture, in a voice which, though clear as crystal, was entirely innocent of inflection, as one rapt in inward contemplation, a mood which he quickly communicated to his hearers, he would speak for a quarter of an hour, or perhaps a little less.⁷

Word of Newman's charisma in the pulpit quickly spread, and each Sunday newcomers came to St. Mary's to hear him preach. The undergraduates from Newman's alma mater, Oriel College, came first, followed by men from other colleges.

The congregation continued to grow, till at last all the most brilliant people in Oxford began to make a point of attending Evensong at St. Mary's, rubbing shoulders there with pious shoeblacks, devout housemaids, and a few High Street shopkeepers.

Bouyer notes that Newman's popularity never caused his sermons to "deviate from that perfect simplicity which had been their outstanding characteristic from the beginning."⁸

Brastow, writing fourteen years after Newman's death, describes Newman as an "apologetic preacher." He says that Newman left no doubt about his doctrinal opinions in his sermons, and even the sermons that have a "definitely ethical and evangelistic character" have a

⁷Ibid., pp. 187, 176.

⁸Ibid., p. 177.

"doctrinal basis and an apologetic interest." To him, Newman is "entirely ignorant" of the science of Exegesis, the art of Biblical exposition or interpretation. Newman's use of Scriptural quotations in his sermons are used with great freedom, to Brastow's thinking, and the "unexpected themes" Newman deduced from the use of Scriptural citations were "rather shocking to the critical homiletic mind." However, Brastow excuses Newman's "unconventional" methods, calling his preaching "stirring" with an "evangelistic note."⁹

Contradicting Brastow, another critic, Joseph Reilly, feels that Newman "sought moral, not doctrinal, subjects" in his sermons, and "sharpened them like the point of an arrow." Reilly likens Newman's mind to that of St. Augustine and feels that Newman's mission as a preacher is

to bring men to hear and see and understand--and
then to live the years through to the end, as under
the very eyes of God and in the shadow of His wings.

Reilly agrees that Newman was a great preacher, but does not consider him a great pulpit orator. "The eye was not appealed to nor gratified by the appearance and the gestures of the speaker," says Reilly of Newman in the pulpit. So poor is Newman's pulpit style that Reilly describes a fictitious scenario whereby a chance observer

⁹Brastow, Modern Preachers, pp. 301, 303-04.

may have stumbled onto Newman's weekly service and would have perhaps made these observations about Newman:

He would have looked unmoved upon the tall and stoop-shouldered preacher with his low voice, his unoratorical manner, his rapid enunciation, who scarcely raised his head but kept his eyes fastened upon his manuscript. With a shock of disappointment and surprise, he might well have asked himself if this man were actually the voice of the moral aspirations of young Oxford, if he were the head and front of the greatest spiritual movement in generations, or if, by a trick of chance, he might not be some callow curate whose diffidence must be overcome by practice.¹⁰

Bertram Newman, in his biography of Newman, reminds the reader that the pulpit during Newman's time was a very "important institution of English life. Preaching was still a seriously cultivated art in the first half of the nineteenth century," and sermons provided many Victorian households "with the major part, not only of their spiritual, but also of their mental sustenance." Bertram Newman feels that Newman had all of the "accidental qualities" of a great preacher--the fact that he was unmarried, coupled with the attributes of "an impressive manner, a noticeable if not commanding presence, and an exceedingly musical voice."¹¹

¹⁰Joseph J. Reilly, Newman as a Man of Letters (New York: Macmillan Co., 1925), pp. 54-55, 50.

¹¹Bertram Newman, Cardinal Newman: A Biographical and Literary Study (New York: Century Co., 1925), pp. 72-73.

Another biographer, J. M. Flood, notes that Newman's Sunday evening sermons earned for him the reputation of the "most remarkable preacher who had ever appeared in an Anglican pulpit." Totally "devoid of oratorical art," Newman's preaching, nevertheless, attracted men of different schools of thought who did not necessarily agree with the philosophy of the movement Newman represented. Flood recounts such Victorian notables as William Gladstone, Matthew Arnold, James Anthony Froude, and John C. Shairp, among others, who recorded the lasting impressions Newman made upon them in his sermons. Several of his observers remarked "on his singularly impressive manner in the pulpit, combined with a clear and beautiful intonation," characteristics which Flood says "won for Newman his remarkable success as a preacher."¹²

Almost all of Newman's critics agree that, while Newman was definitely a great preacher, he was not a pulpit orator in the classical sense. A religious writer, Eugene M. Burke, writing for the occasion of the Newman Centennial in 1945,¹³ explains the distinction. "The

¹²J. M. Flood, Cardinal Newman and Oxford (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1933), pp. 157-58, 160.

¹³This Centennial was observed by Catholic followers of Newman, in celebration of his conversion to the Roman Catholic faith in 1845.

classical pulpit oratory," writes Burke, "is limited both by the occasions which call for it and by the talent it requires," if it is to be effective. He goes on to explain that preaching, on the other hand, is a tool that is constantly used and does not require the wide range of talent that is demanded in good pulpit oratory. In the classical tradition of pulpit oratory, the orator "works on a large canvas," presenting religious truth "in stately cadence and martial array," calling on, for his audience, the "massed display" of religious thought and history. The preacher in contrast, "is content to etch out a single point or aspect" of religious truth, and "so develop it that he may set it firmly and efficaciously in the mind of his hearer." Burke sums up the difference between the two:

The immediate concern of the preacher is the individual, whereas the immediate aim of the orator is the group and the occasion. Yet, in all this, it is to be noted that in the actual sermon the preacher will often achieve genuine oratorical levels, and the orator will not be without power to move the individual.¹⁴

¹⁴Eugene M. Burke, "The Salvation of the Hearer," in American Essays for the Newman Centennial, edited by John K. Ryan and Edmond Darvil Benard (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1947), pp. 88-89.

Newman's success at St. Mary's led critic Middleton to write in 1950, some one hundred and seven years after Newman preached his last sermon at St. Mary's:

There are many today who feel the power behind the Parochial Sermons, the Sermons bearing on Subjects of the Day, breaking out from the restraint of the printed page, a power which has influenced and still influences the spiritual life of the Church of England.¹⁵

If Newman's preaching as an Anglican had such a profound effect upon his hearers and later upon those who read his sermons, one wonders as to the effect his preaching as a Catholic priest had on his listeners. The religious writer Dessain writes that Newman's Catholic preaching began in 1847 with his return to Maryvale, near Birmingham, to set up the English Oratory of St. Philip. On Sundays, Newman would walk from Maryvale to St. Chad's Cathedral in Birmingham to deliver his sermons and then walk back. Although St. Chad's, Birmingham, was only sixty miles from St. Mary's, Oxford, they were worlds apart in other respects. Newman's congregation at St. Chad's was made up of mainly blue-collar workers from the industrial town, together with poor Irishmen driven to England by the Irish Famine. As an Anglican, Newman had

¹⁵Middleton, Newman at Oxford, p. 93.

always read his sermons, but he soon conformed to the Catholic custom of preaching his sermons extemporaneously. Dessain likens these early Catholic sermons to the Parochial Sermons preached at St. Mary's; their simplicity made them easy for the congregation to follow.¹⁶

Dessain does not record the influence Newman's Catholic sermons had on his listeners, but another religious writer, Placid Murray, writes:

We feel a hiatus between his Anglican and his Catholic sermons, perhaps because he felt obliged to fall into line with Catholic practice, even where no principle of faith or discipline was involved.

Contrasting the earnestness of the Anglican sermons, especially those contained in the Parochial and Plain Sermons with "their sobriety, their restraint, their realism," with Newman's Catholic sermons, Murray finds the Catholic sermons, "apart from some of the Occasional Sermons," disappointing.¹⁷

Newman's Sermon Style

As Harrold so succinctly states in his biography of Newman, "it is clear that Newman's fame as a preacher

¹⁶Dessain, Newman, pp. 7, 9.

¹⁷Placid Murray, in his introductory study to Newman the Oratorian, by John Henry Newman (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1969), p. 39.

does not rest on his ability as an orator." Harrold maintains that Newman's pulpit appeal "lay elsewhere than in gesture, or majestic voice, or dramatic emotion." Two main characteristics of Newman's preaching, his "earnestness and his concentration on a single message" were the foundation of his appeal. Coupled with these characteristics was Newman's habit of discussing a general subject in his sermons, while at the same time, he appeared to be saying to the individual hearer, "Thou art the man for whom these words are intended." Harrold feels that Newman's "covert" approach to his listeners accounted for the "appearance of reserve, indirection, subtlety, and refinement in his discourses." While remaining "extremely impersonal," this covert approach in Newman's sermons left the impression that he was "uncannily aware of one's deepest personal secrets."¹⁸

Looking specifically at Newman's sermons, Harrold finds them distinguished "for their psychological insight, their imagination, . . . their literary power" and their "delicate realism which adjusts them to their particular audience." "Most critics of Newman agree," writes Harrold, "that his power of realizing for others

¹⁸Harrold, Newman, pp. 322-323.

the actuality of the spiritual world was the most prominent feature of his sermons."¹⁹

Harrold notes that Newman's prose style originated in Cicero and in the English eighteenth century; however, he feels that Newman had several styles, "never merely one . . . depending on the readers he hopes to reach." Newman's style

. . . was the style of a man delicately observant, keenly sensitive to the ridiculous, capable of sharp wit, and convinced that learning should be culture, and the scholar a gentleman.

Harrold continues:

Though his sentences are often extremely long, they maintain their lucid and leisurely unity by various rhetorical devices: skillful repetition of key words, paralleled phrases and clauses, illuminating antitheses, adroit subordination, and well-placed climaxes. . . . His imagery is never startling, but quiet and unobtrusively persuasive; his metaphors always do greater duty in his arguments than whatever logical process he may be appearing to conduct.²⁰

Brastow calls Newman the "master of English style" and credits the popularity of his preaching to the "diction" of his style. He describes Newman's style in his sermons as simple, sometimes even "colloquially direct and familiar, bringing high things down into the

¹⁹Ibid., p. 325.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 346-347.

experiences of common life." While being "elevated and dignified," Newman's style is at the same time "clear and exact, speaking directly to the mind and conveying thought with discrimination."²¹

W. J. Dawson, a literary critic writing in 1906, says, "As a sermon-writer, Newman has no superior in the English language, either for range or style." Dawson believes that Newman's rarest power "lay not in the direction of philosophy, but poetry." Dawson describes Newman's style:

It is when he speaks as a poet; when he analyzes human motives, lays bare the human heart, cuts through the core of convention to the naked quivering human soul and conscience; when he speaks of death and eternity, of the solemn, tender things of human life . . .--it is then that he is greatest.

To Dawson, Newman's sermons

. . . 'delight the mind with an effect more often produced by music than by language; sometimes, indeed, by the highest kind of lyric poetry, but very rarely indeed by prose; and thinking of them, we think less of their substance, than of some rare, almost unnameable quality, subtly akin to both fragrance and melody, which pervades them.'²²

Reilly considers Newman to have "the resources of the poet." Newman made "analogy his ally and he gave it a

²¹Brastow, Modern Preachers, p. 306.

²²W. J. Dawson, The Makers of English Prose (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906), pp. 293-294.

range of beauty and delicacy of suggestion which haunt the memory as do the 'inevitable' figures of speech of the great poets."²³

Critic Lewis Gates says Newman's style "at its best, has the urbanity, the affability, the winning adroitness, even the half-careless desultoriness of the familiar talk of a man of the world with his fellows." Gates believes that a trained student of the literary method would find, when he analyzes Newman's works, a union of "logical strenuousness" with the "grace and ease and charm of a colloquial manner and idiom." Newman is able to accomplish this union as a "result of rare tact, finely disciplined instinct, exquisite rhetorical insight and foresight, and extraordinary luminousness and largeness of thought." He writes that Newman's sermon style was heavily influenced by another great rhetorician, Thomas De Quincey. Gates compared De Quincey's style with Newman's, and found in Newman's sermons several traits of De Quincey, namely,

the iteration of emphasis on an important word, in the frequent use of inversions, in the rise and fall of the periods, and indeed, in the subtle rhythmic effects throughout.²⁴

²³Reilly, Newman, p. 66.

²⁴Lewis E. Gates, Three Studies in Literature (New York: Macmillan Co., 1899), pp. 66-67, 95.

A "subtle musical beauty" is evident in Newman's prose, and especially in his sermons, writes Gates. Newman to him, understands the "symbolic value of rhythm" and uses it extensively in his sermons. Together with his use of rhythm, Newman's style also includes a wide assortment of literary devices and a "generous use of examples and illustrations. Whatever be the principle he is discussing," writes Gates, "he is not content till he has realized it for the reader in tangible, visible form, until he has given it the cogency and intensity of appeal that only sensations or images possess." Summing up Newman's abilities as a prose writer, Gates concludes:

In all these ways, then, by his idiomatic and colloquial phrasing, by his specific vocabulary, by his delicately adroit use of metaphors, by his carefully elaborated imagery, and by his wealth of examples and illustrations, Newman keeps resolutely close to the concrete, and imparts everywhere to his style warmth, vividness, colour, convincing actuality.²⁵

Another critic of Newman, Thomas Chetwood, calls Newman a master of prose melody. His use of alliteration, assonance, and antithetical balance was a point of Newman's prose rhythm; also the change of movement within his works causes Chetwood to liken Newman to a "master

²⁵Ibid., pp. 96, 107-108.

pianist." Calling Newman a "prose musician," Chetwood says of his style, "Newman has not notes but accurately chosen words to marshal and set in motion."²⁶

Middleton, in considering Newman's style, said that a part of his appeal was

the charm of his poetic nature, which showed itself to perfection in his sermons, not indeed with any straining after effect, but as true poetry comes direct and effortless.

Middleton goes on to say:

If any volume of the Parochial Sermons be opened, or the Sermons on Subjects of the Day, almost at random, there will appear pages and pages of great poetic beauty, sometimes of almost haunting melody, which delight us with their unfailing charm.²⁷

Geoffrey Tillotson calls Newman one of the "supreme genuises of Nineteenth-century England . . . a supremely literary genius." But, because of Newman's religious beliefs, Tillotson suggests that many literary critics have not assessed his talents accurately:

The literary critic can take on historians (say Gibbon) and politicians (say Burke) and art critics (say Ruskin) more comfortably than he can take on Newman.

Because of Newman's "sensuous" use of "music and colour," his "sensitivity" and his generous use of

²⁶Thomas B. Chetwood, Handbook of Newman (New York: Schwartz, Kirwin & Fauss, 1927), p. 41.

²⁷Middleton, Newman at Oxford, p. 98.

"imagery," Tillotson adds that there was no doubt that Newman is a poet in every sense of the word. Regarding Newman's works as a whole, Tillotson says that

among the sermons . . . there is an unbroken level of excellence. . . . Newman is always literary, even, all things considered, when he is most narrowly ecclesiastical.²⁸

A critic of more recent times, George Levine, compares Newman to Thomas Macaulay: "although Newman was perhaps the most artful and brilliant prose writer of the nineteenth century," he could not please his readers as did Macaulay. "It is difficult to be popular," writes Levine, "when one insists on probing to the heart and on questioning all of the most popular and important moral and religious prejudices." Newman's religious belief is the source of his strength as a writer, Levine feels, and is a "partial explanation of his superiority, as a writer, to Carlyle and to many of his more socially conscious contemporaries." Levine writes:

The extraordinary quality of Newman's art has long been recognized to grow from his capacity to give the impression of speaking as a complete human being to other human beings, with deep sensitivity to their thoughts and feelings: 'cor ad cor loquitur'.

This "impression of self" that Newman transmits in his non-fictional work is made through the use of "metaphors, analogies, and examples, in highly subtle and convincing

²⁸Tillotson, Newman, pp. 8-9, 18, 24.

rhetorical forms" and by the use of expressions that suggest to his audience that he is both aware of the problem he is discussing and their needs.²⁹

Modern critic David J. DeLaura has conducted extensive research on Newman's influence on Victorian England. He explains that a part of Newman's appeal in his sermons is his ability to "invite the reader or hearer to 'trust' or have 'faith in' him as a speaker of truth." DeLaura comments:

Newman's unique role in modern culture is to invite his hearers to join him in a 'performance' felt to be transforming, a shared process affecting perception, character, and the very springs of action.

The remembrance of Newman, conditioned in part by his sermons, "played a very central, and still largely unrecorded, part in the literary and spiritual climate of late Victorian England."³⁰

Critiques of the Sermons

Although many critics have written about Newman's overall sermon style, a great deal of research has not been conducted in regard to the four sermons being

²⁹George Levine, The Boundaries of Fiction: Carlyle, Macaulay, Newman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 165, 214, 218.

³⁰DeLaura, "'O Unforgotten Voice,'" p. 44.

analyzed. The following critiques concern these particular sermons.

"The Individuality of the Soul" is representative of that group of sermons Newman wrote and preached between the years of 1824 and 1839, the style of which Reilly comments upon:

Their ardor is concealed by a calm style of the utmost simplicity almost too coldly chaste, which at times glows with a living warmth when reticence is cast aside and Newman yields himself up to his imagination or to spiritual passion.³¹

Harrold calls these early sermons of Newman's the expression of

Newman's profoundly sacramental view of visible phenomena--for him, the physical world is a curtain which veils but does not hide the glories of a vision too bright for mortal eyes to bear, too vast for mortal minds to comprehend.³²

"The Parting of Friends" was Newman's last sermon as an Anglican; in addition to its historical importance in Newman's life, it is often cited by critics for its memorable closing paragraph. In this closing, Reilly says Newman reached "a climax which he never attained before and never surpassed (perhaps never equaled) again." Reilly comments that Newman's passion "was in his beautiful

³¹Reilly, Newman, p. 70.

³²Harrold, Newman, p. 142.

lament, its very texture woven of biblical imagery and diction, in which he bade farewell to Oxford and to the Church of England."³³ Harrold calls the closing paragraph "curiously moving in its mounting rhythms."³⁴

Brastow writes:

The pathos and delicacy of these words are not more impressive than the ardent affectionateness of the man that is disclosed by them, and they give us an insight into the secret of his personal influence.³⁵

"The Mental Sufferings of Our Lord" was preached during what has been described as the "honeymoon years in the Catholic ministry" and was first published in 1849. Harrold describes this sermon as "the most sustained flight of his imagination." It was published in Discourses Addressed to Mixed Congregations, a volume, Harrold writes, which is "one of the richest . . . Newman ever produced, in point of style and eloquence, elaborate and ornate diction, and fervent religious spirit." Judging this sermon as a "feat of literary evocation, as an effort to clothe a dogma with human realism," Harrold

³³Reilly, Newman, p. 72.

³⁴Harrold, Newman, p. 332.

³⁵Brastow, Modern Preachers, p. 292.

considers this sermon as ranking high among the world's great sermons.³⁶

The last sermon reviewed, "The Second Spring" was preached in 1852 during the height of Newman's Catholic years. One of Newman's biographers, John Moody, calling this sermon a "prose poem," writes: "It was a high example of beautiful English prose and filled with the brilliant symbolism of which Newman was so great a master."³⁷ Harrold observes that "In Newman's day, it was a favorite with Catholic and non-Catholic; it is said that Macaulay knew it by heart, and that George Eliot could not quote it without tears."³⁸

Influences

It is necessary at this point to review the literature written about Newman's influence on other writers during the Victorian period, and vice versa, about the factors that influenced Newman's particular style in his sermons.

³⁶Harrold, Newman, pp. 163-64, 327.

³⁷John Moody, John Henry Newman (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1945), p. 173.

³⁸Harrold, Newman, p. 208.

Early in this study, reference was made to Newman's influence on such notable writers as Pater and Arnold. DeLaura has traced Newman's influence on Arnold back to Arnold's days at Oxford and contends that Arnold's reference to Newman in his Emerson lecture of 1883, although eloquent, was not based on firsthand observation. Rather, Arnold was influenced by rereading Newman's sermons after they were republished in 1869. This was not to say that Arnold was not deeply impressed by Newman; Newman's influence on Arnold was impressive:

No other man of the nineteenth century--neither Goethe, nor Sainte-Beuve, nor Emerson, nor Carlyle, nor Wordsworth--evoked from Arnold such a continuous and detailed intellectual response combined with such an intense personal veneration.

DeLaura goes on to say that Newman's influence on Arnold's writings "extended to substantive matters of social, educational, and religious interest," far beyond what Arnold would openly acknowledge. "Arnold was either unaware of, or unable or unwilling," writes DeLaura, "to acknowledge in public, the full extent of his engagement with Newman's thought and personality."³⁹

³⁹David J. DeLaura, Hebrew and Hellene in Victorian England: Newman, Arnold, and Pater (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1969), pp. 15, 139-153.

In regard to Pater, DeLaura advances the theory that

Newman's central role in shaping Pater's concept of style or . . . Pater's view of the 'sense of fact,' as the expression of the author's 'vision within,' is elaborately dependent on Newman's richly 'personalist' doctrine of style.⁴⁰

Further research will undoubtedly uncover other writers who have been influenced to a great degree by Newman; however, the preceding references may serve as evidence of Newman's literary influence.

As Newman influenced others, he was likewise influenced by those who came before him. Writing in 1899, nine years after Newman's death, Gates states that Newman was a product of his time, and that his writings connected him

with what was most distinctive in the literature of the early part of the century. Interpreted most searchingly, his early Anglicanism and his later Catholicism were peculiar expressions of that romantic spirit which realized itself with such splendour and power in the best and most vital literature of his day and generation.

Newman's youth and impressionable years were spent under the influence of the Romantic atmosphere, to a degree that Gates says has been overlooked:

His work, despite its reactionary character, indeed, partly because of it, is a genuine expression of the

⁴⁰DeLaura, "Victorian Cult," p. 6.

Romantic Spirit, and can be understood only when this is interpreted and brought into relation with the great tendencies of thought and feeling of the early part of our century.

Gates points out that mediaevalism was a "distinctive note of the Romantic Spirit," and that Newman was "intensely alive to the beauty and the poetic charm of the life of the Middle Ages." He describes Newman as a "great mediaeval ecclesiastic astray in the nineteenth century," and holds strongly that Newman's "kinship" with the Romanticists is recognizable

in his imaginative sympathy with the past, in the range and perspective of his historical consciousness, . . . in his devotion to an ideal framed largely in accordance with a loving reverence for mediaeval life; . . . his vein of mysticism, his imaginative sympathy with nature, his interpretation of Nature as symbolic of spiritual truth, his reflection of reason as the guide of life, and his recognition of the inadequacy of generalizations and formulas to the wealth of actual life and to the intensity and variety of personal experience.⁴¹

A recent critic, G. B. Tennyson, approaches Newman's style through the modern study of what he calls "Tractarian aesthetics." Tennyson defines the Tractarian aesthetic as one who

insists above all on the religious character of poetry and by extension of all art. Poetry is the result of a welling-up and expression of an intense

⁴¹Gates, Studies, pp. 96, 107-08, 112-13.

emotion, which in turn is the desire of the soul to know God. Poetry is thus the outward expression of a powerful inward, even subconscious, religious feeling.

Tennyson goes on to note two important factors which influenced Newman and the Tractarians, the "Doctrine of Analogy" and the "Doctrine of Reserve." He defines the Doctrine of Analogy as

the application to art of the text from St. Paul: 'The invisible things of (God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.' (Romans 1:20) That is, the visible world is a world full of correspondences with the invisible world; physical things are signs and symbols of spiritual things.

The Doctrine of Reserve that Newman and other Tractarians held is

that in communicating religious knowledge (which would, of course, in their view include also poetry and art) the communicator (including of course the poet) should exercise 'due religious reserve,' a kind of restraint and even indirection in expression appropriate to the sacredness of the subject being discussed.

Using this theory as a basis for his analysis of Newman's sermons, Tennyson says that Newman's sermons were examples of "deep emotion lying behind artistic utterance." The Tractarian aesthetic doctrine was evident, Tennyson says, not only in Newman's preaching style, but also in his sermons, which were "jewels of literary art"

and were artistic creations resulting from a "personal outpouring of an overwhelming religious impulse."⁴²

Critic Stephen Prickett also advances the theory of the romantic influence on Newman. Newman, Prickett comments, was "reared in the English literary and linguistic tradition of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keble." This tradition included seeing words not as mere "things" but as living powers, the principle of organic development from Coleridge. Prickett contends that Newman has "considerable debts to Coleridge" in his literary style, but that Newman was never a "Coleridgean" in the sense of Coleridge's other followers. Newman, however, does take Coleridge's concept of "organic growth," and by "drawing out the essentially literary and poetic implications" of this concept, he suggests a "quite new way of apprehending Christianity: that is, as a work of art."⁴³

From Wordsworth, through the influence of his friend Keble, Newman developed a "kinship with Nature." Newman also shared with Wordsworth, "in spite of their vast differences," a sense of "personal individuality so great

⁴²G. B. Tennyson, "Tractarian Aesthetics: Analogy and Reserve in Keble and Newman," The Victorian Newsletter 55 (Spring 1979): 8-10.

⁴³Prickett, Romanticism, pp. 156, 164-65, 172-73.

as to need a universal philosophic system to make sense of it." Prickett writes:

The Oxford Movement was a religious flowering of the English Romantic movement: . . . an inheritor of the 'poetic' tension of head and heart so typical of Wordsworth and Coleridge.⁴⁴

Pursuing the idea of the romantic influence on Newman, a review of some common "romantic" metaphors and analogies as stated in M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition, is in order. Abrams states that the analogies of God to "an overflowing fountain," or a "radiating sun" were employed by Coleridge and Wordsworth. Also, "The figure of the soul as a fountain, or an outflowing stream, is also frequent in romantic poetry"; metaphors of "light," "the mind as a fountain," "life-giving rain," and "plant images" were all common to the romantic writers, and especially Coleridge and Wordsworth.⁴⁵

With these influences in mind, we are now ready to examine Newman's sermons.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 70, 176.

⁴⁵M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 58, 61, 66-67.

CHAPTER III
ANALYSIS OF FOUR SERMONS

Sources

In order to analyze a selected strain of Newman's sermons for literary qualities, it was necessary to choose sermons that were representative of the different stages in his religious growth, since these stages were such an integral part of Newman's life. After reviewing what has been written by Newman's critics and biographers, it was decided to divide Newman's ministry, and hence, the sermons studied, into four major time periods. The choosing of the particular sermon to be analyzed from each time period was a more difficult task, because Newman was a prolific sermon writer, producing twelve volumes of sermons¹ during his lifetime. Each of the four sermons chosen for analysis are, in the judgement of this writer, representative of the particular style and type of sermon Newman wrote and preached during that stage of his religious life.

The first time period in Newman's religious development can be defined as beginning in 1824, when he assumed

¹Harrold, Newman, p. 333.

the curacy of St. Clement's shortly after his ordination as an Anglican Deacon² until roughly 1839, a time when Newman began to question his own role in the Anglican Church.³ Representative of this time period is "The Individuality of the Soul,"⁴ a sermon Newman preached on March 27, 1836, when he was vicar of the University Church of St. Mary's at Oxford.⁵ This sermon is found in the fourth volume of Newman's Parochial and Plain Sermons, which were widely acclaimed during Newman's lifetime both for their religious message and their literary appeal.⁶ Reprinted several times due to their popularity among the Victorians,⁷ sermons such as "The Individuality of the Soul" established Newman's early fame as an outstanding preacher. Simple, austere, unadorned, these early sermons were "concerned almost entirely with ultimate matters."⁸ "No reader can form an adequate impression of his

²Dessain, Newman, p. 8.

³Prickett, Romanticism, p. 152.

⁴John Henry Newman, Parochial and Plain Sermons, vol. 4 (London: Rivingtons, 1875), pp. 80-93.

⁵Church, The Oxford Movement, p. xiii.

⁶John Henry Newman, A Newman Treasury, ed. Charles Frederick Harrold (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943), p. 142.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Harrold, Newman, p. 333.

personality, his art, or his message," writes Harrold about these early sermons, "if he leaves these sermons unread."⁹ Writing about the impact this early group of sermons had on Newman's listeners, Harrold goes on to say,

This calm, coldly chaste, Anglican style was ideally suited to Newman's purposes, the troubling of men into religion, the uncovering of their subtle vices and hypocrisies and self-deceptions.¹⁰

The next stage in Newman's religious development--1839-1843--can be regarded as transitional. During this period Newman published two volumes of sermons, the Oxford University Sermons and the Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day.¹¹ Some of the sermons in these two volumes are very Anglican in nature, while others are "so Catholic that they might have been delivered in the Roman Church."¹² The most famous sermon from this group is "The Parting of Friends,"¹³ which Newman preached as his farewell to his Anglican friends on September 25,

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 341.

¹²Ibid.

¹³John Henry Newman, Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day, new ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1869), pp. 395-409.

1843, from the pulpit at Littlemore.¹⁴ The 26th sermon in the volume Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day, this particular sermon was the "last public scene"¹⁵ Newman would make as an Anglican. According to Ward, during the delivery of the sermon Newman's "voice broke . . . and his words were interrupted by the sobs of his hearers as he said his last words of farewell."¹⁶

Between the years of 1843 and 1845, Newman was on the "death-bed of his Anglican life."¹⁷ After his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1845¹⁸ Newman was not active in preaching until his reemergence as a Catholic priest in 1847.¹⁹ By 1849, Newman "was at peace and full of confidence and energy."²⁰ Dessain writes, "his first years as a Catholic was a period when Newman relaxed and blossomed out after the long agony of his 'Anglican deathbed.'"²¹ During this third period of his

¹⁴Wilfrid Ward, The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1927), 1: 76.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 82.

¹⁸Newman, Apologia, p. 211.

¹⁹Dessain, Newman, p. 94.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

life, Newman published Discourses Addressed to Mixed Congregations in 1849. "This volume is one of the richest which Newman ever produced," writes Harrold, "in point of style and eloquence, elaborate and ornate diction, and fervent religious spirit."²² Dessain says that these Catholic sermons "are much more elaborate and ornate than the Anglican sermons, and contain many passages of eloquent beauty."²³ The sixteenth sermon in this volume is "The Mental Sufferings of Our Lord"²⁴ which is representative of the type of sermon Newman was delivering to his audiences during this period.

The fervor of Newman's "honeymoon" years with the Catholic Church softened and mellowed with time, producing the last grouping of his sermons in the volume, Sermons Preached on Various Occasions, which was published in 1857.²⁵ Out of this volume came "The Second Spring," the sermon hailed by many as a "literary masterpiece,"²⁶

²²Newman, Treasury, p. 164.

²³Dessain, Newman, p. 94.

²⁴John Henry Cardinal Newman, Sermons and Discourses (1839-57), new ed. (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949), pp. 232-245.

²⁵Newman, Treasury, p. 208.

²⁶John Henry Newman, Favorite Newman Sermons, ed. Daniel M. O'Connell (New York: America Press, 1932), p. 5.

which was preached by Newman on July 13, 1852, at St. Mary's, Oscott, at the first Provincial Synod of Westminster.²⁷ The occasion of the synod was a result of the reestablishment of the Catholic hierarchy in England,²⁸ which was the central theme of the sermon. Newman was the Rector of the Catholic University of Ireland in 1852, and at this particular meeting he was preaching to all the English Catholic bishops and nearly all of the Oxford converts who had become priests.²⁹ "The Second Spring" became so popular in later years with Catholics and non-Catholics alike that it was reprinted and sold singly in brochure form.³⁰

Summary of the Four Sermons

"The Individuality of the Soul"

Newman begins this sermon with a quotation from the book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament, "The spirit shall return unto God, who gave it."³¹ He expounds upon

²⁷Newman, Treasury, p. 208.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Moody, Newman, p. 172.

³⁰Newman, Treasury, p. 208.

³¹Eccles. 12:7.

this concept of the soul returning to God in the opening lines of the sermon, reminding his listeners that their souls belong to God. He emphasizes his message about the soul by using short, repetitive phrases, "God gave it, He made it, He sent it into the body, and He upholds it there."³²

He tells his listeners that they are very unique because they, along with the rest of mankind, have a "distinct soul"³³ that is unlike any other. He then impresses upon them their unique individuality among all of the millions that have died or are currently living in their time; the fact that every person "is as whole and independent a being in himself, as if there were no one else in the whole world but he."³⁴

This "individuality of the human soul"³⁵ is the central theme of this particular sermon, and Newman wants to be sure his listeners understand this concept. He gives them analogies with things common to their immediate world, analogies that are familiar to them. "To

³²Newman, Parochial Sermons, p. 80.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., p. 81.

³⁵Ibid.

explain what I mean: do you think that a commander of an army realizes it, [the individuality of the human soul] when he sends a body of men on some dangerous service?"³⁶ Newman asks his listeners. He goes on to say that the commander more likely only considers his men "as but the wheels or springs of some great machine."³⁷ He continues the references to modernization with another simile: "We class men in masses, as we might connect the stones of a building."³⁸

Newman tells his audience that the concept of classifying all men into one nation, one unifying body of government, denies the individuality of man and his soul:

We still think that this whole which we call the nation, is one and the same, and that the individuals who come and go, exist only in it and for it, and are but as the grains of a heap or the leaves of a tree.³⁹

He combines the imagery of modernization versus nature by using as an example a citizen of a "populous town."⁴⁰ This citizen, who lives in the hustle and bustle of the

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., p. 82.

⁴⁰Ibid.

city, is so unique and individual that "he has a depth within him unfathomable, an infinite abyss of existence; and the scene in which he bears part for the moment is but like a gleam of sunshine upon its surface."⁴¹

Newman next introduces to his listeners the immortality of all souls. Relating his imagery back to nature, he says, "All those millions upon millions of human beings who ever trod the earth and saw the sun successively, are at this very moment in existence all together."⁴² He acknowledges that this concept may be difficult for his listeners to comprehend; therefore, he recounts for them individuals from the Bible, from history, and from the audience's past acquaintance who are still, because of their immortal souls, alive. He contrasts this spiritual concept with the reality of nature; "The rain falls, and the wind blows; and showers and storms have no existence beyond the time when we felt them; they are nothing in themselves."⁴³ Newman continues, "But if we have but once seen any child of Adam, we have seen an immortal soul."⁴⁴ This immortal soul, he tells

⁴¹Ibid., p. 83.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., p. 86.

⁴⁴Ibid.

them, is not "passed away as a breeze or sunshine,"⁴⁵
but lives in either "bliss or misery."⁴⁶

This concept of "bliss or misery" introduces Newman's next point in the sermon, the idea that there are only "two classes of men"⁴⁷ in the eyes of God. He compares these two classes as being "as far apart in their tendencies as light and darkness."⁴⁸ He uses a series of antitheses in describing these two states to get his message across: "bliss or torment"; "in paradise or in the place of torment"; "eternal rest or eternal woe."⁴⁹ After contrasting these two states, he says "certain it is that every one who dies, passes at once into one or other of two states; and if he dies unsanctified and unreconciled to God, into a state of eternal misery."⁵⁰

The avoidance of "eternal misery" is the finale of this sermon. Newman reminds his listeners that they have an individual, immortal soul that is not dependent on the

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 87.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 88.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 90.

material world, but rather on the spiritual world of God.⁵¹ Once their immortal souls have left the material world, Newman tells his listeners, the things they once thought were important will cease to be:

What will be your thoughts about the world which you have left! how poor will then seem to you its highest aims, how faint its keenest pleasures, compared with the eternal aims, the infinite pleasures, of which you will at length feel your souls to be capable!⁵²

He ends the sermon with a quote from the New Testament, telling his audience to pay heed to Christ's warning about the devil and the implications for their immortal soul:

'Be not afraid,' He says, 'of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you, whom ye shall fear. Fear Him, which, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say unto you, Fear Him.'⁵³

"The Parting of Friends"

Newman begins this sermon with a quotation from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament, "Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening."⁵⁴ He then

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid., p. 92.

⁵³Ibid., p. 93.

⁵⁴Psalm 104:23.

cites passages from the book of John, recounting the Lord's last supper with his disciples and describing this last supper as a feast. In describing this interaction with his disciples, Newman says of Christ, "Thus passed the season of His ministry."⁵⁵ He describes for his listeners Christ's feelings at this last feast, "there is nothing gloomy, churlish, violent, or selfish in His grief; it is tender, affectionate, social."⁵⁶

From this scriptural beginning, Newman goes on to make reference to his own personal situation, "We indeed to-day have no need of so high a lesson and so august a comfort."⁵⁷ Relating back to the scripture he has quoted, he says, however, "we are naturally drawn to think of it, though it be infinitely above us, under certain circumstances of this season and the present time."⁵⁸

The season Newman is referring to is the coming Fall, for he is preaching this particular sermon in late September.⁵⁹ He enlarges upon the theme of the seasons' cycle;

⁵⁵Newman, Subjects of the Day, p. 395.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 396.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ward, Newman, p. 76.

"now are the shades of evening falling upon the earth, and the year's labour is coming to its end."⁶⁰ He goes on to tie together nature's seasons with the seasons of the church:

In Septuagesima the labourers were sent into the vineyard; in Sexagesima the sower went forth to sow;--that time is over; 'the harvest is passed, the summer is ended', the vintage is gathered.⁶¹

Continuing the images of nature, and from nature, the images of the feast and the harvest, Newman tells his audience, "We have kept the Ember-days for the fruits of the earth, . . . and now are offering up of its corn and wine as a propitiation, and are eating and drinking of them with thanksgiving."⁶²

Building his message carefully, Newman continues his sermon, quoting passages from scripture that praise God. He also continues the relationships of God with nature: "If we have had the rain in its season, and the sun shining in its strength, and the fertile ground, it is of Thee."⁶³ Using a technique that reoccurs in his

⁶⁰Newman, Subjects of the Day, p. 396.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid., p. 397.

⁶³Ibid.

writings,⁶⁴ Newman asks his listeners a series of questions, contrasting opposites and the images of light versus dark:

May not his sun set as it has risen? and must it not set, if it is to rise again? and must not darkness come first, if there is ever to be morning? and must not the sky be blacker, before it can be brighter? And cannot He, who can do all things, cause a light to arise even in the darkness?⁶⁵

He continues the imagery of "light" and "sun" and "earth" by quoting to his audience passage after passage from the Old and New Testaments that contain these references.⁶⁶ Newman ends this recitation of scripture almost abruptly, and says, "How vain are all our pains, our thought, our care, unless God uses them, unless God has inspired them!"⁶⁷

Taking shelter again in scripture, Newman relates to his listeners a description of the "house of God" from the book of Chronicles.⁶⁸ He then makes a direct reference

⁶⁴This same technique, the use of rhetorical questions, is used in the "Mental Sufferings of Our Lord" and "The Second Spring."

⁶⁵Newman, Subjects of the Day, p. 397.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 397-398.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 398.

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 398-399.

to his own ministry, "We too, at this season, year by year, have been allowed . . . to rejoice in God's Presence, for this sacred building which He has given us to worship Him in."⁶⁹ Relating back to the Lord's Last Supper and the feast of the Passover, Newman says:

We have kept the feast heretofore with merry hearts; we have kept it seven full years unto 'a perfect end'; now let us keep it, even though in haste, and with bitter herbs, and with loins girded, and with a staff in our hand, as they who have 'no continuing city, but seek one to come'. (Heb. 13:14)⁷⁰

Skilled in his ability to recount scripture, Newman tells his audience the stories of Jacob, Ishmael, Naomi, Orpah, Ruth, David, Jonathan, and St. Paul in succession, highlighting in each story the images of feasting.⁷¹

Newman relates to his audiences similarities in the biblical stories to the story of Christ, and cites for them ways in which Christ was rejected by mankind.⁷² His sermon shifts dramatically to a tone of despair, and making reference to the Anglican Church, he says, "How is it, O once holy place, that 'the land mourneth, for the corn

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 399.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 399-406.

⁷²Ibid., p. 407.

is wasted, the new wine is dried up, . . . because joy is withered away from the sons of men?' (Joel 1:10)."⁷³ Newman's anguish with the Anglican Church comes out in full force when he laments:

O my mother, whence is this unto thee, that thou hast good things poured upon thee and canst not keep them, and bearest children, yet darest not own them? why hast thou not the skill to use their services, nor the heart to rejoice in their love? how is it that whatever is generous in purpose, and tender or deep in devotion, thy flower and thy promise, falls from thy bosom and finds no home within thine arms?⁷⁴

Almost as justification for his extensive use of scripture, Newman says, "Scripture is a refuge in any trouble; only let us be on our guard against seeming to use it further than is fitting, or doing more than sheltering ourselves under its shadow."⁷⁵ He continues his thinking on the subject, "It is far higher and wider than our need; and its language veils our feeling while it gives expression to them."⁷⁶

Encouraging his audience to rejoice in the "glory of God," he makes reference once again to the image of

⁷³Ibid., p. 407.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 408.

⁷⁶Ibid.

feasting, but now it is a positive image, "'Go your way; eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth your works; let your garments be always white, and let your head lack no ointment'" (Eccles. 9:7,8).⁷⁷

Newman closes the sermon with this passage which is a personal entreaty to his Anglican friends:

And, O my brethren, O kind and affectionate hearts, O loving friends, should you know any one whose lot it has been, by writing or by word of mouth, in some degree to help you thus to act; if he has ever told you what you knew about yourselves, or what you did not know; has read to you your wants or feelings, and comforted you by the very reading; has made you feel that there was a higher life than this daily one, and a brighter world than that you see; or encouraged you, or sobered you; or opened a way to the inquiring, or soothed the perplexed; if what he has said or done has ever made you take interest in him, and feel well inclined towards him; remember such a one in time to come, though you hear him not, and pray for him, that in all things he may know God's will, and at all times he may be ready to fulfill it.⁷⁸

"Mental Sufferings of Our
Lord in His Passion"

Unlike the previous sermons reviewed, Newman does not introduce this particular sermon with a scriptural quotation. Instead, he begins by reminding his listeners that they are in the Lenten season of the

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 409.

⁷⁸Ibid.

year,⁷⁹ and that he feels that the congregation has a spiritual need "to consider, as closely and minutely as we can . . . the sufferings which our Lord endured in His innocent and sinless soul."⁸⁰

Before he begins his recitation of Christ's sufferings, Newman points out to his audience that Christ, "though He was God, was also perfect man,"⁸¹ and like themselves, Christ had an individual soul, "though pure from all stain of evil."⁸² He reinforces this concept of Christ's human soul for his listeners, by reminding them that every human being possesses an immortal soul: "Man without a soul is on a level with the beasts of the field."⁸³ Newman compares the physical nature of the human body and its ability to suffer "wounds and death" with the spiritual nature of the human soul which assumes the "pain and sorrow" of the suffering human body.⁸⁴ Because Christ was a perfect man, Newman tells his

⁷⁹Newman, Discourses, p. 232.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid., 233.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

listeners, He possessed both a human body and a human soul; therefore, "as His atoning passion was undergone in the body, so it was undergone in the soul also."⁸⁵

Using his technique of repetitive particulars, Newman recounts the physical aspects of Christ's suffering:

His sufferings in the body, His seizure, His forced journeyings to and fro, His blows and wounds, His scourging, the crown of thorns, the nails, the Cross.⁸⁶

In spite of the horror of Christ's physical suffering, Newman stresses the fact that Christ's human soul was the "true recipient and seat of the anguish."⁸⁷ He says,

It was not the body that suffered, but the soul in the body; it was the soul and not the body which was the seat of the suffering of the Eternal Word.⁸⁸

In order to reinforce his point Newman uses an object from nature, a tree, in an analogy.

A tree, for instance, has life, organs, growth, and decay; it may be wounded and injured; it drops, and is killed; but it does not suffer, because it has no mind or sensible principle within it.⁸⁹

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 234.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

Newman compares the ability of the human soul to experience suffering with that of a tree and, another image from nature, that of a beast: "Had we no spirit of any kind, we should feel as little as a tree feels; had we no soul, we should not feel pain more acutely than a brute feels it."⁹⁰

Narrowing his focus on the concept of pain, Newman goes into a lengthy discourse on pain, and its effects on the human mind. He describes for his audience the agony of successive, cumulative pain, which only a human soul can experience fully. Summing up this discourse on pain, Newman says:

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.⁹¹

Having set the stage for the pain Christ suffered, Newman then reminds his audience of Christ's complete control over his crucifixion, because, "though He was a perfect man, yet there was a power in Him greater than His soul, which ruled His soul, for He was God."⁹²

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 236.

⁹²Ibid., p. 237.

Contrary to the ordinary human, Christ "was not subject, could not be exposed, to the influence of His own human affections and feelings, except so far as He chose."⁹³

When Christ's time had come, "that hour of Satan and of darkness, the hour when sin was to pour its full malignity upon him,"⁹⁴ Christ presented to his crucifiers

the whole of His soul, His whole advertence, His whole consciousness, a mind awake, a sense acute, a living cooperation, a present, absolute intention, not a virtual permission, not a heartless submission.⁹⁵

Newman compares Christ's suffering to wine, with a metaphor:

The sufferings belonged to God, and were drunk up, were drained out to the bottom of the chalice, because God drank them; not tasted or sipped, not flavoured, disguised by human medicaments, as man disposes of the cup of anguish.⁹⁶

Citing again Christ's complete command over the situation, Newman uses another metaphor to tell his listeners how Christ began his suffering: "He drew back, at the proper moment, the bolts and fastenings, and opened the gates,

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 238.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid.

and the floods fell right upon His soul in all their fulness."⁹⁷

Having set the climate for what is to come, Newman asks a rhetorical question, "what was it He had to bear, when He thus opened upon His soul the torrent of this predestinated pain?"⁹⁸ What he has to receive is sin, that "what is well known to us, what is familiar to us, but what to Him was woe unutterable."⁹⁹ Newman then begins a detailed description of Christ's ordeal in the garden of Gethsemane, vivid in its use of imagery, personification, and metaphors:

There, then, in that most awful hour, knelt the Saviour of the world, putting off the defences of His divinity, dismissing His reluctant Angels, who in myriads were ready at His call, and opening His arms, baring His breast, sinless as He was, to the assault of His foe--of a foe whose breath was a pestilence, and whose embrace was an agony. There He knelt, motionless and still, while the vile and horrible fiend clad His spirit in a robe steeped in all that is hateful and heinous in human crime, which clung close round His heart, and filled His conscience, and found its way into every sense and pore of His mind, and spread over Him a moral leprosy, till He almost felt Himself to be that which he never could be, and which His foe would fain have made Him.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 240.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 241.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 242.

Newman continues this description with his use of absolute and noun phrases:

Hopes blighted, vows broken, lights quenched, warnings scorned, opportunities lost; the innocent betrayed, the young hardened, the penitent relapsing, the just overcome, the aged failing; the sophistry of misbelief, the wilfulness of passion, the obduracy of pride, the tyranny of habit, the canker of remorse, the wasting fever of care, the anguish of shame, the pining of disappointment, the sickness of despair; such cruel, such pitiable spectacles, such heartrending, revolting, detestable, maddening scenes; nay, the haggard faces, the convulsed lips, the flushed cheek, the dark brow of the willing victims of rebellion, they are all before Him now; they are upon Him and in Him.¹⁰¹

Newman sums up this dramatic scene with a description of Christ's bloody sweat; he uses the metaphors of nature, the imagery of rivers and plants:

. . . the red streams rushed forth so copious and fierce as to overflow the veins, and bursting through the pores, they stood in a thick dew over His whole skin; then forming into drops, they rolled down full and heavy, and drenched the ground.¹⁰²

He ends the sermon with a reminder of Christ's control over his situation:

. . . when the appointed moment arrived, and He gave the word, as His passion had begun with His soul, with the soul did it end. He did not die of bodily exhaustion, or of bodily pain; His tormented Heart broke, and He commended His Spirit to the Father.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 244.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 245.

¹⁰³Ibid.

Almost anticlimatic to his dramatic sermon, Newman adds a prayer to the end of this sermon, asking for atonement for the sins of man, and promising future "acts of adoration" to God.¹⁰⁴

"The Second Spring"

Returning to his earlier practice of reciting from scripture, Newman begins this sermon with lines from the Song of Songs, "Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. For the winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land" (Cant. 2:10-12).¹⁰⁵ These lines set the tone for the rest of the sermon, as Newman begins to describe "the order, the constancy, the perpetual renovation of the material world."¹⁰⁶ He contrasts the images of life and death and tells his listeners, "one death is the parent of a thousand lives."¹⁰⁷ Each hour of time in the material world is "a testimony" to "the great whole. It is like an image on the waters, which is ever the same,

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Newman, Favorite Sermons, p. 13.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

though the waters ever flow."¹⁰⁸ All of the changes in the material world are constant, following into one another in succession: "The sun sinks to rise again; the day is swallowed up in the gloom of the night, to be born out of it, as fresh as if it had never been quenched."¹⁰⁹ The seasons revolve in an unending cycle; "Spring passes into summer, and through summer and autumn into winter."¹¹⁰ This reliable cycle "teaches us in our height of hope, ever to be sober, and in our depth of desolation, never to despair."¹¹¹

Newman cites the contrasts between the material world, which is "so vigorous, so reproductive, amid all its changes," and what he calls the moral world, which is "so feeble, so downward, so resourceless, amid all its aspirations."¹¹² The constancy that nature offers is continual and consistent, but this is not true of man; where on earth, asks Newman, is "the champion, the hero, the law-giver, the body politic, the sovereign race,

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 14.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Ibid.

which was great three hundred years ago, and is great now?"¹¹³ Newman describes man on earth "as a bubble that breaks, and as water poured out upon the earth."¹¹⁴ This frailty of man is a common lament, says Newman, because man "tends to dissolution from the moment he begins to be."¹¹⁵ He continues, "The greatest work of God's hands under the sun, he, in all the manifestations of his complex being, is born only to die."¹¹⁶

Newman continues this line of thinking by describing how man lives out his life cycle. In his description man takes on the imagery of a dying plant:

We look at the bloom of youth with interest, yet with pity; and the more graceful and sweet it is, with pity so much the more; for, whatever be its excellence and its glory, soon it begins to be deformed and dishonored by the very force of its living on. It grows into exhaustion and collapse, till at length it crumbles into that dust out of which it was originally taken.¹¹⁷

In keeping with the metaphor of man as a plant, Newman describes the moral side of man's nature as a flower:

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 14-15.

How beautiful is the human heart, when it puts forth its first leaves, and opens and rejoices in its springtide. Fair as may be the bodily form, fairer far, in its green foliage and bright blossoms, is natural virtue. It blooms in the young, like some rich flower, so delicate, so fragrant, and so dazzling.¹¹⁸

However, "wait till youth has become age," Newman cautions, and the "issue of this natural virtue" will be "failure and overthrow, and annihilation."¹¹⁹ When man reaches adulthood, "moroseness, and misanthropy, and selfishness, is the ordinary winter of that spring."¹²⁰ Not only is this mortality at work in man's nature, but it also applies to his accomplishments, says Newman; "Powers of the world, sovereignties, sooner or later come to nought; they have their fatal hour."¹²¹

Having presented such a forceful argument for the mortality of man and all his works, Newman surprises his audience by asking them, "But what is it, my Fathers, my Brothers, what is it that has happened in England just at this time?"¹²² He goes on to tell them that if

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 15.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 16.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Ibid.

they were "inhabitants of some sister planet" who had turned their eyes toward England just at that moment, they would witness "a political phenomenon as wonderful as any which the astronomer notes down from his physical field of view."¹²³ This phenomenon began "soon after St. Michael's day, 1850," when "a storm arose in the moral world, so furious as to demand some great explanation."¹²⁴ This "ubiquitous storm" can be observed "increasing from day to day, and spreading from place to place, without remission, almost without lull, up to this very hour."¹²⁵

Calling this phenomenon "a portentous event," Newman reminds his listeners of his earlier discourse on the cycles of the physical world, and the fact that "the past never returns."¹²⁶ However, this moral phenomenon has caused the past to return:

The English Church was, and the English Church was not, and the English Church is once again. . . . It is the coming in of a Second Spring; it is a restoration in the moral world, such as that which yearly takes place in the physical.¹²⁷

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 17.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 18.

In an exercise to refresh their memories, he recounts for his audience the history of the Catholic Church in England over the previous three centuries. Newman then reminds them of the Church's decline, personifying its image:

That old Church in its day became a corpse . . . and then it did but corrupt the air which once it refreshed, and cumbered the ground which once it beautified.¹²⁸

Lamenting over the sacrileges that had occurred so many years before, Newman continues:

What a martyrdom to live in it and see the fair form of Truth, moral and material, hacked piecemeal, and every limb and organ carried off, and burned in the fire, or cast into the deep!¹²⁹

Newman tells his listeners that while they witnessed the Church's decline on one side, he had witnessed it on the other side. The fact, however, "of the utter contempt into which Catholicism had fallen"¹³⁰ was indisputable. He describes for them, from his previously Anglican viewpoint, how Catholics were looked upon by the general population during his earlier Anglican years. To Newman the

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 19.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Ibid.

Catholics of England, [were] found in corners, and alleys, and cellars, and the housetops, or in the recesses of the country; cut off from the populous world around them, and dimly seen, as if through a mist or in twilight, as ghosts flitting to and fro, by the high Protestants, the lords of the earth.¹³¹

Returning to the present resurgence, Newman reminds his audience that the past is behind them; "The world grows old, but the Church is ever young."¹³² Personifying the Catholic Church in the likeness of Mary, the Mother of God, Newman entreats her: "Arise, Mary, and go forth in thy strength into that north country, which once was thine own."¹³³ He continues, bringing in the images of nature; "Shine on us, dear Lady, with thy bright countenance, like the sun in his strength . . . till our year is one perpetual May."¹³⁴

Newman tells his audience that this revival of the Catholic Church is not without its troubles and obstacles, but he entreats them to have hope. Reminding them of the Church's stormy past in England, he says:

. . . in that day of trial and desolation for England, when hearts were pierced through and through with Mary's woe, at the crucifixion of Thy body

¹³¹Ibid., p. 21.

¹³²Ibid., p. 24.

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴Ibid.

mystical, was not every tear that flowed, and every drop of blood that was shed, the seeds of a future harvest, when they who sowed in sorrow were to reap in joy?¹³⁵

He warns them, however, that their battles and sufferings may not be over:

Have we any right to take it strange, if, in this English land, the springtime of the Church should turn out to be an English spring, an uncertain, anxious time of hope and fear, of joy and suffering-- of bright promise and budding hopes, yet withal, of keen blasts, and cold showers, and sudden storms?¹³⁶

Newman urges his listeners to meet the challenge, and to "mount up and ride forth to battle" and gain the "prize."¹³⁷

Newman closes this sermon almost anticlimactically, reminding them that they have a friend and resource in St. Phillip Neri, who had blessed the young Saxon youths some three centuries earlier in Rome when they were in training for missionary work in England. Newman assures his audience that the spirit of St. Phillip is still available to them: "to do you a service, here in your own land."¹³⁸

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 26.

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 27.

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 29.

Shared Images

The preceding summaries may confirm in the reader's mind that Newman was adept in the use of literary devices. Through their use, he makes his sermons come alive for both his listener and his reader, leaving little doubt as to the message he wishes to convey. A review of all four sermons identifies ten specific types of rhetorical devices in use: metaphor, simile, personification, analogy, antithesis, repetition, rhetorical question, climax, anticlimax, and the use of quotations. All of these are evident in the preceding review; however, a closer look at some of these devices will identify some common images that all four sermons share.

Newman's use of similes and metaphors is evident in all four sermons. Their use is most common in conveying images of nature: the use of the sun; the image of a plant as a tree or a flower; and the image of water as rain, a stream, or a flood are common to all four sermons. In "The Individuality of the Soul," a moment in man's existence "is but like a gleam of sunshine upon its surface," and the immortal soul cannot be "passed away as a breeze or sunshine."¹³⁹ In "The Parting of Friends," Newman

¹³⁹Newman, Parochial Sermons, p. 83.

asks, "May not his sun set as it has risen?"¹⁴⁰ In "The Second Spring" he says of the cycles of nature, "The sun sinks to rise again."¹⁴¹

The organic concept of a living, growing plant is a metaphor used throughout the four sermons. In "The Individuality of the Soul" he compares the individual in society to "grains of a leaf or the leaves of a tree."¹⁴² In the "Mental Sufferings of Our Lord," he uses the concept of a tree's growth cycle to parallel man's life cycle.¹⁴³ His imagery is most vivid, however, in "The Second Spring" when he describes the physical nature of man as a plant, and the spiritual nature of the Soul as a blooming flower, "its green foliage and bright blossoms, is natural virtue."¹⁴⁴

In the sermon "The Parting of Friends," Newman expands the organic concept of man as a living, growing plant by referring to the "harvest" of the "fruits of the earth," and relating these fruits with the feast that

¹⁴⁰Newman, Subjects of the Day, p. 397.

¹⁴¹Newman, Favorite Sermons, p. 13.

¹⁴²Newman, Parochial Sermons, p. 82.

¹⁴³Newman, Discourses, p. 234.

¹⁴⁴Newman, Favorite Sermons, p. 15.

ensues. He ties together the products of the harvest, the "corn and wine," with the religious concept of Christ's Last Supper, where Christ shared bread and wine with his disciples at the feast of the Passover. Continuing the religious analogy, Newman's use of subtle metaphors link the religious concept of transubstantiation at the Last Supper with the physical aspects of the feast: "We have kept the Ember-days for the fruits of the earth . . . and now we are offering up of its corn and wine as a propitiation." His choice of the word "propitiation" carries the symbolism even further; it parallels the religious dogma of Christ's body and blood being offered as appeasement for the sins of mankind.¹⁴⁵

Newman continues the wine imagery in the "Mental Sufferings of Our Lord," comparing the sufferings of Christ to wine, "the sufferings . . . were drunk up, were drained out to the bottom of the chalice, because God drank them."¹⁴⁶

The images of water, in the form of rain, a flood, or an overflowing stream is another common theme that Newman's sermons share. In the earlier two sermons, the

¹⁴⁵Newman, Subjects of the Day, pp. 396-399.

¹⁴⁶Newman, Discourses, p. 238.

images are modest and are linked with the other nature images. Contrasting man's spirituality with the reality of nature, Newman says in "The Individuality of the Soul": "The rain falls, . . . and showers and storms have no existence beyond the time when we felt them."¹⁴⁷ In "The Parting of Friends" he connects nature with God, "If we have had the rain in its season, and the sun shining in its strength, . . . it is of Thee."¹⁴⁸ The imagery is stronger in the "Mental Sufferings of Our Lord" when Christ's sufferings are symbolized as a flood, "He drew back, at the proper moment, the bolts and fastenings, and opened the gates, and the floods fell right upon His soul in all their fullness."¹⁴⁹ Newman continues this imagery of the overflowing stream in this same sermon:

That tormented Heart, the seat of tenderness and love, began at length to labour and to beat with vehemence beyond its nature; 'the foundations of the great deep were broken up'; the red streams rushed forth so copious and fierce as to overflow the veins.¹⁵⁰

In "The Second Spring," he describes a moment in time "like an image on the waters, which is ever the same,

¹⁴⁷Newman, Parochial Sermons, p. 86.

¹⁴⁸Newman, Subjects of the Day, p. 397.

¹⁴⁹Newman, Discourses, p. 240.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 245.

though the waters ever flow." His description of man's tenure on earth is likened to "a bubble that breaks, and as water poured out upon the earth."¹⁵¹

Through the use of personification, Newman makes both the Anglican Church and the Catholic Church come alive for his listeners and his readers. In "The Parting of Friends" the Anglican Church is personified as a mother who is rejecting one of her children, specifically Newman: "O my mother, whence is this . . . that thou . . . bearest children, yet darest not own them?" This rejection is very painful for Newman, who sees in himself "thy flower and thy promise" of the mother church, but who "finds no home within thine arms."¹⁵² In "The Second Spring," the personification of the church as a mother is continued, but in this sermon Newman relates the Catholic Church to the Virgin Mary, the mother of Christ. This mother church has accepted him, and his description of her is flattering, "Shine on us, dear Lady, with thy bright countenance."¹⁵³

¹⁵¹Newman, Favorite Sermons, pp. 13-14.

¹⁵²Newman, Subjects of the Day, p. 407.

¹⁵³Newman, Favorite Sermons, p. 24.

Newman's sermons are filled with imagery, and a more detailed, word by word analysis is necessary to capture every nuance of his message. These images studied are but a sampling of Newman's prose style evident in these four sermons.

CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The intent of this study is to determine if John Henry Newman's sermons exhibit perennial literary qualities. This is accomplished by analyzing four of Newman's sermons selected from four major time periods in his life: "The Individuality of the Soul" from his early Anglican years; "The Parting of Friends" from his period of indecision; "Mental Sufferings of Our Lord in His Passion" from his early years in the Catholic Church; and "The Second Spring" from his established Catholic period.

The primary sources for the analysis are the actual sermons as they are found in Newman's publications of his sermons. The secondary sources are those articles, books, and biographies that have been written about Newman, his sermons, and his sermon style. A review of the literary influences on Newman, as well as his influences on other writers, is also done.

After reviewing all pertinent literature about Newman and his sermon style, a review of the literature on

literary criticism and analysis is conducted, in order to decide what constitutes perennial literary qualities.

The next step in the study is a line by line analysis of each of the four sermons, identifying those literary devices in use.

The analysis of each sermon reveals several findings about Newman's sermon style. His use of literary devices is extensive in all four sermons, with metaphors, similes, and analogies being the most common. Newman also uses personification, antithesis, rhetorical questions, climax and anticlimax to convey his message to his reader. Through the use of these devices, Newman sends a powerful message concerning the individuality of man, his immortal soul, his relationship with God and his relationship with his church. Newman communicates his deep religious beliefs through the imagery of such metaphors as the sun, a plant, a stream, harvest, a feast, connecting these images with man or God, or both.

Conclusions

After analyzing the four representative sermons, this writer feels that Newman's sermons do have perennial literary qualities. This is evidenced by his adroit use of the literary devices, which we have discussed in some detail in Chapter Three. Through his beautiful imagery,

Newman relates the religious message to each reader in such a way that it becomes intensely personal to each individual; his heart speaks to your heart--cor ad cor loquitur.

Although Newman's message is an intensively religious message, it is not necessary for his reader to be a Christian in order to appreciate his sermons. They have enough literary merit in that they can appeal to anyone who is interested in beautiful, figurative literature. An individual who does have a firm understanding of Christianity, however, will have an even greater appreciation of Newman's imagery.

Relating back to Sainte-Beuve's definition of a classic, Newman's sermons fit easily into this description. They do enrich the mind and convey intrinsic values and moral truths that are universal to all of us, regardless of our religious orientation.

In addition, Newman's use of literary devices in his sermons is definitely tied to the Romantic influence of Coleridge and Wordsworth. His metaphor of an organic, growing plant parallels Coleridge; his nature metaphors parallel Wordsworth. Throughout all of the four sermons studied there is example after example of the Romantic influence on Newman. These romantic influences are also

a part of the literary appeal of his sermons and make them a good resource for a study of the Romantic period.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Newman's sermons be studied further for their literary value. They offer a wealth of untouched literary gems; perhaps because of their religious nature, fewer scholars than they deserve have approached them in detail from a strictly literary view. Newman was a prolific sermon writer; these four sermons studied represent but a minute part of the over two hundred sermons Newman wrote during his lifetime. To borrow Newman's technique: his sermons appear to the rest of the world as the drab little cocoons of religion, when in reality they are beautiful literary butterflies waiting for the metamorphosis of analysis. It is recommended that they be studied further, especially in light of their contributions to the Romantic spirit in Victorian England and their contributions to literary appreciation today.

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