

SEMINAR PAPER

DIFFERENT MODELS OF INFALLIBILITY?

For most of the century following the First Vatican Council, infallibility was a "given"—a doctrine that Catholics universally accepted, energetically defended, and rarely questioned. Symptomatic of the conventional attitude towards infallibility is the remark, attributed, a half-century ago, to the English Benedictine historian and Cardinal, Francis Aidan Gasquet (1846-1929); a lady who came to see him during his last illness is reported to have asked: "Is it true that the next Pope might be an American?" Gasquet is said to have replied: "Dear me, how strange it would be to have someone guessing infallibly."¹

Humor or irony aside, the fact remains that the heated debate about infallibility during Vatican I became an increasingly faint memory after the Council. Perhaps the apparent lack of interest in the Council's proceedings was the result of a carefully managed historiography, which gave the impression that the Council, in spite of a few detours, basically followed its pontifically, if not divinely, determined direction.² Or perhaps lack of concern about Vatican I in the first half of the twentieth century was the product of a hybrid synthesis of insecurity and complacency in the wake of the Modernist controversy: the anti-Modernist measures may have simultaneously discouraged any questioning of a conciliar teaching such as infallibility and so encouraged its unquestioned acceptance. In any event, a half-century after the Council, there was scarcely any commemoration of Vatican I.³

Renewed interest in Vatican I was created by the convocation of Vatican II; however, the latter's teaching on infallibility was not a re-casting, but an explicative corollary, of its predecessor's definition.⁴ For Vatican II, "infallibility" was a given not a guess; it was a *datum*, not a *disputandum*. Nonetheless, although there were some indications in professional historical and theological publications that "infallibility"

¹E. Hutton "Catholic English Literature, 1850-1950," *The English Catholics, 1850-1950*, ed. by G. Beck (London: Burns & Oates, 1950), p. 527.

²Cf. A. Hasler, *Pius IX (1846-1878), päpstliche Unfehlbarkeit und I. Vatikanisches Konzil: Dogmatisierung und Durchsetzung einer Ideologie* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1977), pp. 512-26. The Conciliar proceedings are available in J. Mansi's *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, Vols. 49-53 (1923-27).

³O. Pesch, "Bilanz der Diskussion um die vatikanische Primats- und Unfehlbarkeitsdefinition," *Papsttum als ökumenische Frage*, ed. by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft ökumenischer Universitätsinstitute (Munich: Kaiser; Mainz: Grünewald, 1979), pp. 167-71.

⁴Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 25; J. Ford, "Infallibility: Primacy, Collegiality, Laity," *The Jurist* 30 (1970), 436-46; N. Nissiotis, "The Main Ecclesiological Problem of the Second Vatican Council and the Position of the Non-Roman Churches Facing It," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 2 (1965), 31-62.

was ripe for reconsideration, many were surprised by Küng's "inquiry" questioning the meaning of "infallibility."⁵

The ensuing "infallibility debate" was quantitatively successful, if measured by the sheer volume of publications.⁶ Qualitatively, however, the controversy has not always been profitable; for example, a good deal of discussion has centered on "infallible propositions" while ignoring the fact that *Pastor aeternus* did not use such terminology.⁷ Similarly, various alternative terms for "infallibility" have been proposed, though none has yet gained ascendancy; the sheer variety of terminology confirms not only the ambiguity latent in the term "infallibility" but also the complexity of doctrinal issues interconnected with infallibility.⁸

Although the infallibility debate is a decade old, the resolution of the controverted issues appears no closer than at the beginning. Indeed some have abandoned the debate as either irresolvable or inconsequential. Eschewing both these alternatives, perhaps it is time to look for new approaches to the question of infallibility or at least to be more discerning about its methodological implications. In this regard, I would submit that two parameters should be explicitly considered in any discussion of infallibility.

First (and apparently prosaically), infallibility must be accepted as a "given." Whether one instinctively likes the idea of "infallibility" or not, infallibility must be recognized as the teaching of two ecumenical councils and, as such, presumably meaningful to the council participants and so, in some way, doctrinally necessary to the Church as a whole. As a given, then, infallibility should not simply be denied or, equivalently, demythologized into meaninglessness; nor in the opposite vein, should infallibility be maintained with a doctrinal fundamentalism that simplistically reiterates or even aggrandizes the original texts. If infallibility is to be accepted—and such acceptance today may well require new theological terminology—the theologian must carefully investigate the way(s) in which it was originally understood. In this respect, the definition of Vatican I should be seen as the historical prototype—reincarnated though not remodelled at Vatican II—for further theological discussion on infallibility.

Secondly, and perhaps surprisingly, the conciliar definition on infallibility does involve a species of "guesswork." Even if one accepts the conciliar statement as the historical prototype, one must simultaneously acknowledge, in theory and in fact, that every conciliar statement is inherently a compromise.⁹

⁵ *Infallible? An Inquiry* (New York: Doubleday, 1971).

⁶ An ample bibliography is provided in *Fehlbar? Eine Bilanz*, ed. by H. Küng (Zurich: Benzinger, 1973), pp. 515-24.

⁷ *Pastor aeternus* described the "definitiones" that resulted from the exercise of infallibility as "irreformabiles" (H. Denzinger, A. Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* 3074/1839). Theologians who equate "irreformable definitions" and "infallible propositions" should also assume the responsibility for verifying the alleged identity.

⁸ The interconnection of infallibility with other doctrines has been highlighted by P. Chirico, *Infallibility: The Crossroads of Doctrine* (Kansas City: Sheed, Andrews, and McMeel, 1977).

⁹ Cf. G. O'Collins, *The Case Against Dogma* (New York, Paramus, and Toronto: Paulist, 1975).

Factually, after Vatican I, the Council's teaching on infallibility was appropriated in different ways by different ecclesiastics. While it is customary to observe that the rejection of infallibility was restricted to a relatively small number of "Old Catholics,"¹⁰ more attention needs to be paid to the fact that the reception of Vatican I ranged on a spectrum from hyperbolic ultramontanist to obediential minimalism. For example, the reception of *Pastor aeternus* by the American hierarchy was quite varied: although it is well known that only two bishops, including one American, voted *non placet* at the solemn session on July 18, 1870 (when *Pastor aeternus* was formally promulgated), little attention has been given to the fact that only half of the American prelates who went to the Council remained at the end to vote in favor of infallibility. Also of importance is the fact that only a handful of American bishops issued explanatory statements on infallibility after returning from the Council.¹¹

Such historical facts generate theoretical questions. For example, the variety in interpreting conciliar pronouncements has usually been understood as variations on a theme; i.e., behind different-sounding explanations is a single normative interpretation. In contrast to this conventional assumption, the variety in conciliar interpretations may also represent different models operating within the framework of the same terminology; i.e., behind an apparently normative definition, there are irreconcilably variant explanations. In either alternative, the admission of a justifiable spectrum in conciliar interpretation establishes sufficient precedent for analogous plurality in the future.¹²

In sum, historical prototype and hermeneutical plurality might well serve as two key parameters in future examinations of Vatican I and infallibility. While the implications of such a methodological orientation need to be worked out in rigorous detail—a project that obviously goes beyond the possibilities of this essay—it does seem possible to test some features of such a proposal by examining a celebrated disagreement about the meaning of infallibility—that of Manning and Newman—and then to project a possible route for theologizing about infallibility in the future.

MANNING: AUTHORITATIVE DECISIONS

Henry Edward Manning, who, after his conversion and ordination as a Roman Catholic priest in 1851, studied at the Accademia dei Nobili

¹⁰Cf. V. Conzemius, "Catholicism: Old and Roman," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 4 (1967), 426-45, and "Old Catholicism: a Forgotten Lesson of Catholic Reform," *Louvain Studies* 4 (1972-73), 320-37.

¹¹Cf. J. Hennessey, *The First Council of the Vatican: the American Experience* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963); P. Hennessey, "The Theological Influence of the Declaration on Papal Infallibility on the Church in the United States" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Catholic University of America, Washington, 1977).

¹²For more detailed studies of the effect of changing paradigms on church doctrine, see T. Sanks, *Authority in the Church* (Missoula, Montana: American Academy of Religion, 1974), and C. Talar, "Paradigm and Structure in Theological Communities: a Sociological Reading of the Modernist Crisis" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Catholic University of America, Washington, 1979).

Ecclesiastici, was appointed the second Archbishop of Westminster by Pius IX in 1865. In Rome two years later for the celebration of the eighteenth centenary of the martyrdom of Saints Peter and Paul, Manning, along with Bishop Ignaz von Senestrey, responded to the pope's announcement of a future general council in an extraordinary way: "On the eve of St. Peter's Day I and the Bishop of Ratisbon were assisting at the throne of the Pope at the first Vespers of St. Peter; we then made the vow drawn up by P. Liberatore, an Italian Jesuit, to do all in our power to obtain the Definition of Papal Infallibility."¹³

Although Manning's subsequent pastoral letter on *The Centenary of St. Peter and the General Council*¹⁴ gives no indication of this vow, there is no doubt that Manning felt that "the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff, although it is not expressly defined by the Church, is yet proximately definable;" indeed, "whosoever denies to the Roman Pontiff the privilege of infallibility granted to him by Christ" would be guilty of culpable error and vincible ignorance.¹⁵

If this judgment seems stringent, it is but the corollary of Manning's summary of the evidence of Scripture, the writings of the Fathers, and the decrees of previous councils:

(1) That to Peter, first and alone, was given by our Divine Lord the plenitude of all power, both of teaching and ruling, together with the charge of the whole flock on earth.

(2) That this power was so given to him that he was able to act alone and supremely, apart from the other Apostles; whereas the other Apostles were unable to act except in subordination to him.

(3) That to him a special assistance was granted to sustain him in the knowledge and declaration of the faith, and a special office committed to him to confirm and sustain the faith of the Apostles; so that the deposit of faith was doubly secured, first in the person of Peter, and next in the college of the Apostles in union with him.

(4) That this Divine foundation and institution of the Church is perpetual; that Peter lives on in his successors, and the college of the Apostles in the episcopate; so that both the Chair of Peter is indefectible and infallible, and also the episcopate in union with it.¹⁶

For Manning, then "the supernatural gift of infallibility in the ordinary state of the Church, resides first in the head, next in the whole episcopate united with him."¹⁷ Although Manning allowed for an epis-

¹³E. Purcell, *Life of Cardinal Manning* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1898) 2: 420; the text of the vow is given by U. Betti, *La Costituzione Dogmatica "Pastor Aeternus" del Concilio Vaticano I* (Rome: Antonianum, 1961; Spicilegium Pontificii Athenaei Antoniani 14), p. 54, n. 1.

¹⁴This letter, dated September 8, 1867, was originally published separately (London: Longmans, Green, 1867) and subsequently as the initial part of *Petri Privilegium* (London: Longmans, Green, 1871). Cf. F. Cwiekowski, *The English Bishops and the First Vatican Council* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1971), pp. 70-71; R. Ippolito, "Archbishop Manning's Championship of Papal Infallibility, 1867-1872," *The Ampleforth Journal* 77, 2 (1972), 32-33.

¹⁵Manning, *The Centenary*, p. 65, citing Gonzales, *de Infallibilitate Romani Pontificis*.

¹⁶Manning, *The Centenary*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 23; Manning preferred not to treat extraordinary instances, such as the Western Schism.

copal exercise of infallibility, the necessary condition, even in the case of a general council, is papal approval:

A Council is not truly general nor does it represent the Universal Church if it be apart from its head, or act without him, or without subordination to him: For then it would be a headless body. Therefore, it is by the influx of the head into the body that the Council acts, and by the assistance of the Holy Ghost it acts infallibly, so as to bind all the faithful.¹⁸

This assistance of the Holy Spirit was, in Manning's view, comprehensive in extent. Not only did infallibility extend to doctrinal definitions, such as those of the Council of Trent or that of the Immaculate Conception, and to formal condemnations, such as those of Lamennais, Hermes and Frohschammer, but apparently to an undifferentiated variety of other decisions as well:

The Roman Pontiffs, from the beginning, have issued decrees, sentences, judgments, condemnations, on faith, on morals, on universal discipline, without Councils, general or particular, or with the assistance of bishops chosen by themselves, or with their own clergy and theologians. And such acts of the Roman Church have always been received as objects of faith, and laws of Divine authority.¹⁹

As with other converts who are tempted to become "more Roman than Rome,"²⁰ Manning's hyperextension of infallibility seems to have been motivated by the same issue that led to his conversion—his basic disillusionment with what he considered the irretrievably erastian character of the Church of England and his concomitant desire for an absolute ecclesial authority.

Gallicanism, Josephism, Anglicanism, were devices of government, and diseases of the ruling classes. The people never shared them, never understood them; would have rejected them if they had; and do reject them as soon as they come to see that the choice lies between a State religion and the faith of Christendom, between a royal supremacy and the authority of the Vicar of Christ.²¹

Two months before the Council convened, Manning again expressed his thoughts on *The Ecumenical Council and the Infallibility of the Roman Pontiff*.²² By this time, Manning was quite aware that a number of Catholics considered any definition of infallibility inopportune; however, in responding to objections against such a definition, he seemed more prepared to deal with practical issues, both political and pastoral, and less with theological nuances.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71; Manning cited this passage from Brancatus de Lauraea.

¹⁹ Manning, *The Centenary*, p. 27; cf. p. 78.

²⁰ Cf. J. Holmes, *More Roman than Rome: English Catholicism in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Burns & Oates; Shepherdstown: Patmos, 1978).

²¹ Manning, *The Centenary*, p. 96. On the circumstances of Manning's conversion, cf. E. Purcell, *Life* 1: 522-628, and S. Leslie, *Henry Edward Manning, His Life and Labours* (New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons, 1921), pp. 81-102.

²² This pastoral letter, dated "Rosary Sunday, 1869," was originally published separately (London: Longmans, Green, 1869) and subsequently as the middle part of *Petri Privilegium* (1871); cf. E. Cwiekowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-98, and R. Ippolito, *loc. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

In contrast to the "patent, notorious, importunate, and organized" denial of infallibility on the part of "a handful of active and hostile minds in England and in Germany,"²³ Manning's own understanding of infallibility was straightforward, with "no shades or moderations."²⁴ Infallibility, for Manning, meant "that the Vicar of Jesus Christ speaking *ex cathedrâ*, in matters of faith and morals cannot err."²⁵ And in contrast to "some twenty opinions as to the conditions required to authenticate an utterance of the Pontiff *ex cathedrâ*," Manning proposed a much simpler criterion for judging an exercise of infallibility: "That the doctrinal acts be published by the Pontiff, as Universal Teacher, with the intention of requiring the assent of the Church."²⁶

Using this criterion, Manning had no apparent difficulty in covering with infallibility "a multitude of acts," including not only solemn papal and conciliar teachings, but also the condemnations of "a long series of propositions in theology and philosophy."²⁷ He apparently exempted only one area from this blanket coverage and even there the exemption appears rescindable:

The infallibility here in question has no relation to the multifarious administration of dioceses. Such a definition as we speak of would either have no appreciable influence on the ordinary administration of bishops; or if any, only in the way of giving certainty and solidarity to the judicial acts and pastoral jurisdiction of the Episcopate throughout the world.²⁸

Manning's insistence on the fullest possible extension of infallibility appears to be based on his view that papal infallibility is "the infallibility of the Church in its Head, and is the chief condition through which its own infallibility is manifested to the world;"²⁹ accordingly, the more or less frequent exercise of infallibility by the popes is necessary "to make manifest that the active infallibility of the Church, between Council and Council, is not dormant, suspended, or intermittent."³⁰

In retrospect, Manning's preconconciliar pastorals seem motivated by his conviction that papal infallibility was a revealed doctrine that must be defined and that "the admission of a doubt as to any revealed doctrine is fatal to faith in that doctrine."³¹ Unfortunately, his convictions were not formulated in a carefully enunciated definition of infallibility; rather, he equated "the stability, indefectibility, or infallibility of the faith of Peter" as "these modes of expressing the same Divine fact."³²

At the Council itself, Manning did his utmost to fulfill his vow; though "not the intellectual leader of the Infallibilist party—he has been

²³*The Ecumenical Council*, p. 43.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 145.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 28; cf. pp. 38, 51, 122.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 61.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 51.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 47.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 121.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 42.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 149.

aptly called its Chief Whip."³³ His first, and perhaps most crucial, success was in the election of the membership of the *Deputatio de Fide*, the conciliar committee that would be charged with preparing and revising any statement on infallibility; with one exception, all of the two dozen elected members, including both Manning and Senestrey, were pro-infallibilist.³⁴ Election to the *Deputatio* gave Manning the strategic advantage of excusing himself from public debate on conflict-of-interest grounds, while simultaneously allowing work behind the scenes on his pet project; as he later reminisced:

The International Committee met often, and we met weekly to watch and to counteract. When they went to Pius IX, we went also. It was a running fight.³⁵

Since Manning's work at the Council was in some measure a covert operation, opinions have varied about the real degree of his influence.³⁶ For example, in the series of procedural steps that eventually led to the proclamation of infallibility, was Manning the clever strategist responsible for each maneuver, or the apt catalyst necessary for concerted action, or the glorified errand-boy whose assistance, while valuable, was nonetheless expendable?

Similarly, the question of Manning's theological influence has been raised—most recently by the discovery of a draft, in Manning's handwriting of what appears to be an English translation of the penultimate text of the Council's definition:

We, therefore, faithfully adhering to [*abiding in*]
the tradition, received/
from the beginning of the Christian religion, for the glory/
of God our Savior, for the exaltation of the Catholic Faith/
and for the Salvation of Christian people, this Holy/
Council approving, teach, and define as a dogma/
divinely revealed; that the Roman Pontiff, when/
he speaks ex Cathedra, that is when * discharging/
the office of Pastor & Teacher of all Christians, by/
his supreme Apostolic authority *he* defines **/
doctrine of Faith or Morals to be held by the/
Universal Church by the divine assistance, promised/
to him in Blessed Peter *is* possessed *of* that infalli-/
bility, with which the Divine Redeemer willed/
that His Church in defining *** doctrine of faith/
& Morals should be endowed; and therefore **** such/

³³ W. Purdy, "Manning and the Vatican Council," *Manning: Anglican and Catholic*, ed. by J. Fitzsimons (London: Burns & Oates, 1951), p. 91.

³⁴ Senestrey's council diary has been edited by K. Schatz as *Wie es zur Definition der päplichen Unfehlbarkeit kam*, Frankfurter Theologische Studien 24 (Frankfurt am Main: Knecht, 1977).

³⁵ Purcell, 2:453; the so-called "international committee" was an unofficial gathering of prelates opposed to infallibility.

³⁶ For a summary appraisal of different judgments about Manning's influence with the British government during the Council, see W. White, "Lord Acton and the Governments at Vatican Council I," *Lord Acton, the Decisive Decade, 1864-1874*, ed. by D. McElrath et al. (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1970), pp. 157-59.

definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of them-/selves irreformable.³⁷

Given his privileged position as a member of the *Deputatio de Fide*, Manning presumably would have been able to write a carefully nuanced exposition of *Pastor aeternus*; such expectations notwithstanding, Manning's lengthy pastoral on *The Vatican Council and its Definitions* "reflects the strong Ultramontane line he pursued before and during the council" and "contributed to English hesitation in accepting the decrees of the council."³⁸

Manning's ultramontanism is most apparent in his treatment of the "object of infallibility"—i. e., the areas of teaching that come under the purview of infallibility.³⁹ While he conceded that the "formula"—"doctrine of faith and morals"—"is variously expressed by the Church and theologians," he felt that "it always means one and the same thing."⁴⁰ Moreover, while Manning acknowledged that the "object of infallibility" is restricted to "faith and morals" and "excludes therefore

³⁷This text, written on a single sheet of paper was discovered by Dr. Channing Jeschke, librarian at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University, which recently acquired some five thousand items that once were part of Manning's library; the text is reproduced here with gratitude for Dr. Jeschke's permission.

A slash (/) indicates the end of a line in the original; italicized words are above the line in the original; *abiding in* is written directly above "adhering to"; the first asterisk indicates that "in" was originally written above "when" but then deleted; the double asterisk indicates that "that a" was written (on line) and then crossed through; the triple asterisk indicates that "the" was written (on line) and then stroked out; the quadruple asterisk indicates that "thus" was written above "therefore" and then deleted.

Not only the linear phrasing (particularly its irregularity) but also the insertions and deletions indicate that Manning was translating from a Latin text; in particular, "adhering to"/"abiding in" are alternate translations of *inhaerendo*, which appeared in the final text of *Pastor aeternus*; there is no evident reason for these alternates, in English.

The Latin original that Manning was using is apparently the penultimate version of *Pastor aeternus*, which was available on July 11, 1870 (text in Mansi, 52: 1235); Manning's draft was probably written no earlier than July 9, when textual emendations were still being submitted, and no later than July 16, when the words, *non autem ex consensu ecclesiae*, were added to the text (Mansi 52: 1318) but do not appear in this draft.

³⁸F. Cwiekowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-79; cf. R. Ippolito, *loc. cit.*, pp. 36-39; Manning's pastoral, dated the "Feast of S. Edward the Confessor" (October 13) was originally published separately (London: Longmans, Green, 1870) and subsequently as the concluding part of *Petri Privilegium* (1871). It may be of interest to note that Manning's recently discovered text is basically identical with the translation of the same passage in the pastoral (p. 218); the variants between the two versions are what one might expect in comparing a preliminary reading with a more polished translation.

³⁹In fairness to Manning, it should be noted that his descriptions of the pope as teacher of all Christians (*The Vatican Council*, pp. 58-59), the divine assistance given to the pope (pp. 79-86), and irreformable definitions (pp. 91-92) are more moderate; in the latter case, one is surprised that Manning did not stress the anti-Gallican intention of this part of the definition.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 60; as M. Bévenot, "'Faith and Morals' in the Councils of Trent and Vatican I," *The Heythrop Journal* 3 (1962), 15-30, has noted, the meaning of *fides et mores* needs further clarification; in this regard, W. Levada, *Infallible Church Magisterium and the Natural Moral Law* STD Dissertation Excerpts (Rome: Gregorian University, 1971), p. 70, has concluded "that the phrase itself does not properly admit of a translation 'faith and morals' in such a way that *mores* simply means 'all man's moral activity,' or even all moral norms or principles."

all other matter whatsoever," his application was "wide and general" including not only "the whole revealed Word of God" but indirectly "whatsoever is necessary for exposition or defense."⁴¹ This indirect object encompassed not only "truths which are necessary to the custody of the Depositum" including "truths of mere human history" and "truths of interpretation" regarding the orthodoxy of texts, but also the "condemnation of propositions" including censures less than heresy:⁴²

It is not credible that a proposition condemned by the Church as rash should not be rash, and as scandalous should not be scandalous, or as offensive to pious ears should not be such, and the like. If the Church be infallible in faith and morals, it is not to be belived that it can err in passing these moral judgments on the ethical character of propositions.⁴³

A second interpretation colored by ultramontaniam was Manning's understanding of the pope's prerogative of infallibility: "the Roman Pontiff possesses by himself the infallibility with which the Church in unison with him is endowed."⁴⁴ For Manning, the infallibility bestowed on Peter was not dependent on his union with the other apostles; rather, "their infallibility was evidently dependent on their union with him."⁴⁵ Correspondingly, "if the definition [of Vatican I] does not decide that the Church derives its infallibility from the Head, it does decide that the Head does not derive his infallibility from the Church . . ."⁴⁶

However, the most revealing insight into Manning's ultramontaniam is given by his explanation of the pope's exercise of infallibility. In a passage that caused considerable consternation, Manning explained the act of defining:

The word 'definition' has two senses, the one forensic and narrow, the other wide and common; and this in the present instance is more correct. The forensic or narrow sense confines its meaning to the logical act of defining by *genus* and *differentia*. But this sense is proper to dialectics and disputations, not to the acts of Councils and Pontiffs. The wide and common sense is that of an authoritative termination of questions which have been in doubt and debate, and therefore of the judgment or sentence thence resulting.⁴⁷

Although describing the act of defining as "wide and common," Manning still seems to understand it as a juridical process; such an inference is reinforced by his explanation of *definienda* as "the final decision by which any matter of faith and morals is put into a doctrinal form."⁴⁸ Accordingly, one should not be completely surprised that Manning describes infallibility as a charism of juridical discernment: "Infallibility is a quality of the doctrinal jurisdiction of the Pontiff in faith and morals."⁴⁹

⁴¹ Manning, *The Vatican Council*, pp. 59, 66-67.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 67-74.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 90; cf. "But the head is always infallible by himself" (p. 91).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 88; cf. pp. 123, 130.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 97. Manning's apparently juridical understanding of infallibility seems to

In sum, while Manning may have changed the course of the Council, the Council apparently did little to change the course of Manning's thought on infallibility.

NEWMAN: THEOLOGICAL SEARCHINGS

During Vatican I, Newman's reservations about the Council's projected definition became public, when what was intended as a personal letter to his ordinary, Bishop Ullathorne, was published in the *London Standard*:

Where we are all at rest and have no doubts, and, at least practically, not to say doctrinally, hold the Holy Father to be infallible, suddenly there is thunder in the clear sky, and we are told to prepare for something, we know not what, to try our faith, we know not how. No impending danger is to be averted, but a great difficulty is to be created. Is this the proper work for an Ecumenical Council? As to myself personally, please God, I do not expect any trial at all, but I cannot help suffering with the various souls that are suffering. I look with anxiety at the prospect of having to defend decisions which may not be difficult to my private judgment, but may be most difficult to defend logically in the face of historical facts.⁵⁰

Newman's reservations about infallibility did not surprise those closest to him, who already knew that he had been wrestling with the topic for some time. Yet, Newman had not published his reflections, possibly because he hoped to avoid "that necessary collision which must take place" between his views and those of Archbishop Manning and W. G. Ward, editor of *The Dublin Review*.⁵¹ In addition, as Newman acknowledged to John Stanislas Flanagan: "I dare say I have not been consistent or logically exact in what from time to time I have said about the extent and subject matter of the Church's infallibility, for it is a very large question and I have never set myself formally to answer it."⁵²

In retrospect, Newman's disclaimer seems unduly modest: while he appears to have had a number of unresolved questions about infallibility, still, twenty-nine months in advance of the conciliar definition, he had already worked out an organic framework in which a theology of infallibility was meaningful. As one might have anticipated from *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, its author envisaged the magisterium as teaching in a way analogous to the apostles:

be the basis for his insistence that the rule of faith cannot be tested by history (p. 121) and so the grounds for excluding "all difficulties from human history" (i.e., the cases of papal errors) "by prescription" (p. 119); this stance led Manning to an unfavorable judgment on the historical approach to theology personified by Acton and Döllinger (cf. p. 126).

⁵⁰This frequently quoted text is given by W. Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman* (London, New York, Bombay and Calcutta: Longmans, Green, 1919; Westmead: Gregg International, 1970) 2: 288. Cf. J. Holmes, "Cardinal Newman and the First Vatican Council," *Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum* 1 (1969), 374-98; G. Swisshelm, "Newman and the Vatican Definition of Papal Infallibility," *St. Meinrad Essays* 12, 3 (1960), 70-88.

⁵¹*The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Biblical Inspiration and on Infallibility*, ed. by J. Holmes (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), p. 109; on Newman's differences with Manning, also see pp. 144, 155, and with Ward, see pp. 111, 146-48.

⁵²*Ibid.*, p. 154.

... there is nothing which the Church has defined or shall define but what an Apostle, if asked, would have been fully able to answer and would have answered, as the Church has answered, the one answering by inspiration, the other from its gift of infallibility; ... the Church never will be able to answer, or has been able to answer, what the Apostles could not answer, e.g., whether the earth is stationary or not, or whether a republic is or is not better than a monarchy.⁵³

As with any analogy, certain differences must be recognized. If, for example, "an Apostle could answer questions at once, in contrast, the Church answers them intermittently" ⁵⁴ Again, the Church can and "does in fact make answers which the Apostles did not make and in one sense did not know" ⁵⁵ This apparently surprising superiority of the contemporary Church vis-à-vis the apostolic is comparable to the advantage enjoyed by Aristotelian philosophers over their mentor:

... the perfect Aristotelian will know whether this or that opinion, sentiment, conjecture, generalization, negation is Aristotelic or not. In one respect, he knows more than Aristotle; because, in new emergencies after the time of Aristotle, he can and does answer what Aristotle would have answered, but for the want of the opportunity did not. There is another point of view in which he seems to have the advantage of Aristotle, though it is no real superiority, viz that, from the necessities of the interval between Aristotle and himself, there has been the growth of a technology, a scientific vocabulary, which makes the philosophy easier to remember, easier to communicate and to defend. . . .⁵⁶

However, as Newman observes with uncustomary harshness, the development of theological terminology has definite disadvantages:

Such a scientific apparatus has its evils; for common minds, instead of throwing themselves into the genius and animus of the philosophy, will make the technology the beginning and end of their study; and will be formalists, pedants, bigots, and will be as little made philosophers by their verbal knowledge, as boys can swim because they have corks or run because they have belts.⁵⁷

In contrast to those who treat the deposit of faith as "a list of articles that can be numbered," Newman envisaged the deposit as "a large philosophy; all parts of which are connected together, and in a certain sense correlative together, so that he who really knows one part, may be said to know all, as *ex pede Herculem*."⁵⁸

Corresponding to this view of the deposit of faith as "a living idea and body of doctrine" that "for its security requires certain *pomoeria*" and "must be realized in the concrete,"⁵⁹ is Newman's insight into the

⁵³ *Theological Papers*, p. 158; cf. 107.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, the sentence concludes: "... though they would have known them, i.e., made present to their consciousness, and made those answers, had the questions been asked."

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46; cf. p. 155.

way that "the infallibility of the Church not only guarantees and explains, but applies and interprets the revelation."⁶⁰

... the Depositum is in such sense committed to the Church or to the Pope, that when the Pope sits in St. Peter's chair, or when a Council of Fathers and doctors is collected around him, it is capable of being presented to their minds with fullness and exactness, under the operation of supernatural grace, ... with which it habitually, not occasionally, resided in the minds of the Apostles;—a vision of it, not logical, and therefore consistent with errors of reasoning and of fact in the enunciation, after the manner of an intuition or an instinct.⁶¹

Although Newman had developed a theological framework for infallibility, he was apparently still troubled by a number of important issues. First, he was concerned about the "subject matter of infallibility" which he identified as "the depositum [of faith] in its logical outcome and in its concrete exhibition. . . ."⁶² Since the Church "cannot, from the nature of the case, increase its depositum,"⁶³ then "even an Ecumenical Council cannot turn an implicit truth into a dogma."⁶⁴ It is hardly surprising, then, that Newman objected to the assertion that "certain doctrines, though not revealed in the beginning, are so certain that they have a formal claim on all men, a universal claim for belief, and that no one can be excused from believing except on the plea of invincible ignorance."⁶⁵ In contrast, the author of *An Essay in Aid of A Grammar of Assent* (1870)—conscious of both the subjective quality of certitude and the limitations of logical inference in religious matters—might be expected to have questioned: "what limit is to be put to this gift of infallibility carrying out the revelation into its concrete exhibition?"⁶⁶

Secondly, Newman was concerned about a similar lack of differentiation in describing the exercise of infallibility. While he delighted in acknowledging that "every schoolmaster speaks as if he is infallible"⁶⁷ (and presumably the pope may need to speak in a similar fashion), Newman also thought that the pope's ordinary pastoral activity "does not require infallibility."⁶⁸ Such a conclusion brought Newman into conflict with W. G. Ward who defended "the dogmatic character of all Encyclicals" since he did "not allow that the Church can speak *solemnly* without speaking with her *infallible* voice."⁶⁹ In contrast, Newman proposed "that the Pope cannot claim more than obedience, not an internal assent, to any proposition which was not either revealed, and contained confusè (not illativè) in revelation."⁷⁰

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 106; cf. p. 145.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 118; cf. pp. 103, 110.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

Newman's third concern centered on what he called "the seat of infallibility."⁷¹ Insofar as "there is no one received doctrine on the Church but several,"⁷² he admitted that there would be a variety of opinions about whether infallibility is "vested" in the Church generally or in the pope in particular, either personally, or with an ecumenical council, or with the consent of the episcopate, or even without its consent.⁷³ While he felt that "the non-definition of the Pope's infallibility is, in the present state of things, a necessary safeguard for the due exercise of that his gift, even if he has it," should any pronouncement become necessary, the infallibility of the Church "must be defined, if anything on the subject is defined, before we come to define the infallibility of the Pope."⁷⁴

In light of these preconiliar searchings, it is interesting to consider Newman's reactions to the actual definition. Newman first shared his views about *Pastor aeternus* in his private correspondence with persons who were troubled both by the maximalist interpretations of what had been defined and also by the fact that the definition was "done with an imperiousness and overbearing wilfulness which has been a great scandal."⁷⁵ While Newman was quite sympathetic toward those disturbed by the definition, he was understandably reticent about openly challenging Manning and other maximalists. However, the publication of Gladstone's "political expostulation" on *The Vatican Decrees in their bearing on Civil Allegiance*—which questioned whether any Catholic who accepted the teaching of *Pastor aeternus* could be a loyal British citizen—gave Newman the opportunity of simultaneously answering Manning and refuting Gladstone.⁷⁶

In *A Letter Addressed to His Grace the Duke of Norfolk*,⁷⁷ Newman castigated maximalist excesses:

There are those among us, as it must be confessed, who for years past have conducted themselves as if no responsibility attached to wild words and

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 111, 144.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 115.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁷⁵ *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. by C. Dessain and T. Gornall, Vol. 25 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 262. Cf. R. Strange, "Newman on Infallibility: 1870 and 1970," *The Ampleforth Journal* 80 (Spring, 1975), 61-70; P. Wilcox, "Spiritual Direction in the Correspondence of John Henry Newman, 1845-1890" (S.T.D. dissertation, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 1979), pp. 271-95.

⁷⁶ Gladstone's work, originally published in 1874 (London: John Murray) was republished by A. Ryan in *Newman and Gladstone: the Vatican Decrees* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962). For the background to this controversy, see J. Altholz, "The Vatican Decrees Controversy, 1874-1875," *The Catholic Historical Review* 57 (1972), 593-605; J. Holmes "Liberal Catholicism and Newman's Letter to the Duke of Norfolk," *Clergy Review* 60 (1975), 498-511; H. Jenkins, "The Irish Dimension of the British *Kulturkampf*: Vaticanism and Civil Allegiance, 1870-1875," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 30 (1979), 353-77.

⁷⁷ Newman's letter, originally published in 1875 (London: Pickering) was later republished in *Certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching* (London: Longmans, Green, 1885 ff; hereafter *Diff.*) and in Ryan's *Newman and Gladstone* (hereafter *Ryan*); the passage cited in *Diff.* 2:176-77/*Ryan*, p. 76.

overbearing deeds; who have stated truths in the most paradoxical form, and stretched principles till they were close upon snapping; and who at length, having done their best to set the house on fire, leave to others the task of putting out the flame. The English people are sufficiently sensitive of the claims of the Pope, without having them, as if in defiance, flourished in their faces.⁷⁸

Against the importune demands of maximalist interpreters Newman maintained that "a moderation of doctrine, dictated by charity, is not inconsistent with soundness in the faith."

Newman's "moderating" interpretation of *Pastor aeternus* emerges clearly in his descriptions of the infallibility of the pope, the extent of infallible teaching and its subsequent appropriation.

First, Newman insisted that the infallibility of the pope must be determined by the infallibility of the Church, i. e., the Church by a supernatural infallible guidance is secured from error in its teaching. The pope, representing the Church, "is to be recognized as in the exercise of his infallible teaching" only when he speaks *ex cathedrâ*; however, the requisite conditions for *ex cathedrâ* teaching "contract the range of infallibility most materially."⁷⁹

Accordingly, Newman limited the "object" of infallibility to those propositions which are "referable to the Apostolic *depositum*, through the channel either of Scripture or Tradition"; moreover, this kind of papal "definition must relate to things necessary for salvation."⁸⁰ These restrictions on the exercise of infallibility led Newman to conclude that "Papal and Synodal definitions, obligatory on our faith, are of rare occurrence; and this is confessed by all sober theologians."⁸¹

In a corresponding way, Newman circumscribed the obligation of accepting ecclesial teaching. While acknowledging that infallibility could be channeled, both "in direct statements of truth, and in the condemnation of error," still he asserted that the Church "has made provision for weighing as lightly as possible on the faith and conscience of her children."⁸² Such restraint needs to be exercised even "in those circumstances and surroundings of formal definitions;" in particular, conciliar and papal terminology needs to be carefully examined, for "there may be not only no exercise of an infallible voice, but actual error."⁸³

In Newman's view of the "reception" of doctrine, two facets— theological interpretation and ecclesial revision—are particularly striking. First, the explanation of church teaching is the responsibility of theologians: "None but the *Schola Theologorum* is competent to determine the force of Papal and Synodal utterances, and the exact interpretation of them is a work of time."⁸⁴ Secondly, just as popes and

⁷⁸ *Diff.* 2:321/Ryan, p. 184.

⁷⁹ *Diff.* 2:235/Ryan, p. 187.

⁸⁰ *Diff.* 2:329-30, 331/Ryan, pp. 190, 191.

⁸¹ *Diff.* 2:338/Ryan, p. 196.

⁸² *Diff.* 2:333/Ryan, p. 192.

⁸³ *Diff.* 2:327/Ryan, p. 188.

⁸⁴ *Diff.* 2:176/Ryan, p. 76; cf. *Diff.* 2:334/Ryan, p. 193.

councils—correcting their predecessors—have “trimmed the balance of doctrine by completing it,” similar revisions may be anticipated in the future, for “the definitions of later Councils are wont to be more luminous, fuller, more accurate and exact than those of the earlier.”⁸⁵ Or as Newman stated more bluntly in a personal letter, about six months after Vatican I had been prorogued: “Let us be patient, let us have faith, and a new Pope, and a re-assembled Council may trim the boat.”⁸⁶

In sum, while the official teaching of the Church was changed by the Council, the Council apparently occasioned little change in Newman’s thinking about infallibility.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROJECTIONS

If one presumes that an ecumenical council ought to lead to a harmony of doctrinal interpretations, such a presumption is negated by the case of Manning and Newman, who disagreed about infallibility prior to Vatican I and continued to disagree in their subsequent interpretations of the conciliar definition. If anything, their divergence was sharpened rather than lessened.

At one level, the difference between Newman and Manning over the issue of infallibility seems similar in nature to the dispute on inspiration between Newman and Dr. John Healy, later Archbishop of Tuam: “Above all, the conflict was between a patient, deeply inquiring mind that wanted undecided questions left open and an impatient, intolerant spirit that regarded open questions as untidy, to be turned as soon as possible into static formulas that could be imposed as matters of faith.”⁸⁷ Though their differences were certainly psychological, the alienation between Newman and Manning was also (and perhaps consequentially) one of theological methodology and theological models.

Their theological disagreement was evident in regard to several facets of infallibility. First, Manning attempted to extend the “object” of infallibility as far as possible; in contrast, Newman wished to restrict the area of the definable as narrowly as possible. Second, Manning associated infallibility directly with the pope; Newman emphasized the infallibility of the Church, which could be exercised by the pope, but by others in the Church as well. Third, Manning envisioned the exercise of infallibility as producing authoritative decisions ending controversies; for Newman, the use of infallibility was a taking-of-bearings, which could later be expressed more accurately. Fourth, for Manning, infallibility could be utilized rather frequently; for Newman, such a use was

⁸⁵*Diff.* 2:307, 308/*Ryan*, p. 173, 174. The next sections of Newman’s *Letter* (*Diff.* 2:308-17/*Ryan*, pp. 174-81) discuss the relation of doctrine and history and show a further divergence from Manning.

⁸⁶*Letter and Diaries* 25: 310; cf. C. Dessain, “What Newman Taught in Manning’s Church,” in M. Goulder *et al.*, *Infallibility in the Church* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968), pp. 59-80; J. Hughes, “Trimming the Boat on Infallibility,” *Bucknell Review* 19 (1971), 101-18.

⁸⁷J. D. Holmes, R. Murray, eds., *On the Inspiration of Scripture: John Henry Newman* (Washington: Corpus, 1967), p. 40.

extremely rare. Fifth, Manning agreed with those who felt that "dogmas must conquer history" and so simply ruled out any possibility of papal error;⁸⁸ Newman, acknowledging the fact of past mistakes on the part of popes, allowed for a further, corrective development of doctrine. In overview, Manning's ecclesiology was pyramidal; Newman's was one of checks and balances.⁸⁹

The differences between Manning and Newman have been politely overlooked, or possibly ignored, in the past century. On the one hand, the English-speaking Catholic world has always been a bit embarrassed that its two most distinguished Victorian converts failed to get along. On the other hand, many theologians have been even more nonplussed by the fact that two quite different theological positions received papal approbation when both Newman and Manning were raised to the cardinalate some years after Vatican I.⁹⁰

Although "it is hard not to regret that the last hundred years have been spent too often following Manning's course instead of Newman's,"⁹¹ it would be a mistake in the opposite direction to appropriate Newman and to ignore Manning. To appreciate their contribution to a theology of infallibility, more attention needs to be given to the nature of their disagreement.

In the past, it would seem that theologians accounted for the differences between Manning's and Newman's interpretations of infallibility as variations on a theme. Indeed, *Pastor aeternus*, as a compromise statement marked by the ornaments and blemishes of repeated revision, utilized a combination of juridical and theological language that allowed for a variety of interpretations.⁹² The differences between Manning and Newman, however, seem more fundamental than matters of theological vocabulary or jurisdictional semantics. Since their positions are at a certain juncture, apparently irreconcilable, Manning and Newman appear to have been employing what today would be called different ecclesiological models.

If Manning and Newman were really employing basically different ecclesiological models, then theologians today have an interesting precedent for re-interpreting the teaching of Vatican I in a non-judicial

⁸⁸ Cf. V. Conzemius, "Lord Acton and the First Vatican Council," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 20 (1969), 267-94.

⁸⁹ Cf. J. Coulson, *Newman and the Common Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), pp. 55-183.

⁹⁰ Indeed, the papal approval of Newman seems more extraordinary than that of Manning; though Manning was a personal friend of Pius IX, who named him cardinal in 1875, a decade after his elevation to the see of Westminster, Manning's writings on infallibility never received papal congratulations similar to that extended to other writers on the Council; in contrast, Newman, the superior of a small community and not the archbishop of a major diocese, was made a cardinal in 1879, after the publication of his *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, which was not well received in ultramontane circles in Rome.

⁹¹ R. Strange, *The Ampleforth Journal* 80 (1975), 70.

⁹² On the imbalance between juridical and theological views of the Church at Vatican I, cf. P. Granfield, "The Church as *Societas Perfecta* in the Schemata of Vatican I," *Church History* 48 (1979), 431-46.

way.⁹³ The variance between Manning's administrative model and Newman's developmental model of the Church led them implicitly to different (sub-) models of magisterium and, correspondingly, to different conclusions about infallibility. In searching for ways to reappropriate the teaching of Vatican I,⁹⁴ theologians might well elaborate different definitions of infallibility within different models of the Church.

JOHN T. FORD, C.S.C.

The Catholic University of America

⁹³Cf. W. Pannenberg, in *Papsttum als ökumenische Frage*, p. 307.

⁹⁴On the need for a "re-reception" of Vatican I, see the remarks of P. Lingsfeld, in *Papsttum als ökumenische Frage*, pp. 316-17.