

FROM OXFORD TO ROME: NEWMAN'S ECCLESIAL CONVERSION

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Amidst multiple conflicting interpretations of Newman's 1845 conversion, this article offers a new, synthetic interpretation by distinguishing and integrating negative deconversion and positive conversion moments within a six-year, three-phase process: reflection and theological judgment, discernment and judgment of conscience, and deliberation and decision.

CONVERSION IS AN ABOUT-FACE, a significant change of direction, a fundamental horizon shift from one reality to another, indeed, from one world to another.¹ It often involves two distinct moments: a negative deconversion *from* and a positive conversion *to*.² On October 3, 1845, John Henry Newman wrote to Edward Hawkins, the provost of Oxford's Oriel

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¹ See Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972) 237–43, and Walter E. Conn, *Christian Conversion* (1986; repr., Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2006) 26–31. Basic conversion may be cognitive, affective, moral, or religious. Cognitive conversion may be of content (*what* one knows) or of structure (*how* one knows). For an excellent analysis of conversion from social scientific perspectives, see Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University, 1993). I am grateful to Lawrence S. Cunningham, Edward J. Miller, and anonymous referees for their careful reading of earlier versions of this essay and for their helpful suggestions.

² These “moments” or “poles” of deconversion and conversion are often ongoing dimensions of a single extended process. For a sociological analysis of deconversion in terms of social role change, see Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh, *Becoming an Ex: The Process of Role Exit* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988), which delineates the process of role disengagement and disidentification (as well as identity reestablishment in a new role as an “ex”) in four phases: First Doubts, Seeking Alternatives, The Turning Point, and Creating the Ex-Role. John D. Barbour, *Versions of Deconversion: Autobiography and the Loss of Faith* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994) 25, discusses Newman's deconversion in terms of what Rambo names “institutional transition” or “denominational switching.”

College: "I shall be obliged to you if you will remove my name from the books of the College and the University."³ This request represented Newman's negative moment of deconversion from the Anglican Church. Six days later, on October 9 at his communal retreat in Littlemore, Newman was received into the Roman Catholic Church by the Italian Passionist Father Dominic Barberi. This signified his positive moment of conversion. At the end of a long journey Newman's agony was finally over. Two decades later, he wrote in his *Apologia*: "it was like coming into port after a rough sea."⁴

Newman's conversion from the Anglican to the Roman Church was the most famous and publicly important event of his life (1801–1890). But, as I have argued elsewhere,⁵ this conversion was neither his first nor even his most personally profound. Three decades earlier, at age 15, he had experienced a basic Christian moral conversion, moving him from the conventional values of the Anglican Christianity inherited from his parents to a deeply personal Evangelical faith. Then, in his later 20s, he underwent another conversion, a structural cognitive conversion that effected a shift from his Evangelical to an Anglo-Catholic form of Christianity.

It was only in 1833, however, that the controversial period of his life began with the initiation of the Oxford Tractarian Movement. For most of his next twelve years as an Anglican, Newman and his colleagues attempted to recast the Anglican Church from a Protestant into a catholic mold. After years of turmoil Newman's leadership in the Movement came to a definitive end in 1845 with his conversion to Rome. That conversion has been the object of endless interpretations, including Newman's own

³ Quoted in Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (New York: Oxford University, 1988) 301. Among the many volumes on Newman's life published in recent decades, see Maisie Ward, *Young Mr. Newman* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1948); R. D. Middleton, *Newman at Oxford: His Religious Development* (New York: Oxford University, 1950); Meriol Trevor, *Newman: The Pillar of the Cloud* (London: Macmillan, 1962); Charles Stephen Dessain, *John Henry Newman* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1966); Sheridan Gilley, *Newman and His Age* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1990); and Vincent Blehl, *Pilgrim Journey: John Henry Newman 1801–1845* (New York: Paulist, 2001).

⁴ John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1947 [1864]) 216 (hereafter cited as [*Apo.*]).

⁵ See Walter E. Conn, "Young Man Newman: The First Conversion," in *Moral Theology: New Directions and Fundamental Issues: Festschrift for James P. Hanigan*, ed. James Keating (New York: Paulist, 2004) 127–44; and Conn, "Newman's Cognitive Conversion to Anglo-Catholicism," in *A Sacramental Life: A Festschrift Honoring Bernard Cooke*, ed. Michael Horace Barnes and William P. Roberts (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2003) 207–29.

defensive presentation in his classic 1864 *Apologia* and most recently Frank Turner's controversial 2002 revisionist version.⁶

This article attempts to bring together the strengths of each of these two views—Newman's insistence on the cognitive, spiritual conversion to Roman Catholicism and Turner's focus on the affective, social deconversion from Oxonian Anglicanism—into a new constructive synthesis. This new synthesis, moreover, will itself be situated within an original overarching interpretation of Newman's ecclesial shift emphasizing *cognitive* conversion and moral *decision*. I will show, indeed, that because Turner actually explores Newman's deconversion from the Anglican Church rather than his conversion to the Roman Church, he in fact helpfully highlights the existential deconversion factors that made Newman's transitional process so long and difficult.

The central point I will develop in this new, synthetic interpretation is that Newman experienced a cognitive conversion of content in his understanding of the church between 1839 and 1841, and that, when turned directly on himself by 1843, this conversion demanded an enormously difficult moral decision that Newman was able to make only in 1845. Thus I will trace the moments of deconversion and conversion through a three-phase process, through three two-year periods ending in 1841, 1843, and 1845. However, before turning to this new three-phase interpretation, I must first review and analyze Newman's own version of these six crucial years between 1839 and 1845.

IN A MIRROR CLEARLY

By the late 1830s Newman had articulated his own version of the 17th-century Anglican divines' *Via Media*. Anglo-Catholicism was the "true and intelligible mean"⁷ between Liberalism and Evangelicalism within the Church of England, and between Roman Catholicism and rationalistic unbelief beyond it. For Newman, of course, the serious challenger was Roman Catholicism. And, as he later recounted in his *Apologia*, the battle lines were drawn between "the Anglican *Via Media* and the popular religion of Rome," the first standing on apostolicity, the second on catholicity.⁸

⁶ Frank M. Turner, *John Henry Newman: The Challenge to Evangelical Religion* (New Haven: Yale University, 2002). Both Turner and Ker make important use of Newman's correspondence of the period, much of which has only recently been published in *Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vols. 9–10, ed. Francis J. McGrath (Oxford: Oxford University, 2006).

⁷ John Henry Newman, *Essays Critical and Historical*, 2 vols. (New York: Longmans, Green, 1919 [1871]) 1:306.

⁸ *Apo.* 97.

That, at least, was Newman's view in early 1839. But things would soon change.

In his *Apologia* Newman related that, during the summer of 1839, while studying the history of the Monophysites, he received a "shock which was to cast out of [his] imagination all middle courses and compromises for ever." He explained this shock in terms of discovering himself on the heretical side of a structural analogy: "My stronghold was Antiquity; now here, in the middle of the fifth century, I found . . . Christendom of the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries reflected. I saw my face in that mirror, and I was a Monophysite. The Church of the *Via Media* was in the position of the Oriental communion, Rome was where she now is; and the Protestants were the Eutychians." This was his first doubt about the "tenableness of Anglicanism."⁹

About two months later Newman was hit again, this time by a line from Augustine quoted in an article by Nicholas Wiseman on the Donatists: "Securus judicat orbis terrarum." He understood these words to mean that "the deliberate judgment, in which the whole Church at length agrees and acquiesces, is an infallible prescription and a final sentence against such portions of it as protest and secede." Here in Augustine "Antiquity was deciding against itself," and for Newman "the theory of the *Via Media* was absolutely pulverized."¹⁰

The effect of these experiences on Newman was a "dreadful misgiving" that caused him "dismay and disgust." Still, he "became excited at the view thus opened," though before long "the vivid impression upon [his] imagination faded away." In the *Apologia* he summed up the experience this way: "The heavens had opened and closed again. The thought for the moment had been, 'The Church of Rome will be found right after all;' and then it had vanished. My old convictions remained as before." But he "had seen the shadow of a hand upon the wall. . . . He who has seen a ghost, cannot be as if he had never seen it." From these experiences a single question emerged for Newman: "What was I to do? I had to make up my mind for myself, and others could not help me. I determined to be guided, not by my imagination, but by my reason."¹¹

With the Monophysite ghost and the Augustinian echo in the summer of 1839, Newman began a new stage of his life's journey, a cognitive conversion of content regarding the identity of the catholic church. This cognitive conversion constituted a key dimension of the multiyear process that culminated with Newman moving in 1845 from the Anglican Church to the Roman Church, the move commonly called his "conversion." As important

⁹ Ibid. 95, 104.

¹⁰ Ibid. 106, 107.

¹¹ Ibid. 107, 108.

as this cognitive conversion was for Newman, it was only one part of a long and grueling process. For beyond (1) grasping a *new intellectual view* of the true church in the abstract, Newman had to (2) struggle toward an existential application of this new view *to himself*, and finally (3) wrestle with the moral imperative to *decide to act* on this new ecclesial self-understanding. All this would take much time and anguish.

Although Newman had a sharp appreciation of the importance of the imagination, the *Apologia's* account of his long journey reads more like a legal brief than like a spiritual autobiography. Newman wrote it as a history of his *opinions*, and thus stressed reason more than imagination and feeling. Not only do imagination and feeling get short shrift, but the mention they do get is often negative in relation to reason. So, although Newman had expanded his understanding of reason beyond the narrow syllogistic model of rationalism,¹² he still saw reason over against imagination and feeling, which were not to be trusted. He wanted to follow reason.

In the *Apologia* Newman presented the nature of his conversion in a way that reflects his characterization of the Anglican view of "Truth" as "entirely objective and detached." There was, he wrote, "a contrariety of claims between the Roman and Anglican religions [on the Faith and the Church], and the history of my conversion is simply the process of working it out to a solution."¹³ Although he had had some latent notion of unrest and a sense of being on a journey for a number of years (he mentions 1829 and 1833), intellectually the conversion process began, Newman tells us, in the summer of 1839 when he saw himself reflected as Monophysite and later repeatedly heard the ringing of Augustine's "Securus judicat orbis terrarum." But, despite his misgivings about the Anglican Church's status, he still had serious problems with the Roman Church, so he carried on with the Tractarian cause, and even published *Tract 90* asserting the validity of a catholic interpretation of the Anglican Thirty-nine Articles.

When recounting the experiences of 1839 in the *Apologia*, Newman portrayed the Monophysite episode as a "doubt" about "the tenableness of Anglicanism." He characterized the Augustinian quotation as a powerfully vivid "impression" on his imagination, comparing it with Augustine's own "tolle, lege, tolle, lege." He had to reflect on it, he writes, "to determine its logical value, and its bearing upon [his] duty." But his immediate reaction to the "dreadful misgiving" arising from these experiences was a feeling of "dismay and disgust." Nevertheless, as I have noted, Newman was "determined to be guided, not by [his] imagination, but by [his] reason." As a

¹² See Newman on faith and reason in his *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford between A.D. 1826 and 1843*, intro. Mary Katherine Tillman (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 1997 [1843]).

¹³ *Apo.* 102.

result, by the time he wrote his *Apologia* he claimed: "Had it not been for this severe resolve, I should have been a Catholic sooner than I was." This is the point in the *Apologia*, as we have seen, at which Newman related his realization of the big question, "What was I to do?" Then he writes: "I had to make up my mind for myself, and others could not help me." The phrase "make up my mind" conveys Newman's intended stress on reason. The words "for myself" suggest an independence of mind, one of the structural characteristics of cognitive conversion. And the concluding "others could not help me" emphasizes this independence. We must wonder whether, 25 years after the fact, Newman overemphasized his independence as well as the role reason would eventually play in his conversion, and whether, perhaps, he underestimated the role "others" would play. In any case, his words present the issue as a theological dilemma calling for an intellectual solution.¹⁴

One instance of Newman's determination to think for himself relates to his recognition that he had uncritically accepted views from the great Anglican divines on the Roman Church, that he had taken their statements "for granted without weighing them for [himself]." In connection with his views on the Roman Church we also have his reason/imagination conflict about the Antichrist. In the *Apologia* Newman tells us that, just before his Monophysite experience in 1839, he "underwent a great change of opinion" about the vicar of Christ's stigmatization as the Antichrist, coming to believe that "such a calumny was almost one of the notes of the Church." But, he explains, "we cannot unmake ourselves or change our habits in a moment. Though my reason was convinced," he continues, "I did not throw off, for sometime after,—I could not have thrown off,—the unreasoning prejudices and suspicion, which I cherished about her at least by fits and starts, in spite of this conviction of my reason." Despite the meddling of "charitable Catholics," he was "determined upon taking [his] time." Newman's understanding of the reason/imagination relationship in this instance, where his reason preceded imagination, may offer a useful model for our later consideration of his long and difficult struggle of conversion to Rome. The major decision at the heart of such a conversion involves the whole person, affective imagination as well as reason, not just reason alone. Newman's resolve to be guided by reason certainly prolonged his journey, as he claims. However, by integrating existential factors involved in deconversion, I will later argue that, for at least the last two years of his journey, he had in place all the reasons he needed but lacked the sufficient support

¹⁴ Ibid. 104, 107, 108.

of his affective imagination as well as the pressure of external events necessary to motivate his difficult decision.¹⁵

NEWMAN'S ANGLICAN DEATHBED

At the beginning of the *Apologia's* penultimate chapter, Newman famously writes: "From the end of 1841, I was on my death-bed, as regards my membership with the Anglican Church, though at the time I became aware of it only by degrees." At a deathbed, he says, "the end is foreseen"; it is only "a matter of time." Between July and November 1841 Newman had received the now famous "three blows" that broke him. First, while working quietly in Littlemore on a translation of St. Athanasius, his ghost returned. This time he found clearly in the Arians an even bolder version of what he had earlier discovered in the Monophysites: "the truth lay, not with the *Via Media*, but with what was called 'the extreme party'"—with Rome. The second blow was political. Bishops began condemning the assertively catholic *Tract 90*, which had appeared in February. The third blow, which "finally shattered" Newman's faith in the Church of England, was the installation of an Anglican bishop in Jerusalem. A joint venture with Protestant Prussia, this new bishopric was exactly the kind of Protestantizing of the Anglican Church he feared. This was "the beginning of the end." Despite all this, for the next two years, until his 1843 resignation from St. Mary's, he "never contemplated leaving the Church of England (though he "expected or intended gradually to fall back into Lay Communion") because he "could not go to Rome, while she suffered [inappropriate] honours to be paid to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints."¹⁶

Though the end may be foreseen, the wait can be excruciating. Not all of Newman's younger allies in this phase of the Tractarian Movement appreciated that "great acts take time," as he put it in the *Apologia*. Many urged him on with strong logical arguments. But Newman was not impressed by "paper logic," because "there is a great difference between a conclusion in the abstract and a conclusion in the concrete." He quoted St. Ambrose's maxim, "Non in dialecticâ complacuit Deo salvum facere populum suum" ("Not by logic was God pleased to save his people"). Newman was not "carried" on by logic, he says, anymore than the weather is changed by "the quicksilver in the barometer." Change is complex. "Pass a number of years," he said, "and I find my mind in a new place; how?" Clearly, for Newman, it is not by abstract logic. "It is the concrete being that reasons; . . . the whole man moves; paper logic is but the record of it." Thinking back to the Oriel common room, he said, "One is not at all pleased

¹⁵ Ibid. 111, 110, 114.

¹⁶ Ibid. 133, 126, 132, 134.

when poetry, or eloquence, or devotion, is considered as if chiefly intended to feed syllogisms.” He summed up his view of logic and his circumstances in one classic sentence with a characteristic analogy. First he made his point: “All the logic in the world would not have made me move faster towards Rome than I did”; then the image: “as well might you say that I have arrived at the end of my journey, because I see the village church before me, as venture to assert that the miles, over which my soul had to pass before it got to Rome, could be annihilated, even though I had been in possession of some far clearer view than I then had, that Rome was my ultimate destination.” So, one thing at least seems clear: though Newman wished to go by reason, it was not the shallow reason of abstract logic, but the deep reason of the full, concrete person. Just how this deep reason is related to affective imagination remains to be seen.¹⁷

In a “state of serious doubt” about the Anglican Church, Newman resigned his St. Mary’s position in September 1843, retiring into lay communion at Littlemore as an Anglican. Although he had a “probable prospect” of turning to Rome some day, he could not do it while he thought what he did of “the devotions she sanctioned to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints.” Because he could not know what would come of his doubt, he did not give up his Oriel fellowship at that point.¹⁸

CERTITUDE AND PROBABILITY

Over against his doubt, Newman sought certitude, which he understood “as the consequence . . . of the accumulative force of certain given reasons which, taken one by one, were only probabilities.” In the *Apologia*, speaking about himself in 1843–1844, Newman asserted: “that I believed in a God on a ground of probability, that I believed in Christianity on a probability, and that I believed in Catholicism on a probability,” and, he continued, “that these three grounds of probability, distinct from each other of course in subject matter, were still all of them one and the same in nature of proof, as being probabilities—probabilities of a special kind, a cumulative, a transcendent probability but still probability.” Unlike the “rigid demonstration” of mathematical certitude, in religious inquiry we “arrive at certitude by accumulated probabilities,” a certitude which, with God’s help, “rises higher than the logical force of our conclusions.”¹⁹

At this point in the *Apologia*, Newman distinguished between opinion and conviction. By 1843, Newman stated clearly, his religious opinions had changed: “On the one hand I came gradually to see that the Anglican

¹⁷ Ibid. 152, 153.

¹⁹ Ibid. 180, 181.

¹⁸ Ibid. 167, 194.

Church was formally in the wrong, on the other that the Church of Rome was formally in the right"; furthermore, he saw, "that no valid reasons could be assigned for continuing in the Anglican, and again that no valid objections could be taken to joining the Roman." Thus he added: "I had nothing more to learn; what still remained for my conversion, was, not further change of opinion, but to change opinion itself into the clearness and firmness of intellectual conviction."²⁰

By "intellectual conviction" here Newman clearly meant certitude. For, after going on to explain the two practical steps he took in 1843—the retraction of his hard statements against the Roman Church and the resignation of his St. Mary's position—he immediately acknowledged: "I had one final advance of mind to accomplish, and one final step to take," to wit: "That further advance of mind was . . . to be able honestly to say that I was *certain* of the conclusions at which I had already arrived." Finally, based on this certitude, "That further step, imperative when such certitude was attained, was my *submission* to the Catholic Church." But at this point in the *Apologia* Newman defined certitude not as "accumulated probabilities," but as a "reflex action; it is to know that one knows." In 1843 he was not near certitude, and did not reach it, he claimed, "till close upon" his reception into the Catholic Church. He was in a state of painful doubt, in which he felt he could not continue. In the *Apologia* he describes his difficulty plainly. "I had been deceived greatly once; how could I be sure that I was not deceived a second time?" Again: "I thought myself right then; how was I to be certain that I was right now?" And again, with even greater intensity: "How many years had I thought myself sure of what I now rejected? how could I ever again have confidence in myself?" He repeats his understanding of certitude: "To be certain is to know that one knows"; and then poses the pointed question: "what inward test had I, that I should not change again, after that I had become a Catholic?" He realized that his misgivings needed a limit: "I must do my best and then leave it to a higher Power to prosper it." So, in late 1844 he resolved to write an essay on doctrinal development; and "if, at the end of it, [his] convictions in favour of the Roman Church were not weaker, of taking the necessary steps for admission into her fold." He would resolve what he regarded as an intellectual problem by turning to an intellectual means, by writing an essay. And his "test" would not be that his convictions become stronger, simply "not weaker."²¹

Newman was searching for certitude while in a terribly troubled state. In a letter to a supportive friend (November 16, 1844), he stated his "para-

²⁰ Ibid. 181.

²¹ Ibid. 194, 195, 206, 207. See John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1949 [1845]).

mount reason for contemplating a change": "my deep, unvarying conviction that our Church is in schism, and that my salvation depends on my joining the Church of Rome." And this "conviction remains firm under all circumstances, in all frames of mind." Added to this conviction was the growing "most serious feeling" that the reasons for his Anglo-Catholic belief "must lead [him] to believe more, and that not to believe more is to fall back into scepticism." But this firm, deep, unvarying conviction was not enough. He was held back by a fear that he was "under a delusion." And his state of mind is all the more troubled when he thought of how much he would be giving up in such a change, of "sacrifices irreparable, not only from [his] age, when people hate changing, but from [his] especial love of old associations and the pleasures of memory." On the other hand, he had nothing in human terms to attract him: "no visions whatever of hope, no schemes of action," and, perhaps most importantly, "no existing sympathies with Roman Catholics"; he knew no Roman Catholics, he wrote, and did not like what he heard of them. Humanly speaking, he was losing everything dear to him, and gaining nothing. He was not "conscious of any feeling, enthusiastic or heroic, of pleasure in the sacrifice"; he had no external affective support for the decision that confronted him.²²

CONSCIENCE AND DUTY

At this point in the *Apologia* Newman also quotes from a series of letters he wrote to Maria Giberne at the end of 1844 and during the first half of 1845. In the first of these letters (November 7, 1844) Newman seems ambivalent. He begins: "I am still where I was; I am not moving." Unlike many others, he says, he does not think a move is "either suitable or likely." But then, in the very next sentence, he says, "I have very little reason to doubt about the issue of things, but the when and the how are known" only to God. Here, again, he stresses that he has "a great dread of going by [his] own feelings, lest they should mislead [him]." He notes the great force of the opinions and feelings about him that exist "on every side and among all parties." Still, "by one's sense of duty one must go; but external facts support one in doing so." Two months later (January 8, 1845) after noting the unsatisfactory state of the Roman Catholics, Newman asserted: "This I am sure of, that nothing but a simple, direct call of duty is a warrant for anyone leaving our Church." No attraction to the Roman Church, no repulsion for the Anglican counts. "The simple question is," he insisted, "Can *I* (it is personal, not whether another, but can *I*) be saved in the English Church? am *I* in safety, were I to die to-night? Is it a mortal sin in *me*, not joining another communion?" Clearly, Newman was now in the radical

²² *Apo.* 207, 208.

realm of personal conscience. And less than three months later (March 30, 1845) he explicitly referred to conscience as he recast his dilemma once more: "My own convictions are as strong as I suppose they can become: only it is so difficult to know whether it is a call of *reason* or of conscience. I cannot make out, if I am impelled by what seems *clear*, or by a sense of *duty*." He stressed "how painful this doubt is," and how he was waiting, "hoping for light," though he realized he had "no right to wait for ever for this." Surprisingly, perhaps, he added that he "should attend to any new feelings" he might have as a result of the prayers of his friends. And then he referred to his move as practically a foregone conclusion, indicating that he probably will not last, as he had hoped, until the summer of 1846, seven years from his first convictions, but intended to give up his Oriel fellowship in October and then, before Christmas, publish an explanation of his move. In fact, his "difficulties so cleared away" as he worked on his essay that he "resolved to be received" before finishing it.²³

Reflecting on his move to the Roman Catholic Church in his *Apologia*, Newman attested that he had no "trouble about receiving those additional [Roman] articles," like transubstantiation, as soon as he believed, upon his conversion, that "the Roman Catholic Church was the oracle of God." He acknowledged "intellectual difficulties," but asserted, famously, that "Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt." Those "additional articles" notwithstanding, Newman summed up the effect of his move to Rome in the rather low-key terms of relief: "I was not conscious to myself, on my conversion, of any change, intellectual or moral, wrought in my mind. I was not conscious of firmer faith in the fundamental truths of Revelation, or of more self-command; I had not more fervour; but it was like coming into port after a rough sea."²⁴

Newman had been on a "rough sea" from the summer of 1839 until October 9, 1845. During those six years he had moved from his first doubt about the "tenableness of Anglicanism" to his final decision to be received into the Roman Catholic Church. In his contemporaneous letters and in his retrospective *Apologia*, Newman explained those years of struggle as an intellectual process of striving for certitude. He knew the process would be lengthy, but he was determined to be guided by reason, not by affective imagination. He realized that he had to make up his own mind for himself, but he was also aware that others—especially his younger colleagues—had influence on him, and that whatever he finally did would influence many others.²⁵

Conversion may be a rather private and compartmentalized event for

²³ Ibid. 208, 209, 210, 212.

²⁴ Ibid. 216, 217.

²⁵ Ibid. 104; see 147, 121, 134, 160–61, 193, 197.

some people, but not for Newman. However much he would have preferred privacy during this deeply personal process, he was, in fact, in a fishbowl, with what must have seemed like the whole world watching him, taking notes, and expressing opinions. In addition to that social pressure, he also realized that what he characterized as an intellectual process would not be isolated in its consequences. Going over to Rome would not simply mean holding different religious opinions and attending a different church for Sunday services. It would mean that every aspect of his whole world would change: his Anglican career, colleagues, friends, even family relationships would be permanently lost. All this made for an incredibly complex and painful process, stretched out over years, and marked by confusion, ambivalence, and ambiguity. It is no wonder that contemporary commentators as well as later historians found much to criticize. To these I now turn.

THREE MORE BLOWS, AND MONASTIC DESIRE

Among Newman's critics, Frank Turner is the most recent historian to challenge Newman's account of his conversion process. Turner sees Newman's conversion less as the positive culmination of an intellectual and spiritual development than as the negative result of Newman's failure to effect a catholic transformation of the Anglican Church. He summarizes his view: "The entrance of Newman into the Roman Catholic Church itself was the collapse of a whole series of social and ecclesiastical relationships that had permitted him to remain in the English Church despite his sectarian tendencies." Indeed, "Newman delayed his decision to be received into the Roman Catholic Church for as long as possible, and in the end found that decision largely forced upon him."²⁶

Turner cites three external events of 1845 as a second set of sharp blows to Newman, "even more crushing to his situation in the English Church than the autobiographically more famous ones of 1841." The first of these blows was the failed attempt by the college heads, in February, to have *Tract 90* condemned by university convocation along with W. G. Ward's *The Ideal of a Christian Church*. Though Newman's friend R. W. Church, a proctor, vetoed the censure of *Tract 90*, the effort at condemnation was a clear sign to Newman that he was to be persecuted even in his Littlemore retreat. The second external blow came in June with the censure of Frederick Oakeley by the ecclesiastical Court of Arches. Oakeley, one of the newer, stronger Tractarians, who had stood with Ward, had then gone on to publicly claim the right to hold Roman doctrine while subscribing to the Anglican Thirty-nine Articles. Oakeley's position was more radical than

²⁶ Turner, *John Henry Newman* 6, 11, 21.

Newman's, but its repudiation could be understood as extending to Newman's more moderate position and the principles of *Tract 90*. In Turner's view, after the Oakeley decision the position that Newman and his followers "hoped to realize over time had become legally, if not necessarily theologically, untenable." Finally, in late September, a third event occurred that Turner thinks *may* have been another blow to Newman: the death of George Henry Law, the bishop of Bath and Wells, with the prospect of Oxford's Bishop Richard Bagot being named his successor. Though this transfer was not publicly announced until October 16, Turner considers it likely that it could have been known in Oxford early enough to have influenced Newman's decision "to enter the Roman Church when he did." Turner's point is that, as bishop of Oxford, Bagot had protected the Tractarians, and that Newman realized that any new bishop appointed to Oxford by Prime Minister Robert Peel would be less than favorable to the Tractarians. Maybe this prospect, according to Turner, was the sign to Newman that it was time to go while the going was, though never good, at least better than it was likely soon to become.²⁷

Beyond these three specific external events, however, there lies, in Turner's interpretation of Newman's conversion, one major reality: Newman's fundamental desire to live in a monastic community of celibate men, of devoted followers. In this account, Newman's move to Rome was finally precipitated by the conversions to Roman Catholicism of several of his younger Littlemore colleagues. Newman's desire to maintain his monastic community was so strong that he followed his younger colleagues in order to continue monastic life with them in the Roman Catholic Church. By going over to Rome, despite everything he did to keep them in the Anglican Church, his younger followers turned the tables in their relationship to him, and in the end the leader became the follower. Whatever validity this interpretation of his motivation may have, it does highlight how significant communities of unmarried men had been in his adult life—from the single tutors and students at Oriel to the celibate Tractarian colleagues at monastic Littlemore. As important as family, friends, and colleagues were to Newman, monastic celibacy—first Anglican, then Roman—was his priority, and finally Newman left the married John Keble and E. B. Pusey and followed the celibate John Dalgairns and others to Rome.²⁸

TRUTH IN AMBIGUITY

My purpose here is not to present Newman's conversion in black or white interpretations. I aim for a balanced interpretation, acknowledging

²⁷ Ibid. 529, 542, 548.

²⁸ Ibid. 622–23.

the interpersonal, social, and political context, while also recognizing the profoundly intellectual and spiritual reality of Newman's conversion. Truth here, as in most complex human realities, lies in ambiguity. My point is that one can understand the many years of misery and confusion Newman suffered before his conversion only if one appreciates the fully personal reality of his struggle. Though intellectual and spiritual, the struggle was anything but abstract and rarified. It was deeply embedded in the affective and imaginative dimensions of a very complex individual, and it was carried out in a highly complex social and political world. With that proviso stated, I now return to consider the course that, in retrospect, the author of the *Apologia* knew ended in Rome. However, to the Tractarian Newman it must have seemed less like a journey to a known destination with the aid of map and compass, and more like the stumbling steps of a lost person's groping through a thick forest on a dark night. By the 1840s Newman was lost in confusion; he knew what he wanted, but he did not trust himself to go for it; he knew he had been wrong before.

Newman's depiction of the half dozen years before his conversion to Rome, seen through his contemporaneous letters as well as his retrospective *Apologia*, is the story of an intellectual search for certitude about the true church. If he began negatively with doubts about the Anglican Church, before too long—determined to go by reason and not by affective imagination—he came positively to the opinion that the true church was the Roman Church. He held this opinion for much of this preconversion period. Yet it was only an opinion. He needed a clear and firm intellectual conviction. He remembered being deceived before when he had thought he was right. How could he be certain he was right now? What inward test could assure that he would not change again? He needed certitude, or, as he put it, he needed to know that he knew. Finally, his test took a negative form: he would work his way intellectually through the issue of doctrinal development, and if at the end of that task his favorable opinion of the Roman Church were not weaker, he would take the necessary steps to join it. He portrayed the entire ordeal as an intellectual process, a process guided by reason, seeking not only opinion but certitude.²⁹

THREE KEY PHASES

Newman understood himself as only seeking evidence to transform a hypothetical opinion into a definite judgment. But much of his language about certitude and degrees of conviction, as well as about affective imagination and conscience, suggests that his story needs further analysis. I will proceed in this analysis of Newman's last six years as an Anglican by

²⁹ *Apo.* 171, 181, 206, 207, 195.

delineating three two-year phases, each culminating in a significant internal and external event: (1) by late 1841, after enduring the “three blows,” he had affirmed his 1839 discovery that the *Via Media* was an “impossible idea” and had made plans to set up a community at Littlemore; (2) by late 1843 he had made a judgment of conscience that the Roman Catholic Communion is the church of the apostles and had resigned his St. Mary’s position; and (3) by late 1845 he had decided to act in accord with his judgment of conscience, and had given up his Oriel fellowship and made, as he put it, his submission to the Roman Catholic Church. In summary: following upon his Monophysite discovery in 1839, Newman made (1) a *theoretical judgment* of truth (1841), then (2) a *practical judgment of conscience* about that theoretical judgment’s personal rightness for himself (1843), and finally (3) a *decision* to act on that judgment of conscience (1845). Although Newman’s conversion is usually identified narrowly with his 1845 decision, here I will interpret it more broadly as spanning some six years, 1839 to 1845, highlighted by key moments, and culminating in the decision of October 1845. I will now examine each phase of this lengthy conversion more closely.

Reflection and Judgment

First, there was the initial discovery, leading to doubt. In the *Apologia* Newman began his conversion narrative with a simple, direct sentence: “The Long Vacation of 1839 began early.” But the events of the next six years triggered during that “Long Vacation” would be anything but simple and direct. In the course of his study of the Monophysites that summer, Newman for the first time experienced a doubt about “the tenableness of Anglicanism.” On top of that doubt, almost immediately came Augustine’s “*Securus judicat orbis terrarum*.” With that combination, “the theory of the *Via Media* was absolutely pulverized.” But, as powerful as the summer’s experiences had been, the thought that “The Church of Rome will be found right after all” soon vanished, and Newman’s “old convictions remained as before.” Or so it seemed; in fact, the doubt had been planted; Anglicanism would never again be the same for Newman. Newman mentions in the *Apologia* that for years he had had a latent notion that he was on a journey, that his “mind had not found its ultimate rest.” He cites the 1833 Mediterranean trip, and even an 1829 experience of being “led on by God’s hand blindly, not knowing whither He is taking me.” But in those years he had not distrusted his own convictions; now in 1839 he did. What was he to do? He realized he had to make up his mind for himself; and he was determined to go by reason, not imagination. He knew it would take time; meanwhile it would be business as usual, or so he hoped. But to Newman, however the externals may have appeared, business was anything

but usual, as, in deep intellectual transition, he became “very nearly a pure Protestant,” with no theology beyond his three propositions of 1833.³⁰

Publicly, Newman carried on the battle. *Tract 90* was published in February 1841, at which point, he notes in the *Apologia*, “I was indeed in prudence taking steps towards eventually withdrawing from St. Mary’s, and I was not confident about my permanent adhesion to the Anglican creed; but I was in no actual perplexity or trouble of mind.” In the following months there was “immense commotion,” but *Tract 90* was not condemned, and Newman thought he had weathered the storm. Then, in the summer, began the “three blows” of 1841. First it was the Monophysite ghost returning in Arian guise, and Newman’s realization that the truth lay not in the *Via Media* but in Rome. Then the bishops began their attack on *Tract 90*. Finally, there was the Jerusalem Bishopric affair, which “finally shattered” Newman’s faith in the Anglican Church. In his retrospect, this was the “beginning of the end”; it put him on his Anglican deathbed.³¹

A month after his conversion to Rome, Newman wrote to a critic about his allegiance to the basic Anglican principles of antiquity and apostolic succession, specifying three phases. “From the time I began to suspect their unsoundness,” he wrote, “I ceased to put them forward.” Later, “When I was fairly sure of their unsoundness, I gave up my Living.” Finally, “When I was fully confident that the Church of Rome was the only true Church, I joined her.” Again, Newman was portraying his journey in purely intellectual terms, but his specification of phases is suggestive for our analysis.³²

By the end of 1841, when he fell on his Anglican deathbed, Newman had completed the first of these three phases. He had moved from his initial 1839 suspicion to a theological judgment: the truth was in Rome, not in the *Via Media*. The *Via Media* had “disappeared for ever,” and a new, more subjective theory had taken its place: “the promised inward Presence of Christ with us in the Sacraments.” This intellectual move, drawn out over two full years, had not been easy. Theoretical judgments, even those seeming to involve little or no self-reference, can be difficult and protracted.³³

The process of reflective understanding preceding scientific judgment has recently been nicely characterized by the University of Toronto neurologist and geneticist Peter St. George-Hyslop: “We are aware of little bits of data as they come out that say, ‘Yes, it’s real,’ but not very strongly, so what you get is not really a eureka moment but something that is incremental. It starts out,” he says, “as ‘Uh-huh, but it’s probably a fluke,’ to

³⁰ Ibid. 104, 106, 107, 108, 109; see 44–51. The three points are: the principle of dogma, the sacramental system, and anti-Romanism.

³¹ Ibid. 124, 132, 133.

³² Ibid. 141.

³³ Ibid. 141, 142.

'Maybe it's not a fluke,' to 'This could be real, let me see what I can do to make it go away,' to 'Well, it seems pretty robust, but there are still problems,' to 'We've taken this as far as we can and we concede that there are many things to be done on this story, but before we do too much more it needs to be put in the hands of some other people, with totally different data sets and totally different ways of analyzing things, and see if they get the same results.'"³⁴ If we transpose that process from a team of scientists quietly working together in a laboratory to a single theologian pondering a question of intense self-interest, and working increasingly alone but under sharp public scrutiny, with no one else to turn to, we can begin to appreciate what Newman was facing during these two difficult years as he struggled toward judgment. And that was only the beginning.

If a pure, abstract intellectual judgment had been all he needed, Newman could have converted to Rome at the end of 1841. But, as we shall now see, much more was required. He had to move, in his words, from a "conclusion in the abstract" to a "conclusion in the concrete."³⁵

Discernment and Conscience

Having reached a theological judgment about the inadequacy of the basic Anglican principles and about the truth of Rome by the end of this first phase of relatively objective reflection, Newman entered what turned out to be a second two-year phase (1842–1843) of intense personal *discernment*: given his theological judgment that the Roman Church, not the Anglican, was the true church, what did that judgment mean for *him*, what should *he do* about it? This second phase moved the process from a more objective to a more subjective mode: now Newman was seeking not just the truth about the church, but the truth for him; he was struggling not just for a judgment of reason, but for a judgment of *conscience*. Conscience is the *self* struggling to discern what to do in a particular situation of moral value.³⁶ Judgments of conscience are thus first-person practical judgments aimed at action, and they carry a built-in moral demand: *this* is what *I must do* on pain of violating my very *self*. Judgments of conscience are therefore simultaneously both existential and practical; they involve the acting self as well as the world acted upon. Such judgments of conscience are acts of a "concrete being," as Newman would say, of a "whole man." Newman's

³⁴ Quoted in Sue Halpern, "The Gene Hunters," *New Yorker*, December 12, 2005, 92–93.

³⁵ *Apo.* 152.

³⁶ For an interpretation of the self as self-transcending, driven ultimately by and to God, see Walter E. Conn, *The Desiring Self* (New York: Paulist, 1998). In the present article I distinguish *reflection* leading to judgment, *discernment* leading to judgment of conscience, and *deliberation* leading to decision.

theological judgment of reason against the Anglican principles and for the truth of Rome constituted a cognitive conversion of content. But because it was only an abstract, intellectual judgment without a personal, practical *terminus ad quem*, it left him hanging existentially in transitional perplexity and confusion, not knowing what to *do*. Now he needed to move to a judgment of conscience in order to establish a concrete personal objective, to set up the possibility of a positive, decisive *act*.

In this second phase, Newman moved into the Littlemore community with younger members of the Movement, engaged in correspondence with Roman Catholic Charles Russell, retracted his anti-Roman statements, and published his *University Sermons*, including his final St. Mary's sermon on doctrinal development, preached in February 1843. That year, as one agonizing month followed another, he finally, personally and existentially, reached the explicit and positive judgment that the Church of Rome was the church of the apostles, the catholic church, and that the Anglican Church, because it was not in communion with Rome, was not part of the catholic church.³⁷ Finally, after months and months of personal discernment, the catholic-minded Newman acknowledged that the Roman Church was the only and necessary alternative to the Anglican Church he now perceived as theologically bankrupt. Despite Rome's many problems, he now saw himself with the "extreme party." Whether he fully realized it at that point or not, this judgment was a judgment of conscience that required him to join the Roman Catholic Church. But this judgment requiring a move to Rome would have to be executed by a *decision*. And this decision, involving every dimension of Newman's being and every aspect of his situation, was so excruciatingly difficult that it would require another two years, two years of agonizing *deliberation*. All he could bring himself to in 1843 was the resignation from his St. Mary's position, which he did on September 7, after one member of the Littlemore community, William Lockhart, went over to Rome.

Deliberation and Decision

Regarding the third two-year phase of his conversion's six painful years, Newman attested in the *Apologia* that what he needed was greater intellectual conviction, in a word, certitude. This view fits well with Newman's intellectual portrayal of his conversion as a search for a solution to a controversy. In this perspective, he had found the solution by the autumn of 1843; now he had to become certain of it. But if certitude is, as Newman put it, knowing that one knows, he would be facing an impossible quest. If certitude is, on his account of it, a second judgment that a first judgment is

³⁷ *Apo.* 200.

correct, he would be involved in an endless series of judgments. I am suggesting a different portrayal of this phase of his conversion. On my account of it, by the autumn of 1843 Newman had reached as much certitude as there was to be reached: he knew what he must do. The cognitional basis of my account is that certitude is not a second judgment, but a quality of a first judgment. To use Newman's language of probability, my point is that certitude is a sufficiently high degree of probability, a probability intrinsic to the first judgment itself. Seeking certitude in a separate judgment is not only fruitless but encourages indecision and even, in the extreme, debilitating scrupulosity. But, if Newman knew what he had to do, he also knew how difficult it would be, and that was the rub. He was right in thinking that "great acts take time."³⁸ The further time he needed, however, was not for greater certitude, but for sufficient motivation. He needed time to convince himself to decide to do what he knew he must do. And because the obstacles he had to overcome in this course of *deliberation* were great, it is not difficult to understand why it took him the better part of two years to reach a decision. Even a clear, strong judgment of conscience that a change is right and necessary must overcome the existential drag of inertia working against deconversion. Deconversion is often extremely difficult. Even when one's present world is problematic, it is still familiar and, in many ways, comfortable. Leaving it for a new, unknown, strange world can be a frightening prospect.

Because Newman was by nature an intellectual, focused in the *Apologia* on his "religious opinions," it is understandable that he paid little attention to noncognitive, existential obstacles in recounting his conversion. For the same reason it is not surprising that he chose to bring things to a head by writing his *Essay* on development, rehearsing once again a position he had been establishing for several years. He would resolve what he regarded as an intellectual problem with an intellectual argument. But the existential obstacles are exactly what must be understood if one is to appreciate the extremely difficult course of Newman's conversion to the Roman Church, especially its last two-year phase of deliberation. Newman was all too painfully aware of the losses a move to Rome would entail.

First, there was Newman's family. Having already lost his beloved youngest sister Mary and his parents to death, as well as his brothers to intolerance, he was now overwhelmed at the prospect of losing his sisters Harriett and Jemima. Harriett was already alienated by his religious views, and Jemima upset by his resignation from St. Mary's. They could not be expected to understand a move to Rome; he could lose both for good.

Second, there were Newman's friends, who were especially important to

³⁸ Ibid. 153.

him. He had already lost Hurrell Froude, and recently John Bowden, to death. He knew a move to Rome would cut him off from Keble and Pusey and his other Anglican friends and Tractarian colleagues, excepting only those who were going over themselves. Such a loss would be devastating. And with his friends and colleagues, he would also be losing Oxford. He was quintessentially an Oxford man, and now that identity would be gone forever. At every crucial point in his adult life Newman had been influenced by one group or another of his Oxford friends. To a significant degree the very meaning of his self was rooted in his friendships, his independent stances notwithstanding. Could he bear losing them?

Finally, there was the Anglican Church itself, *the* Church of England, the church into which Newman was born. From boyhood, he had known no other. He loved the Anglican Church, and had devoted his life to it. It may be impossible for anyone else to appreciate how much it meant to him. For all his adult years, the Anglican Church had been his whole life. Everything he wrote, everything he did, was for this church. Despite all the difficulty and grief he had experienced in it, it was his church. To leave it was almost unthinkable, but that was what he now faced; that was what he now knew he must do.

Humanly speaking, the prospect of these losses of family, friends, university, and church was intolerable for Newman. And, again, humanly speaking, there was nothing to attract him to the Roman Church. He knew little of it, and what he did know was anything but attractive. Newman was an Anglican, an Englishman through and through, and to him everything about the Roman Catholic Church was “foreign,” one of a 19th-century Englishman’s strongest epithets. Indeed, this was a church despised by Englishmen, a church whose pope Newman himself had thought was the antichrist. And the Roman Church itself was not enjoying worldly power and glory at this point. Only faith could bring Newman to the point of seriously considering this church, yet not even faith could erase the painful losses joining it would inflict on him. Because the true church meant salvation to him, such a dreadful decision was rending his self, his very being, and for a while it left him immobile. It would probably have given Newman little consolation had he known that his fellow Englishman Charles Darwin was already well into a painful two *decade* process of deliberation about publishing his own very different but not unrelated ideas on development. Anticipating great controversy and division, Darwin was finally able to end his own deliberation only with the help of an external event, the threat of a competitor’s imminent publication.

Like Darwin or anyone else in such an unbearable situation, Newman needed a push, or, as he might say, an external sign. And, just as the obstacles to his deconversion were centered in key aspects of his Anglican life—family, Oxford friends, the church itself, so too the push to decon-

version came from other aspects of his Anglican life. As we have seen, this push, in Turner's view, came in the form of a second set of three external blows in 1845 and, most importantly, in Newman's fundamental desire for monastic life. The three blows—the college heads' attempt in February to have *Tract 90* condemned by convocation, the censure of Oakeley by the Court of Arches in June, and perhaps the prospect in September of a new, less supportive bishop in Oxford—functioned principally as clear signs to Newman that he had finally lost the political battle for a catholic form of Christianity within the Anglican Church. The twelve-year Tractarian campaign for catholic faith in the Church of England was over, dead. If Newman did not know that before, he knew it now. His Anglican Church would not join Rome, and it would not sanction catholic life within its walls. Newman did not want to leave his beloved church, but in 1845 it became all too evident that his church had no room for him. Deconversion was becoming an increasingly realistic possibility.

Finally, there was Newman's desire for monastic life—really as much a pull as a push. Since 1842 he had had Littlemore, a community of young celibate men of strong catholic leaning living on a monastic model. But now that community was breaking up, with some members following Lockhart to the Roman Catholic Church. Littlemore had been Newman's last best hope for catholic life within the Anglican Church. Now even that hope was disappearing. Although a move to Rome would entail severe losses, including his great friends from the early years of the Tractarian Movement, not moving would mean the loss of these younger members of his monastic community, and the community itself. Thus the very departure of these converts also pulled Newman toward Rome. Though impetuous to his cautious eye, these younger men would in fact provide him a known, welcoming social place in an otherwise mostly unknown and perhaps not so friendly Roman Church. In these converts he could anticipate in the Roman Church a continuation of his monastic community, a community not only of celibate men, but of young men devoted to him. In these converting companions Newman could *imagine* a place for himself in the Roman Catholic Church; he could *feel* personal support for a final step into the unknown. He now had the affective-imaginative strength to follow through and act on his judgment of conscience. One can only guess—we cannot know—what Newman would have done absent the push of the 1845 blows or the pull of his younger converting colleagues. But, in human terms, without these influences it is difficult to imagine him going over to Rome. As he would put it, external facts were supporting his sense of duty.³⁹ To be clear on this basic point: although Turner sees the three blows of 1845

³⁹ Ibid. 209.

and the desire for monastic life as motivating Newman's conversion to the Roman Church, I am interpreting them rather as pushing Newman's de-conversion from the Anglican Church. Newman clearly had other positive intellectual and spiritual reasons motivating his conversion to Rome.

CONCLUSION

So, while Newman was writing his intellectual justification of his conversion through the months of 1845, various existential factors jointly came to a head, giving him the impetus he needed to bring his deliberation process to a decision. For Newman, conversion to the Roman Catholic Church was fundamentally a matter of personal salvation. But, like the rest of humankind, he had mixed motives. The ambiguity of his conversion raised many questions among his contemporary and later critics. Still, to acknowledge that his conversion, like all others, was embedded in a matrix of existential human factors does not diminish or in any way detract from its profound spiritual authenticity. In the midst of his long struggle to bring the Anglican Church to a recognition of its catholic spirit, Newman by late 1841 had come to the clear acknowledgement, in an *abstract theological judgment*, that the true catholic church was the Roman, not the Anglican. By the end of 1843, after two years of personal discernment, he then broke through the murky confusion of his own situation and came to the existential realization, in a *concrete judgment of conscience*, that *he* must join the Roman Catholic Church, that his salvation depended on converting to it. As difficult as it had been to reach that judgment, he then had to bring himself to execute it. Finally, after two more years submerged in excruciating separation-angst, he was able—with the various forms of push and pull I have noted—to overcome the painful obstacles of his personal situation and terminate his deliberation process in a definitive *decision* to leave the Anglican Church (deconversion) and to join the Roman Catholic Church (conversion)—to seek, as he put it, “admission into the One Fold of Christ.”⁴⁰

Newman had been determined to be guided by reason, not by imagination. He thought he needed greater conviction, certitude. In fact, all along he had been guided by reason, and, at least by 1843, he had as much certitude as one can have in personal value judgments. He did not need, and could not have had, more certitude. What he needed, rather, was the strength of affective imagination to effect the decision his conscience was demanding. Rather than guard against imagination by reason, he needed to be moved by it. He needed to *feel* free to leave everything in his life connected with the Anglican Church, and to *imagine* his way forward into

⁴⁰ Ibid. 213.

the unknown of the Roman Church. By October 1845 he felt he could imagine that way.

Thus the six-year course of Newman's conversion, which began with a seed of doubt about "the tenableness of Anglicanism" (1839), and then took root in two complementary judgments on the truth of the Roman Church (1841), and his duty in conscience to join it (1843), ended in a decision (1845) arrived at by a process of deliberation that reached far deeper into the strata of his self than suggested by his intellectual portrayal of "the history of [his] conversion [as] simply the process of working [the controversy about the true church] out to a solution."⁴¹ Intellectually Newman believed in change, as he affirmed in his *Essay* on development. At the same time, by temperament he was a cautious man; he had a great deal to lose, and he knew he had been wrong before. These two factors combined to produce the major change of ecclesial conversion, but only after six painful years of reflection, discernment, and deliberation. Though rooted in an intellectual *judgment*, Newman's conversion is best understood as a moral (religious) *decision* responding to a judgment of personal *conscience*.

⁴¹ Ibid. 102.