

Gallicanism at Maynooth: Archbishop Cullen and the Royal Visitation of 1853

PATRICK J. CORISH

By the middle of the nineteenth century it had become clear that far-reaching changes were under way within the Catholic Church. At their root was the fact that the Gallican structures of the church of the *ancien régime* had been so shaken by the events of the French revolutionary era that they were unable to recover. In consequence, Catholics of even the most Gallican traditions began to regard the papacy in quite a new way, to look across the Alps, to adopt the outlook that came to be known as 'ultramontanism'. This development is already marked with Pope Gregory XVI (1831-46). It became the established norm in the pontificate of his successor, Pius IX (1846-78).

At this time of change there were inevitably many people who proclaimed themselves 'ultramontanes' without being sure what precisely 'ultramontanism' was. In trying to grasp their state of mind it may help to attempt to bring into focus the long-standing 'Gallican' tradition to which 'ultramontanism' was the reaction. The classical statement of Gallicanism is in the Four Articles drawn up by the assembly of the French Clergy in 1682. They may be summarised as follows:

1. The Pope has received only spiritual authority from God. In secular matters kings and princes are in no way subject to his authority;
2. The Pope's authority is limited by that of a general council, in the terms laid down at the council of Constance (1414-18);
3. The exercise of papal authority must be in accordance with canon law, and specifically the ancient established 'liberties of the Gallican church';
4. The Pope's doctrinal authority is unique and universal, but not final unless confirmed by the consent of the universal church.

The conflict between France and the papacy which arose from this declaration was pragmatically resolved in 1693. The Pope agreed to grant institution to bishops on condition that they expressed regret for having subscribed to the Articles of 1682. The king for his part agreed not to enforce them on the French church. The crucial

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question, whether the doctrine of the Articles was true or false, was discreetly shelved. In any case, the king did not keep his promise, and Gallicanism continued to be accepted in France, and widely among Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland because of French influence. The large grey areas in the Gallican creed allowed France to remain Roman Catholic even though the logical conclusion of Gallicanism was schism. No occasion arose which made schism an attractive choice for the French monarchy of the *ancien régime*. However, when this monarchy fell Gallicanism lost its most effective, and, as things turned out, its indispensable support.

What replaced it was 'ultramontanism'. Here too there were ambiguities. The central doctrines, of papal primacy and infallibility, were steadily advancing in acceptability, though perhaps more slowly in clarity, for a long time before their formal definition in 1870. There was considerably more ambiguity in regard to papal temporal power. Many Catholics believed that the Pope's spiritual authority depended on the maintenance of the historic frontiers of the papal states, because of a mixture of political conservatism and fears arising from the insistence by many of the papacy's opponents that the overthrow of the papal states was only the prelude to the overthrow of the papacy itself. Many who were not Catholics feared that the claim to temporal power might still include a claim to authority in the temporal and civil affairs of the world at large. This fear was real enough to trouble statesmen like Bismarck and Gladstone after the definitions of 1870.

Before the French revolution most of the Irish Catholic clergy were receiving their theological education in France, and practically all the remainder in lands heavily influenced by Gallican ideas. It was estimated that out of a total of 478 places in the continental seminaries 348 were in France, 114 in other more or less 'Gallican' countries and only sixteen in Rome.¹ When revolutionary developments closed the continental colleges a coincidence of interests between the government and the Irish Catholic bishops led to the foundation of Maynooth. Its first staff-members were *émigré* clergy, some of them French, some Irish. All, both French and Irish, inevitably brought with them a strong leavening of Gallican ideas.

The fact that the bishops and the government had worked together in the foundation of Maynooth meant that its constitution was satisfactory to neither party. In the act of parliament founding the college (35 Geo. III, c. 21) power of government was placed in the hands of a group named as trustees, consisting of five public officials (all members of the Church of Ireland), six Catholic laymen, and eleven Catholic ecclesiastics. An amending act of 1800 (40 Geo. III, c. 85) declared that these public officials were to cease to be trustees, but they remained as official visitors, together with one Catholic layman and the Catholic archbishops of Armagh and Dublin. It was provided that 'in all matters which relate to the exercise, doctrine and

1. J. Healy, *Maynooth College: its Centenary History* (Dublin, 1895), p. 696.

discipline of the Roman Catholic religion' visitorial power was to be exercised exclusively by 'such of the said visitors as are or shall be of the Roman Catholic religion', though in the presence of the others 'if they, or any of them, shall think proper to attend'. The bishops could hardly accept this as fully satisfactory in an institution which, after a brief experiment with a lay college, became in 1817 exclusively an ecclesiastical seminary. The situation was not essentially altered by further amending legislation in 1845 (8 & 9 Vict., c. 25) which named as visitors one Catholic layman and the Catholic archbishops of Armagh and Dublin, 'together with such five other persons as her majesty shall by warrant under the sign manual nominate and appoint'. Visitorial power in religious matters was to be confined to the Catholic visitors, but for fairly valid reasons of political expediency Protestant visitors continued to be nominated (there were three in 1853).² The situation therefore was that a Catholic ecclesiastical seminary had a governing body not exclusively episcopal and visitors who were not exclusively Catholic. It had to account annually to the treasury for the grant from public funds by which it was generously financed and on which it was almost altogether dependent.

At mid-century the Established Church felt threatened from many quarters, in England as well as in Ireland. A demand that all churches should be voluntary bodies and that there should be an end to all establishments was taking political shape. The Oxford Movement had shown that the Established Church was vulnerable to catholicism. In England, catholicism impinged at the popular level through the Irish — rough and strange in the slums of the English cities, and rougher and stranger at home, where they had embarked on a new round of the interminable Irish question. Widespread resentment could and did lead to 'no popery' outbursts that no responsible politician could ignore, especially at a time when the confusion of parties made it very hard indeed to muster a stable majority in the House of Commons.

The Maynooth Bill of 1845 had led to serious 'no popery' demonstrations, but two events in 1850 raised the level to hysteria. In Ireland, Paul Cullen arrived from Rome as archbishop of Armagh, empowered as papal legate to convene a national synod. In England, the Catholic hierarchy was restored, with a cardinal, Nicholas Wiseman, at its head. Wiseman's indiscreet pastoral fanned the flames, but in themselves these two appointments represented a 'papal aggression' unequalled since the days of Wolsey. Lord John Russell's Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, passed by a huge majority, may not have been the wisest response, but some response was a political necessity. Though this legislation never had any practical effect, it was by no means clear at the time that it would not. It looked even more ominous in Ireland than in England, where the Catholic succession to the historic sees had been maintained, and where it also

2. So Cullen (A.P.F., C.P. 158, ff 129v-130v); see also *Report*, p. 27.

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The Established Church felt threatened from many quarters as well as in Ireland. A demand that all churches should be under the same authority and that there should be an end to all special privileges was taking political shape. The Oxford Movement had shown that the Established Church was vulnerable to Catholicism. In Ireland Catholicism impinged at the popular level through the Irish emigration in the slums of the English cities, and rougher conditions at home, where they had embarked on a new round of the Irish question. Widespread resentment could and did erupt in 'outbursts' that no responsible politician could ignore at a time when the confusion of parties made it very difficult to muster a stable majority in the House of Commons. The Catholic Bill of 1845 had led to serious 'no popery' outbreaks. Two events in 1850 raised the level to hysteria. In 1850 Cullen arrived from Rome as archbishop of Armagh, and the papal legate to convene a national synod. In England, the hierarchy was restored, with a cardinal, Nicholas Wiseman as head. Wiseman's indiscreet pastoral fanned the flames. These two appointments represented a change unequalled since the days of Wolsey. Lord John Russell's Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, passed by a huge majority, may have had the wisest response, but some response was a political necessity. This legislation never had any practical effect, it was clear at the time that it would not. It looked even more inhumane in Ireland than in England, where the Catholic episcopal sees had been maintained, and where it also

called into question Archbishop Cullen's authority to have convened the synod of Thurles as papal legate.

Antipapalism sought out many targets: monasteries and convents were the obvious ones. Maynooth, however, was the most obvious of all, maintained as it was by the public funds and producing as it did the type of popish priest now prominent in the political leadership of the turbulent Catholic Irish (in 1853 the president of Maynooth estimated that in consequence of the increased grant of 1845 the proportion of Irish diocesan clergy educated in the college had risen from one in two to two in three).³ Public opinion demanded that the grant be withdrawn or that what really went on in Maynooth should be held up to the light of day.

Derby's conservative cabinet, formed on 23 February 1852 after the fall of Russell's government, was under heavy pressure from its more extreme supporters to discontinue the Maynooth grant. This it resisted, but to hold its slender majority it accepted a motion for a select committee of enquiry, managing however to spin out the debate to the end of the session by repeated adjournments.⁴ A general election in July gave Derby no secure majority. He was defeated on the budget proposals on 17 December. The new government was a coalition of Whigs, Peelites and Radicals with the earl of Aberdeen as prime minister.

Aberdeen too faced demands for action on Maynooth. He had to take some action, for his government might well fall on the issue. He consulted the Irish M.P., William Monsell, who agreed that the demand for an enquiry could not be resisted, but advised that it be by royal commission rather than by a select committee. Aberdeen thought this a reasonable compromise, especially as royal commissions had been appointed on 31 August 1850 to enquire into the universities of Oxford and Cambridge,⁵ and on 14 April 1851 to enquire into the university of Dublin. He asked Monsell to consult Cullen, since 3 May 1852 archbishop of Dublin, holding out hopes of an increased grant and some improvements in the system. Monsell thought the grant already sufficient, as in fact it was.⁶ Whatever Cullen may have thought of the inducements held out by Aberdeen, he was coming to the decision that it was necessary to work with him.⁷ The warrant for the royal commission on Maynooth was issued on 19 September 1853. It held forty meetings in all, the first set between 20 September and 26 October 1853, and a second between 3 and 11 January 1854. Its warrant was extended on 7 September 1854, as it had not completed its report. This was done at a third set

3. *Report*, p. 35; *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 223.

4. J. H. Whyte, *The Independent Irish Party 1850-9* (Oxford, 1958), p. 57.

5. Where, incidentally, they were not well received. See E. L. Woodward, *The Age of Reform 1815-1870* (Oxford, 1958), pp 471-2.

6. Monsell to Cullen, 14 March 1853 (D.D.A. 40/3).

7. E. D. Steele, 'Cardinal Cullen and Irish nationality', in *I.H.S.*, xix, no. 75 (March 1975), p. 251.

of meetings between 1 and 8 January 1855, and the report was presented on 1 March.⁸

The five commissioners named were men of strong religious convictions and with notable legal and educational interests. The chairman was Dudley Ryder, second earl of Harrowby. 'Solid, sensible and reasonable', he was a dedicated member of the Established Church with many philanthropic interests. In politics he was a moderate Peelite. The second Englishman, Travers Twiss, and the Church of Ireland member, Mountfort Longfield, were both clergymen's sons and both distinguished lawyers. There were two Irish Catholics, Chief Baron Pigot and James More O'Ferrall, who, like Longfield, was a commissioner of the Board of National Education and had also been one of the eight laymen appointed to the committee for the Catholic University in 1850.⁹

Whatever faith Cullen may have reposed in Aberdeen's hints — and even at this early stage in his career he was sceptical of politicians' promises — he was convinced that a great deal in Maynooth needed to be set right, and that it could be set right only by increased episcopal control. In particular, he believed that its theological teaching was strongly Gallican. He felt this to be confirmed by the coolness with which his project for a Catholic university was received in the college. Since the decrees of the synod of Thurles had been approved in Rome he equated opposition to their university proposals with an opposition to Rome deriving from the principles set out in the third and fourth Gallican Articles, even though it might be argued that whereas the Queen's Colleges had been condemned the Catholic University had only been recommended as desirable if at all possible,¹⁰ and, as Newman noted in his exploratory visit to Ireland early in 1854, many of the most 'cultivated' and 'experienced' clergy felt the project was hopeless while the 'educated minds' among the laity felt it was positively undesirable.¹¹

As might be expected, opinions at Maynooth were divided, but some prominent members of the theological faculty were suspicious of Cullen's intentions, two of them in particular, George Crolly and Patrick Murray. Crolly, nephew of Cullen's predecessor in Armagh, had been one of a group of five or six theologians who had refused to sign the pastoral address issued after the synod of Thurles.¹² Murray was suspect because, Cullen claimed, he had in 1851 published a defence of the Queen's Colleges. Murray, on the

8. H. C. 1854-5 [1896, 1896-I] xxii, 1-779 (1896: Report and Appendices; 1896-I: Minutes of Evidence).

9. Adequate notices of all five are to be found in *D.N.B.*

10. See especially P. C. Barry, 'The legislation of the synod of Thurles, 1850', in *Ir. Theol. Quart.*, xxvi, no. 2 (April 1959), pp 131-66.

11. H. Tristram (ed.), *John Henry Newman: Autobiographical Writings* (London, 1956), pp 323-4.

12. Cullen to Bernard Smith, 7 Dec. 1850 (A.I.C.R., Kirby Papers, calendared in *Archiv. Hib.*, xxxi (1973), p. 37).

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¹⁰ C. Barry, 'The legislation of the synod of Thurles, 1850', in *Ir. Ecc. Hist. Rev.* 2 (April 1959), pp 131-66.

¹¹ *John Henry Newman: Autobiographical Writings* (London, 1903), p. 131.

¹² Smith, 7 Dec. 1850 (A.I.C.R., Kirby Papers, calendared in *Arch. Hib.*, 1973), p. 37).

other hand, insisted that he had only advanced hypotheses to be demolished, and that all his readers had understood him in this sense — the *Athenaeum* had even called him a bigot — except Frederick Lucas in the *Tablet*. However, the times were probably too tense for such fine distinctions. Cullen reported to Propaganda in Rome that Murray was not prepared to obey decisions of the bishops or of the Holy See.¹³

As has been seen, the commission began its work on 20 September 1853. By 2 November some of the evidence given at its sessions was in Cullen's hands. By the end of February 1854 he seems to have been in possession of all of it, and he was given copies of the proofs of the report as it was printed. The information and proofs were given to him by one of the Catholic commissioners, James More O'Ferrall.¹⁴

The time-lag between the taking of evidence, finished on 11 January 1854, and the completion and presentation of the commissioners' report, on 8 January and 1 March 1855 respectively has already been noted. Before the report was completed Cullen had gone to Rome with five other Irish bishops—Armagh (Dixon), Tuam (MacHale), Clogher (McNally), Clonfert (Derry) and Cloyne (Murphy). The primary purpose of their visit was to attend at the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception on 8 December. It is well known that Cullen's stay was prolonged because of his confrontation with Frederick Lucas on the issue of 'priests in politics' and the Tenant League. Whereas, however, this controversy had blown up only after he had left Ireland at the end of October,¹⁵ he had gone with a firm determination to seek a verdict on another issue, namely Maynooth College and specifically its theological teaching, and he had what he believed to be damning evidence in his possession.

The Irish bishops in Rome were invited to a meeting in the Congregation of Propaganda in December, which seems to have been exclusively concerned with the question of Maynooth. They divided three and three. Cullen could not expect support from MacHale on this issue, or indeed on any issue. Bishop Derry of Clonfert, who had been a dean in Maynooth, would not admit to any deficiencies in the training of students there. Bishop McNally of Clogher, a former professor, defended the teaching in the college, and specifically rejected any charge of Gallicanism. The matter was referred to Propaganda for its decision.

It would appear likely that the fact that Cullen was in possession of at least a substantial part of the evidence given before the commission first became known at this meeting. At any rate, shortly after

13. 'Essay on Education', in *The Irish Annual Miscellany*, ii (Dublin, 1851), pp 348-50. See also P. Murray to Cardinal Franssoni, Maynooth, 4 October 1851 (A.P.F., S.C. Irlanda 30, ff 718v-719v).

14. Cullen to Kirby, 2 November 1853 (A.I.C.R., Kirby Papers, calendared in *Arch. Hib.*, xxxi (1973), p. 48); same to same, 24 February 1854 (*ibid.*, p. 51); same to same, 27 June 1854 (*ibid.*, p. 52).

15. J. H. Whyte, *op. cit.*, pp 116-19.

Archbishop Dixon's return to Ireland he reported to Cullen that three of the Maynooth professors had written in protest to Lord Harrowby, who had replied, Dixon alleged, that he saw nothing remarkable in letting a trustee and a visitor know what was being taught in the college.¹⁶ The secret was now out, and there were plenty of hard words, but they broke no bones.¹⁷

When the report was submitted on 1 March 1855 it offered nothing that Cullen could regard as 'improvements in the system'. It proposed no change in the method of appointing visitors, and the minor changes proposed in regard to the trustees, though designed to make them a more efficient body, would in fact have given a more active role to the laymen. It judged the existing annual grant sufficient for the needs of the college.¹⁸ On the other hand, it offered nothing to those who had called for blood. On the two most sensitive issues, as far as Protestant public opinion was concerned, namely 'certain points . . . on which the spiritual and temporal authority have been, or might be, in conflict' and 'those portions of moral theology which relate to purity of life', the judgement of the commissioners was unambiguously favourable to the college.¹⁹

Quite correctly, they had not concerned themselves directly with the point which was Cullen's main preoccupation, the doctrinal aspect of theological teaching in the college. In Rome, a decision on this advanced slowly over the next six months, together with decisions on Lucas's dispute with Cullen and several other issues. They were considered sufficiently important to be submitted to a *congregazione particolare*, a special sub-committee of the cardinals of Propaganda.²⁰ Its first session was held on 18 January. The bad relations between MacHale and his two episcopal supporters on the one hand, and Cullen and the secretary of Propaganda, Mgr Barnabò, on the other, deteriorated rapidly. Early in February MacHale and the other two bishops left Rome for Ireland. Only Lucas remained to oppose Cullen.

Cullen's views on Maynooth were put forward in two documents, one a routine *relatio status* of his diocese, presented on 27 March, and the other a long document on all the Irish problems, elaborated in final form by 23 April.²¹ The bishops' authority, he said, was very restricted by the system of trustees and visitors. He had no complaint against the superiors, or against most of the professors and students. Some professors, however, were still unsatisfactory on the issue of Gallicanism, notably George Crolly. He also named as suspect

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22. *Ibid.*, ff 133r-149v, corre
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25. A.P.F., C.P. 158, ff 48

26. Cullen to Barnabò, unda *Hib.*, xxxi (1973), p. 56).

27. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

16. Dixon to Cullen, 31 January 1855 (D.D.A. 332/5).

17. See, for example, *Hansard* 3, ccii, 1974-5 (question in Commons, 27 February 1855); *Edinburgh Review*, cii (July 1855), pp 179-202 (notice of Report of the royal commission).

18. *Report*, pp 27; 67.

19. *Ibid.*, pp 64-5.

20. In consequence, all the documentation is to be found conveniently together in A.P.F., C.P. 158, ff 36-155.

21. *Ibid.*, ff 69rv, 129v-132v.

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It is clear that they had not concerned themselves directly with the issue which was Cullen's main preoccupation, the doctrinal teaching in the college. In Rome, a decision on the matter was slowly over the next six months, together with MacHale's dispute with Cullen and several other issues. The matter was considered sufficiently important to be submitted to a special committee, *articolare*, a special sub-committee of the cardinals. Its first session was held on 18 January. The bad relations between MacHale and his two episcopal supporters on the one hand, and the secretary of Propaganda, Mgr Cullen and the other, deteriorated rapidly. Early in February the other two bishops left Rome for Ireland. Only one bishop was to oppose Cullen.

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Patrick Murray and Henry Neville. He put in evidence, in Italian translation, a considerable part of the answers Crolley had given when questioned by the commission.²² He demanded that any professor offending should be removed, and he asked for a Roman decision because the Irish bishops were divided.

Expert theological opinion was sought from Giovanni Perrone, S.J., at this time rector of the Collegio Romano. His verdict²³ was very hostile to Crolley, to the verge, one might suggest, of unfairness. He made four general recommendations:

1. that the theology text-book²⁴ be changed;
2. that the removal of certain professors might be considered;
3. that the president or prefect of studies be given authority to supervise theological teaching and to bring any problems to the notice of the bishops;
4. that the Congregation of Propaganda should issue some general declaration of disapproval.

The congregation's decision was given on 14 June.²⁵ Perrone's recommendations were accepted, with one important modification. There were to be no dismissals, but Crolley was to be gently induced to retract his opinions and to agree to visit Rome where it was hoped he might be brought to a better frame of mind. A letter had been sent to the Maynooth board of trustees asking that no action be taken on the commission's report at their June meeting.²⁶ Cullen left Rome at the end of the month and was in Dublin by the middle of July.

Rumour and report had preceded him, but he must have felt reasonably in control of the situation. The Maynooth board had deferred consideration of the report of the commissioners to its meeting in June 1856. 'I think', Cullen commented in a letter of 21 July 1855 to his nephew Patrick Moran in Rome, 'they will find that the business has been done for them'.²⁷ With growing impatience he awaited formal communication of Propaganda's decision. It had not arrived when term began in Maynooth on 29 August. The document as issued was dated 6 September, posted on 15 September, and

22. Ibid., ff 133r-149v, corresponding to *Minutes of Evidence*, pp 23-35.

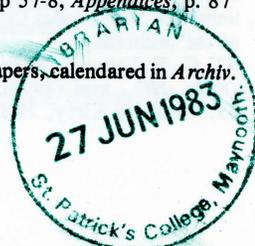
23. Ibid., ff 149v-151v.

24. The text-book in dogmatic theology was by Louis Delahogue, one of the first French professors. The text-book in moral theology was by Louis Bailly, S.J. (1730-1808). For fifty years it had been the manual in most French seminaries. Gallican and extremely rigoristic, it had been placed on the Index, *donec corrigatur*, by a decree of 7 December 1852. At their meeting in January 1853 the Maynooth trustees had ordered that its use be discontinued (see Cullen to Kirby, 3 January 1853, same to Bernard Smith, 23 January 1853 (A.I.C.R., Kirby Papers, calendared in *Archiv. Hib.*, xxxi (1973), p. 45); *Report*, pp 57-8, *Appendices*, p. 87 and elsewhere.

25. A.P.F., C.P. 158, ff 48v, 50r.

26. Cullen to Barnabò, undated draft (A.I.C.R., Kirby Papers, calendared in *Archiv. Hib.*, xxxi (1973), p. 56).

27. Ibid., p. 54.



arrived in Dublin in the then customary eight days.²⁸ The decision was to be implemented by the four archbishops.

George Crolly expressed himself unreservedly willing to do anything Rome might require of him.²⁹ It was not so easy to assemble the four archbishops. Archbishop Slattery of Cashel was old and had for long been an invalid, and MacHale was not disposed to co-operate. In the end, the archbishops of Armagh and Dublin met the Maynooth staff in the college on 22 November.

We have detailed accounts from both sides of this tense and painful meeting, one from Cullen, one from Murray.³⁰ Murray's account, obviously written while the wounds were raw, insisted that Cullen had not fully appreciated the difficult situation in which the staff had found themselves in giving evidence before a royal commission on the subject of papal authority, and that given the circumstances their good intentions should have been presumed.

The last act was played out at a bishops' meeting in June 1856.³¹ At the first session, on Friday 20 June, Cullen formally communicated the proceedings to date, and made certain further proposals for Maynooth, including matters of student discipline and the introduction of certain 'Roman' devotions. All were accepted by the bishops at their meeting on Saturday, and by the Maynooth board of trustees meeting in the college the following Tuesday.³²

'We dealt with Maynooth at length but achieved little', Cullen wrote to Kirby, the rector of the Irish College, Rome, on 29 June.³³ It does, however, seem clear that the upshot of the whole debate was to strengthen considerably the authority of the bishops over their national seminary.

Of the three professors singled out for disapproval by Archbishop Cullen, demands both personally and professionally humiliating had been made on George Crolly. His prompt acceptance must be taken as an indication of at least uncertainties in his commitment to theological Gallicanism. On the other hand, his evidence before the commission may be fairly interpreted as indicating that he was far from being in the lead in the retreat from the Gallican position. In a sense, he talked himself into trouble by a kind of donnish insistence on making himself quite clear on theological points that were of secondary interest to the commissioners. In this field he did commit

28. It is in D.D.A. 449/7. See also Cullen to Kirby, 23 September 1855 (A.I.C.R., Kirby Papers, calendared in *Archiv. Hib.*, xxxi (1973), p.56).

29. Crolly to Cullen, 15 November 1855 (D.D.A., 332/5).

30. Cullen to Kirby, 29 November 1855 (A.I.C.R., Kirby Papers, briefly noted in *Archiv. Hib.*, xxxi (1973), p. 57, and printed in P. MacSuibhne, *Paul Cullen and his Contemporaries*, iii (Naas, 1965), pp 212-13). Murray's account is preserved in the library of Maynooth College.

31. Two copies of the decisions taken at this meeting are in D.D.A. One (332/5) is imperfect, but includes Crolly's autograph letter. The other (339/1) gives a full text of the decisions.

32. C. B. Lyone to Kirby, 27 June 1856 (A.I.C.R., Kirby Papers, calendared in *Archiv. Hib.*, xxxi (1973), p. 61).

33. Cullen to Kirby, 29 June 1856, in MacSuibhne, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

himself to some statement of condemnation.³⁴

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34. See *Minutes of Evid*

35. 'Infallibility of the (Dublin, 1852), pp 21-83 362 and iv (Dublin, 185

36. *Minutes of Evidence*

37. *Decreta synodi plen De collegiis Reginae, no*

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The matter was played out at a bishops' meeting in June 1856.³¹ At a session, on Friday 20 June, Cullen formally presented the proceedings to date, and made certain further proposals for Maynooth, including matters of student discipline and the observance of certain 'Roman' devotions. All were accepted by the bishops at their meeting on Saturday, and by the Maynooth trustees at their meeting in the college the following Tuesday.³² Cullen, with Maynooth at length but achieved little', Cullen was appointed rector of the Irish College, Rome, on 29 June.³³ It seems clear that the upshot of the whole debate was to considerably reduce the authority of the bishops over their clergy.

Some professors singled out for disapproval by Archbishop Cullen, both personally and professionally humiliating had been George Crolley. His prompt acceptance must be taken as evidence of at least uncertainties in his commitment to Gallicanism. On the other hand, his evidence before the commission may be fairly interpreted as indicating that he was far from leading the retreat from the Gallican position. In a sense he led himself into trouble by a kind of donnish insistence on his own view, which was quite clear on theological points that were of central importance to the commissioners. In this field he did commit

²⁸ 449/7. See also Cullen to Kirby, 23 September 1855 (A.I.C.R., calendared in *Archiv. Hib.*, xxxi (1973), p.56).

²⁹ Cullen to Kirby, 15 November 1855 (D.D.A., 332/5).

³⁰ Kirby, 29 November 1855 (A.I.C.R., Kirby Papers, briefly noted in *Archiv. Hib.* (1973), p. 57, and printed in P. MacSuibhne, *Paul Cullen and his times* (Naas, 1965), pp 212-13). Murray's account is preserved in the *Archiv. Hib.* College.

³¹ The decisions taken at this meeting are in D.D.A. One (332/5) is signed by Cullen, the other (339/1) gives a full text of the proceedings.

³² Kirby, 27 June 1856 (A.I.C.R., Kirby Papers, calendared in *Archiv. Hib.* (1973), p. 61).

³³ Kirby, 29 June 1856, in MacSuibhne, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

himself to some statements that were almost certain to draw Roman condemnation.³⁴

As for Murray, reasons have already been adduced to show why Cullen should have regarded him with suspicion. They bear only indirectly and marginally on his theology, and one can see why this hard-working and conscientious theologian should have felt harshly treated. Between 1850 and 1853 he had published four volumes of essays, which he had first entitled *The Irish Annual Miscellany*, adding in volume III (1852) a further and more accurately descriptive title, *Essays chiefly Theological*. Here he had already published lengthy essays that show an essentially ultramontane mind.³⁵ In the following years he settled down to produce a new text-book for his students. It appeared in three volumes (*De Ecclesia Christi*, Dublin, 1860-66) and so clearly took up the position to be defined in 1870 as to draw warm praise from Perrone and Pius IX. A one-volume epitome appeared in 1874. Little if any rethinking was called for, but no doubt the less weighty treatment made more appeal to his students.

The only charge pressed against Henry Neville was a statement he had made that whereas the clergy would be bound to obey a papal decision commanding them to have nothing to do with the Queen's Colleges, the laity would not be so bound by a decree commanding them not to send their children to them, because this would be injurious to their interests, and they could 'most reasonably presume' that the Pope did not fully understand the position.³⁶ It would at first sight seem harsh that he was singled out for censure because of this statement, especially as the synod of Thurles had not forbidden the laity to send their children to the colleges, but had only exhorted them, admittedly very strongly, not to do so.³⁷ Two points might be relevantly made. Neville was a young man, appointed to his chair only in 1852; and he was a native of Cork, where there had been much vocal support for the local Queen's College. His statement confirmed Cullen in his opinion that any positive expression of support for the Queen's Colleges must proceed from Gallican principles.

It would nevertheless be unfair to Cullen to conclude that he used the Gallicanism or alleged Gallicanism of Maynooth merely as a pretext to assert his own control over the college in the name of the bishops. He still regarded as insufficient the additional control he had in fact achieved, and when it became clear that no further concessions might be expected from the government he began to

³⁴ See *Minutes of Evidence*, pp 27-8, especially p. 27, paragraphs 22, 26.

³⁵ 'Infallibility of the Church of Christ', in *The Irish Annual Miscellany*, iii (Dublin, 1852), pp 21-83; 'Supremacy of St Peter and his Successors', *ibid.*, pp 229-362 and iv (Dublin, 1853), pp 35-270.

³⁶ *Minutes of Evidence*, pp 354-5, paragraph 176.

³⁷ *Decreta synodi plenariae episcoporum Hiberniae MDCCCL* (Dublin, 1851), *De collegiis Reginae*, no. 6, pp 53-4.

develop his own diocesan seminary at Clonliffe.³⁸ While different people might be at different stages within the general pattern of a retreat from Gallicanism, Cullen, who had gone to Rome in 1820 at the age of seventeen, could have felt no commitment, intellectual or emotional, to the Gallican tradition. Indeed it would appear that for him to be an 'ultramontane' was simply to be a good Catholic. As he wrote to Kirby on 30 November 1852:³⁹

The Catholics and Protestants here are strangely at a loss to know what ultramontaniam is. They think it is some horrid monster. Scully the M.P. for Cork went down to Maynooth a short time ago and spent a whole day there getting himself instructed on the nature of ultramontaniam. What lessons he received I know not, but I think the people and all the real Catholics here are ultramontanes.

His public pronouncements on the Roman question during the 1850s do little to develop the simple straightforward position set out in these words. As is well known it was he who at a critical stage of the Vatican Council in 1870 introduced the formula on infallibility which was in the end adopted. As finally adopted, however, it had undergone certain modifications: the introduction of the technical phrase *ex cathedra*, the decision to entitle the definition *De Romani Pontificis infallibili magisterio* (in order to reassure those who feared the definition might extend to temporal power), and more especially perhaps the decision to include the long historical introduction, contributed by Bishop Martin of Paderborn, which spelled out by an appeal to past history that the Pope's personal infallibility was not in fact separated from the infallibility of the church.⁴⁰ Neither is it certain to what extent the formula as presented by Cullen reflected his personal views. What precisely these were at the end of the long educative process of the council is a subtle question, demanding a thorough investigation quite beyond the scope of this paper. It may be reasonably concluded that in the mid-1850s, apart altogether from the other pressures of the time, intellectually he was not adequately placed to grasp the way in which Maynooth reflected the subtly-changing position of northern European catholicism generally. He did believe that there was an unacceptable 'Gallican' element in the theological teaching at Maynooth. This conviction was reinforced by more 'political' issues arising out of the synod of Thurles and the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. His determined pursuit of named individuals, despite the weakness of the evidence against two of them on any grounds that could be described as academically theological, can be fully understood only if one remembers that these issues were always

38. [R. Sherry], *Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, Dublin* (Dublin, 1962), pp 45-58.

39. A.I.C.R., Kirby Papers, calendared in *Arch. Hib.*, xxxi (1973), p. 44.

40. See, for example, C. Butler, *The Vatican Council* (London, 1930), ii, 97 ff; R. Aubert, *Histoire de l'Église*, xxi: *Le pontificat de Pie IX* (Paris, 1952), pp 354-8.

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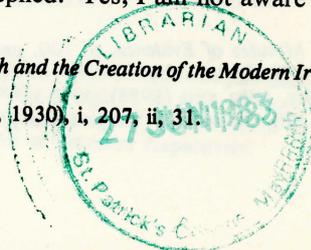
³⁸ *Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, Dublin* (Dublin, 1962), pp 45-58. Cullen's papers, calendared in *Arch. Hib.*, xxxi (1973), p. 44.
³⁹ C. Butler, *The Vatican Council* (London, 1930), ii, 97 ff; *Revue de l'Église*, xxi: *Le pontificat de Pie IX* (Paris, 1952), pp 354-8.

in his mind. It would not be doing justice to the evidence either to ignore the fact that there was an element of the power-struggle in the whole affair. Effective episcopal control over Maynooth Cullen regarded as essential. As the college was exclusively concerned with educating candidates for the priesthood this was a reasonable position. The report of the royal commission, though anything but hostile, showed that any suggestions Aberdeen may have made about 'improving the system' were not politically possible. Cullen was prepared to consider renouncing the government grant if it entailed what he considered unacceptable interference or degrading comment, in parliament or elsewhere. He knew that most of the bishops would not follow him in this, and indeed it was to be ten years later before he committed himself to voluntarism as a principle.

What may be regarded as a dispassionate analysis of the theological issues in the debate of the mid-1850s appeared only after Cullen's death, and nearly a decade after the Vatican Council. It was occasioned by an article in the *Dublin Review* of October 1879, entitled 'Theology, past and present, at Maynooth', contributed by Henry Neville, one of the three professors singled out for censure in 1855. In all conscience, it was not a very searching analysis: it may be taken as certain that it was written to promote the author's candidature as coadjutor to the ageing bishop of Cork.⁴¹ He claimed that Gallicanism had been 'carefully cultivated' at Maynooth for the first half-century of its existence, but that afterwards the professorial staff had thought their way out of this innately weak system of theology. A much more satisfying reply, 'The alleged Gallicanism of Maynooth and the Irish clergy', appeared in the next number (January 1880). It was by William J. Walsh, at that time vice-president of the college, and afterwards, of course, archbishop of Dublin. He belonged to a younger generation, having been appointed to Maynooth in 1867. He made two particularly telling points. The first was that before the definitions of 1870 the issues of 'theological Gallicanism', namely the papal primacy and infallibility, were regarded as matters for discussion in the schools, the arguments for and against being set out. The second was that the retreat from Gallicanism had begun before the date claimed by Neville, and that it had been a slow and gradual process. He appealed to the earlier royal commission of 1826 for proof that the official Gallican position had never been part of Maynooth teaching. In particular, he adduced the evidence of Thomas Furlong, who had been examined as a student in 1826 and as a professor in 1853. Appointed bishop of Ferns in 1857, he had been one of the four Irish 'inopportunist' bishops at the Vatican Council, that is, he believed that the time was not ripe for a formal definition of infallibility.⁴² Asked in 1853 if the teaching in the college was the same as in 1826 he replied: 'Yes; I am not aware of

41. Cf. E. Larkin, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Creation of the Modern Irish State 1878-86* (Dublin, 1975), p. 223.

42. C. Butler, *The Vatican Council* (London, 1930), i, 207, ii, 31.



any difference, save that a more decided bias prevails generally in favour of the infallibility of the Pope and his authority in spiritual matters'.⁴³ In Maynooth as elsewhere theological Gallicanism was in retreat, and the retreat had begun well before 1850.

Furlong's scrupulously careful judgement can be supported by evidence provided in 1839 by Edmund O'Reilly. O'Reilly had begun his studies for the priesthood in Maynooth, but in 1830 he had gone to the Irish College in Rome, where Cullen was rector. He had been a brilliant student, and was appointed to a chair of theology in Maynooth in 1838. He left in 1851 to become a Jesuit, and in 1859 was appointed first rector of Milltown Park. After his first year on the staff in Maynooth he wrote to Tobias Kirby, then vice-rector of the Irish College in Rome.⁴⁴ In this letter he admits that he was prejudiced when he re-entered Maynooth, but that a year's experience had convinced him that things had greatly improved since his student days. Gallicanism, he said, was almost dead: 'the papal infallibility is not looked on in any odious light, and is certainly inclined to by several of the professors. Of course the temporal power is not dreamt of, and why should it be?'

Archbishop Cullen has for long had a bad reputation. In recent years, however, historians of very varying interests seem to be converging on a much more sympathetic reinterpretation. A final verdict will take time to assemble, because of the very stature of the man. Within the context of this paper I would like to leave the last word with Dr Patrick Murray. Cullen died on 24 October 1878. The next day Murray committed his thoughts to the privacy of his diary:⁴⁵

25. Friday. Cardinal Cullen died on yesterday, exactly nine months, by the day of the week and of the month, since Crolly's death (Crolly, Thursday, Jany. 24: Card. Cullen, Thursday Octob. 24). The Cardinal's death will, no doubt, cause a very sensible change in the affairs of the Irish church. Since he came to Ireland nearly 28 years ago, but especially since he became Archbishop of Dublin upwards of 26 years ago, his influence at Rome, in Irish matters, was paramount. Whether it would have continued so under the present Pope, especially since Card. Franchi's death, it is now impossible to say. He came here as Archb. of Armagh with very strong views, which he often put forward in very strong forms. Very much to his credit, however, it must be said that for many years back those views had been greatly moderated, some of them entirely abandoned. Whatever errors he may have committed, God has judged him, not according to the objective rectitude of his deeds, but according to the lights he had and the rectitude of his motives. . . . We had, this morning, the office and Mass for

43. *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 100, paragraph 171.

44. O'Reilly to Kirby, 23 July 1839 (A.I.C.R., Kirby Papers, no. 30, calendared in *Archiv. Hib.*, xxxi (1973), pp 2-3).

45. MS, Maynooth College Library, ii, p. 168.

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Crolly had been Murray's closest friend. It must be noted with some regret that he died with the events of the 1850s still unforgotten and unforgiven in the Rome of the last days of Pius IX.⁴⁶ Murray himself died at Maynooth, painfully and patiently, on 17 November 1882. It is more than likely that he did not know of the final Roman rebuff to Crolly: certainly Crolly himself was not told of it. However, Murray's final human judgement on Cardinal Cullen may be taken as indicating that for him at any rate the raw edge had left the wounds of the 1850s, and with that the verdict of history has to stop.

46. See the letters of his bishop, Patrick Dorrian of Down and Connor, to Kirby, 21 September, 28 December 1877 (A.I.C.R., Kirby Papers 1877, nos. 299, 395, calendared in *Archiv. Hib.*, xxx (1972), p. 81).

Abbreviations:

- A.P.F., C.P. Archivio della S. Congregazione 'de Propaganda Fide',
Congregazioni particolari.
A.P.F., S.C. Ibid., Scritture riferite nei Congressi, Irlanda.
Irlanda
A.I.C.R. Archives of the Irish College, Rome.
D.D.A. Dublin Diocesan Archives.

The *Report* of the royal commission on Maynooth was published as a parliamentary paper. Details are given in note 8 above. Elsewhere, the three separately-paginated sections are cited as *Report*, *Appendices*, and *Minutes of Evidence* respectively.