

Lord Acton and the Modern State

BY

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Among the liberal thinkers of the nineteenth century there are few whose ideas have greater significance for our generation than have those of Lord Acton, the eminent Catholic scholar whom Lord Morley designated the magistrate of historians, and to whom has generally been accorded the distinctive title of the historian of liberty. His fame is not so great now as at the time of his death and in the years immediately following. Time and changing political conditions have dimmed the reputations of many of the great Victorians; and Acton is no exception. His work is perhaps known to few outside the circle of those who make the study of history their profession; and even among these there are many to whom Acton is now little more than a name, the author of an occasional striking quotation, the founder and editor of the Cambridge Modern History, the friend and confidant of Mr. Gladstone, a Victorian aristocrat with austere and impracticable views on political morality; or, more commonly, as one who in some curious and unexplained manner, contrived the seemingly impossible feat of being at once an advocate of liberty and a member of the Catholic Church.

His reputation rests on no large volume of published work. Compared with other great historians of the nineteenth century, with Ranke, Gardiner, Lecky, or Freeman, Acton wrote very little; and what he wrote was either not published at all during his lifetime, or was published in a form which gave no promise of permanence. His first essays, on a variety of historical and political subjects, were published in *The Rambler* and in *The Home and Foreign Review*, two Catholic periodicals which he edited and in large measure financed. In later years, when opposition had forced him to abandon his cherished project of a scholarly Catholic periodical, his work was published in such journals as *The Quarterly Review*, *The Athenaeum*, and *The English Historical Review*. He was one of the founders of this latter journal, and his review articles on many of the great books of the nineteenth century are still numbered among the finest essays of the kind in our historical literature. All his work appeared in the form of essays, articles and lectures. Most of these are marked by scholarship of the highest quality. Many of them will remain of permanent value to the student of history, especially to the student who is concerned with the history of ideas. But they are brief studies, and on some subjects where Acton's knowledge was wide and deep, historians would give much for a work of broader scope. Shortly after his

death at the beginning of the present century, his more important essays and his lectures on Modern History and on the French Revolution, delivered during the last years of his life while he held the position of Regius Professor of History in the University of Cambridge, were collected and published in four volumes. In addition, two volumes of correspondence have been published, which are in some respects even more illuminating than his more formal work; and in his volume on Lord Acton and his Circle, Cardinal Gasquet has collected more letters and other material, dealing mainly with the work on *The Rambler* and the issues to which that gave rise. This is the bulk of the material upon which any judgment of Acton's work and ideas must be based.

To many of his contemporaries, to Lord Morley for example, one of his closest and most intimate friends, the combination of liberalism and Catholicism in Lord Acton was difficult to understand. They did not commonly go together, especially after the middle of the nineteenth century. To others at a later time, who certainly knew less of Acton, and probably knew less of liberalism and Catholicism than did Morley, this has been an even greater cause of perplexity. Many of these have resolved the difficulty, according to their varying points of view, by denying the reality, either of his liberalism, or of his Catholicism. But this conclusion, although it seems to have been held by Cardinal Manning, W. G. Ward, and some other eminent Catholics in Acton's lifetime, will not bear serious examination.

For Acton himself there was no problem. On a number of important questions which concerned the Catholic world in the middle of the nineteenth century he dissented strongly from the opinions of some of his ecclesiastical superiors. Twice during his early career he was obliged to discontinue the publication of Catholic periodicals which he edited, in order to avoid open censure for views expressed, or for subjects dealt with in these journals. On one occasion during the Vatican Council of 1870 he conducted a campaign in opposition to the policy of the head of his church which cannot be justified, and which can be explained only on the ground that his customary good judgment failed him, and that he wholly misunderstood the nature and implications of the proposed decree on Papal Infallibility. He claimed the right of the historian to judge, when the evidence had been examined; and his judgments, based upon scrupulously honest examination of all the evidence that was available, fell with equal severity on popes and cardinals, princes and ministers. But as between obedience to the Church which he believed to be divinely instituted, and the human freedom which he spent his life in advocating, there was in his mind not the slightest incompatibility.

These were indeed so far from being in conflict, that the Church was, in Acton's judgment, "the true parent of whatever freedom the people of Europe had known." In one of his early essays on the Role of the Church in Politics, he described her as "the irreconcilable enemy of the despotism of the state,

whatever its name, and through whatever institutions it may be exercised.” And the despotism of the state was, always and everywhere, the greatest enemy of the freedom that was essential to man’s moral and spiritual life. True liberty, he added, has been known “only in those states which have passed through her medieval action.” And a large section of his later essay on Freedom in the Christian Era was given to a development of this theme. He entertained no romantic ideas about life in the middle ages. No one saw more clearly how imperfectly the task of embodying the principles of the Christian state in durable institutions of government had been performed in most parts of Europe. But the principle had been understood and so long as men adhered to it, the danger of despotism, either temporal or ecclesiastical, was avoided, and the authority of both church and state kept within its proper limits.

The sincerity of his faith made a strong impression on his intimates. “What mainly marked him out among men”, wrote one of his pupils, “was the intense reality of his faith. This gave to all his studies their practical tone. His scholarship was to him as practical as his politics, and his politics as ethical as his faith. All his varying interests were inspired by one unconquerable resolve, the aim of securing universally, alike in church and in state, the recognition of the paramountcy of principles over interests, of liberty over tyranny, of truth over all forms of evasion or equivocation.” He was of course, not alone in asserting the paramountcy of principles and of liberty and truth; but his work possesses a quality derived in part from his religion, in part from his particular training as a historian, which set him apart from most other liberals of the time. His approach to the great problem of human freedom was that of a Christian, a humanist and a historian; and in him the qualities of these three were united as they have been in very few men.

As a Catholic, Acton was refused admittance to a number of Cambridge colleges to which he applied, and he was obliged in consequence to seek his education elsewhere. He found it in Germany, more particularly in Munich, then the most active centre of Catholic scholarship on the continent. He was something of a free lance student, untrammelled by regular lecture courses and examinations; but for seven years, 1848 to 1855, he followed a rigorous course of reading in history and related subjects under the immediate direction of Dr. Ignace Dollinger, who already had a European reputation for his work on ecclesiastical history.

His association with Dollinger was one of the decisive influences in Acton’s life. It began with enthusiasm and respect on the part of the pupil and genuine interest on that of the master. It ended in sincere affection between the two which endured, despite all vicissitudes, till the older man’s death. To that association Acton probably owed much of his characteristic approach to history: his bias towards the universal and away from the local and particular; his preoccupation with principles and ideas; above all, his unceasing interest in ‘Christianity as history’. “As an historian,” he wrote later of his Munich

master, “Dollinger regarded Christianity more as a force than as a doctrine, and he displayed it as it expanded and became the soul of later history.” The judgment might have been written of Acton himself

In Munich Acton became acquainted with some of the most distinguished scholars of the time, among them the historian Ranke, whom he delighted to call his master, although the latter’s conservatism and partial predilection for Prussian monarchy must have created an intellectual gulf between the two men. Munich was then the most active centre of opposition to the Hegelian philosophy of the state, which was being generally received in Germany, and applied most conspicuously in the Prussian state. Hegel was described by Dollinger as “The strongest enemy of religion and freedom, the reasoner whose dialectic made a whole generation of clever men incapable of seeing facts.” And throughout his life Acton held a very similar view. The absolute state under any form was, in his judgment, the most powerful and the most persistent obstacle to the development of human freedom. The claim to determine the religion of its subjects, implicit in the idea of state absolutism, he denounced as “the canonisation of despotism” It involved the denial of freedom in every form; and the philosophy which justified such a theory of the state, whether from the pen of a Hobbes or a Hegel, met in him its most uncompromising opponent.

By birth and tradition Acton was a European rather than an Englishman. He was a member of an old English Catholic family, settled on its estates at Aldenham for centuries past; but he was born of a branch of the family which had migrated to the continent about the middle of the eighteenth century, and had risen to high office in the kingdom of Naples. His grandfather was prime minister of that kingdom during the period of Napoleon’s ascendancy, and was responsible for an alliance between Great Britain and Naples, which was of material service to British naval forces in the Mediterranean during the war with Bonaparte. His own father was a high official of the same government. Through his mother, a daughter of the Duke of Dalberg, he was related to a number of the most prominent families in south Germany. Extensive travel during his student days, often in the company of Dr. Dollinger, confirmed his cosmopolitan tastes and interests. Throughout life he numbered among his friends eminent scholars and public men in most countries of western Europe. To a greater extent than most of his English contemporaries he had a sense of the unity of Europe, and a corresponding freedom from the narrowing spirit of nationalism. A short visit to the United States left in his mind a fixed conviction of the value of federalism as a form of government which provided the most effective checks, at once upon the tyranny of the state and the tyranny of the mob.

Early in life, probably during his student days in Munich, Acton formed the design of writing a comprehensive history of liberty, and of the institutions in which it had, in various times and in various places, been

given some measure of reality, from its first faint beginnings among the Jews, the Greeks and the Teutonic tribes to the relatively mature state which it had reached in the Anglo-Saxon world of the nineteenth century. History was for him essentially a practical subject, and no history more practical than the history of human freedom. "A knowledge of the past," he said, "the record of truths revealed by experience, is eminently practical as an instrument of action and a power that goes to the making of the future." But he was in no haste to begin the work which he had planned. He realised the difficulties in the way of such an undertaking, and his letters from Munich during his last years with Dollinger make it plain that he was mapping out the field, measuring the obstacles to be overcome, and equipping himself for the task.

That book was never written. Probably on the scale on which it was planned, and by the standard of scholarship which Acton imposed upon himself, it could not have been written at that time. Too much of the past was still unknown. Too much of what passed for history was hardly more than legend; and the task of dispelling legend and replacing it with authenticated history over so vast a field was beyond the power of any individual. For a time in middle life Acton settled down at his home in Shropshire, where he had collected a library of some sixty thousand volumes, and set to work upon the task. But the effort was abandoned after a few years of not very constant application, and it does not seem ever to have been resumed. His reasons for abandoning the project are not clear. There were probably many, and among them must certainly be included his growing awareness of the impossibility, in the then state of historical knowledge, of compiling the book which he had envisaged.

It is possible, however, to form some idea of what the book would have contained from the two brilliant and suggestive essays on the History of Freedom in Antiquity and in the Christian Era which Acton wrote in 1877, and which, it may be assumed, provide an outline sketch of the projected work. These are among the most remarkable essays of the kind in our literature. Together they provide a panorama of the history of freedom among the peoples of Europe from the age of Pericles to the establishment of the American republic; and seldom has so much that is vital in the history of the modern world been contained in so brief a space. It is on the basis of these essays, and on innumerable passages scattered through his occasional writings and lectures, that Acton's reputation as the historian of liberty rests. The theme was always central in his mind, whatever the particular subject on which he wrote or spoke. It provided him with the criterion by which he judged men and events; and many of his lectures on Modern History and on the French Revolution, delivered in Cambridge and published after his death, are in one sense little more than essays on the advance or the decline of freedom in the modern world.

Lord Acton never attempted anything like a philosophic exposition of his idea of liberty; and he has been criticised on the ground that his meaning is not clear, and that the liberty which he advocated was so extreme as to preclude legitimate authority. The criticism is unwarranted. Acton's meaning is quite clear, and his conception of liberty as an absolute did not in any way deprive the state of authority within its proper sphere. In the course of his reading he collected some two hundred definitions of liberty, with most of which he disagreed; and he saw in this variety of interpretation one of the significant and tragic facts of history. Nothing, he believed, had proven a more stubborn or persistent obstacle to the advance of freedom than ignorance and uncertainty as to its true nature. "Hostile forces have wrought much injury; but false doctrines and ignorance and confusion have wrought much more." In the opening passage of one of his essays on freedom he summed up the forces of opposition in a few luminous phrases which have not lost their significance. "Ignorance and superstition, the lust of conquest and the love of ease, the strong man's craving for power and the poor man's craving for food." At the head of the list he placed ignorance; and again and again in his outline of the history of freedom he indicated the tragic consequences that have followed from men's failure to comprehend the meaning and importance of human freedom, and from their readiness to surrender hard-won gains for some temporary advantage, for national glory, for conquest, for material wealth, security, and the like.

His own definition was simple. "By liberty," he said, "I mean the assurance that every man will be protected in doing what he believes to be his duty against the pressure of authority and majorities, of custom and opinion." Or again, he defined it as "the condition in society which enables the individual to direct his life according to the forces within him and not around him." It was inseparably connected with man's inner life and with his duty as a member of society. "The proper name for the rights of conscience," he observed, "is liberty"; and this idea was basic in all that he wrote. If these definitions left some questions unanswered, the explanation is that Acton was not greatly concerned about the philosophic ramifications of his subject. He knew what he meant, and for the practical task which he had in hand, his meaning was clear. Liberty was for him the condition necessary to realise the end of civil society and of man's life on earth. And his purpose was to demonstrate its growth from the records of history, to show the conditions which favoured it, the things that were necessary to establish and preserve it, and the factors, always present in some measure, which went to stultify, to distort it, and to block its development.

Liberty so defined could exist only in a developed civil society. Unlike many of his contemporaries among English historians, Acton attached little importance to the ideas and practices of Teutonic tribes as the origins of freedom in the Anglo-Saxon world. Whatever the part which these had played

in the evolution of parliamentary institutions, – and that was at best a debatable point – there was an essential difference between the negative social independence enjoyed by primitive peoples before the state had come into being and developed its functions of government, and the freedom with which he was concerned. This last was a product of history, of a process going on through centuries of time, which had for its object “the organisation of self-government and the substitution of right for force, of authority for power, of duty for necessity, and of a moral for a physical relationship between government and people.”

In that process Christianity had played a decisive part. Indeed, it would be scarcely an exaggeration to say that, in Acton’s judgment, the Christian religion had been the most potent of all forces making for the freedom of men. Popular government, he says, had existed before the advent of Christianity; and there had also been “mixed governments and federal governments; but there had been no limited government, no state, the circumference of whose authority had been defined by a force external to its own.” That was the problem which the classical world, for all its brilliant intellectual development, could not solve, the problem for which Christianity alone offered the solution. The admonition to ‘render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s’, was for him the charter deed of human freedom. These words, he declares, “gave to the civil power under the protection of conscience a sacredness it had never before enjoyed, and bounds it had never acknowledged. They were the repudiation of absolutism and the inauguration of freedom.”

It was this insistence upon an ethical basis for freedom, and upon an ethic derived from Christianity that distinguished Acton from most nineteenth-century liberals. That alone would, in his judgment, provide an adequate guarantee for the limits that must be imposed on the authority of the state. He took little interest in the doctrines of the Utilitarians, and he was resolutely opposed to the concept of the state which underlay the philosophic idealism of T. H. Green and his school. Liberty was not for him, as it was for many others, a means to an end. It was itself the end. It did not exist for the sake of securing a good or efficient administration. Government and administration existed for the purpose of securing the freedom that was essential to the moral life of man. “Liberty,” he remarked, in one striking passage, “occupies the summit. It is the thing which has profited from all the good and suffered from all the evil that history records. It is almost, if not altogether, the sign and the prize and the motive in the onward and upward advance of the race for which Christ was crucified.” This involved no conflict with authority, properly understood. On the contrary, liberty and authority were inseparably connected and dependent upon one another. Divorced from liberty, authority lost its ethical character and became mere power; while

liberty, as distinct from licence, could exist only in relation to authority expressed through law.

But authority thus understood was something very different from the absolute power assumed by states in Western Europe at the close of the middle ages, and retained under one form or another by most of them since that time. That form of state was, always and everywhere, the enemy to be guarded against. In particular, its claim to determine the religion of its subjects, the principle of *Cujus regio, Ejus religio*, was the negation of freedom in every form. "Where it is admitted that the most sacred of all duties is protected by no rights, that the best of man's possessions may be taken from him by the state, there is no security for inferior things, and no place for freedom."

That the state claiming such absolute power rested upon some measure of popular support did not, in Acton's opinion, alter its character, or diminish the danger. He was not deluded by the idea of the 'representative monarchy' of the Tudors which held such attraction for most English historians. The tyranny of Henry VIII was not the less tyranny for "the passionate submission, the gratified acquiescence" with which it was received by most Englishmen. But it was the development of absolutism in France and the enthusiasm with which it was accepted, that most clearly pointed the danger. "It would be easy," he declared, "to find tyrants more violent, more malignant, more odious than Louis XIV, but there was not one who ever used his power to inflict greater suffering or greater wrong; and the admiration with which he inspired the most illustrious men of his time denotes the lowest depth to which the turpitude of absolutism has ever degraded the conscience of Europe." It has been left to the twentieth century to provide more striking examples.

But if the authority of the state was to be limited, a similar definition of the authority of the church was required. The freedom of churches was essential to the freedom of the individual; but absolute power in the ecclesiastical order was not less dangerous than absolute power in the temporal order; and not a little of Acton's distrust of Papal power arose from his fear of centralised autocracy encroaching on spheres outside its proper jurisdiction. He regarded religious liberty as the first and most important of all liberties. It was, he declared, "the germinating principle from which civil liberty was sprung;" but civil liberty, which included the liberty of the state within its proper sphere, was essential to the preservation of religious liberty. Theocracy was not less a danger than Erastianism. Commenting on the struggle between the Empire and Papacy during the middle ages, he observed that a complete victory for either would have been fatal to the liberties of Europe. The contest had been fruitful, not because either side had triumphed, but because each had been obliged to seek popular support, and to define more clearly and precisely the principles of free government.

By the nineteenth century there was no longer any possibility of confining the absolutism of the state by a force external to its own. The dualism of the middle ages had come to an end. The sovereign nation state, strengthened rather than weakened by the revolutions which had destroyed absolute monarchy, had become the normal type of political organisation; and there was not yet any prospect of an international order to set limits to the authority of the individual state.

Within each state, however, there were certain controls that could be maintained. Acton's remedy for the evil of over-centralised power was a form of pluralism, under which authority would be divided and dispersed among many groups and institutions. He anticipated Maitland, Sir Ernest Barker and certain other English writers in insisting upon a division between the area of governmental activity that fell within the authority of the state and that which should be left to society; and he constantly emphasised the safeguards to liberty which must be kept in mind.

Of these the most important concerned the structure of government. It must be so constitutionally checked and controlled as to prevent the use of power "for purposes other than those moral purposes for which civil society exists." That involved direct participation in the general government, and, above all, a carefully regulated division of power. "Liberty depends upon the division of power." Autocracy is the result of its undue concentration. A people must never yield to the temptation to abandon the checks and to surrender its destiny to a power which it cannot control. No material gain that might result from such a surrender would compensate for the moral loss that it would involve. The ideal government was that under which the individual would normally be unconscious of the pressure of public authority, and would be free "to direct his life according to the influences that are within him, and not around him."

That condition could be realised only in a community in which the state grew naturally out of society. To achieve this, society itself must be organised and distributed "in distinct classes and corporations, each enjoying social powers in its own sphere." That was of the essence of free government. "Where this distribution is wanting, and the social mass comprehends no moral person, but only physical units, society is atomic, and the state cannot be an organism, an expression or organ of society, but must be supreme and absolute, whatever its form."

Acton regarded the English system of parliamentary government and the federal system of the United States as most nearly approximating this ideal of state and society. He did not share the optimistic faith of some of his contemporaries in the perfection of the Victorian constitution. He had no illusions about the realities of power exercised by landlords and industrialists. But he was convinced that "the latent principles of the constitution" were more nearly in accord with the principles of the Christian state than were

those to be found elsewhere in Europe; and he spoke with some knowledge of the actual conditions of government in most countries on the continent.

Related to the form of government, and of almost equal importance in determining the balance between state and society upon which liberty depended, was the institution of private property. Acton did not deal extensively with the various doctrines of socialism which were becoming current in his day; but he referred to the subject incidentally in a number of his essays; and his antipathy could, in any case, be assumed. Socialism, which he regarded as a development of those forms of democracy which put the emphasis on equality rather than on liberty, involved an extension of the authority of the state to which he was strongly opposed. He recognised the measure of justice which informed the socialist theory, although he wholly dissented from the solution which it offered. That theory, he declared, “endeavoured to provide for the existence of the individual beneath the terrible burden which modern society heaps upon labour. It is not merely a development of the notion of equality, but a refuge from real misery and starvation.” He had no superstitious reverence for the sanctity of private property as an end in itself. He was as far from adhering to the *laissez faire* doctrines, which found favour with most nineteenth-century liberals, as he was from agreeing with Irish landlords, who saw social chaos in any proposed interference with their indefensible privileges. Yet he regarded private property as an essential means for securing the conditions of freedom. “A people averse to the institution of private property,” he said, “is without the first element of freedom.” The system would inevitably lead to evils; but these must be corrected by reform, not by revolution. In the properly constituted state, reform, designed to create and maintain the most favourable conditions for the freedom of all classes and individuals, should be the natural accompaniment of authority. “I cannot conceive a state,” he wrote, “in which reform should not be the normal condition of progress, that is, of existence.”

But it was in the theory of nationality, as it was developing in the nineteenth century, that Acton saw the gravest menace, at once to liberty, to the unity of Europe, and to the true principles of Christian society. In one of the most thoughtful of his essays, written in 1862, he sketched the history of this movement, noted the events which had given it vitality, from the Partition of Poland and the French Revolution to the illiberal reaction which followed the Congress of Vienna, and foretold with remarkable prescience the course that it was likely to follow. In the form that it had taken, it was, he believed, an arbitrary and destructive force, a theory that would justify the most ruthless form of absolutism that Europe had known. “Beginning by a protest against the domination of race over race, it grew into a condemnation of every state that included different races, and finally became the complete and consistent theory that the state and the nation must be coextensive.” That doctrine was perilous. It differed wholly from the theory that made nationality

an essential, but not the supreme element in the state, a theory which Acton found most fully embodied in the British state and empire.

“The greatest adversary of the spirit of nationality is the modern theory of nationality. By making the state and the nation commensurate with each other in theory, it reduces practically to a subject condition all other nationalities that may be within the boundaries of the state. It cannot admit them to an equality with the ruling nation which constitutes the state, because the state would then cease to be national, which would be a contradiction of the principle of its existence. According therefore to the degree of humanity and civilisation in that dominant body which claims all the rights of the community, the inferior races are exterminated, or reduced to servitude, or outlawed, or put in a condition of dependence.” This form of nationality, he concludes, “does not aim either at liberty or prosperity, both of which it sacrifices to the imperative necessity of making the nation the mould and measure of the state. Its course will be marked with material as well as moral ruin, in order that a new invention may prevail over the works of God and the interests of mankind.” Not many predictions have been more completely or more tragically fulfilled.

During his lifetime Lord Acton was, intellectually, a somewhat solitary figure. He belonged to no school of liberal thinkers. On many vital issues, he was in open disagreement with most of those who called themselves liberals. And on the other side, he was equally opposed, on some questions of the first importance, to the opinions of the more conservative and authoritarian, not to say reactionary members of his own Church. He was essentially a scholar. As an active politician, for a few years in the House of Commons, and a longer period in the House of Lords, he was inconspicuous. It was not until his appointment at Cambridge in 1895 that he found himself in a position suited to his talents; and then he had but a few years to live.

As a historian, Lord Acton was interested primarily in the moral progress of mankind. His basic postulate in the interpretation of the historic record was the freedom of the human will; and, consonantly with this belief, he rejected every form of determinism which sought to explain the history of man by reference to external or material change. He did not accomplish all that he projected; but he did as much as any man in his century to give to history the place which it now occupies, and to impart to its study the spirit of objective, scientific scholarship. “History”, he observed, “compels us to fasten on abiding issues and rescues us from the temporary and the transient.” And in a passage in his inaugural lecture in Cambridge, he summed up the function of this branch of human knowledge in words that have lost none of their significance. “It is apparent how stubborn a phalanx of error blocks the paths of truth; that pure reason is as powerless as custom to solve the problem of free government; that it can only be the fruit of long, manifold and painful experience; and that the tracing of the methods by which divine wisdom has

educated the nations to associate and assume the duties of freedom is not the least part of that true philosophy that studies to 'assert eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to man.'"

Bibliographical Note

The quotations in this article have been taken from the published collections of Lord Acton's work, to which reference has been made. Acton's work has attracted the attention of many scholars, and there is already a fairly extensive literature on the subject. The following books may be specially recommended;

Lord Acton and His Circle; edited, Abbot Gasquet, O.S.B. (London 1906).

As Lord Acton Says; F. E. Lally (Newport, R.I.: 1942).

Acton; Bishop David Mathew (London: 1946).

In the course of his career as a publicist, Lord Acton engaged in a number of controversies with ecclesiastical authorities, especially with Cardinal Wiseman and Cardinal Manning. These controversies lie outside the scope of this essay, and on the issues which caused them the present writer expresses no opinion. They are discussed at length in the works here listed. Further material on this subject will be found in *The Life of John Henry, Cardinal Newman*, by Wilfrid Ward (London: 1912)

Two shorter studies may also be mentioned. There is an excellent analysis of Lord Acton's political theory in Crane Brinton, *English Political Thought in the Nineteenth Century*; and Dom Butler, O.S.B., has contributed an illuminating chapter on Acton's career to a volume of studies entitled *Great Christians*.