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THOMAS MANTON

*A Guided Tour of the Life and Thought
of a Puritan Pastor*

THOMAS MANTON

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Thought of a Puritan Pastor*

D E R E K C O O P E R



P U B L I S H I N G

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Dedicated to Steve Nichols

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FOREWORD

For many Christians, the Puritans have become a staple of their everyday lives. It is perhaps strange that men who lived so many hundreds of years ago still speak with such power to a generation raised on video games, computers, cell phones, and, more recently, texting, iPods, and iPads. Their popularity, therefore, is clearly not rooted in their compatibility with the tools of modern life; rather, it lies in the seriousness of their devotion and the greatness of the themes they engage. Human sinfulness, God's grace, the glory of Christ, and the certainty of the life to come: these are all staples of Puritan literature, and they are of perennial interest to God's people in all places and at all times.

For all the renewed interest in the Puritans, many of them remain little known. The names of John Owen, Richard Baxter, and Thomas Watson are familiar to many, but a host of other figures of equal theological and pastoral acumen feature less frequently on reading lists. In part this is because of the complexity of their language. In an era of sound bites and tweets, the rolling, periodic sentences of the Puritans can make them difficult to read. It is also the result of the differences between their world and ours: for all the common themes noted above, there is still something alien about seventeenth-century England. It is not the world of the twenty-first century.

Thus, it is a great pleasure to introduce this book by Derek Cooper. Dr. Cooper has done the church a great service by writing a clear and helpful introduction to the works of a Puritan who is perhaps less well known today than some of his contemporaries and yet who modeled the ideal of a Puritan pastor in so many ways. Thomas Manton was the complete package: a careful exegete, a passionate preacher, a churchman, a pastor, a theologian, a shepherd of souls. As with many other seventeenth-century figures, his writings are voluminous, and aspiring readers need a good map and guidebook to help them make their way through the sometimes dense material. This is precisely what Dr. Cooper has provided.

This book, excellent as it is, should not be the end of the story; it is rather aimed at whetting the reader's appetite for Manton in particular and the Puritans in general. I have no doubt that it will do precisely that.

Carl R. Trueman
Westminster Theological Seminary, Pennsylvania
March 2011

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is the result of several years of research into the life and thought of Puritanism in general and Thomas Manton in particular. So when it comes to acknowledging those who have played an important role in the formation and completion of the book, it only makes sense to me to give thanks to Thomas Manton himself! Although he has been dead for more than 300 years, I am thankful that he lived, and I certainly hope that this book faithfully represents his life and legacy. One of the greatest acts of love we show for others is to remember them; so the task of writing this book is actually an exercise in obeying Jesus' command to love others.

Besides Manton himself, I would additionally like to thank Marvin Padgett and the staff at P&R. I appreciate Marvin's enthusiasm for the Puritans, his oversight of this project, and the friendliness of the P&R staff. Everyone in the process has been helpful and pleasant, and I am appreciative of their support. My gratitude also belongs to Brandon Withrow, who has been helpful in answering a host of questions on a variety of topics. My wife Barb always merits praise, and I am forever appreciative of her support of me and the work I do. In particular, I would like to thank Carl for writing the foreword to this book; I have learned a great deal about Puritanism from him. I am also thankful to Tim Wengert, who first let me explore the topics covered in this book and who provided needed insight. Many thanks go to John Pahl,

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Finally, I would like to thank Steve Nichols. Steve’s kind heart, support, flexibility, and eagerness to connect this book to P&R have been greatly appreciated, and it is to him that I dedicate this book. I hope this book only strengthens the Guided Tour series that he created and has sustained so well.

PART ONE

MANTON IN CONTEXT: A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH PREACHER

The few who know him [today] would gladly testify, I am sure,
that Thomas Manton was one of the best authors of his day.

—J. C. Ryle

Ministers who do not know Manton need not wonder if
they are themselves unknown. —C. H. Spurgeon

In days like these, I am thankful that the publishers of
Manton's *Works* have boldly come forward to offer some
real literary gold to the reading public. I earnestly trust
that they will meet with the success which they deserve.

—J. C. Ryle

I shall now come to speak . . . of Dr. Thomas Manton . . .
a name worthy of precious and eternal memory.

—William Bates

Remembering Thomas Manton

Although there are a select few today, echoing William
Bates's words above, who certainly hold the name of Thomas

Manton as “precious” in their sight, there are far more who regard this name as anything but an “eternal memory.” Instead, it is a name that is completely forgotten. Notwithstanding his obscurity today, however, Thomas Manton was a noted preacher, author, and public figure in seventeenth-century England. He wrote hundreds of sermons or exegetical works in addition to penning the preface to the second edition of the Westminster Confession of Faith (1658). He participated in key discussions on political and religious issues and made several appearances before the English Parliament. What is more, as the rector of St. Paul’s, Covent Garden, he pastored an important congregation that included many persons of note. In fact, not only did Manton serve as a personal chaplain to Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell, but he was also invited to be a personal chaplain to King Charles II due, in part, to his involvement on the committee to restore Charles II to the throne subsequent to Cromwell’s death. From these years until his death in 1677, Thomas Manton was a prominent clergyman who was well known and well respected by conformists and nonconformists alike.

Despite his importance in matters political and religious, however, interest in Thomas Manton’s life has been sparse. This is apparent at both the academic and popular levels. When it comes to the academic level, scholars have generally focused on Puritanism in general or isolated individuals such as John Owen or Richard Baxter in particular. Most references to Manton that interact at all with his life rely upon a very old work that is almost 150 years old—a memoir of Manton’s life by Englishman William Harris. Originally written by Harris as an introduction to the first printing of Thomas Manton’s complete works in 1870, this helpful yet dated biography represents the most exhaustive account of Manton’s life in print.

When it comes to the popular level, awareness of Thomas Manton’s life and writings are equally minimal. This is espe-

cially lamentable given that Manton's works were delivered and designed for the average Christian in the pew. As Luke Timothy Johnson rightly states about Manton in his commentary on James, "His work . . . is above all 'practical,' that is, directed to the religious life and practices of his learners; all his learning tends to this end." Unlike many of his more famous contemporaries, Manton's works were not scholarly treatises or academic tomes. Rather, they were "practical" biblical expositions and sermons, which he preached to his congregations for their spiritual edification, and only later published them at the invitation of those who wanted his powerful and pertinent sermons to be made available for others to read.

Speaking of these sermons, Manton's complete works contain more than 600 individual and collective sermons. Although this may not seem like many—given that Manton preached several days a week for thirty-five years—this is a great quantity compared to other notable Puritans. As Hughes Oliphant Old explains:

[We] have a far richer selection of Manton's sermons than we have for any other leading Puritan preacher. Regrettably, Richard Baxter (1615–91) and Edmund Calamy (1600–1666), who are usually named with Manton as the three most prominent Puritan preachers, have not left us any appreciable collection of sermons. Manton, therefore, probably gives us the best sustained impression of Puritan preaching which is available.

Indeed, Manton illustrates Puritan preaching well, and it is therefore completely appropriate that a sustained look at his life and writings is finally in print.

Overview

In order to better familiarize ourselves with this largely forgotten Puritan pastor, we will take our guided tour of

Thomas Manton by looking at his life, writings, and legacy in three distinct parts. Each of the chapters in Part One focuses on different phases of Manton's life by narrating key events, by interacting with the historical circumstances of the day, and by engaging some of Manton's own writings that date from this time. Part Two concentrates on Manton's best-known work: his commentary on the book of James, which he preached week after week to his congregation outside of London. This section considers the similarities and differences between Manton's way of interpreting this letter in relation to the Protestant Reformers, Anglicans, and Puritans respectively. Finally, Part Three includes selections from Manton's works that are intended to introduce readers to some of his more noteworthy sermons and expositions. Collectively, this part focuses on Manton as citizen, pastor, and preacher. In addition to these three parts, two appendices discuss Manton's legacy as well as guide interested readers to his twenty-two-volume body of writings.

THE SERVITOR FROM SOMERSET, 1620–40

The seventeenth was the decisive century in English history.
Christopher Hill

I have come to know [Thomas Manton] so well that I could
pick him out from among a thousand divines if he were
again to put on his portly form, and display among modern
men that countenance wherein was “a great mixture of
majesty and meekness.”
C. H. Spurgeon

Introduction: The Decisive Century

It is a commonly held view that the seventeenth century was the most critical and crucial century in all of English history. Even more specifically, authors like Christopher Hill propose that the “decisive decades” of that century “are those between 1640 and 1660.” Hill’s assessment of the seventeenth century and these specific decades is certainly suggestive, as this period profoundly shaped British history. Political tension between Parliament and Charles I (1600–1649), economic hardships among the middle and



1.1. Portrait of Thomas Manton by Robert White.

lower classes, religious disputes within the Church of England, the outbreak of the English Civil War, the establishment of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate under Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), as well as the restoration of the monarchy and the issuance of several key legislative acts all jointly suggest both the restlessness and the significance of this period in English history.

Thomas Manton lived during all of these events. His life stretched through more than half of the seventeenth century, and he was altogether active during the crucial decades between 1640 and 1660. Manton was born five years before the ascension of Charles I, and he died seven years before the death of Charles II (1630–85). The middle of his life was lived during the Commonwealth (1649–53) and the Protectorate (1653–59) under Oliver Cromwell (and briefly his son Richard), and he was one of three scribes who attended the Westminster Assembly (1643–49). Manton additionally served as one of several chaplains to Cromwell and preached on occasion before Parliament; later he resigned (by compulsion) under the Act of Uniformity in 1662 as the minister of his parish and was even imprisoned during the reign of Charles II. In all of these events, the changing rhythm and the restless activity of seventeenth-century England provide the decisive setting from which to understand the life and writings of Thomas Manton.

Despite Manton's position as one of the more active and important divines in this crucial period of English political and religious history, he has attracted little interest over the past 150 years. To correct this oversight, this chapter provides an overview of Manton's life and in the process demonstrates the important role that he played in that "decisive century" in England's history. Specifically, this chapter narrates the first half of Manton's life—from his birth to his graduation from Oxford and ordination within the Church

of England—while the following two chapters in this section describe Manton’s career during the middle and later years of his life.

Early Years: Childhood and Grammar School, 1620–35

Thomas Manton was born in the remote southwestern county of Somerset, England in 1620. As the parish minister (or rector) at that time, Manton’s father, also named Thomas, baptized his son in March of that year at Lydeard St. Lawrence. By the time of his birth, Protestantism had existed in England for one hundred years. Both of Manton’s grandfathers, in fact, were Protestant ministers in the Church of England, a lineage that explains in part why young Thomas entered the ministry. The other reasons why he entered the ministry were probably related to the economic advantage it afforded him (since he was of a lower social class) as well as his personal interest in and calling to the pastorate.

Little is known about Manton’s early years and experiences. He attended his studies, notes William Harris, the English scholar and churchman of the nineteenth century who wrote a memoir of Manton’s life, at “the free school of Tiverton” in Devonshire for several years. There Manton presumably encountered a very traditional curriculum of grammatical studies and Latin. His education was doubtlessly similar to his more famous contemporary John Owen’s (1616–83), who while in grammar school in the 1620s studied grammar, literature, and, above all, Latin in preparation for future undergraduate studies at the University of Oxford.

In the early seventeenth century there were two such schools in the small town of Tiverton. The first is Blundell’s School, which was founded upon the death of Peter Blundell in 1601. Interestingly, Bishop Joseph Hall (1574–1656),

the clergyman who later ordained Manton, was offered the position of master upon the school's inception but declined. Samuel Butler subsequently accepted the position, and he would have been master during Manton's time there. The second free school in Tiverton in the early seventeenth century was Chilcott's. It was founded in 1609 upon the death of Robert Chilcott (Camyn), nephew to Peter Blundell. Little is known about the early history of this school.

It is difficult to determine precisely which of the two schools Manton attended. Records at Blundell's did not formally begin until 1770, and no extant records exist from Chilton's. However, there was arguably little difference between the two; both were intended to educate boys in the rudiments of learning that were required for admittance into the university. Manton's schooling was no doubt similar to Anthony Wood's description of his own at "a Latin school in a little house," since both Blundell's and Chilcott's would have been small at that time, and since they would have been supremely concerned with teaching their pupils Latin, the language of the academy.

Larger Religious and Political Events in England, 1620s–1630s

While young Thomas was studying Latin in a small school in the remote southwestern part of the country, England as a whole was experiencing great change. The long and stable rule of Elizabeth I (1558–1603) established peace and security in contrast to the previous years of unrest under the reigns of her half-siblings Edward (1547–53) and Mary (1553–58). Although the religious and political compromises that Elizabeth made in her reign helped stabilize the nation in many ways, they eventually created a rift that began to

emerge after James I (1566–1625) became king at the queen's death in the opening years of the 1600s.

One of these rifts was the growing tension between different groups within the Church of England. On the one side were the episcopalians¹ (or proto-Anglicans), who preferred a more liturgical worship service as well as a church leadership model based on the authority of bishops. On the other side were the presbyterians (who, together with congregationalists and independents, became known as Puritans),² who preferred a more simple worship service and a church leadership model based on the authority of elders or “presbyters.” In addition to these ecclesiological differences, there were, of course, additional theological and religious distinctions that separated these groups; but during the early part of the seventeenth century they were bent on staying united within the Church of England.

This unity gradually waned during James's reign (1603–25), but it was not until his son's tenure as King of England that this tension came to full force. Charles I, heir apparent to his father James I and grandson to Mary, Queen of Scots, inherited the English Crown in 1625. For a variety of reasons, Charles experienced great difficulty with Parliament throughout his reign, and he would eventually be brought up on charges of treason and executed in 1649 during the English Civil War. Unlike his father, who disagreed with many of the political and religious leaders and policies in England at the time but compromised when necessary, Charles was steadfast in his views. He made several ques-

1. The terms *episcopalian* and *presbyterian* in this book are lowercased since both refer to ministers in the Church of England. These two terms would refer to people from different denominations at a later point in history.

2. The use of the term *Puritans* here refers, in the words of Carl Trueman, “to those who wished to see a further reformation of worship in the Established Church in a direction which emphasized liturgical simplicity and the centrality of preaching. . . . Such Puritans were not separatists, however, as by and large, they remained within the church until expelled in 1662.”

tionable decisions and appointments in his early years as king—including a very unpopular decision to marry a French Catholic princess at a time when Parliament was thoroughly Protestant and decidedly anti-Catholic, as well as making several appointments that further continued his uneasy relationship with Parliament.

One such religious and political appointment was Charles's decision to appoint William Laud (1573–1645) to the very important and influential bishopric of London in 1628. This was a striking blow to the Puritan cause, which was increasingly uneasy with the direction of the Church of England. For some time now, London had been a great stronghold of both Puritan and presbyterian ideas. The king's appointment of the Anglo-Catholic Laud caused great consternation, and it is at this time that Puritanism entered a new and more aggressive phase. This is because Laud—who was openly Arminian, strongly in favor of the episcopacy, highly ceremonial and sacramental, and generally opposed to the Puritans—began passing legislation that directly disfavored this group as well as nominating several bishops and others of note to higher positions in the church who were knowingly Arminian in theology. Laud's policies and actions at this time, though fully supported by King Charles I, caused mounting tensions that would only be resolved during the English Civil War and Restoration.

Adolescent Years: Oxford University, 1635–39

The king's appointment of people like William Laud to very influential positions affected many people, Thomas Manton included. Young Thomas's residence at Oxford actually coincided with that of Laud's who, as chancellor from 1630 to 1645, introduced several educational reforms at the university. Laud's chancellorship was heavily involved

in the daily affairs of the school. It is believed, in fact, that Laud is largely responsible for the expansion of Arminianism within the university curriculum at Oxford, in much the same way that he was responsible for the changes in the church at large, which until this time had been largely Puritan and Calvinistic.

Manton entered Wadham College at Oxford University in March of 1635. Although Exeter College had been, notes Stephen Porter, “the most popular college for students from Somerset” for some time, Wadham became the “commonest destination” for students from the western counties in the early seventeenth century. Wadham was actually the newest addition to Oxford at this time. It was founded upon the death of Nicholas Wadham in 1610, and the new college was meticulously constructed through the efforts of Wadham’s wife Dorothy for the next several years. Being founded by a descendant from a wealthy family rooted in the western part of the country, Wadham’s new college naturally attracted students from that general area. According to the original statutes of Wadham, in fact, three scholars were to be admitted from Manton’s home county of Somerset.

Manton matriculated to Wadham as a “servitor” or plebeian (the equivalent of a “sizar” at rival Cambridge University). This was the lowest of grades at Oxford, and it resonates with Stephen Porter’s assertion that “Youths of lower social status went to the universities to obtain the training and qualifications required for them to develop a career, especially in the church.” This was because a career in the church “was the single greatest outlet” or professional avenue for university students in the seventeenth century, especially for plebeians such as Manton. In line with the times, Manton was likely the first in his family of clerics to enter the university. The very opportunity to attend Oxford was either afforded by his being the only male child in the family or,

what is perhaps more plausible, by receiving patronage by an aristocrat from his home area.

The economic factors to Manton's education are consonant with the development of the clerical profession in England during the seventeenth century. Unlike Manton's two grandfathers and his father, for instance, a university education became important for prospective clergymen only during the seventeenth century. Before then, most clergymen did not attend the university. By Manton's time, however, clerical education at the university level was on the rise. Historian Rosemary O'Day estimates, in fact, that about 15 percent of students at Oxford during the 1630s were "sons of clergy" who were probably following their fathers' footsteps into the ministry. In this way she wryly asserts that for plebeians such as Manton, "the degree was a meal-ticket."

It is in this context that Porter underscores the "economic" and "social" advantages received by plebeians such as Manton who attended the university. To do so as a servitor was certainly not ideal in such a class-conscious nation like England—where one's status upon birth largely determined one's status throughout one's life—but attending the university was a supreme opportunity for an increase in mobility and status. As a servitor, Manton would have waited upon the fellows in Wadham and received exemption from certain fees for room and board and lectures. Because of the "indignities and drudgery" that the rank of servitor entailed, Lawrence Stone argues that clergymen's sons often matriculated as "commoners or battelers," which would have been a grade up the social ladder and therefore would have given the student greater social mobility and standing, rather than as servitors. Presumably due to economic necessity, however, Manton served as a servitor at Wadham.

During Manton's residency at Wadham College, Oxford was experiencing an explosion in its population at both

the university and in the surrounding town—a reflection of the wider population growth throughout England. It is estimated that Oxford boasted a town population of 10,000 residents in the 1630s, while a third of the population lived at the university. This decade, interestingly enough notes Nicholas Tyacke, “saw the highest numbers of student admissions in any decade before the 1870s,” coming to around 5,000 admissions in total, which eventually produced an influx of ministerial graduates in the middle of the seventeenth century. Despite the increase in admissions and population, however, the colleges rarely contained more than 200 students at a time. It is estimated that Wadham College, for example, housed around 100 members during Manton’s residence. Hart Hall, where Manton spent his last days before graduating, was approximately the same size.

The Curriculum at Oxford, 1630s

The center of learning at Oxford (and Cambridge) in the seventeenth century was the undergraduate curriculum. This was so, historian Mordechai Feingold explains, because “it was shared by all students, irrespective of social background or length of stay.” Every undergraduate ostensibly followed this course of study regardless of respective college, background, or future endeavor. In this respect, the undergraduate curriculum was “quintessentially humanistic”; it was designed to foster general familiarity with all subjects rather than specialization in any one in particular. Students were therefore exposed to a wide variety of subjects. A typical student, explains Feingold,

ideally received grounding in the constituents of language, arts, and sciences, acquired the habits of reasoning and

judgement, and, perhaps most important, imbibed a love of literature that would last until one's dying day.

The aim of the undergraduate curriculum was therefore to instill in its students an appropriate disposition toward learning and a foundation upon which to build their own edifice of knowledge in the years subsequent to Oxford.

Similarly, as Cambridge historian William Costello explains in one of his books, logic was regarded at both Cambridge and Oxford as "the 'art of arts,'" the framework for all subsequent knowledge. He further characterizes the discipline as primarily Aristotelian, though Feingold attests the appropriateness of this categorization. What it was not, however, was Ramist. Feingold argues persuasively that Ramism waned in popularity within "two or three decades after [Peter] Ramus' death in 1572." There were many reasons why this occurred, not least, Feingold states, because the "movement as a whole scarcely retained intellectual respectability." Aristotelianism, by contrast, retained intellectual respectability for some time. And although the discipline of logic was not completely Aristotelian in the sense that students only studied Aristotle, Aristotelian logic was present in the curriculum; and it was certainly represented in the context of Oxford's emphasis on "the essential interconnectedness of knowledge," as well as in its attention to language and its construction.

Aristotle's interest in language and exact expression naturally coalesced with the sister art of logic, rhetoric. Renaissance sensitivity to rhetoric as exemplified in the works of, among others, Erasmus (1466–1536) had become the hallmark of a university education. However, rhetoric was not limited to modern authors; instead Feingold argues that it was "to be as comprehensive as possible, exercising the student in a variety of ancient and modern styles." In this way,

it was very eclectic: Classic Greek and Latin writers such as Ovid, Virgil, Cicero, Horace, Seneca, and Petrarch featured heavily in the curriculum—as a cursory look at Manton’s quotations from his sermons substantiates. In fact, Seneca and Petrarch were particular favorites of his, and it is natural to conclude that he learned to read and appreciate these authors while in grammar school and especially while at Wadham.

On the whole, there was a veritable “veneration of language” at Oxford during the Renaissance that contributed to its dominance in the curriculum. Feingold notes how William Laud’s chancellorship further perpetuated this emphasis on language as the “ultimate purpose of both the BA and MA courses.” Attention to eloquence naturally directed students to the Greek and Latin classics. The Oxford historian Charles Mallet asserts, for instance, that first-year students at Wadham were required to attend lectures “on Greek and Latin authors three times a week.” The prevalence of Manton’s frequent allusions to classic authors in his works reveals his indebtedness to his earlier education, particularly his exposure to Latin classics.

According to Oxford historian George Brodrick, undergraduates most likely attended lectures in grammar, rhetoric, ethics, logic, moral philosophy, and Greek; and most students took the Bachelor’s degree at the end of their fourth year. The so-called Laudian Code of 1636 suggests that the lectures closely followed the medieval educational system: namely, the *trivium* (“the three roads”), which included grammar, logic, and rhetoric; and the more advanced *quadrivium* (“the four roads”), which included arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. Specifically, Feingold states,

Rhetoric was prescribed for the first year, dialectic for the second and third years, and moral philosophy—along with

Greek and arithmetic—was studied by students in their third and fourth years.

The required examinations for the Bachelor of Arts at the completion of their studies tested students in the subjects of the lectures they attended. What is more, as Brodrick explains, “the method of interrogation seems to have been exclusively oral; and the authority of Aristotle was to be paramount within the whole sphere of his voluminous writings.”

As a prospective minister, Manton would have certainly benefited from the public lectures he attended as well as the many disciplines he studied through the course of his undergraduate education. Especially valuable would have been what were called “declamations” and “disputations.” Whereas the declamation was essentially a short speech that students gave in order to refine their speaking abilities as well as their literary and rhetorical insight, the disputations were debates between students that evaluated their abilities to think quickly and conduct arguments reasonably and eloquently. Manton would have engaged in several of these exercises during his undergraduate days in various subjects, and involvement in them would have greatly benefited him during his career, which focused so heavily on reasoning and speaking well.

Besides the lectures, the disputations, and the declamations, there was an additional resource at the university that would have been particularly influential in the course of Manton’s education: the tutor. Tutors in the seventeenth century supervised the studies of their pupils and recommended specific books. By the end of the sixteenth century, and certainly by the time of Manton’s matriculation at Wadham, all of the colleges at Oxford had mandated the appointing of tutors for all incoming students. Because tutors offered

personal guidance to students as well as additional instruction to the formal lectures and disputations, a student's tutor was perhaps the most important person with whom the student would be in contact.

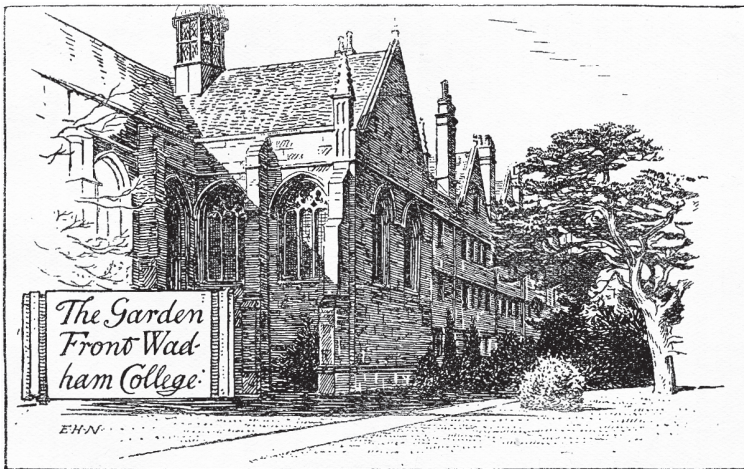
Unlike his more famous acquaintance John Owen, who studied at Queen's College, Oxford under Thomas Barlow (1607–91), it is not possible to determine who Manton's tutor was while at nearby Wadham College. The warden or head of Wadham at this time was Daniel Estcot, but he probably influenced Manton less extensively than his tutor. Due to the fact that tutors differed widely in their management of their pupils, it is not possible to establish the specific books to which Manton's tutor would have directed him. Manton's tutor certainly supervised his progress in Latin and Greek, and he would have offered additional instruction as needed. But further information about Manton's tutor and the influence he may have had upon him is not known. What is most likely is that there were multiple influences on Manton's education, in terms of teachers, teaching method, and books.

From Bachelor to Doctor

Manton graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1639. For some unknown reason, he transferred to Hart Hall (now Hertford College) during his last months of study and thus graduated from this society instead of Wadham. Transferring from one college to another was far from uncommon at Oxford, but the exact reason for Manton's departure from Wadham is obscure. The most sensible explanation for this transfer was financial. This was because "halls" were cheaper than "colleges," and it was a regular occurrence for students to transfer to halls from colleges as a result. Another explanation, one given by Anthony Wood (1632–95), who wrote a

generation after Manton and described him as “a hotheaded person,” insinuates that Manton’s temper was the reason for his transference to Hart Hall toward the end of his studies. Regardless of the exact cause of his departure from Wadham, Manton resided at the college and received supervision there for practically the entirety of his undergraduate studies at Oxford. In this way, it remains of little consequence that Manton transferred at the end of his undergraduate program to Hart Hall.

Although Manton graduated in 1639 and thereby concluded his on-campus requirements at the university level for good, he did not terminate his studies. Over the course of his career, Manton received two more degrees at Oxford: the Bachelor of Divinity and the Doctor of Divinity. According to the Laudian statutes, the degree of Bachelor of Divinity required seven years beyond the Bachelor of Arts, while the Doctor of Divinity required eleven. However, the students were not required to remain in residence while



1.2. Picture of Wadham College, Oxford, where Manton attended college during the late 1630s.

completing these degrees. In accordance with these statutes, Manton became a Bachelor of Divinity at Wadham (not Hart Hall) on April 20, 1654. He was awarded this degree on the ground that “he is a person of known worth, and a constant preacher in London.” Six years later on November 19, 1660, he received the Doctor of Divinity at the request of Charles II—the highest degree Oxford offered.

The earning of the Doctor of Divinity at this time was prestigious, and throughout his lifetime Manton was regarded as a very learned pastor. As Anglican Bishop J. C. Ryle (1816–1900) would later proclaim, Manton was “the prince among the [Puritan] divines.” From the years during his undergraduate studies at Wadham to the ones subsequent to becoming a Doctor of Divinity two decades later, Manton amassed an extensive library, particularly of books relating to divinity or theology. At the time of his matriculation to Wadham, that college maintained a collection of some 2,000 books on divinity in its private library. The much larger and more famous Bodleian library at Oxford was likewise available to Manton (though it is possible that as a servitor he was not allowed entrance there).

Although it is not known exactly which books Manton read while at Oxford, it is evident in his many writings that he was conversant with both classic and modern authors, secular and Christian ones. And it can further be conjectured, based on contemporary records, which books were available in the middle of the seventeenth century and which were popular or prominent around Manton’s lifetime, especially for Puritans. Because Thomas Barlow was a tutor at nearby Queen’s College while Manton was a student at Wadham, it is not implausible to conclude that Barlow’s *On the Study of Theology*, which listed the books that he prescribed for his students including John Owen, would have been quite familiar to Manton.

A cursory glance at Barlow's list of books is impressive, encompassing a wide range of theological and exegetical works with which Manton would have probably been at least generally familiar, if not much more so. Upon his death in 1691, Barlow bequeathed his massive volume of books, which included the titles that he recommended to his students, to Bodleian Library. Although Manton's library was not as extensive as Barlow's, it was certainly noteworthy. The library catalogue of these books, which were all sold at an auction in London immediately after Manton's death in order to sustain his wife and children, contains hundreds of volumes, which the auctioneer William Cooper divides into various categories: Greek and Latin works, commentaries, theology, philosophy, history, and divinity. This list confirms the many reports about Manton being a very learned pastor and preacher who spent countless hours in his study in preparation for his sermons.

Ordination and Pastorate, 1639–40

When Manton graduated from Oxford in 1639, he was a mere nineteen years old. Although William Harris argues that this was especially noteworthy at the time, it is not necessarily as unusual as it appears. Several factors determined when students would matriculate to the university, not least of which was mastery of Latin. Therefore, there was a range of several years for incoming and graduating students. John Owen, for instance, graduated BA when he was sixteen years old, while his more famous pupil John Locke graduated BA when he was twenty-three. Rosemary O'Day estimates that the average age for incoming students was around seventeen years of age, but the age depended ultimately upon the mastery of Latin.

Shortly after his graduation from Oxford, Manton was ordained to the diaconate in the Church of England in 1640.

There is disagreement as to whether he ever received further ordination from the lower office of “deacon” to the higher one of “priest” at some point later in his career. Anthony Wood, for his purposes, reports that Manton was ordained to the priesthood in 1660 at Westminster Abbey. However, Harris’s memoir of Manton, dating back to the second part of the nineteenth century, argues instead that Manton took orders as a deacon (and never as a priest) in the conviction that he had been “properly ordained to the ministerial office.” This mind-set is based on the conviction that God is the one who officially ordains, so the human level of ordination—whether as a deacon or priest—is not as important. Harris bases this statement on the words of Edmund Calamy (1600–1666), a friend of Manton’s. Given that Wood argues that Manton’s ordination in 1660 was his only ordination within the Church of England, it is most likely not correct.

What appears most likely is that Manton was ordained to the diaconate in 1640 at the age of nineteen, but it is not possible to determine whether he was ever officially ordained to the priesthood later in his career. His appointment to the noteworthy rectorate at Covent Garden in London several years later could suggest that he was, but this is not definitive. What is more established is the record that it was the well-known author and bishop Joseph Hall who ordained Manton. Hall, the noted proponent of episcopalianism (Anglican episcopacy) and a satirist during the seventeenth century, was appointed to the bishopric of Exeter in 1627, an office that he held until he transferred to the see at Norwich in 1641. Because Hall was the bishop in the diocese to which Manton accepted his initial position in nearby Sowton, it was he who ordained young Thomas. In the ceremony Hall stated that Manton “would prove [to be] an extraordinary person” throughout his career, but little is known about the direct relationship between the two.

Manton in Relation to Changing Times

While Manton was graduating from the university and undergoing ordination in 1639–40, momentous changes were taking place in the country. The English Crown, under Charles I, was in the middle of an intense dispute with Scotland, which was known as the Bishop's War. Charles's



Charles I.

CHARLES I.

1.3. Portrait of King Charles I in 1648, who was taken prisoner during the English Civil War and beheaded for treason in 1649 by Parliament.

attempt to force the episcopacy upon the presbyterian Scots had been fiercely resented, and Charles was in a precarious position since he was in desperate need of money and support, but lacked both since he had refused to call Parliament in session for a decade and had attempted to rule the nation independently. Stubborn, but with no other options, Charles ordered the so-called Short Parliament into session in the spring of 1640 to help his situation, but the members offered no support for the king; so he hurriedly dissolved the Parliament only to have to convene the so-called Long Parliament a few months later once his situation was dire. The convening of the Long Parliament in the fall of 1640 was the beginning of the end of Charles's reign. Parliament, bitter over the king's failure to redress previous grievances and discontent with the economic, political, and religious direction in which Charles was leading the nation, effectively took control of the government. The series of events that ensued eventually erupted into a veritable war involving the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

As all of these momentous events were transpiring, young Thomas Manton was embarking on the beginning of his career. His entire life, in fact, would be supremely inter-related with these events. Within just a few years, he would be forced to move his family out of harm's way on more than one occasion, and his eventual arrival in London during the Commonwealth would place him in a very advantageous position, only to be pushed out of prominence once the tide had turned in the opposite direction. In all of these events within this "decisive century," Manton was very much a man of his times, attempting to be faithful to his call to the pastorate in the midst of difficult and unprecedented circumstances.