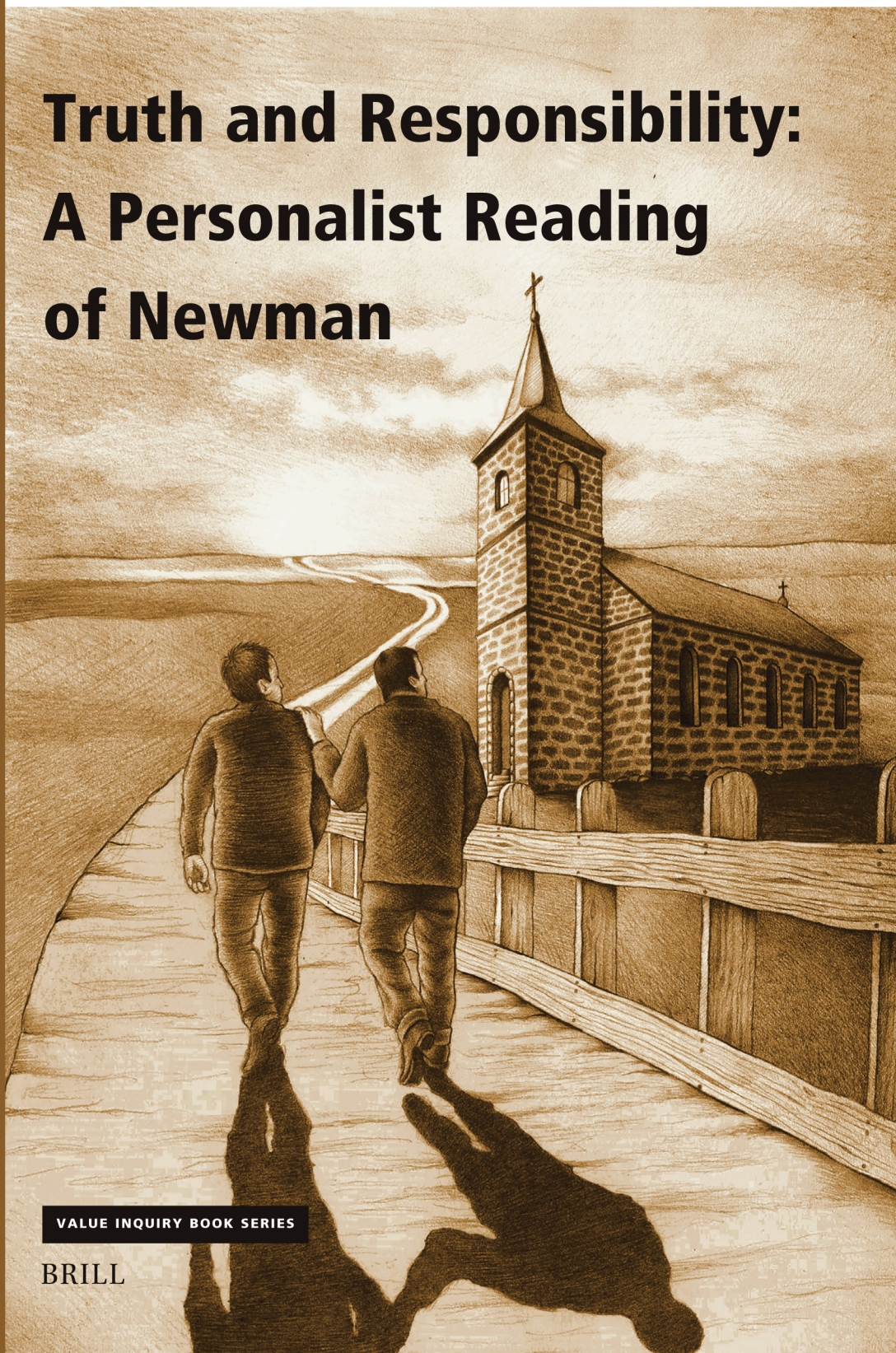
Jan Kłos

Truth and Responsibility: A Personalist Reading of Newman



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Truth and Responsibility: A Personalist Reading of Newman

By

Jan Kłos

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Contents

Abbreviations of John Henry Newman's Texts

Apo.	*Apologia pro Vita Sua*
DA	*Discussions and Arguments*
Ess.	*Essays Critical and Historical*
PPS	*Parochial and Plain Sermons*
GA	*An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*
Diff.	*Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching Considered in Twelve Lectures addressed in 1850 to the Party of the Religious Movement of 1833*
US	*Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford*
SD	*Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day*
Dev.	*An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*

Introduction

> At present we are in a world of shadows.
> What we see is not substantial.
>
> J. H. NEWMAN

• • •

> Truth is stranger than fiction.
>
> W. A. CLEBSCH

• • •

> For I have lit on a great truth: to wit, that all men dwell,
> and life's meaning changes for them with the meaning of the home.
>
> A. DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

∴

John Henry Newman wrote one of his perhaps best known and most recognized works, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, in 1864. Why did he write it? Why did its author see the need to write a "defence of his own life"? This question is especially intriguing, for the title might suggest that the author of the *Apologia* came to the conclusion that his life was in need of defence, or else sought to compare his life with someone else's, an idea that he himself would particularly oppose as being absurd. It must be noted that by this time, he had already learnt to trust rather the call of duties from without than from within his own self, a mode of action which was an important trait of his modification of modern epistemology. Man is safer, both in moral and religious respect, when assuming the arduous task of defending the truth or, to be precise, realizing it rather than when giving in to the temptation to stand up in defence of his wounded self-image. For in the case of a spirited defence, he is guided by his duty, even if cumbersome, not by the doubtful satisfaction of retribution. And even when he is called to defend it, he must be on his guard not to get too caught up in this task, because the truth is not his property or his invention. The task to write

"the history of himself" Newman understood as his "great trial."[1] And it was a trial worth undertaking, for it is always worth understanding oneself.

When were his life decisions challenged? It was the time of Lent in that memorable year when Newman fell ill and was filled with a foreboding feeling of approaching death. He then noted in his diary: "I write in the direct view of death as in prospect. […] I die in the faith of the One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church. […] I hope to die in that Church which our Lord founded on Peter, and which will continue till His second coming."[2] In these words he sought to stress that, if, indeed, it was the moment of his departure, he would not like to be taken as a defeated man, that he still persisted in the decision to which he had grown and had ultimately made in 1845, at the moment when he joined the fellowship of the Roman Catholic Church.

Charles Kingsley's pamphlet,[3] which was the main reason why Newman embarked on writing the *Apologia*, reached the future Cardinal on Palm Sunday, at the heart of Lent. It is from this text that the British convert learned that he was a liar – such was Kingsley's conviction – and that by joining the institution which persisted in error he was no longer a man of trust, for his decision could not have been disinterested. The pamphlet was clearly accusatory in tone towards the Roman Catholic Church. It enlivened the ancient Anglican resentments. Newman found in the text the charges he already knew, namely that the Church of Rome had been always hatching plots, in the grounds that the goal justifies the means; she tended to gain and increase her power rather than preach the truth. The pamphlet combined prejudices towards Newman, allegedly a tool in the hand of "imperialistic" Rome, with prejudices towards the Church.

Pondering over the text of his adversary, Newman wrote: "He asks what I *mean*; not about my words, not about my arguments, not about my actions, […] but about that living intelligence, by which I write, and argue, and act. […] I must, I said, give the true key to my whole life; I must show what I am that it may be seen what I am not […]. I wish to be known as a living man, and not as a scarecrow which is dressed up in my clothes."[4] The author of these words seems to be asking: how can an outside observer recount and comprehend

1 Cf. *Apo.*, 1.

2 M. Trevor, *Newman: Light in Winter*, London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1962, 331.

3 It was entitled *What Then Does Dr. Newman Mean?* Kingsley was a graduate of Cambridge University, a member of the Anglican Church, a professor of literature, a writer, and advocate of Christian socialism. He was very much in favour of Darwin's theory of evolution, and severely criticised the Roman Catholic Church.

4 M. Trevor, *Newman: Light in Winter*, 332–333.

every incident and reflect every mood of another person, so that he can justifiably pass such a condemnatory and disparaging judgment? For him, as for any outside observer, a single biography is a story seamless in its tracings; he has no access to the internal struggle of the person in question. But for the insider it is replete with hesitations, second thoughts, inspections and retrospections. Let us also note that the word "scarecrow" expresses Newman's indignation at being taken for granted on the one hand and, on the other, at the total disregard for the unique character of a person's individual history in which there are moments of hesitation, vacillation, and misinterpretation; life is a dynamic personal process unfolding in history with all its respective trials. Thus, Kingsley's text shows a complete disregard for the dynamic character of individual human life.

The above reflection is essential and will make the principal point of reference for this work. Facing such charges, Newman seems to argue as follows: "this sounds as if someone bore me a grudge that I am not someone else than I am." I interpret the *Apologia* both as a defence of individual life, for it is only this particular life for which a person can take responsibility, and also as a message which has a more universal value. In this manner, I understand the whole text by Newman as a text which perfectly fits the nineteenth-century revisions of the Enlightenment. Therefore, I agree with the Polish historian of philosophy, Andrzej Walicki, who claims that Newman's personalism is "recognised as an excellent indication of individualist and, at the same time, universal philosophy of Catholicism,"[5] a conclusion which succinctly recapitulates Newman's position and his valuable contribution to the understanding of our times. Today, we seem to be torn between two extremes: individualism and collectivism, or, in the political sense, loose individualism and the overweening State which has this tendency to form people into a mass. Both dichotomies are wrong. As such, they reduce the wealth of human nature. When we turn to individualism, we neglect the communal part of human life; when we turn to collectivism, we belittle the importance of individual impact.

Newman indeed defines his *Apologia* as a defence of himself, but not in the sense that his life is better than others' lives. As he admits himself: "my whole work has been a defence of myself."[6] But this defence was aimed primarily, as has been stressed many times here, at the defence of the individual life that runs its course of changes, failures and successes, not at gainsaying that something did not take place if it did take place, or that he wished to have been

5 A. Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli* [*Stanisław Brzozowski* – the Paths of Thought], Kraków: UNIVERSITAS, 2011, 311.

6 *Apo*., 188.

someone else, or that he regretted he was not a different person. Newman's aim was to fend off accusations of hypocrisy both about his past and his current decision to move to the Roman Catholic Church.

What right does one person have to charge another person with falsehood and hypocrisy? He would have to contemplate in his mind, as a point of reference, either his own life or some universal model; such a model, if that were available, would be an abstraction elicited from different (how many?) biographies. We might call it, tentatively, an approximation of what an ideal life could be like. He should also possess complete knowledge about the concrete circumstances of this other person, under which this person made such decisions and not others. Such a task would indeed be Herculean, for it would not only necessitate the external observance of the person under investigation, but to actually enter his mind. The other person cannot deny what he, in good faith, had assented to at the moment of his assent, and what kind of knowledge he had at his disposal. Obviously, he could have made a mistake, but at the same time he cannot renounce or deny himself, even though he might recall the past time with pain and regret, for it was he who was its hero and main author. It must also be noted that both pain and regret are justifiable on condition that such a person can recall the intentional aspects of his decisions. Now, if his intentions were good, what kind of pain or regret can he feel?

This hostile pamphlet, paradoxically, brought recovery to Newman who had only recently thought about his imminent death and, strangely enough, it is thanks to this pamphlet that we have received one of the most beautiful descriptions (it could even be called a eulogy) of the development of an individual person, composed in accordance with the best rules of English prose. Let us state this clearly: it is an apology of struggles, errors, triumphs and failures, through which a person is led by his or her right conscience amidst the complicated dynamisms of events, in search of the certitude which brings peace. Newman felt aggrieved that his life had been so lightly dismissed.

I note here an interesting parallel with a previous event in the life of our author. In 1833, when Newman sojourned in Sicily,[7] he also fell seriously ill. He thought about his imminent death as well, and it was then as well that he had this profound belief that he still had a special task to fulfil in his homeland.

7 Meriol Trevor rightly suggests that the Sicilian expedition inside the crater was for Newman a figure of man's journey to his own interior, a journey which the British tourist made himself (see M. Trevor, *Newman: The Pillar of the Cloud*, London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1962, 123–124). The darkness of the crater certainly instigated the thought about the functional disarrangement of the mind that must be integrated. The cognitive faculties are only potentially ready to their role.

Indeed, he recovered and returned home. At that inauspicious time his best known poem "Lead, Kindly Light" was composed (difficulties lend inspiration to poetry). Thereafter the movement for the renewal of the Anglican Church, the Oxford Movement (1833–1845),[8] started, and the poem became the hymn of that same movement. In 1864, we have a similar premonition about death, and a new task to perform.

This work is an attempt to show the mystery of individual life as a solitary drama in coming to know the truth in which the person has not only a theoretical recognition of the truth, but has realized that he possesses (or, rather, is possessed by) it and can say: *I know that I know*. Simultaneously, he has a profound sense of certitude that he does not need to go anywhere else; this does not mean that he has no problems to tackle, for such a state would be utopian and unreal, but that he is in the right place. In this way, each must make a solitary effort at integrating one's own internal life; in other words, to paraphrase Newman, placing thoughts, words, and feelings *under one roof*, i.e. reconciling the intellectual with the moral parts of our being. There are no shortcuts to take and no alien paths to be adopted. Therefore, I would like to retell Newman's story, taking into consideration facts from his biography; if we are to evaluate someone's life, we must consider this individual history as it successively unfolds. Our author would always stress that in *our* journey to truth and certitude, i.e. to *our* personal fulfilment, we have to use ourselves,

8 After the Reform Act of 1832, a new ecclesiastical fervour emerged within the Anglican Communion, known as the Oxford or Oriel movement because it originated in Oxford and especially at Oriel College, or as Tractarianism because it found its literary expression in a series of publications called Tracts for the Times. In the public eye, its most prominent figure was Pusey. Essentially, it was a return to the divine authority of the Catholic Church, a Church whose priesthood had been handed down in unbroken continuity over the centuries through the rite of ordination. This authority could not be overturned by the state, nor could any secular jurisdiction be recognised. The sanction for its doctrines and ritual was to be found in the decisions of the universal councils of the Church, in the teaching of the early Fathers and in the practice of the universal Church. On this basis, doctrines and practices that had previously been condemned as papist were revived. The movement brought a new intensity of spiritual life to the Church, and at the same time challenged the fundamental doctrine of Protestantism, claiming not only that the Church was independent of the state, but that the priesthood was the authoritative mediator of divine grace. The state refused to recognise the claims of the new school and continued to maintain its own authority; but the Tractarians did not accept the solution of disengaging from the establishment and relinquishing their endowments in the name of spiritual independence.

Clergymen feared that atheistic reform would be unleashed. The movement was initiated with John Keble's Oxford sermon (*On National Apostasy*) in which the preacher declared a clerical resistance founded on the apostolic traditions of the Church of England. It was a conservative and intellectual appeal to Anglican tradition.

our faculties, overcome *our* failures, and moderate *our* successes. To know the truth and to realize it—that is our fundamental responsibility. And such was the principal reason why Newman set out on his quest. He did not feel safe and at home in his milieu. In other words, he felt, in a sense, incomplete and could not be satisfied with the advantages his academic and religious position gave him.

Let us follow then the stages of Newman's biography as he delineated them in his *Apologia*. We are going to look at them with a view to seeing how they mould the person's development and help one attain fulfilment. It is indeed fascinating to watch how Newman realized that the place to which he was born was not his home, how he sought certitude and, for that purpose, decided to analyze human cognition anew, since he had to refute certain essential elements of the hitherto philosophy of modernity; how he delved into the processes of human cognition and came up with a new insight. His life is a meaningful lesson for personal growth and the proposal of personalism. Therefore we are going to consider the stages of his life from the point of view of his important contribution to the understanding of the human being introduced in his other works.

The main purpose of this work is to garner, sift and systematize Newman's insights he strewed so profusely through the pages of his numerous texts in order to gain a picture of the person, the person he understood not as an isolated being endowed with intellectual capacities, but as a historical creature plunged into his time and place. This does not mean in the least that Newman advocated relativism or subjectivism, but emphasized that, depending on our personal circumstances, we face different obstacles on the way to the truth. Since the thinking of a historical creature is related to his time and place, as we are not pure *res cogitans*, we need to recognize our obstacles and overcome them in the quest for truth and certitude. Newman's confessions from his *Apologia pro Vita Sua* are supplemented with references to the theoretical attainments from his other texts. In like manner, I hope to provide a possibly complete picture of the thinker.

Let us also emphasise that this is a study of Newman from outside the familiar Anglo-Saxon context, which seeks to illustrate his relevance in the wider context of nineteenth-century European thought, and to demonstrate his current cognitive value to readers from different backgrounds and schools across Europe. The reader will find here, for instance, Newman's notion of the primacy of the person, an element so characteristic of the personalist philosophy of St John Paul II and Poland's Lublin school.

PART 1

The Main Components of Newman's Personalist System of Cognition

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Introduction to Part 1

John Henry Newman was an intriguing figure in his country, both as a scholar, writer, and preacher. He electrified his listeners with his sermons, completely free of any oratorical effects. He would read them from his pulpit in a monotonous voice, but filled with the power of the spirit, as if he wanted to say that the most important thing was not the preacher but his message, the sincerity of his intention. (The way he presented his sermons would probably not make headline news in our visually dominated communication). His voice was not powerful, he took long pauses, but nevertheless "he kept his congregation spellbound."[1] His sermons were characterized by "a continuous tone of earnestness."[2] What electrified the people then was the truth emanating from the words, or, better still, from the speaker of these words. Let us present one more extraordinary fact, namely, that this power of attraction is retained both in the sermons from his Anglican period, as well as in those from his Roman Catholic period. That is a unique feature of Newman's texts in general, and an obvious conclusion arises here. One may be, on the whole, in error as regards his assessment of the other party, but still remain true to oneself.

How does one person recognize another person? As human beings, we recognize other persons ultimately not only on the grounds of a number of certain well-known traits. We recognize and accept them despite the fact that the set of traits is always incomplete, for we are confronted with many implicit elements; and even in the case of the explicit elements, more often than not we realize that we have been taken aback by yet another trait we have not noticed before. A further point is that the implicit ingredients will always remain so. The main failure of Kingsley's argument against Newman was that the author of the pamphlet took it for granted that he knew all the past, or even, perhaps, future decisions (and the attendant social states) of a given person; that there are certain obvious interpretations of what is unknown at the moment. Now, given all the states I know (obviously judging, in retrospect), I confront them with an arbitrary pattern; moreover, let us note that when a critic thinks "he knows," he is simply imposing his own interpretation, and, naturally, has no access to all of the hidden motives. His reasoning amounts to usurpation because (1) we do not have access to someone's past and future states, and (2) we do not have at our disposal one universal pattern of conduct, a sort of

1 Zeno, *John Henry Newman and his Inner Life*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987, 56.

2 *Ibid*., 57.

template of human behaviour. Therefore, our critical evaluation of someone's decisions is only subjective, for we fail to enter the concrete circumstances of the other person's life. Such a situation is even more complicated. Assuming we have learnt, say, the "system" of another person, even then we shall never be able to render a complete picture because we can never, so to speak, enter the other person's mind. Prudence should suggest at least a suspension of judgment.

This failure to understand another person, a failure that results not merely from our ontic structure, for we share this with other human beings, but from what is additionally superimposed by our personal development amidst cultural animosities and prejudices, may predispose us to adopting a positive or negative attitude to another person. This adds to the inadequacy of our knowledge. In the beginning, for instance, Newman inherited a hostile attitude to Roman Catholics, for such was his historical heritage and his partiality. The judgments he formulated were based on his incomplete knowledge about the Roman Catholic Church and her believers. His faulty reasoning, however, did not stand in the way of forming personally true judgments. If, as he often claimed, change is the essence of human life, such was his life throughout. Change is the essence of growth. We only need to be true to ourselves under the guardian eye of a well-informed conscience, and such is the most certain way out of ignorance.

The *Apologia* rises to the point of being a symbol of what crowned the whole of Newman's writing, namely his efforts to show a person in all his or her concrete circumstances and historical development, and how such a being can accomplish fulfilment. As I wrote in the introduction, I find in this work two principal goals: the individual and the universal. The individual goal pertains to its author's resolution to critically examine his life not with the intention to evaluate it according to some objective pattern, let alone compare himself with others. In his *Apologia*, therefore, Newman does not defend his life because it has not satisfied someone's expectations, as if he indeed wanted to be someone else and behave differently. He only defends himself against the charges of hypocrisy and pretence. We could define the method of the text as that of introspection, which in itself is an important factor of spiritual life, and a historical study, which, in turn, goes against the tide of the dominant model of modern ahistorical attitudes. Newman was constantly on his guard lest he succumb to reluctant sympathy, suspicious of any emotional agitation let loose from the control of reason.

The individual purpose of the work then consists in deciding whether, at times, its author was a double-faced man, that is, whether he made use of what he himself in other contexts calls *unreal words*, words foreign to the speaker,

i.e. discordant to his thought or intention. Looking at a person, Newman does not limit himself only to the era in which he lives, but aspires to show a much broader context, namely the philosophical context which made the culture of the nineteenth century be in such a state. We shall see this, above all, in his most philosophical work, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, although he frequently disclaimed any ambitions to be called a philosopher. Philosophy naturally strives to arrive at certain universal truths, but Newman often emphasizes that he wishes to speak only *from* and *for* himself, without evaluating others; at the same time, it is true that there are different philosophies. Some of them resemble testimonies and personal memoirs, and such was Newman's philosophy; it is also true that all genuine philosophy should bear witness to its holder's quest for truth, and such was his philosophy too, i.e. a personal testimony. In the case of Newman, it was an especially personal endeavour. Not only did he wish to understand his own life, but he also yearned to understand in general the nature of the person's cognition, and, above all, the importance of personal examples, which matter more than theoretical explanations, the role of conscience in the evaluation of moral duties, the relationship between knowledge and belief and, above all, the mystery of persons in their readiness to interpret the meaningful signs of the time.

In the beginning of the *Apologia* he notes that he cares less "for disclosures," and the main text opens with the memorable words *Secretum meum mihi* (my mystery belongs to me), words we can find in the works of the prophet Isaiah, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Philip Neri, and St. Theresa Benedictine of the Cross (Edith Stein). In other words, there are things he cannot account for, so he would rather keep them secret. As regards the things he can explain, he has nothing to hide; he does not treat his life as exemplary, but as one among others; there are elements in each individual life that cannot be explained, for it is composed of numerous latent particles. The individual person is often not aware of them, nor is he able to notice the moment when they become part of him, let alone explain or define them. And, what is of utmost importance is the fact that, despite such complexities, each life has a chance to be fulfilled. Persons can attain their personal goals.

Now, the universal purpose I find in the *Apologia* is the fundamental message that refers to the dignity and great value of individual life lived in recognition of its singularity, uniqueness, and non-repeatability. It is, additionally, purposeless to turn it into a universal pattern, because, due to this singular and unique character, two different lives can hardly be compared, even though we examine them carefully, and even if we assume we receive reliable information. One individual history will never be repeated. Some, or perhaps many of

its aspects, will resemble other biographies, but, as a whole, it is a closed book, belonging only to one author.

The *Apologia* shows the greatness and responsibility of human decisions not because it is a theoretical study on responsibility (this would be a particularly foreign idea to its author), but because it is an individual testimony to such decisions. If this man, who had just recently claimed that the Roman Catholic Church was the seat of the worst error, as it was held by the majority of Anglicans, now decided to join it, there must be some important reasons behind his decision. And if he himself seeks to understand it, he ought to adhere to the method of introspection and self-examination, carried out in all sincerity and responsibility. The ancient principle of "know thyself" is particularly suitable here. Let us also add that the universal character of Newman's decision does not consist only in the fact that he became a well-known convert from Anglicanism to Catholicism, but in the fact that he had recognized the primary role of the call in his conscience. Consequently, he was ready to sacrifice his social position, to accept the bitter reproaches from his own family, and to be abandoned or ostracized by his friends. He did all this not on the spur of the moment, but as a result of meticulous historical studies combined with various personal experiences. Let us note, then, that the individuality and singularity of a concrete life means that, if it can be an example for imitation, it is not in the sense of faithfully copying another person's experience (such an action would have been particularly alien to Newman), but in the sense of being faithful to the judgments of a well-informed conscience and thoughtful analyses, for which opinion or criticism from others is of secondary importance. I have my doubts as to whether I should have written the word "imitation" here; I maybe should have written "observation" or "influence," i.e. how an individual life can be a realization of the recognition of truth. The example of the British convert and the universal character of his message consist in his authentic experience and struggles, his faithfulness and uncompromising attitude towards the recognized truth.

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As a child, Newman read Thomas Paine, David Hume, and Voltaire, works critical of the Christian tenets. Then, at the age of fifteen, he read Walter Mayers' sermons. Mayers[3] (1790–1828) imbued the young reader with the divine faith of the Calvinistic flavour, and conveyed the impressions of dogma. It was then

3 The divine of Pembroke College.

that he learned the doctrine of predestination, which he later called "detestable,"[4] the doctrine denied by the influential preacher and author Thomas Scott (1747–1821).[5] It is worth noting that Newman began his reading list with the luminaries of the Enlightenment, deists and ardent advocates of unrestrained individual freedom and the sovereignty of the human intellect; all of these elements evidently came to a clash with the truths of the revealed religion. Paine extolled individual freedom, Hume undermined the role of reason and doubted any providential intervention in the natural order (miracles), and Voltaire belonged to the group of libertarian *philosophes* who tended to absolutize civil liberties and satirize religious dogmas. We can say that, most probably, there was something tempting in them for the young mind without any ability of discernment at that time. Newman himself admitted that having copied out Voltaire's verses, which denied the immortality of the soul, he said to himself: "How dreadful, but how plausible!"[6] The fact that he testifies to this moment of dubious fascination simply underlines his sincere intentions to lay open all the turning points and inspirations in his life, even those outright controversial. Let us also note that by reading these authors Newman learned the wild force of the intellect let loose; he learned the destructive force of human reason deserted by religious faith.

Thomas Scott, whom I have already mentioned, and Bishop Daniel Wilson (1778–1858) were the two men who exerted a special spiritual impact on the young Newman. He had long wished to visit Scott in person, but failed to fulfil this yearning, for the death of Scott was quicker. He stressed two elements manifested in this Anglican divine, namely "bold unworldliness and independence of mind."[7] We can surmise that these two traits had marked the young scholar for years onwards. And he concisely describes Scott's behaviour and his important decisions, which can well be applied to Newman himself. Scott "followed truth wherever it led him, beginning with Unitarianism, and ending in a zealous faith in the Holy Trinity [...][;] he [...] first planted deep in my mind that fundamental truth of religion."[8]

Scott's way is clearly a forerunner of Newman's. It depicts how the individual persons, when enlightened by the truth realized in them, can proceed through the meanders of their daily events and reach their appointed destination. Newman felt animated enough to follow suit, for he always underscored

4 *Apo.,* 3.
5 His book *The Force of Truth* (1779) had twelve editions during his lifetime.
6 See, *Apo.*, 2.
7 See, *ibid.*, 3.
8 *Ibid.*

the importance of personal examples. This is extremely interesting when we bring to mind the fact that Newman started with a vivid acceptance of the existence of God at the early stage of his life, and only later in his *Grammar of Assent* did he embark on a thorough analysis of human cognition. This fact is evidently a clear manifestation of his logic: first a vivid response of the heart, then a reflection on that response. The moment of his teenage inward conversion in which it appeared to him that only two realities were substantial—God and his own person—was his life-shaking experience at that time. With these beliefs in mind, this individual person set out on a journey through the various turbulences of respective challenges. These should open up the right perspective of any reliable analysis of Newman.

Now, Kingsley, the author of this critical letter, at the reception of which Newman felt compelled to account for his past life, apparently ignores the actual moments of his opponent's biography. This is what usually happens when criticism is intended for criticism's sake, and its author does not feel like learning the true facts of the accused person. Let us add that in further editions[9] of the *Apologia*, Kingsley's name appears in a more subordinate position. It follows that the author no longer wished to give a firm rebuttal to the accusations, but wanted to focus on the importance of the individual life instead, a topic which is central to this work.

We can also claim that it is not the experience of his juvenile conversion that had a bearing on his future life, but rather the example of another person, although he remembered this experience throughout his life. It is the example of Scott that foreshadows his *method of personation*. The juvenile conversion, as existential and emotional as it was, could in no way be treated as the whole of one's life, with its beginning and its end; the *whole* life is evidence of steadfast perseverance, while a momentary stirring of the spirit can lead to anything. Therefore, one can deduce that the person's life as a whole was more appealing to Newman than his own temporal experience; life as a *whole* is a combination of many aspects, not just individual elements picked up by chance, reinterpreted and brought against someone in the form of an accusation. We find in literature excellent examples of such futile attempts to understand a person, having first deconstructed him or her into individual parts for the sake of analysis. Let us consider, for instance, the celebrated French writer and pilot Saint-Exupéry:

9 In this work, I refer to the 1865 edition, republished in 1987 and edited by Maisie Ward (a descendant of one of Britain's distinguished Catholic families).

> For, as with the tree, of man too you know nothing if you spread him out across his allotted span and disperse him in his difference. The tree is more than first a seed, then a stem, then a living trunk, and then dead timber. The tree is a slow, enduring force straining to win the sky. So is it with you, my little man. God compasses your birth and growing up; He fills you, turn by turn, with longings and regrets, joys and griefs, angers and forgivings, and then He draws you back unto Himself. Yet none of these transciences is *you*; neither the schoolboy nor the husband, neither the child nor the old man. You are one who fulfils himself.[10]

Writers have this advantage over philosophers, in that, using their *licentia poetica*, they are allowed to take shortcuts; rather than being limited by the rigours of a detailed exposition of their views, they go straight to the subject and grasp its essence. Obviously, there are certain points that need to be stressed: Scott ended up becoming a Trinitarian. In order to appreciate this, one must first approve of the dogma of the Holy Trinity, the foundational Truth that Newman came to understand later when he undertook a thorough study of the Church Fathers.[11] In other words, it is of no use trying to comprehend the mysteries of faith merely by means of logical inferences; one must believe in them first. Scott, indeed, was like a tree with its whole history, the beginning and the end enclosed within the allotted span of its growth. And Newman learnt this truth gradually.

Another thing is worth stressing here. Newman had planned to visit Scott, as has been said, but before he decided to do so the man died. Out of a sudden, he was like a child who had come of age, left by his parents to move forward on his own. I propose to interpret this as follows: that Newman was saved from any attempts to imitate another person's life. Scott's life, therefore, now resembles a closed book which should be treated as a sample of a whole, with no opportunity to personally share it with someone else. What could Scott have said about the hidden mystery of his life? What could Newman have said? What could he have drawn from it? The fact of his friend's untimely death gave him to understand that he should make his own attempts, his own quest for the truth and certitude that give peace, whereas Scott's story is only evidence that

10 A. Saint-Exupéry, *The Wisdom of the Sands*, trans. by S. Gilbert. London: Hollis & Carter, 1952, 10.

11 See more on Newman and his view of the Trinity in an interesting dissertation by Matthew Kemp, *Economy of Condescension: John Henry Newman's Trinitarian Theology*, Chicago: eCommons Loyola University Chicago, 2020, https://ecommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4799&context=luc_diss, *passim*.

it is possible: the story of an uncompromising search. It was from him that Newman took as the motto for his later life: "Holiness rather than peace, and Growth the only evidence of life."[12] As we shall see, growth is naturally closely related to change. Change is the normal process in our life; indeed, the latter can hardly be envisioned other than as a process of constant change. And, what is of utmost significance, *change does not contradict personal integrity*. This is what prejudiced opponents find so difficult to understand.

As was noted in the introduction, Newman saw the person's hope for a better future not in biology, technology, i.e. the Promethean prowess, but in his spiritual resources. Therefore, if he submits to a false authority, he easily falls prey to corruption and loses his orientation. The great nineteenth-century French political thinker put it superbly when he wrote: "Men are not corrupted by the exercise of power or debased by the habit of obedience, but by the exercise of a power which they believe to be illegal and by obedience to a rule which they consider to be usurped and oppressive."[13]

Let us stress one point that will accompany us throughout this book. There is no thinking, as such; this is a very Newmanian conclusion. It is always personal in the sense that it is a function of the thinking person, particularly in practical matters. Newman did not appeal to some transcendental level, but took the human person as he or she is in reality. In such a person, faith and reason go hand-in-hand, for in order to reason in matters of faith and morality, one must assume the first principle. And this assumption is faith. We shall keep repeating this truth, for it superbly recapitulates any comprehensive understanding of John Henry Newman.

The twentieth-century American philosopher William Barrett, in his book on existentialism, succinctly described Søren Kierkegaard with words that also perfectly fit Newman. He wrote: "Kierkegaard does not disparage intelligence; quite the contrary, he speaks of it with respect and even reverence. But nonetheless, at a certain moment in history this intelligence had to be opposed, and opposed with all the resources and powers of a man of brilliant intelligence."[14] Indeed, Newman does not disparage intelligence, but his intelligence had to oppose the encroachment of modern rationalism.

Newman was well aware of the warfare between the city of God and the city of man (the powers of darkness); in line with St. Augustine, he abided by

12 See *Apo.*, 4.

13 A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. by H. Reeve, New York: Bantam Dell, 2000, 9.

14 W. Barrett, *Irrational Man. A Study in Existential Philosophy*, Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1962, 149.

this distinction, as he read Joseph Milner's[15] *Church History*. In the beginning of his growth, he was "deeply impressed" by William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. And he was even "enamoured" by the Fathers of primitive Christianity, especially St. Augustine and St. Ambrose. The process of individual growth is never a smooth process, i.e. an inference going from one indubitable premise to another. To confirm this conclusion, let us observe that, simultaneously to these spiritual luminaries, Newman read Isaac Newton's *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John*. Milner imbued him with the truths of primitive Christians and most probably filled him with thoughts favourable to Catholicism, but Newton's text installed in him contrary ideas, i.e. he became "most firmly convinced that the Pope was the Antichrist."[16] This cultural intrusion remained with him up to 1843. What should be our conclusion when we consider such a fact? First of all, if we dare to evaluate another person's decisions, we need to take into consideration all of the elements of one's biography and see how the line of life meanders between the smooth shoreline and rocky cliffs; it is often under the impact of contradictory forces. The individual traveller must constantly be on his guard and ready to change course. And we have to add in this context that the more Newman learned about the past of Christianity, in particular of the Church of Rome, the less was he ready to assent to her being in grievous error, or else whether he could in earnest call the Pope the Antichrist. This was the question of his personal integrity, namely, whether he was ready to come to terms with such statements within his own person.

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The time up to 1822 symbolises Newman's adolescent spiritual fascinations. The year 1822 opens a new period in his life, namely the period of intellectual maturity. Here, we need to mention Richard Whately (1787–1863), the logician, philosopher, economist, theologian and Archbishop of Dublin, who taught Newman, as he writes, "to weigh my words" and "to be cautious in my statements," two rigours indispensable in an academic career.[17] Whately taught him, as he admits, "to think and to use my reason, to see with my own eyes, to walk with my own feet, and to think for myself."[18] Let us note that, paradoxically,

15 Joseph Milner (1744–1797), an English evangelical divine and close friend of James Stillingfleet (about whom more will be said later).

16 *Apo*., 5.

17 See *ibid*., 6.

18 *Ibid*., 7, 8.

these traits were pillars of rationalism, then deemed by our author so dangerous for the virtue of obedience. Another inspiration was Edward Hawkins (1789–1882), a High Church[19] member, who imbued Newman with the doctrine of Tradition. Having read his sermon about Tradition, Newman learned from it "that the sacred text was never intended to teach doctrine, but only to prove it, and [...] we must have recourse to the formularies of the Church; for instance to the Catechism, and to the Creeds [and then] verify them by Scripture."[20] He then understood that, apart from *sola scriptura*, there was also the cultural and religious context of Tradition; the Church was indeed entrusted by Christ to human hands. Newman himself was a member of the Bible Society at Oxford, but then decided to withdraw his name from its subscription-list, for it dawned on him that Tradition of the Church did matter as well. He then also became acquainted with the doctrine of Apostolical Succession by William James (1797–1868) from Oriel College.

19 High Church, Low Church, and Broad Church – these are the main branches within the Anglican Church. The High Church places more emphasis on ritual, it is often referred to as the Anglo-Catholic Church, while the Low Church emphasises preaching, personal piety and the authority of Scripture. The Low Church has a more Protestant orientation. The Broad Church arose in the nineteenth century; it is latitudinarian and secularised in outlook.

20 *Ibid.*, 6.

CHAPTER 1

Probability as the Guide of Life

In 1823 he read Joseph Butler's *Analogy*, a text well-known to many scholars in his day, and personally a turning point for him. Of the numerous positive effects this book had on the reader, Newman especially stresses two: "an analogy between the separate works of God leads to the conclusions that the system which is of less importance is economically or sacramentally connected with the more momentous system [...] [and] the unreality of material phenomena." The second important inspiration that Newman inherited from Butler, which was especially topical in his further intellectual development, was the "doctrine that Probability is the guide of life."[1] This latter point is especially crucial, for it inspired him in his work on the logical cogency of faith which he dealt with in his *Grammar of Assent*. For these two elements, Newman was later accused of fancifulness and scepticism.

His relationship with Whately gradually relaxed, especially when the latter became Archbishop. Nevertheless, Newman mentions other crucial aspects he owed to him. Whately taught him "the existence of the Church, as a substantive body or corporation"; he imbibed in him the "anti-Erastian views of Church polity,"[2] views which were later the prominent features of the Tractarian movement (i.e. the Oxford Movement). Erastianism, as we know, was the doctrine which originated in the sixteenth century and claimed that the State was superior to the Church in ecclesiastical matters. In various geopolitical contexts it bore a different name, but the underlying idea was the same. For that matter, it was called Gallicanism in France and Josephinism in Austria. To be more precise, Thomas Erastus (1524–1583), the Swiss theologian who is supposed to have held such views, did not formulate them. They were made radical by the influential Anglican theologian Richard Hooker (1554–1600), who claimed secular supremacy in his work *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Politie*. The Tractarians, of course, denied such supremacy of the State. Church and State should be independent of each other. And a further point was important, namely that the Church might retain its property "though separated from the State."[3] Such views were also endorsed in *A Letter Concerning Toleration* by John Locke whom Newman respected, although intellectually at variance with him as regards the

1 *Ibid.*, 7.
2 *Ibid.*, 8.
3 *Ibid.*, 9.

British philosopher's rationalist-empiricist epistemology.[4] All in all, Newman admits that Whately's work "had a gradual, but a deep effect on [his] mind."[5] If gradual, then it was brought home to him with an ever more powerful impact and depth, which means its influence was permanent.

At that time, his thinking became more independent and diverged into the direction of what he called "the Liberalism of the day." It was the period in which he "was beginning to prefer intellectual excellence to moral."[6] Whately thought that he was Arianizing; he also felt disdain for Antiquity at that time.

As we can learn from this cursory presentation of Newman's initial reading list and inspirations, we have to say that his philosophical studies were fairly irregular, that he was rather a solitary searcher. It is interesting to note how Newman colloquially describes the period of his life until 1841 as being out of his shell, a phrase I understand in opposition to being inside one's shell.[7] We may say that until 1841 he was a man of the academic world, well-known to the public at large. Then, when his inner search intensified, he "entered his shell," for the moment of his vital decision had been steadily maturating in him. He needed to listen to himself more carefully to check whether that which his reason had found out as the right path resonated with his own feelings. He became more intimate with John Keble (1792–1866), Richard Hurell Froude (1803–1836), and Robert Isaac Wilberforce (1802–1857), all of them later active members of the Oxford Movement.

Keble seems to have been the most prominent. And as we are writing here about the importance of individual life, of which Newman's *method of personation* is significant, Keble was a key figure. After Newman's years of groping through a valley of shadows, through evangelical and liberal delusions, Keble brought a more profound dimension to spiritual matters. Newman compares his influence to that of a musician whose composition strikes new and original notes, and he combines Keble's impact with that of Butler's. He learned two truths then. First, he learned "the Sacramental system [...], the doctrine that material phenomena are both the types and the instruments of real

4 See *GA*, 136. Newman indeed writes a eulogy of Locke in his *Grammar of Assent*, and praises him for "manly simplicity of mind and his outspoken candour," and he ascertains that "there is so much in [Locke's] remarks upon reasoning and proof" with which he fully concurs, and that he feels "no pleasure in considering him in the light of an opponent" of his own views. (ibid., 136–137).

5 *Apo.*, 9.

6 *Ibid.*

7 See *Ibid.*, 11.

things unseen," and this is what Newman found as something that Anglicans and Catholics had in common.

The second element, however, I gather to be the most important in Newman's further development, especially for his epistemology, has already been mentioned. Butler, as we have just said, imbued him with the principle that probability is the guide of life. This principle, as such, may lead to doubt and scepticism with regard to the existence of absolute certainty. Newman stresses this in one of his Anglican sermons where he writes that in all practical matters we are obliged "to dwell upon [...] what is *likely* to be."[8] If every conclusion is just probable, all truths are merely matters of opinion. It was Keble, and Newman credits him entirely for this exceptional solution, since he ascribed the firmness of assent we give to religious doctrine not to the probabilities "but to the living power of faith and love which accepted it."[9] Faith and love supplement probability with the force it is lacking because faith and love for the Object of faith make probability sufficient. Love, for that matter, is like the cordial gesture and warm welcome we give to our guests to taste the food we have prepared for them. Thus, probability is rendered sufficient for internal conviction. Modernity sought certainty and focused on propositions, which appears to be the proper area of certainty, but Newman focuses on the person and says that (personal) certitude suffices to be certain on the grounds of what is merely probable. And he concludes the import of Keble's argumentation on him as follows: "Thus the argument from Probability, in the matter of religion, became an argument from Personality, which in fact is one form of the argument from Authority."[10]

It must be observed that this is a very powerful point which goes against the grain of enlightened thinking. Faith and love, not intellectual prowess, to which Newman—as he himself had admitted—had formerly had some inclinations, became the two poles and anchors on which he was ready to ground his thinking. Faith and love also go against Lockean empirical argumentation. The person who follows probabilities, empowered by faith and love for their Object, is no longer held to be an irrational enthusiast. It is through faith and love that believers are made children of God, and become children they must. Children know the speaker, and they do not have to be told literally everything; they are ready to accept what Newman called half-words, can read between the lines, and anticipate the speaker's wishes. In like manner, communication is raised from the level of intellectual exchange to a spiritual communing.

8 *PPS*, 122.
9 *Apo.*, 13.
10 *Ibid.*

Newman agreed with Keble, or at least accepted his doctrine with qualified enthusiasm, for he thought it necessary to add his own modifications. He acquiesced that it was beautiful and religious, but not logical enough. Therefore, he developed his own line of argumentation in *University Sermons* and in his *Essay on Development of Doctrine*. We gain absolute certitude with regard to the truths of natural theology as "the result of an *assemblage* of concurring and converging probabilities."[11] This process is both natural—due to the constitution of the human mind—and supernatural—due to the will of its Maker; it seems that Newman sought to add a more intensive intellectual input, i.e. concurrence and convergence, on the part of the data to enhance the intellectual element. This shows again that he was not an anti-intellectual. Certitude is a habit of mind, and certainty a quality of propositions. The essential difference between certitude and certainty is such, as has already been mentioned, that even if there is no logical certainty, there can still take place a personal certitude. And such certitude is coequal with "the strictest scientific demonstration."[12]

Contrary to Hume's claim that there is no transition from "is" to "ought," Newman states that this deficient certitude, i.e. that which does not result from the rigours of a scientific demonstration, may still constitute a plain duty for some individuals. Let us add that this is so for *some* under *concrete* circumstances, whereas it is not a duty for other individuals under the same circumstances. We can even go further. This recognition of a duty may not take place for the same individual under different circumstances, if due maturity is wanting. Newman, therefore, observed that accepting a duty depends on the one hand on the "converging probabilities," and on the other, on the preparation of the individual, and never merely on the external circumstances. Rather, it is the right disposition of the mind and the circumstances that must meet at a certain point which has not been prearranged. These probabilities amass throughout one's lifetime, explicitly or implicitly, and the person at one unpredictable moment is ready to really assent. In practical and vital life experiences, it is not the intellect alone that makes decisions (or conclusions), but the whole person.

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11 *Ibid.*; see also *GA*, 254, 258.

12 *Apo.*, 13–14.

The human mind is free in the face of probabilities. Depending on a given person, some probabilities suffice for certitude, while others can barely form an opinion; and, similarly, the same probabilities form either certitude in the case of one person, and an opinion in another person. In certain circumstances, some persons are obliged to form a duty, a belief, or only a conjecture; they weigh and consider their assent with regard to probabilities attending on a given case. They do not wish to be judged credulous or superstitious. Such is the area of what Newman calls a Private Judgment, the area of the focus of modern concern, namely that one should be free to unobtrusively follow one's private judgment.

Private Judgment obviously was a strong theme with modernity, synonymous with freedom. Newman did not renounce it, but sought to provide more solid grounds, i.e. to place it within the broader context of the whole person, or adjust it to his modified epistemology. He notes, for instance, how his views on miracles changed between 1826 and 1842, and change as such is also, as we already know, the most important occurrence in human life. The person is not a static structure, but a living and dynamic being. In 1842, he would look at many phenomena under consideration from the point of view of probability which may, as we have said before, create certitude or only a belief or opinion, depending on the response from this particular person.

Analysing numerous influences, Newman emphasizes the figure of Hurrell Froude, Keble's disciple, whose "opinions arrested and influenced" him.[13] Froude admired the Church of Rome and hated the Reformers. He delighted in the notion of "an hierarchical system, of sacerdotal power, and of full ecclesiastical liberty." He scorned the Protestant maxim *sola scriptura* (only the Bible), and "he gloried in accepting Tradition as a main instrument of religious teaching."[14]

Let us observe how all of these elements gradually infiltrated Newman's mind through the mediation of concrete persons. He could not have understood them earlier because there was nobody to tell him about them. Once he realized how much he had gained from other persons, and that, in fact, the concrete truths of religion are borne by persons, he called this mode of cognition the *method of personation*. Of course, one important factor in this method is the special encounter between someone who confesses or witnesses and the person to whom this confession or testimony is made. Another thing that should be deemed of high significance is that the contents of the confession

13 *Ibid.*, 16.
14 *Ibid.*

or testimony must be real; we can presume that it is easier in the case of a testimony because it is naturally connected with doing something, not only with reporting on it. In other words, the speaker must not only be someone who disseminates certain theoretical knowledge, but a witness who lives it; only then can we hope his message will turn into a reliable testimony. Otherwise, the message will not catch on and will be treated as a mere opinion without any intrinsic power of attraction; as we say in English, it will fall on deaf ears. Obviously, another precondition, and we should never forget this, is the preparation of the recipient. The speaker must always be ready to respect the gradual process of preparation that the other person must go through, which means respecting that person's growth, and that, in turn, is to respect the time and place for a certain message to take root. The other person is not an inanimate device, for the use of which knowledge of an instruction manual is sufficient.

In his epistemological considerations, Newman came to the conclusion that in practical matters (like in religion and morality) the knowledge we are confronted with amounts to probability. Clear and distinct concepts are typical of formal sciences and formal reasoning. That is why they bring forth certainty. Of course, when we are dealing with the certainty of propositions of the type 'if a>b and b>c, then a>c', or that a triangle consists of three sides and three angles, we can do nothing but to assent to them. There is no sense opposing or undermining the obvious rules of logic. What can we set in opposition to probabilities? Can we assent to them with the same amount of assurance? Newman's answer is positive, for we can always attain personal certitude no matter how high the probability is. Certitude is, in this case, like clearing a path, and removing all elements of unreality; the burden of proof (*onus probandi*) is on the part of the subject. The latter, however, can only testify to it with respective action, not with a theoretical discourse. The final outcome is not certainty, for there is always probability on the part of the facts, but personal certitude on the part of the person. The person can still assent to it with certitude. This assent is unlike the assent in formal considerations in which we meticulously proceed forward from some premises to other premises until we reach a conclusion. In certitude, especially that based on real assent, we are struck by the truth unexpectedly, although not without prior preparation. To illustrate this, let me bring to mind the following picture. Let us assume that we are groping through a dense forest, picking the right route with an inner intuition and intention of finding the way out. Then, suddenly, a ray of light shoots through the density of the trees and strikes our eyes. And we say: at last, this is it, this is the way out. The final result, however, has been prepared for by the strenuous groping; spontaneous and real assent does not obtain without personal effort.

Persons must be truth-bearers, and only persons can be truth-bearers, if truth is supposed to fulfil its task, that is, to stimulate minds. This is especially vital where one is concerned not with mere theoretical knowledge, with distinctions and well-constructed proposals. In the area of religion and morality, one needs examples, and they can be provided only by persons who live the truth. Only persons can enliven truths, when they are their genuine bearers. Edward Kelly refers, in this context, to Newman's "personalistic epistemology" and his "self-protective personality."[15]

Statements like these call for some clarification. Newman was often accused of individualism or, at least, was regarded as a mysterious and suspicious figure. The charge of individualism may have resulted from the context of British empiricism and Protestantism; both ideological circumstances had brought forth individualism as their offspring. And Newman was born into this context. At the same time, however, we need to bear in mind something that was of primary significance for him and cannot be refuted. When he claimed that only persons can be truth-bearers and that only individuals could bear witness to truths, he did not decide anything about truth itself as such, let alone make it relative to individuals. He only said, and rightly so, that only persons have the respective faculties to accept the truth, to live it, and to bear fruit. How can anyone deny this? To confirm his firm belief, he says in one of his Anglican sermons: "Act up to your light, though in the midst of difficulties, and you will be carried on, you do not know how far."[16] By this light, he meant a well-informed conscience.

He was an ardent advocate of a living experience, that is, when we can really assent to truth as our own, and was equally an ardent opponent of blind imitation in which "our hearts are cold," of which mention will be made further. The phrases "cold hearts" or "cold-hearted people" are often used in Newman's sermons to describe those who accept religious tenets as mere formalities. In other words, they do not intend to translate them into their action. The term "self-protective" is also ambiguous, for it might suggest that Newman sought to justify his own faults, or to explain them away; rather, he wanted to understand himself. We could in vain try to find any corroborating examples, and there is much evidence to the contrary—that he, in all earnestness, sought to depict his motives and their complex contexts and to examine himself without hypocrisy. Newman well understood that the person is a mystery placed in a maelstrom of various circumstances. Critics, from a temporal distance, take

15 E. E. Kelly, *Identity and Discourse: A Study in Newman's Individualism*, in: G. Magill (ed.), *Discourse and Context*, Southern Illinois University, 1993, 17.

16 *PPS*, 1665.

the easy way of formulating accusations, guided either by personal animosities or political expedients, without the least attempts to thoroughly inspect an individual case.

Newman explains this situation in his *Parochial and Plain Sermons* as follows:

> Now it is doubtless a great mystery, why this man receives the truth and practises it, and that man does not. We do not know how it comes to pass; but surely we do not tend to solve it, by saying God has so decreed it. If you say that God does absolutely choose the one and reject the other, then *that* becomes the mystery.[17]

Indeed, such an arbitrary selection on the part of the absolute and benevolent Being would be an abstruse mystery and hard to accept; it is true that in the case of a mystery it is enigmatic by its very nature; nevertheless, a random selection of individual persons for the reception of truth would be truly unfathomable. It is indeed intriguing and mysterious that, being from the same cultural background, people can be led to completely different conclusions. If God were to determine (decree) their decisions, it would be an inexplicable and unacceptable mystery. I think that, as regards persons, it is better to assume that everyone has their own time for development; the real apprehension may happen at any moment, or sometimes the climax is attained as late as the moment of death. Such a reasoning would very much be in line with Newman's doctrine that the potential talents we have are so numerous that their complete fulfilment calls for continuation in eternity; only eternity and, consequently, immortality render the human being consistent. We shall discuss this further on. For the time being, let it suffice to say, by way of analogy, that even an embryonic attempt at cognition and understanding has a chance to be continued. Therefore, we can surmise that the faintest attempt to seek truth stands a chance of being fulfilled in eternity.

It follows from the above argumentation that, from the theological point of view, Newman renounces the idea of predestination, and from the philosophical point of view he is against determinism. For, in either case, there is no room for human freedom. The acceptance of mystery, admittedly, allows for intellectual failure in attaining complete knowledge, but simultaneously it contradicts the determinism of human life by external factors. Newman puts it clearly that the reason why certain people receive the truth and others do not

17 *Ibid.*, 1112.

is "a great mystery." He criticizes the idea of predestination and its attendant demand for a sign that would testify to someone's state of being selected. In his Anglican sermons he writes "that God may be holding communion with us without our knowing it."[18] Therefore, no visible sign is needed, and St. Thomas was rebuked for not believing without the proof of the senses. If it is a mystery why and when people accept the truth, it is a mystery why and when they reject it as well. This mystery cannot be compensated or accounted for by any further logical argumentation or additional facts provided. The question that begs an answer is how to, or whether in general we can, create appropriate conditions for the acceptance of the truth. In other words, whether one can create and convey all the necessary premises to make sure that the expected outcome is accomplished. In the abstract sciences, we have respective formulae and definitions, so that we can arrive at the right conclusions, assuming that we rigorously stick to them; we eliminate contradictions from the mode of our ratiocination. Now, for example, can we create a respective ethos? Can we compose the right social milieu in order to do away with chance? This ethos, apparently, should be composed of a good education, helpful and considerate parents, the right friends. This is possible in film making, where filmmakers anticipate all the steps up to the end of a fictitious story; such a situation cannot be created in real life. The factors I have just mentioned are helpful, but we can provide examples to the contrary, i.e. those who lacked such contributions and yet, when given the truth, were capable of assenting to it, receiving it, and realizing it.

Ultimately, therefore, we have to rely on the person's self and seek the respective sources for the reception of the truth. It is the person who decides, from the depth of his or her innermost being, to accept something or reject it. And this being is always placed within a broader cultural context we call ethos. Ethos usually imposes a certain mode of perceiving reality, thus, in order to gain a clearer command of the evaluation of reality, assuming we cannot change it, we may need to leave; and that is what Newman eventually did—he abandoned his Anglican ethos through a gradual process. Gradual, because the probabilities that concur and converge, do not decide for us; their nature is only, say, to point in a certain direction, to hint at something. It is ultimately the person who commands the decision.

Thus, following the accumulation of probabilities, none can be decisive and ensure acceptance. The person is free in his or her confrontation with probabilities. Newman's path resembles that of the German phenomenologist Edith

18 *Ibid.*, 1245.

Stein who "draws not only on her intellectual experiences and reflections but also on those of her life with others [,]" and, as in Newman's case, all these interpersonal relationships "supplied valuable material for analyses investigating themes of subjectivity and intersubjectivity."[19] The person's own search combined with the influences of others create a very complicated network. One is placed inside this network like a tuned instrument. The given challenge is the occasion to produce the right sound. We shall return to this musical metaphor further on.

The person and his community are in a permanent liaison of interconnections. And the person develops through time, therefore Newman is open to the past history of the Church, to the impact of tradition. Hurrell Froude, likewise, had a deep respect for the Medieval Church and for the Real Presence (of Christ in the Eucharist). Furthermore, Froude was, as Newman writes, an Englishman to his bone. Throughout his intellectual career, Newman's attention indeed centred on the concrete rather than the abstract. Let it be observed that this was still the time when he held the Roman Church to be Antichristian.[20] Froude found it difficult to come to terms with the contradictions between theory and fact, while Newman's difficulties were of a different kind. Nevertheless, he admits that he owes Froude much. First of all, he taught him to look with admiration towards the Church of Rome, to accept the devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and to gradually believe in the Real Presence. The latter is an important element of Roman Catholic theology, i.e. that Christ is really present during the Eucharistic prayer through the efficacy of the word of Christ (Transubstantiation).

In this context, the *method of personation* can also be interpreted along more theological lines. By virtue of creation, every person is a bearer of the Divine Image. When such a person realizes his vocation by genuinely responding to his vocation, he becomes a divine witness. God, who is a Spirit, manifests Himself through His witnesses, i.e. through His real image-bearers. The question arises why only some people felt the urge to leave the Church of England, assuming that they all genuinely sought the truth? This question is a mystery, the decision is always an individual matter and a personal choice. We might just as well ask why of the two criminals who were hanging on their crosses on either side of Jesus, one of them reviled Him whereas the other felt remorse.[21]

19 M. C. Baseheart, *Person in the World. Introduction to the Philosophy of Edith Stein*, Dordrecht: Springer Science+Business Media, 1997, 30.

20 See *Apo.*, 16–17.

21 Cf. Lk 23:40.

It must also be noted that Newman was not inclined to blindly accept every inspiration from his friends or teachers; he was keenly aware of his own distinct growth. He always sought to accommodate concrete inspiration within his own person, using his own intuition, which he later called the Illative Sense, because he always sought to be real, i.e. with his intellectual apprehension and emotional state at one. Nevertheless, let us emphasize the fact that all of these personal influences constantly illustrate Newman's *method of personation* as his working principle; individual persons are perpetually strengthened in their course or dissuaded from it. This means that the truth is most powerfully manifested through the mediation of another person—such is Newman's prevalent idea.

Orators are like persons who furnish their exhibitions of Reason, but they may not feel obliged by them. In this case, the method that could be at work here is the method of impersonation, to draw on Newman's idea of personation. It is the other way round to the teaching of faith which "has been upheld in the world not as a system, not by books, not by argument, not by temporal power, but by the personal influence of such men as have already been described, who are at once the teachers and the patterns of it."[22] These words express the heart of Newman's *method of personation*, namely, that we learn religious truths from those who are at the same time their bearers. And he explains, as if to denounce some alleged charge of enthusiasm, that "to say 'I do not understand a proposition, but I accept it on authority,' is not formalism, but faith; it is not a direct assent to the proposition, still it *is* an assent to the authority which enunciates it; but what I here speak of is profession to understand without understanding."[23] As we shall see, to understand without understanding is very much akin to Newman's cognitive-existential declaration: *I know that I know*.

The pattern, the living example of witnesses, is appealing most powerfully to recipients, so that "they cannot bear their presence; it is holiness embodied in personal form, which they cannot steadily confront and bear down: so that the silent conduct of a conscientious man secures for him from beholders a feeling different in kind from any which is created by the mere versatile and garrulous Reason." What is especially enticing for beholders is an act of generosity, self-denial, "[one] little deed, done against natural inclination for God's sake, though in itself of a conceding or passive character, to brook an insult, to face a danger, or to resign an advantage, has in it a power outbalancing all

22 *US*, 104.

23 *GA*, 53.

the dust and chaff of mere profession; the profession whether of enlightened benevolence and candour, or, on the other hand, of high religious faith and of fervent zeal."[24]

As we can see, the *method of personation* is coequal to personal influence. In *University Sermons* Newman writes: "This being the state of the question, it is proposed to consider, whether the influence of Truth in the world at large does not arise from the personal influence, direct and indirect, of those who are commissioned to teach it."[25]

The power of personal influence is decisive. We could even say that if a person fails to impart influence via his or her vivid testimony, who or what else can do it? Therefore, Newman emphasizes firmly the fact that

> we shall find it difficult to estimate the moral power which a single individual, trained to practise what he teaches, may acquire in his own circle, in the course of years. While the Scriptures are thrown upon the world, as if the common property of any who choose to appropriate them, he is, in fact, the legitimate interpreter of them, and none other; the Inspired Word being but a dead letter (ordinarily considered), except as transmitted from one mind to another. While he is unknown to the world, yet, within the range of those who see him, he will become the object of feelings different in kind from those which mere intellectual excellence excites. The men commonly held in popular estimation are greatest at a distance; they become small as they are approached; but the attraction, exerted by unconscious holiness, is of an urgent and irresistible nature; it persuades the weak, the timid, the wavering, and the inquiring; it draws forth the affection and loyalty of all who are in a measure like-minded; and over the thoughtless or perverse multitude it exercises a sovereign compulsory sway, bidding them fear and keep silence, on the ground of its own right divine to rule them,—its hereditary claim on their obedience, though they understand not the principles or counsels of that spirit.[26]

It is the person who can give life to the Word. The (Biblical) Word feeds on the person. A word (of righteousness) is merely "a dead letter," unless it is "transmitted from one mind to another." I think we can treat the above text as one of the most powerful corroboration of Newman's view. We have all the

24 *US*, 105.
25 *Ibid.*, 94.
26 *Ibid.*, 107.

elements of his system: *personal influence*, *unconscious holiness*, and *obedience without understanding*; let us add, for instance, that unconscious holiness is that kind of holiness in which one does not convince anyone of his righteousness, but emanates it in his life. Personal influence is carried out not by virtue of the person's explicit intellectual capacity, for in such cases manipulation often interferes, therefore Newman writes about *unconscious holiness*. It is like emanation, a spontaneous emanation of testimony without the mediation of words or reflection, or, to be more precise, without the intrusion of intellectual argumentation. For in this argumentation there is a danger that we seek to portray ourselves to the world in a better way rather than show what we actually are; we tend to paint our own persons in brighter colours and omit the negative aspects; we may even wish to meet someone's expectations. Metaphorically speaking, we should be like a clean windowpane through which light passes unobtrusively. To use the scholastic term, the person becomes a *medium quo*. Such a person allows the light to pass through and influence others, without any admixture from the self, especially an intellectual admixture, i.e. without any rationalization of conscience; a clear testimony does not need words. The influence that can be exerted is not automatic, nor is it the case of a mere argumentative persuasion. It brings about its positive result inasmuch as there is a congeniality of minds. The person with *unconscious holiness* is someone who does not *plan* to be holy, but *lives* holiness; it is not premeditated holiness (if such acts were possible), but natural, like breathing.

This claim of *unconscious holiness* is very much in accordance with Newman's overall position, namely that the path to truth is always individual. Of course, we are supported by others, such is the idea of the *method of personation*, but eventually we decide whether to follow some praiseworthy examples or to abstain from them, to be open or stay closed. Therefore, he writes:

> We cannot control our reasoning powers, nor exert them at our will or at any moment. It is so with other faculties of the mind also. Who can command his memory? The more you try to recall what you have forgotten, the less is your chance of success. Leave thinking about it, and perhaps memory returns. And in like manner, the more you set yourself to argue and prove, in order to discover truth, the less likely you are to reason correctly and to infer profitably. You will be caught by sophisms, and think them splendid discoveries. Be sure, the highest reason is not to reason on system, or by rules of argument but in a natural way; not with formal intent to draw out proofs, but trusting to God's blessing that you may gain a right impression from what you read. If your reasoning powers are weak, using argumentative forms will not make them stronger.

> They will enable you to dispute acutely and to hit objects but not to discover truth. There is nothing creative, nothing progressive in exhibitions of argument. The utmost they do is to enable us to state well what we have already discovered by the tranquil exercise of our reason. Faith and obedience are the main things; believe and do and pray to God for light, and you will reason well without knowing it.[27]

This is Newman's view in a splendid recapitulation. We should not "reason on system, or by rules of argument but in a natural way," a recommendation which shows the author's warning against theorizing in religion or morality. Reasoning "in a natural way" calls to mind Newman's natural inference as set in opposition to formal inference, and even his views of real assent versus certitude. As praiseworthy as certitude is, real assent is still an attitude that should be sought; readiness to respond to the call of duty from our conscience is more valuable than reflection on that response. Newman gives us to understand that the main point in proper reasoning in practical matters is not the number of good arguments we may present, but creating the right character. He also pointedly depicts the hypertrophy of reflection and atrophy of action of the era that followed modernity. Without a dogmatic superstructure and principles, doomed to his own contrivances, the modern self tended to perdition. Newman's argumentation ideally fits this romantic revision. Kierkegaard, commenting on Kant, writes in a similar vein in his *Concept of Irony*, where we read: "The more the *I* in criticism became absorbed in contemplation of the *I*, the leaner and leaner the *I* became, until it ended with becoming a ghost."[28]

> In order for the acting individual to be able to accomplish his task by fulfilling actuality, he must feel himself integrated in a larger context, must feel the earnestness of responsibility, must feel and respect every reasonable consequence.[29]

Gradually, Newman approaches the conclusion that as vital a decision as conversion is, it does not reside in private judgment. Rather, it is the response of the whole of the person who, in a tacit manner, collects all the minute elements of his own life and makes his decision. Because of the fact that many components are latent, the process is a mystery, a mystery of the person; it is not a response of the intellect, but of the person as a whole. As he was a keen

27 *PPS*, 1387.
28 S. Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, Part Two, 272.
29 *Ibid*., 279–280.

observer of the findings in the world of science, especially mathematics, he must have been inspired to it by the logic of calculus. The differential is an immeasurable particle, but when added together it brings forth a measurable quantity. In like manner, the implicit, the immeasurable particles of one's life, when recollected together by a sort of personal calculus, create the personal background for a decision. All the elements of the Newmanian system are at work here: natural inference, certitude, and real assent. It is by means of the latter that one eventually realizes the truth. The movement of this realization can never be predicted as defined by a kind of universal formula, for it is always personal and concrete, related to this biography and not to another. The final decision is not a mere summation in a series of ratiocinations from the premises to the conclusion. Real assent, as a sign of maturity, results from what Newman called the "moral instinct" that testifies to this maturity.[30]

Let us stress that the above terms, i.e. the distinction between intellectual excellence and unconscious holiness, the principles of the spirit, the transmission between minds are all vital pillars of Newman's doctrine, and they define his personal attitude. Moreover, unconscious holiness draws on the fundamental distinction between nature and grace; Newman always stressed the dominance of grace over nature, i.e. salvation is worked out in the soul, not by the person's own doing but by the "influence of baptismal grace."[31]

Newman has a great respect for human freedom, and the *method of personation* (or personal influence), by way of examples, does respect freedom. Like his fellow-countryman, John Locke, he excludes coercion from religion. What he calls "the fallacy of persecution" can be applied to torture and belief, that is, when we attempt to persuade people into understanding something or believing something by means of coercion (or even argumentative persuasion). He writes, "it is as absurd to argue men, as to torture them, into believing."[32] Newman used this somewhat shocking parallel on purpose to emphasize human freedom in the area of thinking and believing. It is as important to give one's free consent to understanding as to believing, and that consent derives from the readiness of human will and time. This readiness is never a mere matter of comprehensive arguments, as if there were some magic keys to someone's interior. It is true that rationalists proposed an appropriate method of analysis in order to arrive at the right conclusion, but Newman, as we can see, disavows the sufficient character of such a method. Intellectual comprehension and

30 *PPS*, 1020.
31 See *ibid.*, 1019.
32 *US*, 78.

belief are entirely different matters. Belief cannot be derived from a sequence of ratiocinations, for it is not a solution of a math problem.

People who forget about the importance of moral nature, the significance of growth and the time needed for this growth, when considering religion, and the excessive focus on reasoned arguments, fall victim to fatal errors. Newman recapitulates this situation masterfully in his *University Sermons*:

> Unhappily the blind teacher in morals can ensure himself a blind audience, to whom he may safely address his paradoxes, which are sometimes admitted even by religious men, on the ground of those happy conjectures which his acute Reason now and then makes, and which they can verify. What an indescribable confusion hence arises between truth and falsehood, in systems, parties and persons! What a superhuman talent is demanded to unravel the chequered and tangled web; and what gratitude is due to the gifted individual who by his learning or philosophy in part achieves the task! yet not gratitude in such a case to the Reason as a principle of research, which is merely undoing its own mischief, and poorly and tardily redressing its intrusion into a province not its own; but to the man, the moral being, who has subjected it in its own person to the higher principles of his nature.[33]

It must be observed that this "clever" inquirer achieves his task only "in part." Nor can its effectiveness be ever trustworthy. The person owes no gratitude to Reason because it intrudes "into a province not its own." Rather, it is the person who should subject his Reason "to the higher principles of his nature." And our preacher points to "the faithful shadow of those truths, which unlearned piety admits and acts upon, without the medium of clear intellectual representation."[34] Thus, we return to Newman's *unperceived impressions*, of which we shall be writing further, to the implicit and latent contents of the human mind, to trust and confidence upon which the edifice of faith should be constructed. Ultimately, we owe gratitude to *the man who has subjected his reason to higher principles*. If there is no clear intellectual representation, faith becomes the decisive and enticing factor; at the same time, intimidating obstacles are removed. And faith becomes not so much a private choice, as if religion were merely a private matter, but is transformed into an openness to Divine influences. The solution comes from the person who acts on faith and surrenders

33 *Ibid*., 78–79.
34 *Ibid*., 79.

his reason to faith, not to the intellect which easily goes off the right track and becomes lost in the entanglement of arguments. This "unlearned piety" resembles the mystic approach to knowledge and is similar to Nicholas Cusanus's "learned ignorance."

The problem of our times is the scarcity of teachers as model authorities, of those who have the authority to teach, those who offer examples to follow. There is the proliferation of opinions; they circulate among multitudes frequently as anonymous views. Somebody said something or wrote in a newspaper, and then this view becomes an official opinion, but it is difficult to explain why. Recipients accept such views not because they are true, but because they like them, because they appeal to their tastes. They no longer ask about the reality of their words. Therefore, they have no authors, no one follows their real sense, to put into practice what has been said, whereas great prophets, teachers, and leaders epitomise the unity between words and acts; they primarily entreat people to action. If we were to define the interior of Newman's social space, it would be the space of personal influence.

Sheridan Gilley observes that "Newman is supremely the thinker who taught that faith – and unfaith – are communicated by personal influence, as first by his Lord and Master, and he is the still-living embodiment of his own theory, for his voice conveys his person, a personality with an enchantment to the literary-minded like no other."[35] The modern Roman convert, Muriel Spark, confessed that she had been drawn to the Roman Catholic Church by Newman's vivid example, his dynamic journey through life in which the man's compass is the internal voice of conscience and his remarkable consistency between words and deeds. Newman was very active in his self-inspection before any decision he was supposed to make. Spark's testimony is indeed impressive when she writes that Newman was the driving force behind her conversion, since none of "all the beheaded martyrs of Christendom, the ecstatic nuns of Europe, the five proofs of Aquinas, or the pamphlets of my Catholic acquaintance, provided anything like the answers that Newman did."[36] In these words she perfectly rendered the essence of Newman's path to holiness, e.g. the daily observance of one's duties. There is, one might say, nothing spectacular in Newman's conversion. It is like reaching one's destination after an arduous journey, the kind of journey that we often experience in our life. He emerges from the murky depth of shadows and images to the pure light of the truth. The destination

35 S. Gilley, *Newman and the Convert Mind*, in: I. Ker (ed.), *Newman and Conversion*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997, p. 5–6.

36 Cited in M. Spark, *Newman and the Convert Mind*, 6. To be precise, Aquinas wrote about "five ways" (*quinque viae*), not proofs.

is not perfect in a universal sense, as we might surmise, but, above all, it is the place in which the person, having arrived, states with relief: "it's mine." It can also be someone else's, but not without another arduous journey, with the obstacles typical of this particular person and not of another. Newman is so enticing and attractive for those who seek the truth because he shows endurance and untiring will.

No wonder, then, that Gilley calls Newman's life "a work of art."[37] Indeed, each person's life is a work of art, assuming that one endeavours to set out on a journey to the point where he or she can repose in the truth expressive of the words "this is my place." This repose is not equal to inertia. Rather, it resembles a solid foundation upon which to stand, feeling its firmness. Gilley stresses Newman's ear for words, just as he had an ear for music, therefore the history of his conversion is a beautiful exposition of his literary talent, someone who "wrote like an angel."[38] Therefore, his texts appeal so much to lovers of literature, for even amidst the turmoil of spiritual struggle he manages to harness his words via a smooth literary form. At the same time, there is honesty, a rare skill indeed, in what he is writing, with no attempt to show off. Newman always speaks from his own heart to the heart of his readers.

His main endeavour was to disavow the enlightened claims that only by way of the learned intellect could one arrive at truth, a truth that is at the same time personal (obliging one to do what one confesses as true). And the outcome of this modern ambition was obvious: the intellect came to the fore, whilst other personal faculties remained uncultivated. Such was the modern belief, i.e. to apply a respective method by following meticulously calculated steps of analysis. The working intellect would not rest until it could stand dazzled by the light of a clear and distinct idea. Newman, for his part, decided to focus on the person as a whole. He stood in amazement before his own person and marvelled at what he was in himself, his own past and his revolutionary decisions, bearing in mind that he still kept his identity, how he managed to disclaim the views today he had so ardently assented to yesterday. In order to answer this dilemma, another method is proposed, a method of describing and inspecting an individual life, how it meanders through the Scylla and Charybdis of daily decisions. It is a challenge to a person empowered with the respective faculties.

What is the leading factor in this universal paradigm of modernity which Newman sought to discuss? It is Private Judgment. The problematic thing about this judgment is that it leads to diverse directions in such grave matters

37 See S. Gilley, *Newman and the Convert Mind*, 7.
38 See *ibid*.

as religion. It is made worse and of greater weight when private judgment deviates from the current course to an entirely novel course of action. Most probably, it was not yet the time to think of himself, but Newman was well aware that in the case of such radical decisions one must be ready to follow up with a personal testimony. He claims, for example, that the Tractarians "if they think it a duty to unsettle things established, they should show their earnestness by being willing to suffer," which brings "home to a man's mind his own responsibility."[39]

It does not have to come from our private examination. Newman rightly thinks that if we stress the importance of private judgment, it is contradictory and inconsistent to demand that, for instance, dissenters should abandon their communion, while members of the English Church should not.[40] Indeed, if private judgment amounts to a mere private examination of an issue, then this should be our logical conclusion, namely, that everyone is entitled to make his or her own decision by privately reflecting on the matters under consideration.

Let us trace his reasoning. Newman is consistent in his pre-Catholic stage. Those who do not seek a teacher are in grievous error. So, he concludes: "They who think they have, in consequence of their inquiries, found the teacher of truth, may be wrong in the result they have arrived at; but those who despise the notion of a teacher altogether, are already wrong before they begin them."[41] These words Newman may have addressed to himself, and his own error when he was taught to "think for himself."[42] And then he himself admitted that he had been wrong in maintaining that independent thinking was the safest way out. Such was the enlightened heritage as expressed in the phrase *sapere aude* (take courage to think). Descartes initiated this turn to the self and, what followed, the internalization of moral resources. Locke's empiricism continued this claim by making the mind the highest authority of the notional reservoir. A convert is in dire straits, he is looked at with distrust and aversion, equally by those whom he has left and by those whom he has joined. He must prove that his move is not "some eccentricity of character, or fickleness of mind, or tender attachment, or private interest."[43]

We sense a certain empiricist undertone, one that he later criticized in Locke, for Newman surmises that such a momentous decision must come indeed from extra-rational motives. He makes it clear that we must distinguish

39 *ESS.*, II, 338.
40 See *ibid.*, 355.
41 *Ibid.*, 356.
42 See *Apo.*, 8.
43 *ESS.*, II, 339.

between the *right of private judgment* and the *private right of judgment*. And what is meant in his analysis is the former, rather than the latter. The private right of judgment would mean that some groups (or individuals) usurp for themselves the exclusive right to make judgments about others, while depriving others of the right to form their own judgments. Additionally, people who claim to hold on to the right of private judgment act on reason; they are not biased or prejudiced. As such, private judgment is in accordance with modern rationalism, which stressed the intellect. To Newman, this seemed a very inadequate view of human cognition, therefore he proceeded to examine thoroughly how and on what basis we form our judgments. Now, if we act on reason in forming private judgment, or on good sense, as Descartes would have it, and good sense is equally distributed among people, why are there so many differences in such weighty matters as religion? Two elements are fundamental: 1) religious truth *does* exist, and 2) private judgment often leads to views opposite to someone's faith. Newman also rightly noted that there is fundamental link between an act of private judgment and individual responsibility.[44]

Let us note that Newman found a contradiction with regard to the treatment of private judgment. It was naturally highly valued in Protestantism as a result of modern thinking; on the other hand, Newman was criticised when he converted to the Roman Church. Shall we say that the right to private judgment did not work in his case?

The most important thing is to act out of duty. Where does this duty come from? Newman's answer would read: from our well-informed conscience (when it is open to the Absolute, i.e. the source of its duties). Therefore, "[an] act of duty must always be right; and will be accepted, whatever be its success, because done in obedience to His will. And He can bless the most unpromising circumstances; He can even lead us forward by means of our mistakes; He can turn our mistakes into a revelation; He can convert us, if He will, through the very obstinacy, or self-will, or superstition, which mixes itself up with our better feelings, and defiles, yet is sanctified by our sincerity."[45] It must be noted that the word "sincerity" is of key importance here, for what could Newman have set in opposition to his accusers' arguments except sincerity? Indeed sincerity in his case is, at the same time, understood as obedience to conscience; and we could say, paraphrasing his own words, that he was *sanctified by his own sincerity*. And the important point here is that we do not owe conversion merely to our intellectual endeavours. Therefore, we need to stress the word

44 See, *Ibid*., 338.

45 *Ibid*., 342.

"sincerity" again, for sincerity is not hypocritical, although at times erroneous, therefore even in mistakes it can be found free of guilt. Sanctity and sincerity appear to be the safest grounds on which to form private judgment, given that human interior is so often diffuse.

And talking about converts, Newman is convinced that *sincerity* and *obedience* are the most important signs of the spirit of conversion, as we shall see in the quote below. And the author adds emphatically that if a convert from whatever religion "has come over to us apart from this spirit, we do not much pride ourselves in our convert."[46] The author of these words is consistent in his personalistic approach, in his *method of personation*; converts should not be passive or interested followers. Conversion itself is not enough, let alone if it is merely expedient, out of fear or convenience; such an act of conversion would only be external. Let us also note that the Oxford Movement started in 1833, so some years of transformations had already passed. Newman despises those who decide to convert out of other, lower, motives:

> If he [a convert] joins us because he thinks he has a right to judge for himself, or because forms are of no consequence, or merely because sectarianism has its errors and inconveniences, or because an established Church is an efficacious means of spreading religion, he plainly thinks that the choice of a communion is not a more serious matter than the choice of a neighbourhood or of an insurance office. In like manner, if members of our communion have left it for Rome, because of the *aesthetic* beauty of the latter, and the grandeur of its pretensions, we are grieved, but, good luck to them, we can spare them. And if Roman Catholics join us or our 'Dissenting brethren,' because their own Church is behind the age, insists on Aristotelic dogmas, and interferes with liberty of thought, such a conversion is no triumph over popery, but over St. Peter and St. Paul. Our only safety lies in obedience; our only comfort in keeping it in view.[47]

It follows from this excellent passage that no motives for conversion were acceptable to Newman, except those duties dictated by a well-informed conscience; a genuine conversion should derive from inner belief, from conviction, not from baser motives, e.g. aesthetical. And, in general, inner belief should be our driving force. Such was the purity of motives that he valued most. He was not interested in gathering partisans in a political issue, but true believers.

46 *Ibid.*, 343.
47 *Ibid.*, 343.

Having read these words, any charge of interestedness or insincerity levelled against Newman must be deemed most malicious and false. In other words, anyone who should change his religion on such pretensions would be unreal. And unreality is contrary to conscience. How are we supposed to obtain private judgment and stay on the safe side? First of all, we must be guided by pure motives. The deliberating intellect can easily reach out to baser motives, such that are insinuated by self-interest, not by duty and obedience. We should then turn to the heart. And Newman puts forward what he so excellently developed in his *Grammar of Assent*, that is spontaneous (real) assent, for "first and most ordinary kind of Private Judgement [...] is that in which we engage without conscious or deliberate purpose."[48] This is like the readiness of pure motives, whereas reflection interferes with the chords of such motives and may easily diverge us from purity. The main trait of his thinking is indeed consistency. Such is his trademark in the pre-Catholic and Catholic periods; his consistency only takes different forms and brings about different results. Newman is distrustful of reflection, of whatever kind that comes from the reflexive power and may tamper with the pure light of motives.

The most important point, the decisive moment of conversion, is to be manifested as the fulfilment of a certain process of development. We can indeed see Newman's consistency at work. As he is discussing real assent in his philosophical work *Grammar of Assent* and writing about being overpowered, in his *Essays* he puts down the following words: "While Lydia heard St. Paul preach, her heart was opened. She had it not in mind to exercise any supposed sacred right, she was not setting about the choice of a religion, but she was drawn on to accept the Gospel by a moral persuasion." The crucial point is that "the judgment exercised is not recognized and realized by the party exercising it, as the subject-matter of a command, promise, duty, privilege, or anything else. It is but the spontaneous stirring of the affections within, or the passive acceptance of what is offered from without."[49] We can deduce from this comment that the right attitude for conversion is not intellectual satisfaction, but being embraced by the right spirit and certitude, which means to give the assent of one's person, free from any calculated self-interest. This kind of assent is not theoretical, in which arguments are being compared, and the most well-founded wins. At the same time, this point is probably the most difficult in his exposition to comprehend. For how are we supposed to understand this invisible process of preparation that is going on within a person, so that when the

48 *Ibid.*, 344.
49 *Ibid.*

right moment comes, this person is ready to really assent? Let us add that this moment is not premeditated because it is not merely consciously (i.e. deliberately) prepared; rather, it results from the amassing of implicit and explicit elements. It is then not my intellect that decides and makes a decision, but my whole person. Metaphorically speaking, we can say that it is like a seed that drops on fertile ground, or like a gust of oxygen which enlivens the body. My whole history of the untiring search for the truth has made it fertile, together with my twists and turns, my failures and victories, or even these unperceived impressions (which we shall discuss further). The main guiding force being the sincerity of intentions.

Let us emphasize these phrases as extremely important elements in Newman's vision: *moral persuasion* (i.e. not intellectual deliberation), *spontaneous stirring*, and *passive acceptance*. All of these components denote that there is no intellectual barrier between the sender and recipient, no intrusion from the reflecting subject. We may surmise that the author of these words was preparing himself for that kind of reception, and, obviously, for that kind of private judgment. Private, because the response came from this particular person, and not from another, private not in the sense of a deliberative conclusion understood by the jealousy of one's own point of view. Now, in what sense was it a judgment? If a judgment, then not in the sense of intellectual prowess, for even people with a relatively small power of comprehension can adequately respond to the truth that is being taught, more so to the testimony that is being given.

People may be moved to consent to certain truths that are being preached, when emotionally stirred, or else because there is, what Newman called in another context, congeniality between the thoughts (ideas) and the mind. Now, what kind of thoughts? He enumerates them thus: the thought of honour, glory, our duty, eternal life, Divine Goodness, and if we perseveringly dwell upon these things, we are led along a course of action on condition they are "congenial" to our mind. This congeniality in turn calls for a preparation of the mind, as Newman explains it, if

> there is that preparation of mind, the thought does lead to the act. Hence it is that the fact of a proposition being accepted with a real assent is accidentally an earnest of that proposition being carried out in conduct, and the imagination may be said in some sense to be of a practical nature, inasmuch as it leads to practice indirectly by the action of its object upon the affection.[50]

50 *GA*, 82.

The *state of hearts* is an essential part of Newman's epistemology. Unlike in empiricism, it is not enough to construct a logical proposition to be accepted by the mind. It must be stressed that "the imagination [...] leads to practice indirectly," which means that it does not actually determine action, but has the means to initiate action because it acts upon "the affection." Newman points to another significant affinity between ideas and minds, which is the response of the living person. It must be also noted how consistent he is in his most fundamental views, since he had already written about this preparation in his 1841 text on private judgment about people who are converted "through their habitual and abiding frame of mind and cast of opinion."[51] Such cases, however, seem hardly to be a case of private judgment, and in this respect Newman has a point. Contrary to empiricism, especially that of Locke's as used in his *Letter Concerning Toleration*, it is not by way of the accumulation of reasons that one elicits one's due consent to a given truth (or, in this case, a given religion). Persons decide that way or another depending on their hearts. This "openness" of hearts may also be deemed only a fleeting moment that passes away sooner than it has been realized by the party in question. Newman rightly observes that if in conversion decisions result from such spontaneous moments, they may, perhaps, be called "private," but they can hardly be regarded as judgments. They are made on the spur of the moment, often according to a transient whim. Everything depends on "the state of their hearts; the one party consist of unformed minds, or senseless and dead, or minds under temporary excitement, who are brought over by external or accidental influences, without any real sympathy for the Religion, which is taught them *in order* that they may *learn* sympathy with it, and who, as time goes on, fall away again if they are not happy enough to become imbued with it; and in the other party there is already a sympathy between the external Word and the heart within. The one[s] are proselytized by force, authority, or their mere feelings, the others through their habitual and abiding frame of mind and cast of opinion. But neither can be said, in the ordinary sense of the word, to inquire, reason, and decide about religion."[52]

People who are illiterate or unreflecting hardly ever enquire about the foundations of their religion, let alone about changing it. For Newman, conversion is an arduous process whose endpoint is not premeditated, hence no one can predict when this final moment of decision will occur. Those who decide about changing their religion give in to the sentiments they find rather than

51 *ESS.*, II, 345.
52 *Ibid.*

adopt them. There is no inquiry or proof, "nothing of argument, discussion, or choice in the process of [their] conversion." Such a person "has no systems to choose between, and no grounds to scrutinize."[53] Such being the cases of conversion, one can indeed hardly call them private judgments; put another way, conversion is not a calculated decision of the intellect, for there are too many factors, some of them latent, to be taken into consideration. They are either emotionally beguiled or enforced by circumstance. Conversion may also occur by means of supernatural intervention, which interrupts the natural order of laws, so that the mind cannot master it. Either way, there is no room for private judgment. Such being the case, no wonder that Newman later in his life undertook the challenging task of examining the nature of assent in his *Grammar of Assent*, assent which is part of our judgment.

We may be prompted to judgment by virtue of the moral sense, assuming that we have accepted the first principles. Newman, however, is still asking if we can find any other proof of private judgment apart from sympathy, being in the company of others, and being exposed to a supernatural intervention. And he found it, as he stressed, "much more to our purpose, [...] by means of the study of Scripture itself."[54] Ultimately, the quest refers us to a teacher because "conversions recorded in Scripture are brought about in a very marked way through a *teacher*, and *not* by means of private judgment, so again, if an appeal is made to private judgment, this is done in order to settle who the teacher is, and what are his notes or tokens, rather than to substantiate this or that religious opinion or practice. And if such instances bear upon our conduct at this day, as it is natural to think they do, then of course the practical question before us is, *who* is the teacher now, from whose mouth we are to seek the law, and *what are his notes?*"[55]

Now, we shift emphasis from the message onto the author of the message. In other words, it is not important on what I ground my private judgment, but *who speaks* to me and *who gives* testimony. Judgment itself fades away and is no longer held in such high esteem. The proper teacher must be free from idolatry, must speak with authority and judicially, and must emanate holiness. The question "for Private Judgment to exercise itself upon is, what and where is the Church?"[56] We need to focus on the teacher of doctrine because religion "is for practice, and that immediate."[57] Newman anticipates his future decision, as he

53 *Ibid.*, 347.
54 *Ibid.*, 350.
55 *Ibid.*
56 *Ibid.*, 353.
57 *Ibid.*

certainly found in the Church of Rome the right teacher. And this approach is very much in keeping with his *method of personation*. This method means, let us recall, that the revealed system is brought home to us through the mediation of persons.[58] Newman explains his understanding of personation and claims that we find it easier "to form a correct and rapid judgment of persons than of books or of doctrines. […] There is something in the sight of persons or of bodies of men, which speaks to us for approval or disapprobation with a distinctness to which pen and ink are unequal. This is just the kind of evidence which is needed for use, in cases in which private judgment is divinely intended to be the means of our conversion. The multitude have neither the time, the patience, nor the clearness and exactness of thought, for processes of investigation and deduction. Reason is slow and abstract, cold and speculative; but man is a being of feeling and action; he is not resolvable into a […] series of hypotheticals, or a critical diatribe, or an algebraical equation."[59]

The author of the above words is convinced that if we are to exercise our private judgment, we should direct it towards "the teacher rather than the doctrine."[60] Let us note that the aforementioned text perfectly recapitulates Newman's personalistic approach, i.e. the person should be taken in his or her entirety. It is not only reason, which is "slow and abstract, cold and speculative," but there are also "feeling and action" that come into play in the person. We need to embrace this multi-faceted structure whose individual elements render the sense of the whole. Newman always appeals to the whole, be it the person or the Church. Only such a whole can speak with its full wealth. These words also manifest Newman's position versus doctrines and persons, notions and realities. Hence, at the moment of his conversion he points to the Church, i.e. to the people who teach. The presence or absence of teachers indicates whether the institution is still alive or already dead. The New Testament "makes the teacher the subject of that inquiry, and not the thing taught; it bids us ask for his credentials, and avoid him if he is unholy, or idolatrous, or schismatical, or if he comes in his own name, or if he claims no authority, or is the growth of a particular spot or of particular circumstances."[61] Put another way, whether this teacher is a real bearer of the supernatural message and its witness, or merely a political propagandist. And Newman concludes that although private judgment is imposed on us as the fruit of the modern turning point, nowhere in the Bible is it insisted that we should gain religious truth by

58 *US*, 48.
59 *ESS.*, II, 354.
60 *Ibid.*
61 *Ibid.*

our own private examination, unless it is brought home to us by mediation of witnesses. Witnesses are the best interpreters who teach by their examples.

He criticizes those who claim that there is no authority anywhere, except only private opinion, because in this claim the truth is relative, so everyone can choose whatever they wish without any ambition to be true; and we, as individual persons, are doomed to our private opinions. If the Church is the ground and pillar of the truth, as Newman thinks she is, we cannot be satisfied with some self-proclaimed voluntary societies which have nothing to do with the Scripture. And he concludes: "Whoever is right, or whoever is wrong, they cannot be right, who profess not to have found, not to look out for, not to believe in, that Ordinance to which Apostles and prophets give their testimony."[62] Let us observe that teaching is placed alongside giving testimony. A teacher with authority is the one who not only teaches, but who is also ready to bear witness to his words.

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While reading the Fathers, Newman came to the conclusion that, with regard to the analogy between the natural and supernatural orders, it is not the laws of nature but the invisible world that governs the elementary principles of the physical universe. The supernatural orders underlie the relationships we call cause and effect. In other words, Newman became convinced of the spiritual nature of the surrounding world. It is interesting that an intuition similar to the one he experienced at the moment of his juvenile conversion in 1816 should have arisen. In his sermon of 1831 about Angels, he bemoaned the fact that modernity was willing to ascribe everything that was going on in the universe not to Angels, but to the agency of "certain assumed laws of nature."[63]

Such was the result of modern disenchantment, and an outcome of the deistic trend, namely that the universe not only evolved from the natural laws hidden within it, but that these laws were the only explanatory rules of every phenomenon, material and spiritual alike (the spiritual aspects can well be reduced to the evolution of the material ones). Brougham and Peel were excellent proponents of this claim. Newman's thinking in this matter is consistent. If he focuses on the personal, he would quite naturally like to view the world as a manifestation of personal forces rather than of inanimate and mechanistic processes. It is true that in the course of scientific progress ever new aspects of

62 *Ibid.*, 357.
63 *PPS*, 451.

nature or social life have brought forth new sciences predestined to examine these same aspects. Newman is realistic in this area and is well aware of what had happened in science since Galileo. He disagrees, however, with the modern exaggerated claims that only the scientific picture of the world is valuable (we shall see this especially in his critical remarks about Peel and Brougham, which we shall discuss further on). Modernity, enchanted by the new opportunities for investigation, the mathematical models of nature, and the fact that nature can be calculated, had tipped the balance against the hidden dimension of the universe in favour of "things seen" and contrary to "unseen things," thus making people ignorant about them. To use Kantian parlance, we can say that the phenomenal world prevailed over the noumenal world.

In like manner, I understand Newman's criticism as a problem of proportions. Exaggeration in either direction renders the picture of the universe, especially that of mankind, incomplete. There is one idea that especially infiltrates all of Newman's thinking, namely that the visible world of motions, gestures and conversations is but a manifestation of something more profound and invisible. And he attributes all of the exceptional interventions in nature to Angels, that is, to spiritual influences, so he concludes on the basis of the Scripture communications that "the course of Nature, which is so wonderful, so beautiful, and so fearful, is effected by the ministry of those unseen beings." And this conclusion is immediately followed by yet another important statement, from the point of view of understanding his system: "Nature is not inanimate; its daily toil is intelligent; its works are *duties*."[64] In other words, the world is not mechanistic, but it is established by God's *fiat* and then held in existence by His providential intervention; we may say that, for Newman, the world is personalised, not an inhuman mechanism, and thereby it becomes an encouragement for interpersonal relations. What we have said is very much in keeping with his *method of personation*.

This is Newman's idea of the analogy between the human world and the physical world at work. The underlying structure of reality is spiritual, i.e. personal. Thus, human beings are not at the mercy of inanimate forces, but they live in a world empowered by the intermediary of intelligent beings. The whole world is purpose-minded because the "daily toil is intelligent." And it rests on the foundation of obedience, for nature is dutiful, i.e. created with a purpose, and fulfils the duties superimposed on it by the Creator. There is an analogy between the soul moving the body and the Spiritual Intelligences moving the universe. Motions in the physical world are manifestations of operative

64 *Ibid.*, 452.

spiritual forces. Newman puts forward his thesis thus: "And I put it to any one, whether it is not as philosophical, and as full of intellectual enjoyment, to refer the movements of the natural world to them, as to attempt to explain them by certain theories of science; useful as these theories certainly are for particular purposes, and capable (in subordination to that higher view) of a religious application."[65] Let it be observed that he wrote these words whilst still in his Anglican years and long before his most philosophical endeavour, i.e. *Grammar of Assent*. The chronological sequence of *Apologia* and *Grammar* is also worthy of note; *Apologia* precedes *Grammar*, just like assent precedes certitude. Real assent precedes reflection on this assent, and *Apologia* is a testimony of his assents.

I think Newman also found confirmation of this predominance of personal response over reflection in the Bible. There we find ample evidence of a distance between reflection and spontaneous decision, and a warning not to rely on the former but to be ready for the latter. Those who hesitate to immediately enter the path to follow Christ are reprimanded.[66] Let us draw another conclusion. Human dignity primarily consists in the fact of being in the image and likeness of God, not in the multitude of projects which human persons can elicit from their consciousness. Thus, a sure manifestation of this dignity is the constant effort to return to this likeness and image. In other words, dignity is grounded in human ontic structure, which has its origin in the divine likeness and image.

Newman proposes his theory as a "humbling doctrine." He acknowledges the usefulness of treating nature as a network of inanimate structures, in scientific parlance. In the case of such writers as Newman, one has to inspect all his writings, for he is not an academic philosopher. Rather, he is an intuitive artist whose elements of philosophy appear in various forms. Indeed, his interpretation of the working of nature echoes the well-known Shakespearean line: "There are more things in heaven and earth, [...] than are dreamt of in your philosophy."[67] Contrary to the deistic vision of God as a watchmaker, in which the world was set in motion by Him and kept in operation by unchanging natural laws, we have a vision that it is rather a living organism that needs constant attendance, and this attendance is granted. We should, therefore, remember that "when we converse on subjects of Nature scientifically, repeating the names of plants and earths, and describing their properties, we should do so religiously, as in the hearing of the great Servants of God, with the sort of

65 *Ibid.*, 453.
66 Lk 9:57–62; Mt 8:22.
67 Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I, Sc. V.

diffidence which we always feel when speaking before the learned and wise of our own mortal race, as poor beginners in intellectual knowledge, as well as in moral attainments."[68]

As practical and useful our knowledge of this world may be, it is even more useful when treated "religiously," i.e. when we can "connect the sight of this world with the thought of another."[69] Newman is very consistent in his long quest—to make sense of this world in his journey to the next world. He proposes that we be aware all the time of being ministered to by unseen spirits.

This attitude should teach us humility. Once we envision ourselves as beings placed within powerful spiritual forces whose ultimate purposes are hidden from us, we have a chance to mitigate our ambitions. The physical world is interpenetrated with spiritual influences. There are also bad spirits which exert their influence on some people and institutions.

Newman does not aspire to be a model of good sense, but tries to trace his individual story with great attention to every detail. I will remind the reader that our author looks at his past events from a certain permanent point of view all the time. For he has arrived at his destination and now resembles a traveller who observes the winding ruts left by his vehicle upon reaching the goal. Sometimes he wonders why he has chosen this and not another turn, bearing in mind the only mode of action with which he had come thus far was to abide by "intelligible processes and honest external means."[70] It must be noted here that "intelligible processes" denote the use of reason, whilst "honest external means" denotes abiding by real words and dutiful obedience towards one's conscience.

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Newman was born after the French Revolution and after the dismissal of the Bourbons. Looking back at these momentous events, he expressed his belief that it was unchristian to cast off governors "who had the divine right of inheritance."[71] Naturally, we observe here a conservative bent, although Newman himself would shun political categorization. Therefore, he avoided being classified as a Tory or Whig. The 1830s saw turbulent political changes in Great Britain, culminating in the Great Reform of 1832. When the Whigs came into power, the liberal tendencies were in motion. In the atmosphere of reforms,

68 *PPS*, 455.
69 *Ibid.*
70 *Apo.*, 20.
71 *Ibid.*

the scope of transformations grew ever broader, including not only the political institutions but also the Anglican Church. The modern principle of rationalization and modernization was well at work.

We must remember that the 1830s were generally a very revolutionary period for the whole of Europe; it suffices to mention the July revolution of 1830 in France, the November Uprising against the Russian Empire in Poland. There was general unrest due to many factors prior to those momentous processes. The first has already been mentioned, i.e. the French Revolution, and Napoleon's successive campaigns, which engaged not only European countries, but also the fledgling United States. Another factor was of course the Industrial Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century whose practical applications boldly encroached upon the nineteenth century. The invention of the steam engine had revolutionized the processes of production, facilitated transport and communication, and transformed the economic face of nations from agriculture to industry. Thousands of eager and adventurous people left their rural farms and pushed forward into growing and bustling cities, creating new problems of overpopulation and crime. The overall social structures of the European nations were undergoing dynamic changes. Britain had grown into a colonial empire.

It was the period when the time-honoured Tories became conservatives, by the more updated standards, and Whigs would soon be termed Liberals.[72] Sir Robert Peel wished to conserve the 1688 constitution, but in 1830 Lord John Grey took office. Let us note that the Catholic Relief Act had been endorsed in 1829. Eventually, the Whigs won a large majority and proceeded to introduce other reforms, e.g. slavery was abolished in 1833. The Scottish historian, Christopher Harvie, recapitulates this revolutionary period concisely: "The axioms of Blackstone and Burke: of continuity, the division of powers, the

72 Whigs and Tories were members of two opposing political parties or factions in England, particularly in the 18th century. Originally 'Whig' and 'Tory' were terms of abuse introduced in 1679 during the debate on the bill excluding James, Duke of York (later James II), from the succession. Whig was a term applied to horse thieves and later to Scottish Presbyterians; it connoted non-conformism and rebellion and was applied to those who claimed the right to exclude an heir from the throne. Tory was an Irish term suggesting a papist outlaw and was applied to those who supported the hereditary right of James despite his Roman Catholic faith. The Glorious Revolution (1688–89) significantly modified the fundamental division between the two parties. Henceforth, most Tories accepted something of the Whig doctrine of limited constitutional monarchy rather than the absolutism of divine right. The Tories began to identify with Anglicanism and Whiggism with aristocratic, landed families and the financial interests of the wealthy middle classes. After 1815 and a period of party confusion, both parties became known as the Conservatives (Tories) and the Liberals (Whigs).

interpenetration of government, economy, and society—and above all the notion of government as a self-regulating mechanism—complemented the mechanics of classical economics, the discoveries of science, and even the cultivated deism of the upper classes."[73] A new social class appeared on the social stage—the Capitalists—alongside large landowners, whose economic thinking was also capitalist.

Such ideas were the natural consequences of modernity, with its message that the human being as a Cartesian *res cogitans* can manipulate the material (and social) world, i.e. *res extensa*. Politics started to be viewed as part of this manipulation in line with Newtonian physics. I think that we may venture to say that Newman's turn to the spiritual underpinning of the visible reality was yet another attempt to mitigate this mechanistic approach, to "warm" or "spiritualize" the world of impersonal forces. At the same time, I doubt if this was his attempt to reverse the tide. He would rather always struggle to compensate for such a one-sided approach and provide a more complete picture of the human being and human affairs. In this complete picture the visible events, technological progress, social reforms are not the only fulfilment of human life; they fail to render the complex being of the person.

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When Newman arrived in Britain from his Italian trip, the Oxford Movement had already started, with John Keble, Hurrell Froude, William Palmer, Arthur Perceval, and Hugh Rose. I am not going to discuss in detail their contributions because the main topic of this work is individual life in its quest for truth, and in this case Newman's individual life. We are basically interested in how he faced various challenging situations, and, in keeping with his *method of personation*, we would like to treat his life as an exemplar.

The main danger in that period was, as has already been said, the dominance of liberal views, especially in religious matters. Newman was alarmed. In order to describe this serious situation, he used such terms as calamity, grievous heresies, and grave circumstances. He was a practical man for whom existing facts had precedence over ideas. If there were some proposals, he sought to be assured first that they would work. Froude fought against Erastianism, which meant the union of Church and State. For him it "was the parent, or if not the parent, the serviceable and sufficient tool, of liberalism."[74] Let us add

73 K. O. Morgan (ed.), *The Oxford History of Britain*, 481–482.

74 *Apo*., 25–26.

that the members of the Movement had no worldly ambitions, no intentions to triumph in the political world. The hindrance to its success was no unity of place. Some of them were indeed Oxford dons, but others were not.

And something Newman counted as the more essential element—the Tractarians did not have "a common history, common memories, and intercourse of mind with mind in the past, and a progress and increase in that intercourse in the present."[75] Such interpersonal experience was vital for Newman. I would ascribe it to the empiricist tradition in which our minds are composed, as Locke had it, of primary ideas, derived from experience, and secondary ideas, composed by the reflecting mind. Newman was convinced that the members of the Movement needed a solid foundation, so that they could build a reliable religious theory to stand up to liberalism. Admittedly, it was from this need of a theoretical underpinning that Newman began to write the Tracts.

We have to say that the Tracts are very individualistic in their expression, as Newman himself wrote: "every one has his own taste [...]. No great work was done by a system; whereas systems rise out of individual exertions. Luther was an individual. The very faults of an individual excite attention; he loses, but his cause (if good and he powerful-minded) gains. This is the way of things; we promote truth by a self-sacrifice."[76] These words in a masterful way recapitulate not only the intellectual path of the Tractarians, but are also a very Newmanian trait of character, for he always cherished this action of one mind on another mind, this fervent mingling of ideas. He was no recluse, loved his friends, and showed his attachment to them.

I have already mentioned Newman's inspirations here, including William Law. It must be noted that Law, whose devotional literature was one element of the Evangelical revival, "stresses that grace was available to those who directed their life by biblical precept."[77] This kind of thinking went against the Calvinist 'election'. The climate of the Evangelical revival was also supposed to be an antidote against the cold mechanistic world. It was "a faith of crisis, valid against atheistic revolution, unfeeling industrial relationships, and brutal personal behaviour." The revival was politically conservative. Unfortunately, as Harvie rightly observes, many of its members became the "severest agnostic and high-church critics."[78] John Wesley left the Church of England and founded the Society of Methodists at the end of the eighteenth century which spread beyond Britain due to its vigorous missionary work.

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75 *Ibid*., 26.
76 *Ibid*., 27–28.
77 K. O. Morgan (ed.), *The Oxford History of Britain*, 484.
78 *Ibid*.

I think we can well understand the concern of the then conservatives amid this overwhelming pressure for reforms. The evangelical movement, which was popular up to the 1870s, penetrated all strata of the Anglican Church. It focused on Bible-reading, prayer, preaching and self-improvement, things in themselves proper not only for Christians, but in general, for moral development. On the other hand, the movement disregarded sacraments and ritual.[79] As such, Evangelicalism[80] could be combined with Kantian transcendentalism and its focus on the autonomy of the individual. High ideals, unfortunately, had no firm anchor of the sacramental foundation. Newman noticed this unwelcome trend within his Church, and, therefore, he decided to join the Oxford Movement which intended to put her on a firm basis. He noticed that in this atmosphere of glorification for autonomy, faith gave in to free-thinking and rationalism, and then was diluted into numerous sects. These trends gave rise to Latitudinarianism, the comprehensiveness of belief, comprising a wide range of beliefs, as long as they could be called free choices of the thinking self. Under such circumstances, the fortune of truth seemed to be doomed. It is also true that there had always been a wide diversity of views within the Anglican Church. This plurality of opinions triggered the process of democratization, which may be good in civil society, but can lead to unwelcome results for a body whose structure is hierarchical and dogmatic.

With regard to Evangelicalism, we can see that it was dominant in the nineteenth century. The specialist in this era, Richard Evans, characterizes the period in the following manner: "Throughout the Victorian age the bulk of the people in all classes had remained Evangelical in outlook. Religious practice and political history as related to religion had combined to make family religion, or the religion of the Bible, as it is sometimes called, the moral basis of the nation; and this produced, until well into the third quarter of the 19th century in spite of much squabbling, a steady approximation between the Anglican and Non-conformist view.[81] In general terms, most British Christians agree to

79 See D. Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth Century*, 107.

80 Evangelicalism (Evangelical Revivalism) – was populist and traditionally high-church, inspired by the religious heritage of the seventeenth century (especially by John Bunyan and John Wesley); evangelicals emphasised the importance of the Bible and faith. They clashed with conservatives who clung to the existing ritual of worship, sacraments and church authority.

81 Nonconformists (nonconformism) – a group of people who refused to recognise the Anglican Church after the schism of Henry VIII (when he issued the Act of Supremacy in 1534); the Act of Supremacy made the King the head of the Church and then the Act of Uniformity in 1559 made the Church of England the established Church. Nonconformists were also known as dissenters. It was from this group that the radical Puritans decided to leave Europe for the New World (America). Nonconformists believed in the principles

looking on life as a period of test and trial, to be followed by a final judgment of reward and punishment. Accordingly, they stressed the vital importance of good conduct, right living, and of doing what one ought rather than what one wished."[82] This approach shifted religion into the area of social work, and in general its proponents believed in salvation by works.

Newman began to visit various quarters of the Church, both Low and High, for they were all alerted to the desperate need for revival. The main enemy was liberalism, especially in spiritual matters. Apart from the Tracts, he would send letters to the *Record* newspaper. His letters addressed such vital issues as Church Discipline, proof of the Scripture, and the application of the doctrine. All of these topics meant to show that the Church is an entirely distinct body from the State, and has her own idiosyncratic structure that, truly, she needs reform, but not along the same lines as the social and political institutions.

Newman's view on the liberalism of the day, a criticism which does not mean that he is against liberty is defined as follows:

> Whenever men are able to act at all, there is the chance of extreme and intemperate action; and therefore, when there is exercise of mind, there is the chance of wayward or mistaken exercise. Liberty of thought is in itself a good; but it gives an opening to false liberty. Now by Liberalism I mean false liberty of thought, or the exercises of thought upon matters, in which, from the constitution of the human mind, thought cannot be brought to any successful issue, and therefore is out of place. Among such matters are first principles of whatever kind; and of these the most sacred and momentous are especially to be reckoned the truths of Revelation. Liberalism then is the mistake of subjecting to human judgment those revealed doctrines which are in their nature beyond and independent of it, and of claiming to determine on intrinsic grounds the truth and value of propositions which rest for their reception simply on the external authority of the Divine Word.[83]

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of the Reformation (*sola fide* and *sola scriptura*) on the one hand, and maintained that the Anglican Church was still not free of Roman Catholic elements on the other. Nonconformists claimed that, according to modern thinking, religion was a matter of private choice.

82 R. J. Evans, *The Victorian Age 1815 –1914*, Wheeling: Edward Arnold, 1981, 277–278.

83 *Liberalism* (*Note A*), in: *Apo*., 192–193. See also a chapter "Newman and the Liberals" in: E. Short, *Newman and History*, Leominster: Gracewing, 2017, 135–202.

It follows from the above passage that Newman does not criticize liberty but rather the abuse of liberty, for in itself liberty is "a good." We need to be free in such a way that respects the truth about the human being in its entirety. There are first principles that should be accepted on faith, not as a result of deliberation. The author of these words is, therefore, an opponent of the culture of immanence in which the human mind encloses itself. There are truths which transcend human cognition, so it would be absurd for the human being to decide about them. The revealed truths of religion are "beyond and independent" of human judgment. They call for "the external authority."

Newman admits that his letters resulted from his exuberant spirit of recovered health. They were a product of spontaneity. It is interesting to note that they were "uncongenial to [his] natural temper, to the genius of the Movement, and to the historical mode of its success."[84] I find this remark to be of much importance, for it shows the author's honesty and sincerity. He is not afraid to inform his readers about the state of his psyche. Such is the individual person; he is not a highly predictable mechanism, he has his emotional upheavals. The reader should be reminded of the context. Newman was after his wearisome journey through France, after being threatened by imminent death in Palermo, and yet regained his health and returned home. Now that the readers know of the concrete circumstances, they may find it easier to show their considerateness and understanding; after all, we are talking about a real person, the like of whom we find in our daily experience. Moreover, Newman was very excited about this work on behalf of the Church. Reporting on such moments of his life, we have a chance to see how his character was taking shape.

At that time, he naturally believed that primitive Christianity, of which the Anglican Church was the epitome, could be regained. He even had "a supreme confidence" in their cause, that primitive Christianity "was delivered for all time by the early teachers of the Church [...], registered and attested in the Anglican formularies and by the Anglican divines."[85] So they needed a second, and better, reformation. Since this primitive Christianity had almost faded away in the country, it must be restored. The Whigs, who were in power, had vigorously undertaken their job of fake reformation by suppressing bishoprics, confiscating Church property, and doing nothing about the vacancies of Sees. Indeed, the State felt supreme in political and religious affairs, and set about reforming the Church.

84 *Apo.*, 28.

85 R. J. Evans, *The Victorian Age 1815 –1914*, 29.

Newman had great confidence in the Apostolical form of doctrine. He described his attitude towards others as a mixture of fierceness and of sport; we must remember that as important as the Apostolical Succession was significant for the Tractarians, there were still bishops in the Anglican Church who could decide whether this doctrine was crucial for them or not. Generally, Newman favoured the High Church and looked with suspicion at the Low Church. This mixture of fierceness and of sport meant that he also resorted to irony, the Socratic rhetorical method.

It is interesting to note that when Newman was accused by Froude of economy in publishing one tract (Tract 15), he argued that he had acted notionally, that he had "only acted instrumentally, as one might translate a friend's book into a foreign language."[86] This is how people often behave in public life, and he admitted he was not free of such behaviour. The fact that he later devoted so much time to a thorough analysis of human cognition, and classified notional assents as weaker than real ones,[87] does not mean that he himself did not make use of them. He is writing about himself as a real person. If things were different, there would be no need to leave *shadows and images*; change and development are the main manifestations of the fact that we are, one way or another, amid shadows and images. And Newman was no exception to this rule. Therefore, he warns his readers that they should not interpret his words in isolation and out of context, or from what he wrote later and in other places. Human life is indeed like a long and intricate composition. Its listener can only have the full benefit when he listens to the whole of it.

When words are taken in isolation and out of context, the reader stands shocked by their glaring contradiction. Such may be a reading of the Bible. The classical example is a quote from Psalm 53, which reads "There is no God," a statement shocking indeed, but the preceding clause confers the correct meaning: "Fools say in their hearts." Likewise, Newman used similar figures. For instance, although he shunned exaggeration, he would rather have exaggeration than indifference. In his Anglican sermon, he says: "True it is, that many times, many ages, have Christians been mistaken in thinking they discerned Christ's coming; but better a thousand times think Him coming when He is not, than once think Him not coming when He is."[88] We may say that this attitude is especially timely when religious fervour is cooling down and

86 *Apo*., 30.

87 Newman emphasises all the time the importance of real assent (real apprehension), cf. L. Richardson, *Newman's Approach to Knowledge*, Gracewing: Leominster, 2007, 51 and ff.

88 *PPS*, 1324.

sliding into indifference. Exaggeration in itself is wrong, but he would rather have exaggeration than calculated indifference.

This subversive approach is often used by Newman, i.e. starting with a certain fact, apparently agreeing with it, in order to draw opposite conclusions. He promoted the principle of restraint and was cautious of ostentation (to this danger he devoted his Anglican sermon). He advocated positive theology, if I may call it this, which consisted in showing good examples rather than condemning bad ones. As he said in one of his sermons, "Let us be far more bent on preaching our own doctrine than on refuting another's."[89]

The members of the Oxford Movement came from different quarters, moved by "one Sentiment, which has risen up simultaneously in many places very mysteriously."[90] Newman characterizes the Oxford Movement, for example, as "a spirit afloat, [...] rising up in hearts where it was least suspected, and working itself, though not in secret, yet so subtly and impalpably, as hardly to admit of precaution or encounter on any ordinary human rules of opposition. It is [...] an adversary in the air, a something one and entire, a whole wherever it is, unapproachable and incapable of being grasped, as being the result of causes far deeper than political or other visible agencies, the spiritual awakening of spiritual wants."[91]

As regards their followers, Newman says that many of them were hot-hearted and manifested their party-spirit rather than the spirit of renewal, an attitude the Tractarians expected to be formed. Newman enumerates these expected virtues: "the silent humility of their lives, [...] the unaffected reverence for holy things, [...] habitual purity of heart and serenity of temper," such people "best exemplify the kind of character which the writers of the *Tracts for the Times* have wished to form."[92] The Tractarians wished to renew the spirit of Antiquity not by its blind imitation, but, rather, by an adaptive recreation. Such was the essence of the Movement and such was the essence of Newman's view of development. The core remains the same, but it is translated into ever new languages, thus being adjusted to concrete times and places.

It is interesting to note that the Church should need reform at all in the nineteenth century, in "this golden age of church-going"—as Thomson calls it—and he adds that "half of the regular church-goers [...] were nonconformists."[93] When we put these things together, our conclusion is clear. Generally,

89 *Ibid.*, 1304.
90 *Apo.*, 66.
91 *Ibid.*
92 *Ibid.*, 67.
93 D. Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth Century*, 109.

to be a nonconformist is a positive approach, but in this religious context it meant one's own private interpretation of religious matters without any intrusion by external authorities. The more so, if this authority was the national Church. Nonconformity in the British context flourished, "and threw its weight behind the burgeoning movement for political liberalism."[94] Dissenters from the Catholic rites were punished during the reign of Henry VIII, and even Elizabeth I, at least initially, was concerned about the Catholic character of the Church. But once the modern process of private opinion in religion started, it was difficult to stop.

If we combine these dispersed elements into one whole, we begin to understand Newman's difficult situation. On the one hand, he was an intellectual child of modernity, and he acknowledged private judgment; private judgment was morally valuable. On the other hand, he was well aware of the functional disarrangement in which the human being was when left alone at the mercy of his own contrivances. The goal was almost implausible: to save the personal approach, for—as he said—he preferred the Personal to the Universal, and, metaphorically speaking, to pin down this person to solid ground, a solid centre of gravity (to use Juan Donoso-Cortés's picture). The purpose was enormous, and almost self-contradictory: to be free and to be dependent; to be sovereign and to be obedient; ultimately, to rely on probabilities and to attain certitude.

Let us observe that, to a certain extent, the revival of the Oxford Movement can be compared to militant Wesleyanism. Wesley struggled against the spiritual somnolence "of this world of easy-going give and take" with an "emotional appeal to the uneducated masses in the towns, for whom the Church had largely failed to provide."[95] Its impact gave rise to the vigorous Evangelical movement. We could say that, apparently, the purpose of Wesleyanism and the evangelicals was similar to that of the Oxford Movement, i.e. spiritual revival, but that the addressees were different. The Movement took root within the High Church party and was "concerned with the correctness of dogma, the authority of historical Church, and the dignity of the clerical hierarchy."[96]

Now those who belonged to the Low Church were of a different inclination. Its early leaders, including Henry Thornton, Granville Sharp and John Venn, created the so-called "Clapham Sect." They insisted "on the importance of personal morality, and of a sober and responsible conduct of public affairs, which led them to develop great schemes of philanthropic and missionary activity; but they attached little importance to the value of the Church as an institution,

94 N. Davies, *The Isle. A History*, London: Macmillan, 1999, 725.
95 R. J. Evans, *The Victorian Age 1815 –1914*, 83.
96 *Ibid.*

or the significance of the priesthood as such."[97] When William Wilberforce (the *spiritus movens* of the struggle for the abolition of slavery) died in 1833, the organizational strength of the movement declined.

Between the High Church and the Low Church parties, there was a large and influential group of liberal-minded Churchmen. They wished "to modernise the financial and administrative sides of the Church, and to get rid of the obvious abuses of pluralism, nepotism, sinecures [...] which disfigured it."[98]

As important as such matters as the relief of the poor are, improvement in the standards of living is not the main purpose of the Church. The Church is an institution whose principal task is to encourage spiritual revival and bring people to salvation; it is not a charitable organization; at least this is not its primary role. In like manner, looking at the wide panorama of church movements, designed to blunt the progressive thrust of the Industrial Revolution and its revolutionary impact on the social structure in the nineteenth century, we have to say that the Church was indeed at a vital turning point. Technological progress truly facilitated many areas and improved existence, but, at the same time, produced various social ills. The rising working-class people needed help from the State and the Church. The point was to know how to distinguish the two institutions, so that their vital functions were not mingled, which would make them indistinct and lead to their atrophy, which would in turn be especially destructive for the Church; the State usually gains from such an expansion of power. Religious fervour, a very positive force when directed only towards social and material improvement, might produce results negative to religion. This is particularly true when the Church's basic mission is forgotten. One of the results of the Oxford Movement was the so-called "Christian Socialism" led by Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–1872) and Charles Kingsley (1819–1875). The term is in inverted commas because we could of course call this kind of socialist activity humanitarianism. Let us add that the latter leader is the same Kingsley who wrote the accusatory text against Newman and who was then humiliated by his devastating response. Some of these activists later held very unorthodox views. Maurice, for that matter, denied belief in everlasting damnation.

It would seem that religious beliefs without a solid dogmatic structure become shifting sands. I think we can agree with Thomson that "the fervour of the Oxford Movement and of the Christian Socialism, and the *furore* caused by both, remain inexplicable unless it be remembered how deep was the

97 *Ibid.*
98 *Ibid.*

mid-Victorian respect for religious belief."[99] This is true, but the Church must be held distinct from social action, no matter how noble it is.

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Newman is often held as one of the staunchest opponents of liberalism in theology. Now William Ewart Gladstone (1809–1898) was one of the magnificent leaders of Victorian Liberalism in his days. He was a High Churchman who had a strong taste for theology and politics. Throughout the years 1852–1868, Gladstone and Disraeli (1804–1881) alternated as Prime Ministers. This mid-Victorian era saw the virtual hegemony of liberalism, and experienced a period of almost unbroken peace (except for some turbulent, but remote, events in India and China). In general, there was no major European conflict between 1815 and 1914 in which Britain took part. The European wars against Napoleon had ended and the First World War was far away. We could say that after 1815 Britain again became an exemplar and model of stable and constitutional government.

In the appendix to the 1865 edition of his *Apologia*, we find his famous critical censure of false liberty in Liberalism. Let us repeat what we have already quoted here:

> Liberty of thought is in itself a good; but it gives an opening to false liberty. Now by Liberalism I mean false liberty of thought, or the exercise of thought upon matters, in which, from the constitution of the human mind, thought cannot be brought to any successful issue, and therefore is out of place. Among such matters are first principles of whatever kind; and of these the most sacred and momentous are especially to be reckoned the truths of Revelation. Liberalism then is the mistake of subjecting to human judgment those revealed doctrines which are in their nature beyond and independent of it, and of claiming to determine on intrinsic grounds the truth and value of propositions of the Divine Word.[100]

Newman himself acknowledged that "the Evangelical party itself, with their late successes, seemed to have lost that simplicity and unworldliness which I admired so much in Milner and Scott."[101] He thought that the Evangelicals had joined ranks with the Liberals. The Church was weak, with so many divergent

99 D. Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth Century*, 110.
100 Note A, *Apo.*, 192–193.
101 *Ibid.*, 20.

views so that it could not compete with the new vigorous social forces, and was oblivious of her true strength. I think we can surmise that these were the moments when Newman looked back with nostalgia at the "good old days" of the primitive Church when she still retained the power of a Spiritual Mother. Newman read about the first martyrs of the Church, her once profound spirituality, and was ashamed. He felt affection for his Church and dismay at the encroaching Liberalism (whether under the cover of Latitudinarianism or Evangelicalism).

Let it be noted that, as he intimates, "the thought [of leaving her] never crossed my imagination; still I ever kept before me that there was something greater than the Established Church, and that that was the Church Catholic and Apostolic, set up from the beginning, of which she was but the local presence and the organ." He was convinced that his Church must be Catholic and Apostolic, if she was supposed to be a Church at all. And he felt the need "of a second reformation."[102] All of a sudden, the Anglican Church presented herself to him as a part of the lost unity.

It was then that he was offered by Hurrell Froude and his father a trip to Italy. This expedition turned out be a decisive moment in his life. He admits they rather avoided Roman Catholics during their journey, except for some figures, e.g. Monsignor Nicholas Wiseman[103] (1802–1865). It was during this journey that Newman, as he often repeated, experienced bereavement and isolation. He was even laid low with malaria, a condition that threatened his life. Inwardly, however, he was convinced that he still had urgent work to do in Britain. Because the members of this expedition avoided Catholics, he admits that he "saw nothing but what was external; of the hidden life of Catholics I knew nothing."[104] This fact must have enhanced his sense of curiosity about Roman Catholicism, stimulated especially by certain implicit and mysterious glimpses.

It was then that he came upon a thought that was typical of him throughout his life, namely that deliverance should be wrought not by institutions, but by persons. And then Newman also felt he had a mission to fulfil in his own country. When he suffered a fever in Sicily, he kept repeating: "I shall not die, for I have not sinned against light, I have not sinned against light."[105] Let us note in passing that this frank confession of not sinning against light might have served as the best response to Kingsley's accusation, for it simply stated that

102 *Ibid.*, 21.

103 He was the first Cardinal and Archbishop of Westminster upon the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales in 1850.

104 *Apo.*, 22.

105 *Ibid.*, 23.

Newman had always acted in conformity with his well-informed conscience, that his words were *real*, i.e. in keeping with his knowledge and feelings, and there was no hypocrisy in his intentions. Because he had to stay in Palermo for three weeks, waiting for a ship, he kept visiting the churches there. At that time he did not know anything about the Real Presence of the Blessed Sacrament in them, which is a vital truth of Roman Catholicism. It was also then that he wrote his best-known poem "Lead, kindly light," which was later adopted as hymn by the Oxford Movement.

On July 14th, Keble preached his famous sermon on "National Apostasy." And this event Newman regarded as the start of the Oxford Movement of 1833. When he returned home, the movement had already begun; the Oxford dons had united their counsels and corresponded with each other.

Newman's message that runs through all his intellectual endeavours reads as follows: if we lose contact with the first principles which underlie the conduct of the person, no political scheme, however well-thought-out, will bring any positive results. Without first principles, one can observe only the steady slide of humanity into nihilism and barbarity. The great projects of revolutionary France—freedom, equality, and brotherhood—are left hanging in the air without the Christian underpinning. These three pillars of modernity have their foundation in human nature, therefore much depends on the condition of the person in their implementation; for John Locke, these pillars are called *bona civilia* and include life, liberty, and the right to private property. The person is a complicated being that is broader than these universal concepts by which we describe only certain aspects we share with other human beings. The best buttress such a person can find is the solid dogmatic institution of the Church.

Slowly but surely, and contrary to the Tractarians' intentions, the Movement grew into a party, a fact that caused alarm. It spread all over the country, and even to America. As Newman wrote, it began to threaten the Church of the Nation, "which it began by professing especially to serve."[106] Repeatedly, in his personal intimations, the author reminds his readers that the collision with the National Church was not intended by the Tractarians. They all went on a mysterious journey, symbolizing individual lives, but each eventually went his separate course. And this course depended on an individual receptive mind and well-informed conscience. First, to assuage the worries of his bishop, Newman was ready to retract his text from the *Tracts for the Times*.

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106 *Ibid.*, 51.

Why was he so distrustful of the individual self, to the point of calling Luther's "contemplation of the self [...] the destruction of religion itself,"[107] while knowing that it is only through this self that he could make his personal decisions? And without his personal decisions he knew he could hardly be called a person, let alone a free person. This is the drama of the great Romantic awakening, i.e. person can no longer find safe shelter behind the universal rules that guide the world, for he or she is perfectly distinct from everything else, let alone being entirely subject to general rules. This is what pre-modern philosophers knew all too well, namely that person's destiny transcends whatever he or she can discover about the material world, that despite his or her great achievements in the area of science he or she must find the truth for himself or herself, no matter how much they can learn about the surrounding world. The only answer to the above question befitting Newman is that he firmly believed that a person guided by a well-informed conscience is no longer locked into his subjective opinions and thus susceptible to various deceptions. Such a person is open to the truth about reality and is ready to change his path in life if he finds it incompatible with what he has found to be true. More precisely, in Newman's case—as we shall see—he *was* found by the truth rather than *having found* it. Let us add that naturally, being found by the truth, the person avoids the illusions associated with subjective impressions. I think this is one of Newman's greatest intuitions.

Classical philosophy establishes the fundamental relationship between the principal cognitive and volitive faculties and their objects. As we know, the basic object of the intellect is to know the truth, and the basic object of the will is to choose the good that has been recognized by the intellect. Newman was obviously aware of this in the same way that a person with a driving licence is aware of the rules of the road. The relationship between the intellect and the truth, the will and the good, and similarly the driver's knowledge about the rules of the road, are theoretical. Newman was most interested in a person's behaviour in the concrete, therefore, how a person can be *open* to the truth, how he or she *realizes* the good, or—in this concrete case—how a driver abides by the rules of the road.

He takes as his starting point a person plunged into his or her varied day-to-day reality. The acting agent occupies a concrete place, evaluates reality in this and not that way, shares some opinions, and adopts concrete standpoints. One would have to answer which of these spaces really belong to him, with which

107 F. M. Turner, *John Henry Newman: The Challenge to Evangelical Religion*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2002, 217.

he identifies himself, which he realizes within and without. Obviously, he is capable of providing many reasons on behalf of this or that opinion because, for instance, he has learned to think in a logical manner. He knows that from certain premises concrete conclusions can be drawn. These are, however, general structures, symbols guided by certain rules. One may, therefore, behave or declare truths in line with what is expected of an intelligent person, whilst being, at the same time, totally absent from what he is doing or talking about. Newman asks about the space of a person's sojourning, his or her true ethos with which he or she is ready to identify himself or herself.

The question about the authenticity of the human being belongs, as is well-known, to the spectrum of questions typical of the nineteenth century. Newman does not decide on the questions about idealism or realism, not because he thought such questions of little importance, but because he was convinced that this decision is not critical for human action. Being confronted, for instance, by another person's suffering, it is more important how I understand my relationship with my neighbour, or whether I *realize* that the other person is my neighbour; accordingly, I shall respond to the inner call to action in line with the situation in question.

From the classical approach to human nature we know that persons have at their disposal the faculty of reason and the faculty of will. By virtue of reason they recognize reality, create concepts by means of which a conceptual structure is made and a science about the world is established. The will enables us to make decisions with regard to ourselves and others. Speaking about the destiny of reason and will we claim—as has been noted above—that reason[108] is set on knowing the truth, and the will on doing the good. None of these faculties, however, is capable of attaining its ultimate calling at the starting point. In a concrete human being, both reason and will always occur in a dynamic entanglement, surrounded by emotions, feelings, inclinations, and aversions. Hence, it is purposeless and contrary to the real state of affairs to speak about reason or will as such. This would be possible only in the case of some ideal being isolated from the world of any experience, from feelings, emotions, and wishes.

In reality, we are always dealing with concrete persons, therefore we always need to take into account the reason and will of this being, immersed in this and not another space. Let us note in passing that in this thinking Newman resembles another well-known Victorian, namely Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), for whom history was a collection of biographies. The place and time of the

108 Newman often uses the terms "intellect" and "reason" alternately.

human being, his history and choices, his individual experience bear an enormous significance. We make our decisions in accordance with our knowledge, but then it turns out that we have made a mistake because we have relied on false assumptions. Thus, for Newman, knowledge is not an ideal state in which—like in some rationalistic vision—reason is confronted by a clear and distinct idea, which has an inner power of persuasion. In such a case, assent would, in fact, be a redundant and impersonal act, for it is the very rules of thinking that "make" decisions on behalf of the knower.

According to Newman, in the case of a concrete person we are dealing rather with a process which is a type of historical development, one growing and passing through consecutive stages in which this person takes on truths by way of an individual struggle. And here an extraordinarily important phenomenological moment appears, combined with the realistic approach. If we want to speak and adhere to the concrete experience of a person (obviously endowed with reason, intellect, and free will), we must not neglect these stages. In this process of growing no step can be passed over, for to accept a conclusion without proper intellectual preparation would amount to the irrational enthusiasm so criticized by the British empiricists; John Locke reduced such preparation merely to its evidential aspect. It is rather like ascending a ladder; to go up it safely, we need to take it one rung at a time.[109] (We shall talk about this more extensively when discussing Newman's journey to the origins of Christianity, as he pondered the question of schism and unity). Thus, a rational personal response is one that provides demonstrative proof of his mental reservoir. In this proof, only explicit elements matter, for they constitute the series of ratiocinative processes. Walter Kaufmann expressed it pointedly while commenting on Buber; he wrote: "The loves of childhood and adolescence cannot be subtracted from us; they have become part of us. Not a discrete part that could be severed. It is as if they had entered our blood stream."[110] We sense a strong Newmanian underpinning here, especially when we bring to mind what has already been quoted here from Newman's response to Kingsley, that we cannot "read a man," that we are dealing with "living intelligence." Indeed, Newman, just like anybody else, cannot "sever" his past from his present because they both constitute his person; at the same time, however, he defends his right to *change* and *develop*.

Newman realized that the working of the mind is different, especially in practical matters and in moral and religious areas. Here, frequently, there is no

109 Cf. *PPS*, 1198.

110 W. Kaufmann, *A Prologue*, in: M. Buber, *I and Thou*, 30.

time for reflection, so the agent must act spontaneously. In *University Sermons*, he notes: "the longer any one has persevered in the practice of virtue, the less likely is he to recollect how he began it; what were his difficulties on starting, and how surmounted; by what process one truth led to another; the less likely to elicit justly the real reasons latent in this mind for particular observations or opinions."[111] Such people, when asked to account for what they deem right or what they believe, become clumsy and incoherent, for they have already attained an intuitive grasp of the matter at hand. They have gained an insight into moral truth, not to talk about it, but to act rightly. Therefore, "moral Truth will be least skilfully defended by those, as such, who are the genuine depositaries of it, but [...] cannot [...] adequately [explain and defend] in words. [...] Its views and human language are incommensurable." because "language [is] but an artificial system adapted for particular purposes." And the author concludes: "Moral character in itself, whether good or bad, as exhibited in thought and conduct, surely cannot be duly represented in words. We may, indeed, by an effort, reduce it in a certain degree to this arbitrary medium; but in its combined dimensions it is as impossible to write and read man (so to express it), as to give literal depth to a painted tablet."[112]

My response is then never entirely theoretical, for I am always a composite of my theoretical knowledge, i.e. certain universal regulations and propositions, and I am somehow constructed by my previous practical responses. They have established a depository, which has grown roots, stratum by stratum, in my very person. If I find some strata inadequate or outright false, I need to go back to the moment where I might have made a mistake. Then I have the chance to rethink my former decisions.

In other words, we may even venture to say that if there is too much praise for someone's moral character, perhaps either this character is not genuine or the admirers are not sincere. If by moral character is meant this intuitive grasp of moral truth, it cannot be expressed in words, nor is it necessary.

Therefore, in the case of Newman, we should be speaking about work on cognition, and always individual work, a "personal result," as Newman defined it, since for him it is the knowing (acting) subject that absorbs into himself the acquired knowledge. It is not logical rules that think, it is the person who thinks, and therefore our author clearly distinguishes assent (a personal decision) from inference (passing from evident premises to conclusions). He distinguishes knowing as personal acting from inferring as a formal procedure. He

111 *US*, 98.

112 *Ibid.*, 98–99.

expresses it more precisely in his *Grammar of Assent*, where we read that "what is concrete exerts a force and makes an impression on the mind which nothing abstract can. [...] The strong object would make the apprehension strong."[113] Therefore, the Apostles had the strongest apprehension of Christ's power and teaching, for they personally participated in His acts.

We read here not so much about a fellowship of knowledge, as about a fellowship of experience. Indeed, phenomenologically speaking, there are many complicated paths of access to the image in the mind, that image which arises as a result of individual experience and maturity, hesitations, returns, doubts, and dilemmas. When it is made permanent, then it is supported (and even this is rare) by the general rules of ratiocination we share with others. It is often interwoven by the invisible, yet powerful, network of faith and hope, those pillars of the believer. They are invisible, for they evade intellectual inspection or calculation, and remain beyond what is measurable.

The empiricists from Locke's school, on the contrary, claimed that it was the discursive and measurable form that was the determinant and criterion of our rationality. Beyond this form, beyond the area of what is explicative, there can be no certainty. He, who is not able to provide formal evidence on behalf of the truths in which he believes, is an irrational enthusiast. We read in Locke: "How a man may know, whether [he is a lover of truth for truth's sake], in earnest, is worth inquiry; and I think, there is this one unerring mark of it, viz. *the not entertaining any proposition with greater assurance than the proofs it is built on will warrant*. Whoever goes beyond this measure of assent, it is plain, receives not truth in the love of it; loves not for truth-sake, but for some other by-end."[114] Locke's objection echoes a similar thought we find in the English historian's book where we read: "Truth for its own sake had never been a virtue with the Roman clergy."[115]

In his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Newman dismisses this objection, writing that it "does not seem to have struck him [Locke] that our 'by-end' may be the desire to please our Maker, and that the defect of scientific proof may be made up to our reason by our love of Him. It does not seem to have struck him that such a philosophy as his cut off from the possibility and the privilege of faith all but the educated few, all but the learned, the clear-headed, the men of practised intellects and balanced minds [...]. The

113 *GA*, 49.

114 J. Locke, *Works*, Repr. Darmstadt: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1963, vol. III, chap. XIX, par. 1, 147.

115 J. A. Froude's *History of England*, quoted in *Apo*., VI.

'enthusiasm' against which Locke writes may do much harm, and act at times absurdly; but calculation never made a hero."[116]

Now, intending to face this understanding of the Lockean (deistic) methodology of assuming truth and giving assent, Newman first had to come to terms with the rationalist-empiricist theory of cognition. This theory tended to some idealized process of cognition and a universal algorithm of gaining certainty. Such a theory would then at the same time be, in the Newmanian sense, an impersonalized methodology, or at least one that reduces the scope of affairs that fall under cognition to intellectually evident truths. In the concrete, however, even a false certainty is something natural, for it results from that which Newman called "functional disarrangements of the intellect," which does not mean that the knower has got lost, only that he is still on the way to incessant education and formation. The point is not to change the human faculties of cognition, but to prepare them in the light of the spirit, under the scrutiny of a well-informed conscience.

In the *Grammar of Assent*, its author describes these initial states as follows: "faculties have their rudimental and inchoate state," and they are "gradually carried on by practice and experience to their perfection."[117] The safest way to avoid chaos and confusion is by being surrounded by permanent dogmatic structures and being obedient to their pronouncements. Such structures Newman found in the Roman Catholic Church. The attempt (by the Oxford movement) to renew the Anglican Church failed, whereas the point was not to adjust the life of the Church to contemporary times, but to save this institution from the deadness of a mere nominal Christianity, one which served only to assist the monarchy and the British lifestyle. Such Christianity was for the authorities; indeed, it was a handy system of social order, but had little in common with the spirit of the Gospel. I am also inclined to interpret the phrase "functional disarrangement" as a reference to the famous reprimand from the New Testament, in the parable of a wedding feast to which many people were invited, but they all refused to come. Let us recapitulate briefly the story. The king was enraged and he sent his servants to invite to the feast whomever they managed to find; they carried out his order. Then the king who arranged the party came in to meet the guests. Walking across the hall, he saw a man not dressed appropriately for the occasion, he felt indignation and said to him: "My friend, how is it that you came in here without a wedding garment?"[118] The lack of the wedding garment resembles functional disarrangement, for it means

116 *Dev.*, 328.
117 *GA*, 189.
118 Mt 22: 12.

being unprepared, and therefore unable to understand, or, to be more precise, to accept.

It is clear that Newman's cognitive realism would consist in the fact that persons gain knowledge by means of their own cognitive faculties. And they are able to do so without referring to some transcendental level, to ideal cognitive structures. They can attain certitude, and the very act of certitude is not annulled by the fact that this could be false certitude or that they are not able to defend it in the heat of a discourse. Thus, writing about his certitude from his Anglican times, Newman could rightly say that he was certain, i.e. he was not internally double-faced as to those affairs which had later on appeared with clarity when his cognition had revealed new facts. Because cognition is always an individual process, one should not bear a grudge against a person that he or she is at this and not another stage of development. Maturation calls for time. The only situation that one should shun is that of double-dealing and hypocrisy, as it has often been stated.

CHAPTER 2

Real and Unreal Words

I think that Newman's sermon about the unreal words is one of his most beautiful. The unreality of our words is yet another element of the landscape of *shadows and images* of this functional disarrangement. With regard to the sermons to which I am referring here, this is certainly my individual choice and not an easy one, for the man who is called "a master of English prose" has left a rich heritage of writing activity.

The renowned Anglo-American poet Thomas Stearns Eliot perfectly describes this discrepancy between reality and its (intellectual or emotional) picture in his poem "The Hollow People," where we read:

> Between the idea
> And the reality
> Between the motion
> And the act
> Falls the Shadow [...]
> Between the conception
> And the creation
> Between the emotion
> And the response
> Falls the Shadow [...]
> Between the desire
> And the spasm
> Between the potency
> And the existence
> Between the essence
> And the descent
> Falls the Shadow.[1]

The unreality we are talking about here can principally be found on two levels: the intellectual and the emotional. By intellectual unreality we mean such a situation where we are speaking about things which we ourselves do not comprehend, and therefore our words are not followed up by actions; unreality

1 T. S. Eliot, *The Hollow Men*, https://allpoetry.com/the-hollow-men [accessed on 20 April 2023].

on the emotional level appears when we do not feel what we are assenting to. Newman provides a masterly résumé when he says that we are unreal "in proportion as our hearts are cold, or our tongues excessive."[2] Man adopts no attitude adequate to what he is saying, or he is using too many words which do not correspond to the real state of his person. Unreality appears when people "say things different from what they feel."[3] When words are disjoined from feelings, it is then that falsehood or another shadow sneaks into their lives. It may also happen that we work ourselves up into certain feelings; it is especially slippery in the case of deep feeling in religion, the kind of feeling that is "natural or necessary attendant on a holy heart."[4] Therefore, Newman implores that we should "aim at meaning what we say, and saying what we mean; [...] aim at knowing when we understand a truth, and when we do not. When we do not, let us take it on faith."[5] One should abstain from double-dealing and ostentation (and acting for show). Newman is wary of ostentation, for it is yet another temptation to expose one's self rather than the truth; in other words, it is also another name for the discrepancy between reality and its image, i.e. that which produces unreality as a consequence. Even those, or, perhaps, especially those who are driven by the spirit of preaching the truth should be suspicious of themselves. Social psychology today terms unreality 'cognitive dissonance'.

Newman recommends prudence and reserve in the area of profession and declaration, writing: "To make professions is to play with edge [tools],[6] unless we attend to what we are saying. Words have a meaning, whether we mean that meaning or not; and they are imputed to us in their real meaning, when our not meaning it is our own fault."[7] This prudence denotes that we should not profess (declare) more than we can master, such being a cure against ostentation. What Newman means here is that we intuitively take words to denote reality; they correspond to reality. We may, in our privacy, attach no sense to our words, but when they are uttered, they become obvious references of reality. People naturally take them for what they mean, and they take it for granted that we stand behind these words, and that the words refer to certain objects. Words, in turn, are sense-laden, even though for us they may be senseless; if we have attached no sense to them, we do not feel obliged by them, or else we have attached to them an entirely different sense from what is commonly

2 *PPS*, 977.
3 *Ibid.*, 978.
4 See *Ibid.*, 1208.
5 *Ibid.*, 979.
6 In the original text there is "tolls," which is obviously a spelling error.
7 *PPS*, 972.

understood by them. Newman, as we have often repeated, sought to utter *real* words. Uttering real words does not mean that the utterer never makes a mistake, but it means that he is not insincere, hence he is not unreal; consequently, being real does not denote being infallible. We have a right to make mistakes, but not to be hypocrites. We may feel discomfort at expressing certain opinions or sharing the common views of our milieu, but because at this particular moment we cannot find anything better, we remain where we are. This kind of experience Newman must have felt before he arrived at certitude.

We may say that with his analyses of how words work in our communication Newman also inspired the philosophy of language. The twentieth-century philosopher of language, J. L. Austin, wrote about infelicities (abuses), which cause misunderstandings, occurring in feelings, thoughts, and intentions.[8] This discrepancy may occur between words and the things they are supposed to name, and between the speaker of these words and his thoughts. In order to avoid unreality, "We ought to attempt nothing but what we can do."[9]

And the author proceeds to characterize his own times, those times of the press, with so much publicity and profession. Newman writes, "this is especially a day of individual profession. This is a day in which there is (rightly or wrongly) so much of private judgment, so much of separation and difference, so much of preaching and teaching, so much of authorship, that it involves individual profession, responsibility, and recompense in a way peculiarly its own."[10] In his *Grammar of Assent*, he classified "profession" under the category of notional assent, and notional assents are the weakest types of assent, in which people eagerly declare certain views which they may not hold at all, or even deny the next moment after having declared them. The mind must be familiar with the subject on which we are speaking. Otherwise, the person who expresses unmeaning words expresses some opinions on matters with which he is entirely unfamiliar, i.e. unreal. He speaks "on and from general principles, on fancy, or by deduction and argument, not from a real apprehension of the matters which he discussed."[11]

Newman is also very realistic in his treatment of our different communication contexts, knowing that speaking the truth can be conditioned by our circumstances, so we need to be careful about what we say and to whom we say it.

8 Austin also calls such expressions misapplications or misexecutions (when either the spoken word is improper, or the speaker is out of place), see J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, 39–52.

9 *PPS*, 1198.

10 *Ibid.*, 972.

11 *Ibid.*, 973.

He draws on the example of St. Alfons Liguori who came up with a theory that concerns people in general, although he himself would not follow it. Newman explains that a person "is guided by his own conscience; but in drawing out a system of rules he is obliged to go by logic, and follow the exact deduction of conclusion from conclusion, and must be sure that the whole system is coherent and one."[12] And then he continues by referring to David Hume's example: "a priest might write a treatise which was really lax on the subject of lying, which might come under the condemnation of the Holy See, as some treatises on that score have already been condemned, and yet in his own person be a rigorist."[13]

There are so many flippant judgments aimed at people without any effort whatsoever on making them examine their cases closer. Here, again, we can see Newman at his best, much concerned about the individual lives of those who are confronted not with theoretical questions, but with real problems. As we know, Newman wrote about the functional disarrangement of the intellect, and he was well aware that in some cases concrete persons have to use such an intellect to grapple with their dilemmas. Of course, Newman intimates, the Protestant authors find this point difficult, for they are certain about the utter depravity of the human being. Newman does not allow the "maxim of doing evil that good may come; but, keeping clear of this, there is a way of winning men from greater sins by winking for the time at the less, or at mere improprieties of faults."[14] It is true that once we adopt a very strict and harsh attitude towards human follies, the outcome may be to the contrary: they harden their bad conduct rather than seek to improve it. Psychology would recommend this kind of practice. Liguori's practical hints are for confessors, not preachers.

Newman defends St. Alfons against accusations, but he does not follow his teaching on this subject matter. He is not bound by Liguori. Rather, he follows St. Augustine and the French divine, writer and Church historian Natalis Alexander (1639–1724) who wrote: "They certainly lie, who utter the words of an oath, without the will to swear or bind themselves: or who make use of mental reservations and *equivocations* in swearing, since they signify by words what they have not in mind, contrary to the end for which language was instituted, viz. as signs of ideas. Or they mean something else than the words signify in themselves and the common custom of speech."[15]

There are some exceptional cases. We should not formulate our principles on the exceptional cases in which people find themselves. Therefore, Newman

12 *Apo.*, 185.
13 *Ibid.*, 186.
14 *Ibid.*, 187.
15 Quoted after: *Apo.*, 187.

states that: "Works on pathology do not give the best insight into the form and the harmony of the human frame; and as it is with the body, so is it with the mind."[16]

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We are socially expected to have opinions, in Newman's times just like in ours, often on matters we do not understand; the processes of democratization have enhanced this tendency. People eagerly discuss political, social, and religious questions. The author agrees, together with Descartes, that there is something like good sense,

> which will see its way through very intricate matters, or that this is in fact sometimes exerted in the community at large on certain great questions; but at the same time this practical sense is so far from existing as regards the vast mass of questions which in this day come before the public, that (as all persons who attempt to gain the influence of the people on their side know well) their opinions must be purchased by interesting their prejudices or fears in their favour;—not by presenting a question in its real and true substance, but by adroitly colouring it, or selecting out of it some particular point which may be exaggerated, and dressed up, and be made the means of working on popular feelings.[17]

In this penetrating analysis of our linguistic behaviour, Newman rightly observes that in our daily communication we more often than not manipulate words, stretch their meanings so as to obtain some other goals, e.g. influence others, frighten the lowly, impress the equal, or else endear ourselves to people of influence, etc. The author excellently grasped the technique of social engineering. Indeed, the vast number of people are not able to become acquainted with the real sense of notions, so they satisfy themselves with the coloured extracts prepared for them by propagandists. And if the latter, additionally, are considered well-educated and enlightened persons, the effect is even more advantageous (for the propagandist, that is). Even such vital notions as freedom and justice may fall prey to social engineering, if we make no efforts to apprehend what they can (or ought to) mean in the human context.

16 *Apo.*, 188.

17 *PPS*, 974.

This is especially true in the area of notional assents, where we include general opinions, and utter declarations frequently as a mere repetition of what others have formulated. We follow idols rather than substance, and sink in shadows. Indeed, we resemble the inhabitants of Plato's cave, tied to their seats and with their eyes hypnotized by the passing images. We cease to be ourselves in the sense that we almost completely externalize ourselves, as it were; in other words, we go out of ourselves rather than bring home to ourselves the realities we learn about. This temporary attachment is often a fleeting experience, even when, for instance, we exert ourselves to show sympathy with those who suffer, while discussing suffering. We try to imitate some correspondent feelings, such as we think are proper for the occasion; we feign emotions. But because we lack them, we use commonplaces to make up for what is missing, as the words are unmeaning and become "lifeless sounds." As different as notional and real assents are, nevertheless one can find a hidden link between the two. Therefore, Newman claims that there is a transition between words and realities, i.e. between notional and real assents.

In order to illustrate this discrepancy between notional and real assent, and a possible transition, I can refer to my personal experience. A friend of mine is a professor of physics at one of the Polish polytechnics. I would never suspect him of any literary talents, yet the letter I received from him some time ago made me change my opinion. In his letter, he described one of his usual staff meetings he had to attend, as he was also a vice-president of that technical university. As a busy man in his position, he kept his mobile phone on all the time during this boring event. He would skim through a host of messages, without showing any interest, mechanically responding to some of them. Then he had to deliver a short talk. After his presentation he resumed his correspondence. As the meeting was drawing to an end, he received another message. Without much interest he looked at the screen and read: "Our dear Mother has passed away today." He froze, in full awareness that it was a message addressed especially to him, not to anyone else, and was demanding his response. It came from his sister under whose care their mother had been of late. He knew that she was very old and weak. And he was well aware that this final moment might occur at any time; nevertheless, it shocked him with its stark and naked factuality. It became *the message*.

This is an example of how notional assents can become real. We all know that we are contingent beings liable to the process of degeneration and death. This is inherent in our biology. To possess a theoretical knowledge, however, is an entirely different thing than the actual experience of someone close to us passing away.

The Church is an institution that should gather *real* (genuine, authentic) believers. This is how Newman characterizes the system of the Church: "The whole system of the Church, its discipline and ritual, are all in their origin the spontaneous and exuberant fruit of the real principle of spiritual religion in the hearts of its members."[18] In other words, it consists in the real assents of its members. When we profess without our feelings, we seem to forget that we need "a long time really to feel and understand things as they are; we learn to do so only gradually."[19] It is a process of gradual exposition and deposition, leaving layer after layer; profession is a matter of words, but we need to *realize* what we say. And this process calls for action, because: "That a thing is true, is no reason that it should be said, but that it should be done; that it should be acted upon; that it should be made our own inwardly."[20]

As we can see, it is very easy to find unreal words in the area of notional assents where we utter opinions on various questions, often being entirely off track on the subject under consideration; to tell the truth, this statement is obvious, for real assents hardly need words. If there are words, they can even be incoherent or incomprehensible, when the person is desperately trying to explain what he firmly believes in. Newman devotes much space to the analysis of notional and real assents in his *Grammar of Assent*.[21] In the light of notions, it is easy to formulate judgments and evaluate, but here we are often merely on the surface of things, while "truth is not on the surface of things, but in the depth."[22] Only there, where we are dealing with images, where we are looking at things, can we penetrate their sense, and images have a chance to entail personal commitment.[23] Even conscience, on the level of synderesis (the most primitive part of the conscience), is only a universal principle accessible to the cognition of all people: do good and avoid evil. Such is the interpretation of the epistemological principle of synderesis. This formal (and innate) principle should be translated into the language of practice. Synderesis itself, as a norm of conduct, exists in the area of notional cognition. In other words, the transition from the level of notional synderesis to the real realization of doing good and avoiding evil becomes a practical task of utmost importance here. Human cognition is limited. It has access to the so-called objective good, especially when it is something commonly shared, but as it is given to persons in their

18 *PPS*, 976.
19 *Ibid.*, 977.
20 *Ibid.*, 978.
21 *GA*, 86–92.
22 *PPS*, 1232.
23 *GA*, 82.

concrete experience it may be difficult to account for. We need more than a mere theoretical discernment. We could adhere to the Kantian principle of categorical imperative, but the solution granting inner peace does not reside in the order of universal law, but in keeping with the inner essence of the person enlightened by conscience. This point is very complicated, for at the same time Newman warns us against following our own images. Hence, this essence is not what we may be feeling at the moment in the psychological part of our personalities. Rather, it is the hidden part of our persons, the implicit reservoir lying tacitly beneath. We have access to it, inasmuch as we grow in belief and in obedience.

Let us also observe that the formal principle we intuitively grasp—do good and avoid evil—poses a number of questions. In like manner, we can ask: do good – for me? For you? For my community? For my country? In order to answer these questions, I need to appeal to something that transcends my person, my country, or my community, if I do not want to be misled by my emotions and head towards egoism or nationalism. At the same time, Newman proposes egotism, for he is well aware of the individual process of cognition in which the outcome depends on the individual state of maturity. Real assent is in each case a personal result.

In his *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, Newman describes how opinions are born, what their nature is, and how they are disseminated among crowds of recipients without anyone of them being an actual partaker in the sense meant by these same opinions. He had always been a very keen observer and interpreter of human behaviour. The passage I am referring to shows his insight into the psychology of collectivism at its best:

> Nay, instead of speaking out their own thoughts, they suffer the world's opinion to hang upon them as a load, or the influence of some system of religion which is in vogue. It very frequently happens that then thousand people all say what not anyone of them feels, but each says it because every one else says it, and each fears not to say it lest he should incur the censure of all the rest. Such are very commonly, what are called opinions of the age. They are bad principles or doctrines, or false notions or views, which live in the mouths of men, and have their strength in their public recognition. Of course by proud men, or blind, or carnal, or worldly, these opinions which I speak of are really felt and entered into; for they are the natural growth of their own evil hearts. But very frequently the same are set forth, and heralded, and circulated, and become current opinions, among vast multitudes of men who do not feel them. These multitudes, however, are obliged to receive them by what is called the

> force of public opinion; the careless of course, carelessly, but the better sort superstitiously. Thus ways of speech come in, and modes of thought quite alien to the minds of those who give in to them, who feel them to be unreal, unnatural, and uncongenial to themselves, but consider themselves obliged, often from the most religious principles, not to confess their feelings about them. They dare not say, they dare not even realize to themselves their own judgments. Thus it is that the world cuts off the intercourse between soul and soul, and substitutes idols of its own for the one true Image of Christ, in and through which only souls can sympathise. Their best thoughts are stifled, and when by chance they hear them put forth elsewhere, as may sometimes be the case, they feel as it were conscious and guilty, as if someone were revealing something against them, and they shrink from the sound as from a temptation, as something pleasing indeed but forbidden. Such is the power of false creeds to fetter the mind and bring it into captivity; false views of things, of facts, of doctrines, are imposed on it tyrannically, and men live and die in bondage, who were destined to rise to the stature of the fullness of Christ.[24]

Having learned, or, rather, having realized that he must have been reliable for his own decisions, he also had to liberate himself from his cultural context. What I mean here is the hostile attitude towards the Roman Catholic Church and her believers, an attitude that resulted from a long tradition of resentment. Not only was he well aware of his pure intentions, but at the same time he was realistic about his enslavement to his concrete cultural context, and he decided to re-examine his long-held notions. All the negative opinions about the "Papists" lay heavy on him; he was ready to challenge them and put them to the test of his historical scrutiny. It must be noted that Newman brilliantly remarked that these false opinions of views "live in the mouths of men;" that is the point, that they live in their mouths, not in their minds or hearts, especially in the hearts where they could feel them as their own.

This is also the heritage of the Fall, as Newman noted, that pushes our selves onto the surface, and there we conduct conversations, without starting them at the roots, without letting others inside. Thus, his ideal when "heart speaks unto heart" is still not completed. In like manner, religion has been translated into sociality, with the inner man being estranged and alienated. In our interpersonal conduct, we assume socially imposed roles which belong to a generally accepted decorum. Newman must have been aware of this, especially taking

24 *PPS*, 1028–1029.

into consideration that this trait was common in the Victorian era. Therefore, the social system is void of a religion freed from political expedients. The wounds are hidden, so they cannot be healed. On the surface, conversation is safe, for no one is real, everyone is an actor playing out their parts for a time.

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Christians should not use the same methods as their opponents do. Such is Newman's message in his sermon on wisdom and innocence, preached in his Anglican days (in 1843). Christians were "to be wise without being harmless."[25] Craft and innocence seem to be contradictory in Christians, but they were attributed to Newman. In his sermon he writes: "The words 'craft' and 'hypocrisy' are but the version of 'wisdom' and 'harmlessness,' in the language of the world."[26] Newman claims that wisdom and harmlessness go together, hence harmlessness is "the corrective of wisdom, securing it against the corruption of craft and deceit [...]; but innocence, simplicity, implicit obedience to God, tranquillity of mind, contentment, these and the like virtues are themselves a sort of wisdom;—I mean, they produce the same results as wisdom, because God works for those who do not work for themselves; and thus Christians especially incur the charge of craft at the hands of the world, because they pretend to so little, yet effect so much.[...] By innocence, or harmlessness, is meant simplicity in act, purity in motive, honesty in aim; acting conscientiously and religiously, according to the matter in hand, without caring for consequences or appearances; doing what appears one's duty, and being obedient for obedience' sake, and leaving the event to God. This is to be innocent as the dove; yet this conduct is the truest wisdom; and this conduct accordingly has preeminently the appearance of craft."[27]

Newman deliberately alludes to his sermon on wisdom and innocence because his decision to convert was charged with craft. He did not feel like defending himself until he was attacked. The usual position is to pay back, to retaliate in form and content. The person who behaves otherwise is suspected of some hidden and treacherous motives. And Newman lists the virtues of wisdom: sobriety, self-restraint, control of word and feeling. Deep feelings call for self-control because we do not want to say what we ought not. Such modes of behaviour stand to reason, nevertheless they merit the sanction of wanting in openness and manliness. The Christian who behaves like a real Christian (not

25 *SD*, 298.
26 *Ibid.*
27 *Ibid.*, 298–299.

merely nominal) cannot follow the logic of the world, for he is not defending his own truth. Additionally, no one can defend sublime values by way of committing deeds which contradict them. For instance, the way to defend the truth is not to lie. Christians do not fight with the weapon of the world, i.e. deceit and stratagems, so therefore even their innocence takes on the colour of cunning and craft. Such are the typical schemes commonly in use. A genuine Christian who does not wish to resort to the like methods is helpless and doomed to silence.

In like manner, religious people are a mystery to the world. It does not understand them, so it imputes to them other motives than those really moving them. It is interesting that in 1843 Newman had already formulated the charges which were later aimed at him. In his sermon, he defined a true Christian, the one he himself was when attacked. The world finds it difficult to understand "the difference between an outward obedience, and an interior assent."[28] Because religious men cannot be fathomed, they are always suspected of some hidden motives which they keep away from observers, whereas they manifest in action their proper motives to others. They behave contrary to what is naturally expected in a bourgeois society. Consequently, they are accused of inconsistency or duplicity.

Newman superbly shows this discrepancy in viewpoints when the same thing can be approved and disapproved at the same time. He depicts consistency at its best in his reasoning, for the moment one accepts the whole system, its basic principles, such discrepancy ceases to be problematic. Therefore, Newman states: "The truest wisdom is to stand still and trust in God, and to the world it is also the strongest evidence of craft."[29] It is interesting that he seems to be writing about himself as if anticipating what is going to happen in two years time. He did not defend his individual decision at the moment of conversion, so he was silent; how could he have provided an explanation for what he himself found difficult to comprehend? Naturally, his silence provoked a plethora of interpretations. We have access to arguments, i.e. explicit forms, not to hidden motives.

In his sermon, Newman describes, in anticipation of himself, the Biblical logic which seems at odds with what we naturally feel. Therefore, we read: "Do nothing, and you have done every thing. The less you do, the more God will do for you. The more you submit to the violence of the world, the more powerfully will He rise against the world, who is irresistible. The less you ward off

28 *Ibid.*, 301.
29 *Ibid.*, 303.

the world's blows from you, the more heavy will be His blows upon the world, if not in your cause, at least in His own."[30] In his sermon, Newman describes, anticipating himself, the Biblical logic which seems at odds to what we naturally feel. It is like doing by not doing, or rather patiently waiting for the course of events to unfold, not in passive indifference, but in active trust. The Word has a life in itself. It seizes some souls, and the word "to seize" used by Newman is especially apt in his context, as we have already mentioned the verb "to possess;" and we shall talk further about the difference between "possessing" and "being possessed." No one can explain this mysterious action of the Word. It is directed to many minds, which move "in one way in many places"; this action of the word the world "imputes to secret management that uniformity which is nothing but the echo of the One Living and True Word."[31] Genuine Christians do not have to go out of themselves in order to protect the Word of God, for in this way they would always expose themselves to the danger of insisting on their own way and protecting themselves rather than God's Word; therefore, Newman chose the safest manner, i.e. observing one's Christian daily duties.

Because all of these processes of Christian life under consideration are implicit and mysterious, they easily fall under the censure of dubiousness and suspicion. So, again, Newman's term of the right disposition comes to our minds when we are discussing these things. Thus, those who are malevolent will naturally say that the people "who triumph through meekness have affected the meekness to secure the triumph."[32] Accordingly, meekness is not their natural disposition, but it is instrumental in obtaining some other ends, and those who resort to such means are simply manipulators. In like manner, Newman predicted Kingsley's accusations nineteen years before the actual charge. The question of implicit and explicit faith arises at this moment. Implicit faith is the kind of cognitive approach which Newman recommended in matters that transcend apprehension. And once we are dealing with a malevolent disposition, it matters little what kind of arguments we can put forward on our behalf, since they will be refuted anyway. Walter Kaufmann, who translated Martin Buber's *I and Thou* into English, in his comments on Buber's philosophy of dialogue describes the way the Jewish philosopher understood God. His words sound very much akin to Newman's intuitions: "The only God worth keeping is a God that cannot be kept. The only God worth talking about is a God that cannot be talked about. God is no object of discourse, knowledge, or even experience. He cannot be spoken of, but he can be spoken to; he cannot be seen, but

30 *Ibid.*
31 *Ibid.*, 304.
32 *Ibid.*, 305.

he can be listened to."[33] Of course, what we are talking here about is not theology as a science, but an interpersonal relationship with God, the existential relationship we find in Newman's devotional texts.

Newman is very consequent in his analyses. Apart from implicit faith, we should also mention implicit obedience, acting on one's conscience, being dutiful, and acting without foresight or calculation. The point is to leave everything to God without a claim on designing the future for oneself. Obedience is expedient, or acting from the heart. Let us make one thing clear. If I wrote in the title about truth and responsibility that should be realized in individual life, I did not mean any kind of life, but the kind of life Newman defined, with all his respective dispositions, his genuine pursuit of truth (along with his mistakes), his purity of motives as judged by conscience; at the same time, it must be observed that any life can be like his, once the individual enters the path of obedience to the Word of God. Individual life can be regarded in its potential and actual aspects. Individual life is important because we have simply no other life at our disposal except our own; it is important as a potential chance to be brought to fruition on condition that we follow some universal values and translate them into our own: dutifulness, reality, consistency, and faith. These are, therefore, values that have their individual manifestations in each case.

Now, shifting these considerations onto the Church, we could say she should also have no foresight or calculation. The Church is not militant, unless we say that she fights against sin, and liberation theology seems a contradiction in itself. If David had been calculating before the fight, he would never have challenged Goliath. If Daniel had been politically shrewd, indeed crafty, he would have not denounced the king's decree and fallen into the lions' den. And, moving forward in time to more recent times, we find examples in Newman's own country. Thomas Beckett would not have risked conflict with Henry II, or Thomas More with Henry VIII. The interesting thing about these two figures is that they were on very good terms with the kings. Thomas Beckett was sympathetic to Henry II's views, he was his chancellor and close friend; when Beckett was appointed to the position of Archbishop of Canterbury, the king thought he would totally obey him and serve his purposes. Nevertheless, the new position transformed its bearer, and Beckett realized he owed allegiance to the Church first. A similar situation took place during the reign of Henry VIII; More was also his chancellor and close friend.

33 W. Kaufmann, *A Prologue,* in: M. Buber, *I and Thou,* trans. by W. Kaufmann, New York: A Touchstone Book, 1970, 25–26.

History provides us with ample such evidence. Newman was right—there must have been an entirely different logic at work. And such examples are always the most difficult cases: when we do not understand the course of events because, for obvious reasons, we cannot understand them. The only thing one can do is to follow one's well-informed conscience, to obey the duty one has recognized in one's conscience. In other words, as we have frequently repeated here, we need to be real, and such is the safeguard under our condition. Extraordinary interventions in the course of nature are put into doubt and "men do not like to hear of the interposition of Providence in the affairs of the world; and they invidiously ascribe ability and skill to His agents, to escape the thought of an Infinite Wisdom and an Almighty Power."[34]

In the sermon *Faith and Experience*, Newman writes that "it is our very profession, as children of the kingdom, to walk by faith not by sight."[35] And he explains the difference between the so-called men of the world and religious men. The starting point, he suggests, counter to the empiricist position, for the empiricists claim, as we know, that we start from experience. Newman, for his part, maintains that it should be faith. We read in his sermon:

> We must believe something; the difference between religious men and others is, that the latter trust this world, the former the world unseen. Both of them have faith, but the one have faith in the surface of things, the other in the word of God. Men of the world take it for granted, that all that seems to be really is. They fancy there is nothing deeper than what presents itself at first view. They cannot bring themselves to think that truth is hidden; that men's characters, words, works, professions, fortunes, doctrines, reasonings, must be carefully and critically examined, before we can find even the traces of truth. They readily allow that in sciences of the world, the appearance is contrary to the truth of things. They quite understand that the great agencies in the material system are invisible, and that which is visible is deceptive [...]; yet they think it folly to distrust the face of the world in religious matters, or to search amid the perishable shadows of time for the footsteps and the resting-places of the Eternal.[36]

It follows from the above that, just as there are hidden laws and regulations in natural phenomena that are contrary to appearances, the same is true of

34 *SD*, 307.
35 *Ibid.*, 64.
36 *Ibid.*, 65–66.

religion. Therefore in religion we must walk by faith and not by sight. Descartes also distrusted the testimony of the senses, so he turned to the inherent logic of the mind. Newman, for his part, turns to the man of faith and his capacity to look through the perishable signs of the external world, through the artificial life, to the hidden sense entrusted to the world by God. Newman turns to the person as a whole, not merely to his or her intellect.

Each person has his own time, some are patterns of faith, others of valour, as Newman beautifully puts it in one of his sermons. The most important thing is that we must be able to "realize and make present [to us] things unseen."[37] Realizing and making present are Newman's key terms, the entrance to his invisible and implicit world, to the infinite abyss of his innermost self. We are encouraged, let us repeat, "to walk by faith, not by sight."[38]

I think we can find that one of the best illustrations of the "by faith" attitude in the Second Book of Kings, where the Aramean Naaman was cured of leprosy. Let us briefly recapitulate the story. He was the army commander of the king of Aram; he was highly esteemed and valiant. Unfortunately, he suffered from leprosy. Now, there was a slave Israelite girl who attended to Naaman's wife. This girl suggested that Naaman go to the prophet in Samaria to find a cure for his disease. Before leaving the commander received precious gifts from his lord and set out on his journey. When the prophet Elisha heard about Naaman's arrival, he sent him a message (without even meeting him in person) that he should wash himself seven times in the Jordan. Naaman was furious because he had his own vision of the healing. Let us read his words of bitter disappointment: "I thought that he would surely come out and stand there to invoke the Lord his God, and would move his hand over the spot, and thus cure the leprosy."[39] Naaman was convinced that the healing should be accompanied by some visible signs and respective rituals, almost like magic; he had his own rationalized conception of what it should look like. In any case, it should be something extraordinary. Apparently he failed to walk "by faith," he trusted in walking "by sight."

If there is no faith, i.e. the right preparation and disposition, even outright evidence fails to convince—especially when one cannot explain a phenomenon by natural causes. The French writer Émile Zola, himself an atheist and freemason at that time, went to Lourdes to prove that all the miracles there were just a matter of mystification. He accompanied two women dying of tuberculosis. And there, at the Grotto of Massabielle, they were completely

37 *PPS*, 1000.
38 *Ibid.*
39 2 Kgs 5:11.

cured of their condition. Despite this unexplained healing, in his book *Lourdes* Zola denied any miraculous intervention. This latter case can be accounted for by Newmanian terms. Zola could not accept such powerful evidence because he was not prepared, because he took it for granted as his first principle—that miracles did not exist. His principal premise, then, was the following: miracles do not exist, everything can and should be explained by natural causes. The major premise in this deductive reasoning is decisive.

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There are various modes of verbal misleading. We use equivocation in just causes and it is not the same as lying. There are certain just causes when an untruth may be the only solution, e.g. when some higher values are endangered. Newman calls them "exigencies or emergencies" like "the defence of life, or a duty as the custody of a secret, or of a personal nature as to repel an impertinent inquirer." He analyzes concrete cases of lying and enumerates the following: 1) to say the thing that is not; 2) a play upon words; 3) evasion; 4) silence.

Some of these cases are allowed under certain circumstances. We also need to distinguish between a material transgression and a formal transgression. For instance, murdering someone is a formal transgression of the commandment "Thou shalt not kill," but an accidental homicide is only a material transgression. In like manner, we may have a formal lie and a material lie. Taking a loaf of bread during wartime is material theft, but not formal because there is no intention of stealing. Likewise, if someone preaches something which is contrary to the teaching of the Church, but he does so in ignorance, he is only a material heretic, not formal. Newman argues on behalf of theological books which accept equivocation, claiming that certain courses of action are merely described in them, but not recommended. And, for instance, their authors would not follow the examples they describe. We read in his text:

> A theologian draws out a system; he does it partly as a scientific speculation: but much more for the sake of others. He is lax for the sake of others, not of himself. His own standard of action is much higher than that which he imposes upon men in general. One special reason why religious men, after drawing out a theory, are unwilling to act upon it themselves, is this: that they practically acknowledge a broad distinction between their reason and their conscience; and that they feel the latter to be the safer guide, though the former may be the clearer, nay even though it be

> the truer. They would rather be in error with the sanction of their conscience, than be right with the mere judgment of their reason.[40]

Hence, the exemptions from the rule of veracity are

> left to the private judgment of the individual, and he may easily be led on from acts which are allowable to acts which are not. Now this remark does *not* apply to such acts as are related in Scripture, as being done by a particular inspiration, for in such cases there *is* a command. If I had my own way, I would oblige society, that is, its great men, its lawyers, its divines, its literature, publicly to acknowledge as such, those instances of untruth which are not lies, as for instance untruths in war; and then there could be no perplexity to the individual Catholic, for he would not be taking the law into his own hands.[41]

This distinction between conscience and reason is noteworthy. Additionally, Newman seems to be referring to the well-known state of nature, when he is writing about "taking the law into his own hands," as set against the political state in which the cases of acceptable untruths are defined. Most probably, he is aware that such an outcome is not possible, therefore he would rather have a well-informed conscience to decide such things rather than reason settling a universal principle. The latter solution would resemble the first Kantian categorical imperative. Newman totally accepts evasion, meaning concrete cases, for which concrete solutions are found—when universal prescriptions cannot be provided.

We find an excellent and well-known example in the First Book of Kings. Two prostitutes were brought before King Salomon. They had had an argument about a baby, for each claimed to be its mother. Salomon then publicly commanded that the baby be cut in two halves, so that each woman could receive one half. Did he really intend to cut the baby and naturally thereby kill it? Of course not. He knew well that only one of the two women could be the baby's mother, and he also knew that the real mother would never allow her baby to be cut.[42] Newman describes another example from St. Athanasius' life, when the saint was in a boat on the Nile. He was flying from Emperor Julian's persecution. Instead of sailing away from those who chased him, he decided

40 *Apo.*, 231–232.
41 *Ibid.*, 232.
42 Cf. 1 Kgs 3:22–27.

to sail back to meet them. And he told his companions that if they were asked about his whereabouts, they should answer, "Yes, he is close to you."

I think we can give yet another example. When the prostitute was brought to Jesus, and the Jews demanded that he decide about her punishment. Jesus could have referred to the law, which punished such cases with death. Instead, he referred to the general state of the sinful man, without giving a straightforward answer.[43]

The case of untruths is not always transgression, especially in time of war. Newman explains his attitude towards lying: "For myself, I can fancy myself thinking it was allowable in extreme cases for me to lie, but never to equivocate."[44] And he accepts evasion. Generally, veracity has something to do with justice, but at the same time there are certain "just causes" in which we are not bound to tell the truth, i.e. in the case of the insane, or for the sake of society.

It follows from these considerations that Newman did not seek a pure morality, unlike Kant, but always had a concrete person in mind. Athanasius elicited his idea of evasion not from some concept of pure will, but from his conscience formed in the Decalogue. He knew he should not lie and he knew he should outwit his pursuers, for his life was at stake and the temptation of their bad will. Newman gives us an example of a Christian who is not at a loss in the so-called post-fall world.

In his soliloquy with himself, Newman does not feel any urge to remember all of the facts. Above all, *he knows that he knows*, that is, he has reached his destination. Therefore, being safe he looks at his past with the personal certitude of the right place he has been going to and ultimately reached. He is, then, not looking at his past from nowhere, from some void of incertitude and hesitation. From this point of view, the censure of others does not matter much, for the individual path he has trodden is predestined only for him. At the same time, as we have seen, he felt compelled to justify his way, so that others were not scandalized.

Allow me to highlight here the question of participation, which is an important issue in Newman's life. Participation means actively and personally acting together with others. Newman realized that he could not passively join others in their Anglican procedures if he was not at peace with himself, i.e. if he could not consciously and in accord with his conscience accept all the elements of his Anglican creed. Newman's history clearly depicts the fact that he did indeed participate in his community to the fullest degree. It was not

43 Cf. John 8:3–11.

44 *Apo.*, 232.

a mere being-with-others, but a conscious decision preceded by cognition of his community's goal. Moreover, he was capable of criticism, yet another trait of authentic participation. Criticism does not annul participation; on the contrary it strengthens it. Criticism means that the persons who criticize are vitally interested in the good of their community.[45] They are capable of transcending the here and now, unmindful of their own interests. Newman was such a person who dared to rise above the expedients of his community. And he showed no fear in pointing out its faults. At the same time, he was jealous of himself, coveting no position for himself, except the truth of his being and the truth of the Church and her fundamental mission. It is for the sake of this truth that he embarked on his own way to the Roman Catholic Church, feeling assured in his personal certitude and the clarity of his conscience.

45 Cf. *US*, 80–81; see more on participation in K. Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 261 ff. The ability to criticise one's community was also for Wojtyła a sign of authentic participation.

CHAPTER 3

Egotism Is True Modesty

We live in a world of shadows and images behind which the true substances of life are hidden. It must be noted that just as the result of real assent is individual, the shadows and images in which we are immersed are also individual. Thus, the strife for cognition is individual, and if I cannot say more than I can master, egotism logically ensues. Let us also observe, to avoid possible misunderstandings, that this process is unlike Locke's empiricism. The ban on saying "more than one can master" is not the Lockean well-defined conceptual world; if such were true, Newman would simply follow the empiricist path. But he meant primarily personal growth in which I can accept more than I understand, but in this case I must believe. If there is no comprehension or belief, and yet a declaration takes place, this is a sure case of usurpation, yet we cannot judge of others which case has taken place. Egotism simply means: I can speak only for myself. Thus reads one of the principles of Newman's personalism.

In the area of "mental or moral science," Newman has one idea that is habitually on his mind, a sentiment that can be applied "to Metaphysics or Ethics, […] that in these provinces of inquiry egotism is true modesty. In religious inquiry each of us can speak only for himself, and for himself he has a right to speak. His own experiences are enough for himself, but he cannot speak for others: he cannot lay down the law; he can only bring his own experiences to the common stock of psychological facts."[1] This programme of the doctrine of personalism, which Newman would so emphatically stress, also motivated Edith Stein (1891–1942, St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross), a martyr of the Holocaust. St. Thomas Aquinas stressed the importance of the sense of touch, and claimed that whoever has a better touch, they have a better thought. This idea excellently coalesces with Newman's position: the point is not to imitate other persons' examples mechanically, but to *realize* the truth in one's own person; and I take realizing to be a co-equivalent term to touching. In like manner, we are enlarging a set of concepts in Newman's personalistic epistemology which includes: the *method of personation*, *real assents*, *real words*, and *realization*.

The fact that our individual life is central to an individual and of utmost importance does not mean that it is not susceptible to an evaluation or a

1 *GA*, 300.

judgment, that each life is of equal value and that we are doomed, at the most, to relativism. It is on the contrary. Individual life can be subjected to evaluation because it is not just an outcome of deterministic (universal) laws, but a result of individual choices. Above all, Newman was not interested in the person in general, but in the concrete person; he sought to come closer to this person in his or her concrete strivings, to *touch* him or her in their concrete being, starting with himself—his most accessible being. It is this concrete person with his or her concrete intellectual, emotional, and social endowments that is confronted with given dilemmas. Let us imagine the following reasoning. Mr X is a Christian and, as a Christian, he assents with notional assent to salvation and eternal life as the ultimate goal of his life. He has set his eye on this goal, but then something else interferes and he is immediately diverted from his original path. Or let us take another example. Mr Y approves of honesty, and in his theoretical apprehensions he values honesty above other sentiments. Then he observes that those who have resorted to dishonest misgivings have succeeded sooner. He may still retain his appreciation of honesty, and even criticize dishonest dealings, but the more he criticizes them, the more he is aware, probably even to his horror, that deep down he regrets that he has been so honest. Thus, theoretical acknowledgement proves too frail to keep us away from what we have notionally assented to, i.e. that honesty is right and dishonesty is wrong. Such people may even keep repeating that they still abide by all of these sublime truths, but when put to the test, when they are about to act according to what they have so repeatedly assented, they cower and fail.

The fact that we have chosen a goal is not enough. We need to *realize* that we have chosen it because only then can the effects have a bearing upon our life. Under relatively peaceful circumstances we may pretend we have chosen the ultimate goal of our life. Then some other affairs interfere, for instance, an unexpected windfall, or the temptation to commit something dishonest, envy—and the ultimate goal surprisingly disappears from our view, and we fight for this temporary gain as if it were the ultimate goal. This means that we did not *realize* the ultimate goal. Such is the meaning of Newman's intuition about personal realization. Our intellectual (theoretical) choice is insufficient to be the working principle of life. I apprehend the ultimate goal, but the question is: do I assent to it with the whole of my being?

All this time we are considering here the question of individual life, or else the individual life in which man himself becomes the author of himself, someone he is working on. Newman, we remember, writes about life as a personal result, and even about the attitude of egotism. Egotism, let us recall, does not mean here being closed to others, and the subjectivization or relativization of the truth, but an essential emphasis not only on the personal responsibility

of individual life, but also—or perhaps above all—on having the respective instruments to lord it over this life. By lording over I mean here mainly an ability to respond to various challenges related to individual life. The solution is not present in the ready schemes of some universal logic, in the social and political reforms which one could refer to, but in a radically comprehended faithfulness towards a well-informed conscience. The precondition is a consciousness that the conscience should and could be formed. This formation is in the harmony, as we have already noted, between words and the person speaking them, i.e. to be true and not to lie to oneself, not to pretend that one has arrived at a certain truth when the opposite is true.

We could interpret Newman's message as encouragement, which reads: "let us start using ourselves," "know who you are, and then you will see how much you can." The present time encourages us rather to the opposite—to depart from ourselves and adopt the various styles on offer. Man bears his own salvation in himself—Newman's principal message could thus be formulated—for it is in his interior that he meets God. This encounter is, for various reasons, difficult. We have too many offers directed at leaving ourselves rather than entering and using ourselves. The contemporary world abounds in numerous occasions for distraction. The history of our civilization shows examples of many countercultural revolutions, among which the most prominent in the western world was the 1968 revolution. It was nothing else but a proposal of a new lifestyle, not in the sense of some profound reading of human nature, but in the sense of being opposed to long-held traditions and customs. Thus, counterculture becomes an illusory promise of liberation. Why and when do people need liberation? Naturally, they need liberation from oppression and injustice, but what is oppressive and unjust in social order? Well, anything can be deemed oppressive if one holds as a point of reference some idealized vision of freedom, without even asking whether this type of freedom is necessary for human beings. In like manner, we eventually return to the proper concept of the human being. Such liberation is, to use Newman's term, unreal, taking into account the fact that most of these people, who followed suit, never made any effort to analyze what human liberty consists in.

In the turbulent times of the nineteenth century, the time of national independence movements, of struggling for unity and the destruction of the hitherto social structures, the falling of aristocratic political orders and the birth of colonial empires, the right of individual decisions comes to the forefront. This claim advanced by modernity has borne much good fruit, but has also brought sour grapes. The British philosopher John Stuart Mill, scared by the prospect of the oncoming era of mass culture, began to preach the fight for the survival of individuality, which could be thwarted by this culture. As far removed as

he himself was from extravagance, he nevertheless advocated it to potential defenders of individuality; they should manifest their individualism without being shy of extravagance, if this could serve the cause of the victory of individuality. His thinking, therefore, was also guided by the principle that the essence of man is on the outside.

It is indeed fascinating to see how Newman grappled, individually, with the heritage of his own milieu, how he delved into historical studies, analyzing the issues of unity and schism. And, eventually, how he decided to join the Roman Catholic Church, leaving his friends free to make their own decisions. We shall discuss this further on.

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The main purpose of the written word is "not to unfold a system for our intellectual contemplation, but to secure the formation of a certain character."[2] When we try to put a moral character into words, we meddle with the springs of life. People of exceptional valour or character find it especially difficult to talk about themselves because what is "the most familiar to us, and easy in practice, require the most study, and give the most trouble in explaining; as, for instance, the number, combination, and succession of muscular movements by which we balance ourselves in walking, or utter our separate words; and this quite independently of the existence or non-existence of language suitable for describing them."[3] How can we put into words the latent powers of our very being? It is difficult to unfold the most hidden incentives of action. Therefore, when Newman was charged with hypocrisy, he understandably reacted with astonishment. In order to render an adequate account of his own life, he would have to note every minute moment of his life, and note exactly the perfect correspondence between the word and the deed, which is impossible. It is not only beyond the capacity of an individual person, but it is also beyond the capacity of the natural discrepancy between words and deeds.

One would have to constantly survey one's inner feelings, but even if that were possible, the findings of this surveillance would have to be translated into words, meanwhile "views and human language are incommensurable."[4] Of course, there are people who have gained an intuitive knowledge of certain things in some areas, i.e. the beautiful in art, or an insight into moral truth. Nevertheless, they still feel embarrassed when asked to talk about it. Newman

2 *US*, 97.
3 *Ibid.*, 97–98.
4 *Ibid.*, 98.

then rhetorically asks: "[…] may we not further venture to assert, not only that moral Truth will be least skilfully defended by those, as such, who are the genuine depositories of it, but that it cannot be adequately explained and defended in words at all?"[5]

Why is that so? The first answer that comes to mind is that language is an artificial (or better: conventional) system and words are only approximate representations of reality. How can such a system adequately render the internal struggle between good and evil? Language can only be regarded an arbitrary medium. As Newman observes: "Moral character in itself, whether good or bad, as exhibited in thought and conduct, surely cannot be duly represented in words. We may, indeed, by an effort, reduce it in a certain degree to this arbitrary medium; but in its combined dimensions it is as impossible to write and read a man (so to express it), as to give literal depth to a painted tablet."[6] The other man always remains a mystery. There are many traits we take for granted, rather than know them, because we cannot read another man (this is again an echo of Newman's response to Kingsley). We have no access to his moments of hesitation or temptation, when he is almost literally hung over a precipice, not knowing himself what to do.

The symbolical phrase "read a man" evidently referred to Newman himself, for he is "that living intelligence," a complex and intricate reality that cannot be read like a sheet of paper. He is indeed, in a masterly manner, painting the awkward position of "our secluded Teacher" who embodies "moral Truth." The Teacher is Christ who is endowed with external gifts, the power of miracles, countenanced by rulers, and with a reputation for learning. As such, Newman observes rightly, he should become the centre of attention for the multitude of men, a hero or a celebrity, as we would say today. Profession by the mouth is easy, performance very difficult. The point is that, in the area of virtue, one needs to submit to certain laws and obligations, but when freedom is comprehended as licence, the task becomes impossible. This licence is defined as "evil feeling" by Newman and reads "that to be bound to certain laws and principles is a superstition and a slavery, and that freedom consists in the actual exercise of the will in evil as well as in good; and they witness […] that a man who throws off the yoke of strict conscientiousness, greatly increases his producible talent for the time, and his immediate power of attaining his ends. At best they will but admire the religious man, and treat him with deference; but in his absence they are compelled (as they say) to confess that a being so amiable

5 *Ibid.*
6 *Ibid.*, 99.

and gentle is not suited to play his part in the scene of life; that he is too good for this world; that he is framed for a more primitive and purer age, and born out of due time."[7]

It is true that if one seeks to satisfy what is expedient and wishes to achieve his goal at any cost, then any sense of duty or obedience may appear as a limitation of freedom; in this case, we are dealing with the failure to accept the first principles. Therefore, the Teacher has a troublesome task, for He is not supposed to lodge certain ideas on the mere surface of the mind, i.e. to liberate the Israelites from captivity, to lower taxes (a political goal laudable in itself), or to gain ascendancy, but He is "to be an instrument in changing the heart, and modelling all men after one exemplar; making them like himself."[8] He is endowed with the aforementioned gifts, and He has language as His means of communication. Now we enter the dynamic tension between the speaker and His listeners. The Teacher is confronted with opposition, outright rejection, or else a sense of wonder, especially on the part of the simple people amazed by His spectacular miracles. It is interesting to note, however, that all the parties were surprisingly united at the trial of the Teacher, spitting out their accusations.

In the realm of moral and religious matters, it is futile (and counterproductive) to understand them merely in an intellectual way. For, on the one hand, we have "the long-established, over-secure, and but silently-working system" of Truth, and on the other "the rebellious Reason."[9] The tension between the living Truth and the rebellious Reason means that the intellectual way is insufficient without personal virtue. Truth fails in the power of eloquence, for its essence does not reside in clear and ready speeches, which may elicit a spontaneous reaction from their listeners but do not grow roots in their innermost selves. Truth can be viewed as a system, but it is "vast and far-stretching, [...] and, viewed in its separate doctrines, it depends on the combination of a number of various, delicate, and scattered evidences; hence it can scarcely be exhibited in a given number of sentences. If this be attempted, its advocate, unable to exhibit more than a fragment of the whole, must round off its rugged extremities, and unite its straggling lines, by much the same process by which an historical narrative is converted into a tale. This, indeed, is the very art of composition, which, accordingly, is only with extreme trouble preserved clear of exaggeration and artifice; and who does not see that all this is favourable to the cause of error,—to that part which has not faith enough to be patient of

7 *Ibid.*, 99–100.
8 *Ibid.*, 100.
9 *Ibid.*, 102.

doubt, and has just talent enough to consider perspicuity the chief excellence of a writer?"[10]

And Newman mentions Thomas Paine (without actually writing his name), whom he calls "that popular infidel writer" and author of *The Age of Reason* (published in 1794). We have already talked about system as used in various contexts and we must be aware that the word "system" has at least two meanings: (1) system as a purely theoretical construction and (2) system as a coherent whole consistent of various components. I shall be constantly reminding the reader of this difference by saying that Newman was talking about the second meaning of the word. Let me emphasise that by 'system' Newman meant first and foremost the unfolding reality of truth over time. Only taken as a whole does it make sense in the life of a person. The person is, metaphorically speaking, indeed a highly complicated and intrinsically complex system, developed and still developing.[11]

Reason—meaning rebellious reason, i.e. in its unrepentant state—can be a dangerous tool, claims Newman, for it can seek to prove and argue, as expedience suggests. In the mouth of a sophist, reason can produce arguments on behalf of a lie just as strong as those on behalf of the truth. And if we have regard for the power of speech, a clever orator can indeed triumph over the religious man. This is also related to the means of circulation, which, let us admit, are extremely more powerful today than in Newman's time; therefore, "words may be heard by thousands at once,—a good deed will be witnessed and estimated at most by but a few."[12] Newman, of course, had no idea about the Internet, but he prophetically anticipated its ubiquitous character and the all-at-onceness form of its messages, as Marshall McLuhan would phrase it. Words are heard by many people, but a good deed is witnessed by a few, and such *personation*—addressed to individuals.

The essence of conversion brought about by an example consists not of intellectual excellence, but in conveying the Inspired Word from one mind to another. Newman focuses, as we have already said, on "unconscious holiness" which is "of an urgent and irresistible nature." It is unconscious, so it is not enforced by a conscious decision, free from pretension, not as a result of

10 *Ibid.*, 103.

11 This understanding of the person is found in the personalism of K. Wojtyła. For him, the human person *is* (the metaphysical dimension) and *becomes* (the phenomenological dimension). Let it be noted that the person always *is* in his or her integrity (identity) the same person (I do not cease to be myself throughout life) and always *becomes* someone in the sense of personality.

12 *US*, 104.

deliberation; we could say that it flows from its bearer. It has an irresistible nature, so it exercises "a sovereign compulsory sway."[13] Its power resides not in words, but in a living testimony, the personal influence of the Teacher; in general, notional assents may amount merely to be "the dust and chaff" in comparison with real assents. We need only a few highly endowed men to rescue the world. And Newman issues a very reassuring message for us at the present moment, for he writes that we should feel "contented and resigned in our generation, whatever be the peculiar character of the power of the errors of our own times. For Christ never will reign visibly upon earth; but in each age, as it comes, we shall read of tumult and heresy, and hear the complaint of good men marvelling at what they conceive to be the especial wickedness of their own times."[14] This is indeed a very encouraging and comforting message for those who feel frightened by the constant encroachment of secular ideas, and the demolishment of time-honoured traditions. The stream of faith is hidden, like a subterranean river, and it is brought to the mind of the current generation by some talented and spirit-filled teachers, i.e. witnesses. The benefactors of mankind are frequently unknown, says Newman.

We have reached a very important point in Newman's clash with the enlightened heritage. Contrary to the rationalistic scheme, which proposes a universal and top-down solution to social problems, i.e. a general formula, a universal recipe, to which individual projects should adjust themselves, Newman proposes to start with the person. Any reform should begin with a personal decision to convert, not only in the religious sense, but simply to better one's life. Of course, this betterment should be carried out with a concrete pattern in view. It cannot be implemented by some subjective ideas, but by personal commitment. The best pattern that Newman proposes is the Christianity embodied in the Church. And the Church is best represented by persons who genuinely live the Christian truth, a religion which is not written on paper, but is a living principle.

We are ready to approach and comprehend some moral problems, Newman seems to be saying, when we have inspected our own life and put it in order.[15] And it does not matter much that we may have changed or even contradicted ourselves in our choices, for "[r]eligion has (as it were) its very life in what are paradoxes and contradictions in the eye of reason."[16] As finite beings, we are forever doomed to this living in-between, to what Newman called "seeming

13 *Ibid.*, 107.
14 *Ibid.*, 109.
15 Cf. *PPS*, 981.
16 See *Ibid.*

contradictions," forever between light and darkness, between sorrow and joy; these contradictions "arise from the want of depth in our minds to master the whole truth."[17] We have already discussed here the Newmanian terms "rebellious Reason" and "garrulous Reason," they all denote unprepared reason, reason let loose in its unchecked power of associations, reason without first principles, i.e. the confines to start from; once these principles are accepted, and they are accepted on faith, they immediately become road signs for a safe journey. Olive Schreiner expressed it excellently in her literary work. We learn from her novel that human reason finds contradictions in whatever it fails to comprehend.[18] Contradictions are found, for example, in different renditions of the same story in the different Gospels.

Perhaps we are indeed enclosed in Plato's cave like in a dream. Newman puts it beautifully when he writes in his sermon: "To men in sleep, in drowning, or in excitement, moments are as years. They suddenly become other men, nature or grace dispensing with time."[19] In line with his *method of personation*, Newman believed in the power of individual persons, the kind of power we manifest in charity. Rather than institutions which seek to publish their Catholic drives, Newman states that "we should all recollect that a restoration of intercommunion with other Churches is, in a certain sense, in the power of individuals. Every one who desires unity, who prays for it, who endeavours to further it, who witnesses for it, who behaves Christianly towards the members of Churches alienated from us, who is at amity with them, (saving his duty to his own communion to the truth itself)[,] who tries to edify them, while he edifies himself and his own people, may surely be considered, as far as he himself is concerned, as breaking down the middle wall of division, and renewing the ancient bonds of unity and concord by the power of charity. Charity can do all things for us; charity is at once a spirit of zeal and of peace; by charity we shall faithfully protest against what our private judgment warrants us in condemning in others; and by charity we have it in our own hands, let all men oppose us, to restore in our own circle the intercommunion of the Churches."[20]

Keeping to the significance of private judgment, the pillar of modernity, Newman seems to wish to overcome the enmity between various Churches,

17 *Ibid.*

18 See O. Schreiner, *The Story of an African Farm*, Alpha Editions, 2018, 38, 39. Trying to come to terms with the incomprehensible, which human reason interprets as a contradiction, the hero says: "My father God knows, my father knows, […] we cannot understand; He knows." (39).

19 *PPS*, 984.

20 *ESS*., II, 374.

primarily between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, with charity. This is indeed a shift in the otherwise hostile relationship between the two communities deemed schismatical and idolatrous, with the Church of Rome being for a long time labelled anti-Christ, enthusiastic, and popish. While holding to their doctrinal differences, the individuals could reach out to their Christian brethren and thus smooth away the sharp edges. There are so many needs people can cater for one another that, despite the differences, unity may come. Newman does not define this unity, so he is still engaged in the philosophy of the Via Media,[21] with the Church of England being an ideal path between Protestant Dissenters and "idolatrous" Rome. The Via Media was promoted by the Tractarians (Newman wrote about it in his *Tracts 38* and *41*). The Tracts recapitulated the fundamental elements of Tractarian theology: Apostolicity, Catholicity, and the efficacy of the sacraments.[22] Let us note in passing that in his thinking about unity Newman was also influenced by the German divine and priest Johann Adam Möhler and his book *Die Einheit in der Kirche oder das Princip des Katholicismus, dargestellt im Geiste der Kirchenväter der drei ersten Jahrhunderte* (Tübingen, 1825)[23]

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Man's life contains in itself a certain paradox. It is a sequence of successive moments extended in a historically finite series, whereas the one who is the subject of these moments experiences himself as a whole, and wishes eternity. Now, this latter experience goes against the chronological successions of various moments; the former experience defies finiteness. Thus, the temporarily limited being, owing to the spiritual faculties he possesses, expects limitlessness. The plethora of talents and possibilities call for a further continuation. Otherwise why should they have come into existence? On the basis of this essential disproportion between the limited span of time and the limitlessness of man's faculties and possibilities, Newman draws a conclusion about the existence of immortality. In one of his sermons we read: "The greatness of their

21 *Via Media* – this was the belief among nineteenth-century Anglicans that the Anglican Church had escaped the abuses of Rome on the one hand and the excesses of Protestant dissenters on the other. Newman initially shared this view, but later abandoned it.

22 See K. F. Curnow, *Richard Hooker, John Henry Newman: A Via Media theology of the Eucharist*, 217.

23 The English translation: *Unity in the Church or the Principle of Catholicism: Presented in the Spirit of the Church Fathers of the First Three Centuries*, trans. Peter C. Erb, Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1995; see G. H. Williams, *The Mind of John Paul II. Origins of His Thought and Action*, New York: the Seabury Press, 1981, 122.

gifts, contrasted with their scanty time for exercising them, forces the mind forward to the thought of another life, as almost the necessary counterpart and consequence of this life, and certainly implied in this life, provided there be a righteous Governor of the world who does not make man for nought."[24]

The manner of reasoning here recalls Aquinas's argument from degrees (also known as the degrees of perfection argument), with the difference that in Aquinas this point was the fourth way in which the right reason (*recta ratio*) comes to the existence of God as the climax of all perfections. If we can see so many manifestations of perfection, there must exist their ultimate cause, perfection itself. Now, in Newman, the thought of the ultimate completion of imperfections concerns the yearning for human immortality in the face of incomplete perfection. After all, our capabilities are never brought here to their complete perfection; some hardly live long enough to do so. On the basis of various forms of perfection (or, rather, imperfection), of those who were deprived of the chance to be fully brought to fruition, owing to limited time, the author notes the necessity of the ultimate completion. If something has been given in its residual form, it must find its ultimate completion in eternity, and the ultimate fulfilment of their having come into existence. Let me refer to an example from mathematics, a field not unknown to Newman, that of the well-known axiom of the curve and its asymptote. The plane curve comes nearer and nearer to the straight line, without any tangent points, or else crosses it at an infinite number of points (if this is a sinusoidal curve), so that it becomes co-identical in infinity. Mathematical infinity appears here to be a concept that harmonises contradictions and goes beyond our temporary understanding. The residual, or even fulfilled, talents in this temporal space that is given to man seem to be only a symbolical curve, tending to be completed without completion.

Human life recalls some broader or narrower scenarios. From our perspective, we can hardly evaluate to what extent a concrete biography has fulfilled given perfections. We would have to look at it from an infinite meta-level at which we would have access to all future states of this concrete human being. Man fulfils only a part of his scenario. His life is, therefore, forever, to a lesser or greater degree, incomplete and unfinished, hence—in order to avoid contradictions—it calls for completion. Otherwise, a contradiction would result if we insisted that a given talent came into existence for nought, that it was just the whim of some impersonal power or the necessary process of nature.

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24 *PPS*, 862.

Each residual perfection that has not been brought to its ultimate shape is, therefore, some essential contradiction. Let us furthermore say, and this I also regard to be Newman's brilliant intuition, that each life without immortality, without infinity, remains senseless. This is how we can understand Newman. Without immortality we are dealing with the paradox of perfection, which is simultaneously imperfection, for it has not been granted fullness. Looking at residual perfection, we are naturally expecting its further continuation. Otherwise, we are disappointed. In each not-yet-fulfilled perfection we observe, as its indispensable element, infinity. It is presupposed here. Perhaps we could not evaluate perfection as perfection at all, if we did not think about it under the aspect of eternity. We live in a contradiction, unless we admit of its further continuation. As Newman pointedly described it: "The very greatness of our powers makes this life look pitiful; the very pitifulness of this life forces on our thoughts to another; and the prospect of another gives a dignity and value to this life which promises it; and thus this life is at once great and little, and we rightly con[d]emn it while we exalt its importance."[25] We may surmise that this conclusion made Newman understand our life as being immersed in shadows and images, in fact not real, and one towards which we should adopt a safe distance.

Our faculties are great, their potentiality is powerful, yet it is never applied here to its best usage. Whatever we begin, no matter how hard we try, it calls for some continuation. The English metaphysical poet of the seventeenth century, John Donne, put it accurately in his *Meditation XVII*, where we read: "when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated. God employs several translators; some pieces are translated by age, some by sickness, some by war, some by justice; but God's hand is in every translation, and his hand shall bind up all our scattered leaves again for that library where every book shall lie open to one another."[26] Is it not beautiful, this picture of man's life being translated into its better form by death? Death is not the end, but the fulfilment of something that has begun. John Donne wrote his *Meditation* at the moment of his approaching death. We could say that great intellects gain a special kind of inspiration in limit situations. The prospect of imminent death brought to Donne a more profound understanding of death; and Newman came to the firm resolution that his life was not at an end yet, that he had an important task to undertake.

25 *Ibid.*, 863.

26 *Meditation XVII*, https://www.northernhighlands.org/cms/lib5/NJ01000179/Centricity/Domain/106/honorsbritishliterature/Meditation%20XVII.pdf.

Only the prospect of eternity in which the interrupted duration of perfection will further be unveiled makes this perfection non-contradictory. The *sine qua non* trait of perfection is its duration and the opportunity of ultimate completion. Only under this condition can we define it as perfection, expecting its further continuation. We live amidst *shadows* and *images*, we always stand in chiaroscuro, trying to accommodate contradictions. Life is "great and little" simultaneously by virtue of the fact that it has not developed into a complete system, therefore into a whole system. Hence, the Bible most accurately states that "what we shall be has not yet been revealed" (1 J 3:2). One cannot expect that the being emerging from the chiaroscuro will be seen in full light. Therefore, Newman presents his dynamic understanding of life whose foundation is change, an ever-present tendency to the ultimate form of perfection, which in this temporal segment, by way of a geometrical curve tending to its asymptote, will not be reached. In like manner, noble deeds, good intentions, rightful yearnings, which have not come to fruition, call for a further continuation. The good-directed tendency is not brought to perfection in this dimension. It is also not measurable, so no matter how long a life is, it remains an inadequate measure of the good that a person has at his or her disposal or can achieve. Only infinity is adequate. Newman proposes here the term "disappointing,"[27] by which we define our emotional state when we are looking at the unveiling good and the length of life given to us for its full revelation. The magnitude of things possible to be created emerges only in its undeveloped form.

(One example especially comes to mind at this very moment, that of the great composer Beethoven, whose symptoms of hearing loss started at the age of twenty-five, and by the end of his life he was completely deaf. Of course, for a musician hearing loss must be a tragedy. Now, following Newman's doctrine, we can imagine Beethoven's hearing regained to its utmost purity and capacity after death. What kind of heavenly music can he create in the fullness of his talents? No matter how much free rein we can give to our imagination, we shall never be able to fathom the beauty and depth of this creation).

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Not only did Newman treat human life as a developing system, but also Christianity and the Church. Thus, one should not judge a person on the basis of aspects taken out of the context of the whole. One should look at the whole, which is developing into a system. Similarly, following Newman's thought, one

27 *PPS*, 864.

could say that only the Roman Catholic Church is being developed into a complete system. I think that this also determined his decision to convert; he saw in the Catholic Church a whole, albeit imperfect, yet on the way to a still more complete fullness.

The word "system" is somewhat misleading in Newman's text because on the one hand he is writing, as has already been noted, about the system of the Church, the revealed system, the silently developed system, and, on the other, the word "system" is understood as something theoretical and devoid of life, and, as such, set in opposition to the living, personal example.

It must be remembered that the word "system" is ambiguous and has at least two meanings, which I have tried to elucidate. Thus, let me remind the reader what I have already written, it can be interpreted as: (1) something synonymous with theory, with what is abstract and therefore set in opposition to practice; and (2) something typical, internally combined, individual and consistent. Newman, as we know, obviously meant system in the latter sense. Thus, we can say that system A is different to system B, for either one system is composed of different elements than the other system, or the elements of one system are held together in different relationships than the elements of the other system. In this sense, we may rightly speak of the Church system, of the Christian system, the English system, and the Roman system. Now, if anyone wishes to form some opinions about any of these systems, they should become acquainted with their composite elements and with their respective relationships; and not only as they are at present, but also as they have developed over history. Newman often criticizes the use of system as a mere theory (1), calling it acting in "an unreal way" or "unnaturally and on a theory,"[28] and that situation often occurs when we attempt to speak about things we do not understand, and, moreover, from their nature we shall never be able to understand.

Only on the basis of all aspects in the case of an individual life could we make reliable judgments. Owing to our temporal limits, the whole is never given to us. Nor is it needed. One cannot expect a man to solve a problem which, because of his limited nature, he is not able to solve; we must always remember the importance of implicit (tacit) elements in Newman's doctrine. The current life is not eternal life. The concept of Christianity as a temporarily developing system makes up an essentially antirationalist moment in Newman's philosophy. The modern prospect tends to an ahistorical position whose centre is Locke's punctual self.[29] According to this awareness, man is

28 *Ibid.*, 1237.

29 C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 159 and ff.

what at each temporal moment his consciousness chooses as his identity. Now, if the foundation of consciousness is ultimately the level of what is explicative and defined, only what is conscious can rightfully remain. Modernity abolishes mystery, for mystery, by its nature, does not allow for explication.

We need to refer again to the phenomenological analysis, as how, for instance, on the basis of a fragment of cloth, which is given to us in perception, we can surmise about the whole. Current life appears to us like that fragment of cloth. Each life is, to a greater or lesser degree, incomplete and left undone. It calls for further completion. It merely prefigures some whole. The sense of life is immeasurable.

Life viewed in itself is "unprofitable," says Newman,

> it is scarcely more than an accident of our being—that is no part of ourselves, who are immortal; that we are immortal spirits, independent of time and space, and that this life is but a sort of outward stage, on which we act for a time, and which is only sufficient and only intended to answer the purpose of trying whether we will serve God or no. We should consider ourselves to be in this world in no fuller sense than players in any game are in the game; and life to be a sort of dream, as detached and as different from our real eternal existence, as a dream differs from waking; a serious dream, indeed, as affording a means of judging us, yet in itself a kind of shadow without substance, a scene set before us, in which we seem to be, and in which it is our duty to act just as if all we say had a truth and reality, because all that meets us influences us and our destiny.[30]

This reasoning begs for an answer to the question how can we be held responsible for what is not real? Newman would certainly answer thus: yes, we can, for this is the only life we have to serve God, and to the degree to which we serve Him. We are humans, not supernatural beings. Life is portrayed in the above passage as an infinite segment with a beginning but no end. Some parts of this line are visible, others are invisible. In fact, everything is invisible because if we consider an infinite magnitude, no matter how much we decided to deduce from it, the infinite remains infinite. That is the essence of our drama of life. The visible part, as short (or long) as it is, is played out amidst shadows and figures. This theatrical and masterly metaphor is indeed interesting here. Plays are put on stage for the public to watch. Actors enter the stage to play their

30 *PPS*, 865–866.

parts. In like manner, we enter our stage to play our parts. The essential difference, however, is that plays have their endings; life proceeds forward. It is like a uniform movement in a vacuum. And comparing the period of our visible life with the remaining section, which is infinite, makes any comparisons absurd. From the point of view of infinity, it matters little how long one lives in this explicit form. Our life resembles an infinite ray whose visible part is a finite segment. Irrespective of how long our life is, infinity is always infinity; and no matter how long the segment is, in comparison with the infinite ray it has no significance. Newman drives home this metaphor, even up to the point of calling our life "artificial."[31]

Newman's position brings to mind the stoic doctrine, but his thought does not tend to the state of apathy, but is a profound interpretation of the Christian perspective. He makes us aware of one extremely important thing, mainly that the purpose of life can be accomplished only in unity with oneself; its length has nothing to do here. The principal goal is rendered by the terms used here: personal result and egotism. What is truly our own is not contained in what is external, but in what is most profoundly internal. It is not in the multitude of lifestyles and projects of the creative I, but in the innermost I from which the truth of the individual being is incessantly emanating. This truth is refracted in words; at times, it is completely distorted by what man receives from without and adopts. Amidst "shadows and images" the truth of the innermost I may be misunderstood. Man attempts to tame the latent area of what is implicative through the expression of what is explicative. He places on the hidden sphere a network of concepts, for he has taken it to heart the call to clarity and distinctness. Moreover, he does not wish to pass for an irrational creature, therefore he seeks to name and define all the layers of his own interior. When he subdues it to the processes of rationalization, he is either driven towards the generally accessible schemes, e.g. of what is commonly accepted, losing his individuality and authenticity, or else invents his own methods of dealing with his problems; he tends, to be objectivized, so to say, and departs from himself, or else embarks on his own contrivances and walls himself off from the truth. Rationalization is the hidden gate through which unreality sneaks in. He begins to experiment with various lifestyles. And he often loses, for it seems to him that he should compete with others, rather than place his own life on solid foundations. Instead of deeply penetrating the richness of his own interior, he exteriorizes himself and engages in skirmishes, whereas he should be sufficient for himself, for he is prepared for the trials.

31 See *Ibid.*, 1191.

Newman frequently stresses the singularity of the individual life. In one of his sermons we read this radical and, truly poetic, description:

> but what is the truth? Why, that every being in that great concourse is his own centre, and all things about him are but shades [...]. He has his own hopes and fears, desires, judgments, and aims; he is everything to himself, and no one else is really any thing. No one outside of him can really touch him, can touch his soul, his immortality; he must live with himself for ever. He has a depth within him unfathomable, an infinite abyss of existence; and the scene in which he bears part for the moment is but like a gleam of sunshine upon its surface.[32]

And then he adds: "We cannot understand that a multitude is a collection of immortal souls."[33] A collection of immortal souls, therefore, is a collection of independent creatures. Indeed, if we go back to the previous geometrical illustration, Newman's description becomes clear. The "unfathomable depth" is the ray, and the "scene" is the segment, "a gleam of sunshine" on the surface. Now looking at a group of people, we are not looking at a mass, but at each creature in particular, at each *unfathomable depth*, whose essences are latent. How else can one interpret the word "unfathomable"?

The individuality of the person means that we are forever doomed to live with ourselves and rely on ourselves; this is not a predicament, although for some people it may be so at times, but a chance to start anew without a desperate search for other resources or a revolt against oneself. It is in and with ourselves that we can arrive at certitude. Newman does this, i.e. stressing subjectivity, not to introduce an artificial division or insurmountable divisions amongst people. He understands very well, and assumes it as the most natural thing, that we enter various relationships, create various interpersonal relationships. Nevertheless, even in the most intimate relationships we still remain separate persons, as if we did not know one another at all. This is to the degree that "there should be a bottomless gulf between us, running among us invisibly, and cutting us off into two parties."[34] Such is Newman's radical ontological individualism which reads as follows: a group of people shall in no way be mixed into one whole. Rather, there are separate and impassable worlds in front of us.

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32 *Ibid.*, 779.
33 *Ibid.*
34 *Ibid.*, 782.

We find the true essence in our inmost interior, therefore one must "shut his eyes to the external world, and open them to the world within him, contemplate his real state and prospects."[35] Coming closer to another man, we are coming close to another world whose only part emerges from the hidden depth. The other man is rather a segment of time, combining the visible and invisible moments, not a point. Being aware of himself means to grasp all of these moments into an integrated whole, indeed into a system. The other is a history developed in time.

Newman very adequately describes the existential condition of his contemporary man. Additionally, this description has a most up-to-date value. He criticizes the naturalistic approach in which we attach values to what otherwise costs us nothing; thus indifference, for instance, may pass for internal peace, and a naive belief in scientific endeavours may pass for hope. The point is that true virtue is a result of transformation, of something that may run against natural inclinations. We read in one of his sermons, entitled "Equanimity":

> In this day especially it is very easy for men to be benevolent, liberal, and dispassionate. It costs nothing to be dispassionate when you feel nothing, to be cheerful when you have nothing to fear, to be generous or liberal when what you give is not your own, and to be benevolent and considerate when you have no principles and no opinions. Men nowadays are moderate and equitable, not because the Lord is at hand, but because they do not feel that He is coming. Quietness is a grace, not in itself, only when it is grafted on the stem of faith, zeal, self-abasement, and diligence.[36]

To paraphrase Newman's words, we could say that people today are polite, tolerant, and gentlemanly not because they are concerned with their neighbours so much, but because there are few things they care about. And in another sermon Newman stresses that right actions should stem from love. In this respect, his claim resembles Augustine's appeal to the hierarchy of love, namely that every action should be performed out of love for God. Love is the right motive, for this means to "live a life, not of sense, but of spirit."[37] The conclusion is that it is not the natural way that matters in accordance with our natural inclinations, but the supernatural way. Let it be noted that Newman always has in mind the spiritual transformation rather than some transcendental level to

35 *Ibid.*, 785.
36 *Ibid.*, 995–996.
37 See *ibid.*, 1196.

which our practical reason has access, as was envisioned by Kant. Therefore, the renewal is brought about not by some effort on our part, but results from cooperation with grace.

The above description shows the essence of the theistic faith, which has nothing in common with the naturalized attitude of serenity with which we are dealing in the stoic approach, nothing in common with the legal approach to social order. Newman constantly reminds us that faith is supernatural and, logically, does not derive from political regulations. Accordingly, it is not a further step, a successive premise in a series of ratiocinations. Rather, it is a thoroughly different qualitative change. And here again we find Newman's brilliant intuition, namely, that partial and aspectual cognition is misleading. One should seek the meaning of experience in its systematic whole.

Faith, in Newman's understanding, cannot be naturally deduced from some theoretical premises. It is supernaturally anchored, although as a religion it contains certain propositions derived from the experience of the faithful, from a tradition handed down from generation to generation. The Christian religion cannot be reduced to propositions aimed at ordering social life, it cannot become, say, a supernaturally reinforced legal order. (Secular rulers have always sought such reinforcement from Constantine's edict until modern times).

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The human intellect is an inadequate tool for deciding religious matters because in its natural state it is mired in chaos. Newman called it, as we remember, functional disarrangement, and this term might be compared to what the nineteenth-century Spanish political thinker Juan Donoso Cortés (1809–1853) called an affinity between reason and the absurd. Newman wrote about functional disarrangement or a compact between the flesh and the world,[38] while Cortés saw in the human mind after the Fall a tendency to the absurd. We read in his best-known essay:

> Prevaricating and fallen man was not made for the truth, nor was truth made for prevaricating and fallen man. Between the truth and human reason, after the prevarication of man, God established a lasting repugnance and invincible repulsion. Truth has in itself the titles of its sovereignty, and does not ask leave to impose its yoke; whilst man, since he rebelled against God, does not tolerate any sovereignty but his own, unless it first

38 See *ibid.*, 1238.

> ask his leave and assent. Hence, when the truth comes within sight, he immediately begins to deny it, and to deny it is to affirm himself in quality of independent sovereign. If he cannot deny it, he enters into combat with it, and by combating it, he combats for his own sovereignty. If he conquers, he crucifies it; if he is conquered, he flies: by flying, he thinks he flies from slavery, and by crucifying it, he believes he crucifies his tyrant.
>
> On the contrary, between human reason and the absurd there is a secret affinity and a close relationship. Sin has united them with the bond of indissoluble matrimony. The absurd triumphs over man precisely because it is devoid of all rights anterior and superior to human reason. Man accepts it precisely because it comes naked; because, being devoid of rights, it has no pretensions. His will accepts it because it is the offspring of his understanding, and his understanding takes delight in it, because it is its own offspring, its own verbum, because it is a living testimony of its creative power. In the act of creation man is like unto God, and calls himself God. And if he be God, like unto God, in man's estimation, all else is nothing. What matters it that the other be the God of truth, if he is the God of the absurd? At least, he will be independent like God, he will be sovereign like God; by adoring his own production, he will adore himself; by magnifying it, he will be the magnifier of himself.[39]

Let us observe that the aforementioned "rights anterior and superior to human reason" are, for Newman, first principles adopted by faith. The Spanish thinker has thus drawn a very persuasive picture of the world out of joint in which the human beings are fascinated with their own creations; such harangues against his contemporary world were his trademark. His vehement speech describes the ontological situation of man after the Fall. Man has become pushed off the path of principal gravitation toward God, the gravitation that imparts sense to his life, the gravitation that is a complement of all the undeveloped perfections of which I have written before. How is he supposed to find the truth about himself, if he has turned away from the Source of this truth and is centred around himself?

Encapsulated in a narcissistic confidence, man fails to read the truth about himself. This is not the way Newman understood egotism. His understanding was ontological rather than psychological; on the other hand, we may say that Cortés's was ontological as well, the psychological consequences being just

39 J. D. Cortés, *Essays on Catholicism, Liberalism and Socialism*, trans. by W. McDonald, London: Forgotten Books, 2015, 61–62.

the result of prior ontological situations. In his doctrine, egotism simply means our duty to take up an individual responsibility in view of those circumstances that are given to concrete man. It is a duty vis-à-vis the Revealed Truth, therefore it is always referred to God. Now, man's internal guide, his conscience, is not a mere individual point of view, for it has duties that come from without, not from within immanence.

Immersed in the world of immanent speculations, man is deep in what Newman calls the world of shadows and images, in this functional disarrangement. What can interrupt this enchanted circle of rotations without an exit? The answer amounts to pointing at the Word of God. God calls man from beyond the shadows and images, showing him the reality of his true I, for He is the Truth and does not deceive man. Then the act of real assent, grasping the Word of God, immersed in the shadows and images, breaks through the intricate circle of speculations, and becomes free to go towards the light of the Truth. Instead of submitting to the linguistic games of mutually balanced reasons, he stretches out his hand to the Word of God and clings to it. Such I would also call the Newmanian moment, namely that man—in spite of his intellectual inadequacy—can still make the right decision.

One could look at this scheme in a different way. In this state of disarrangement, in this dysfunctional state, in the area of reason itself and mutually balancing arguments, chaotic emotions, sentiments and resentments, man will never reason strongly enough to speak on behalf of the truth. Reason itself, not supported by faith, will not show a way out. After the Fall, hence in the current human condition, there has become—says Cortés—a strong affinity between reason and the absurd. Newman, for his part, envisions something that we might call "negative epistemology," in which we do not gratify the true purpose of the intellect, i.e. to know the truth, but rather we walk in darkness and, by means of selection, eliminate wrong choices until only one is left, namely, the true one. He describes this condition of the human being in his *Sermons*:

> We know what is right, not positively, but negatively;—we do not see the truth at once and make towards it, but we fall upon and try error, and find it is *not* the truth. We grope about by touch, not by sight, and so by miserable experience exhaust the possible modes of acting till nought is left, but truth, remaining. Such is the process by which we succeed; we walk to heaven backward; we drive our arrows at a mark and think him most skilful whose shortcomings are the least.[40]

40 *Ibid.*, 1019.

This journeying by trial and error is typical of our fallen state. As we mature in virtue, we gain an intuitive grasp of the matters at hand, which the first man possessed. Once we attain it, "[t]here is no calculation, no struggle, no self-regard, no investigation of motives. We act from love."[41] The final result of this process of maturation is what Newman meant by his famous phrase "Heart speaks Unto Heart." This *ordo amoris* is an essential element in Newman's cognition in the moral sphere. Calculation and self-regard are characteristic attitudes of modernity, the essential contribution of its culture of immanence. Newman wanted to succumb neither to the rationalism of the enlightened model nor to the sentimentalism of the romantic paradigm. They both disregard the important aspects of human nature. They either overemphasize its intellectual aspect or give in to emotions. The intellect and emotions are naturally important, and to ignore them would entail speaking about an imagined person, but they should be placed in the right hierarchy: emotions controlled by reason, guided by conscience and subjected to the revealed Word. A person thus empowered can be situated in any social, political, and historical moment, for—as Newman firmly believed—human beings are ready to brave whatever circumstances they are confronted with. We read in one of his sermons: "None but saintly men, mortified men, preachers of righteousness, and confessors for the truth, can create a home for the truth in any land."[42]

What is left to man who sojourns in shadows and images? What is left to the inhabitant of Plato's cave? Human persons can only move forward and "make their pilgrimage in darkness and in liberty," as the American political philosopher Michael Novak put it.[43] Darkness symbolizes the lack of complete cognition. Freedom denotes, however, the possibility to move. Man immersed in darkness may perform some movements. He may choose ways and directions. If he is immersed in darkness, he lacks the light of complete cognition. Hence, he cannot entirely trust his own reason. He must be open to the light of faith, which could enlighten his darkness. Furthermore, in darkness one could trust someone else's light. In darkness it is easy to give in to promptings and take a bad turn. I think that this was, for Newman, also a mystic moment, since there is darkness outside, a strong theme with mystics. The development of technical civilization, the growth of the economy and wellbeing in no way enlightens this darkness; one should turn to oneself, to his profound I, where God speaks in the voice of conscience. The innermost depth becomes light.

41 *Ibid.*, 1020.

42 *Ibid.*, 1349.

43 M. Novak, *Free Persons and the Common Good*, Lanham: Madison Books, 1989, 33.

It must also be observed that we have all the time been denouncing the so-called "view from nowhere," as the American philosopher, Thomas Nagel, called it. Nagel made a distinction between the objective (scientific) and the subjective (personal) view. His argumentation resembles Newman's claim that our thinking is morally conditioned, therefore it is necessary that we be aware of the place from which we evaluate reality. This is to reconsider our concepts. Newman, like Nagel in the twentieth century, was not against the scientific point of view, but we considerably reduce personal cognition if we limit it only to such an objective approach. Besides, in concrete circumstances human knowledge is never reduced to such an approach because here we simply *use ourselves*, i.e. what we are at the moment, and we always look at things from *somewhere*; we mean here not only our ontic structure with which we have been endowed, but also our personal individuality. We solve problems differently, as individual persons, and it matters most how we have prepared ourselves for a given trial. As there is no view from nowhere, our thinking is morally and socially conditioned; therefore, it is necessary that we recognize the view from which we evaluate reality, and the circumstances in which this view took shape. If one has learnt that the Roman Catholic Church is the Antichrist, one must go deep into the roots of this conviction.

Because notional assent is rightly regarded as the weakest assent, we can presume that the metaphorical "shadows and images" include primarily notional assents. Newman admits that he was enchanted with the Noetic group at Oxford and their fascination with logical reasoning in which anything can be proven. In a world of abstract notions we are responsible for nothing, liable only to the rigours of the analytic scheme. It is only in the real world (ours or somebody else's) that we realize that there are real people and real lives hidden behind the notions we use. This growing awareness of the discrepancy between notions, the main item on the menu of the enlightened scholars, and realities, was part of Newman's individual development and of cognitive theory.

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According to Newman, individuality has nothing to do with individualism, nor with the key term of modern thinking, that is, independence. Let us state it clearly that the egotism of which we have already spoken also has nothing in common with individualistic self-enclosure. Rather, it is a calling to an individual decision to enter the path of truth. In one of his sermons, Newman puts forward the strong thesis which will be the leading idea of his whole activity: "independence was not made for man—that is an unnatural state—may

do for a while, but will not carry us on safely to the end."[44] This thesis sounds surprising in comparison with the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* or the Kantian *sapere aude*. Newman's message seems to go counter to these claims: man is not the master of himself, does not have full control over himself, and his natural state is to "be resigned" and "to be thankful."[45] We could even say that the postulated independence is also—contrary to what this word would suggest—an element of functional disarrangement and part of the world of shadows and images. A strong structure that provided order has been discarded and degraded. Due to the Fall, the primitive revolt, man is being constantly liberated from something. For he has lost the sense of fundamental subordination and everything seems to him strange and imposed. He cannot be free in the way in which man can be free, therefore he is fervently rejecting any ties, even those natural, which bind him to another man in friendship, obligation, and loyalty. The principle of dependence can be treated as one of the first principles. And we assume it on faith, not on empirical evidence, although even empirical evidence shows it clearly that we depend on other people in satisfying our needs. Besides, it would be difficult to imagine obedience, one of Newman's pillars, without the principle of dependence.

The main point is that we need to acquiesce to be subordinate to the transcendent, and always view our life from the prospect of God's eternity. In this way, we realize that we are not solitary creatures doomed to our own contrivances, without any hope for their success in this fragile existence. It is not the Nietzschean will to power that should guide the human being, but a total reliance on God; in other words, neither Kantian autonomy nor aesthetic nihilism. Newman goes counter to modern philosophy, with its focus on the immanent sphere of the self, when he declares: "We are not our own, any more than what we possess is our own. We did not make ourselves; we cannot be supreme over ourselves. We cannot be our own masters."[46] And further on, he formulates a yet more radical view that "as time goes on, […] all men, will find that independence was not made for men—that it is an unnatural state."[47] Many a modern philosopher would be confused about these words, for we have grown accustomed to being protective of individual rights, and any interferences from without are treated with suspicion as encroachments. The nineteenth century saw the birth of the so-called *new men* and *new women* who were sick unto independence (to paraphrase Kierkegaard's well-known work).

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44 *PPS*, 1004.
45 *Ibid.*
46 *Ibid.*
47 *Ibid.*

Being ignorant about their true nature, these "new people" are always wary of permanent obligations in the morbid thirst for liberation, which is impossible, because in their ignorance they wish to liberate themselves from their very nature. They fall into the shackles of contradictions. Olive Schreiner portrays them pertinently in her classic novel. One of the heroines says: "I am so weary of myself! It is eating my soul to its core—self, self, self! I cannot bear this life! I cannot breathe, I cannot live! Will nothing free me from myself?" and she adds in despair: "I want to love! I want something great and pure to lift me to itself!"[48] At the same time these people abhor any formal obligations, for they appear to them binding limitations (!). Newman does not revolt against his self, for that would be a cry of pride. On the contrary, he constantly encourages his readers to *use* their selves. Our own selves are the means of liberation, e.g. how can a person love his neighbour other than by using and loving his own self? I have to use *my* hands if I want to help my neighbour. Treating independence as an unnatural state goes counter to the reformative *sola scriptura* and *sola fide*. This truth gradually dawned on Newman in his Anglican period, for his *Parochial and Plain Sermons* were written during that time.

If we posed a question "on who or what may man depend without a harm to himself?" Newman's answer would be obvious. Only dependence on God makes all the other dependencies—which for Newman are our natural state—in proper order. The author of *Apologia* demonstrated indeed his prophetic intuition when, in his Anglican sermons, he wrote about the faulty attitude of independence. In a way, he anticipated the 1880s and 1890s' movement of the "new men," "new women," and feminism. This movement was the "passion for independence," as an American conservative historian noted.[49] At the same time, this passion is insatiable, for its proponents have no idea what to be independent of; they shun even those limitations which are imposed on them by their own reason. As they have abandoned any moral evaluation, they have no idea what is important and what is of little or no value. Such being the case, everything appears to be liberation and everything appears to be a burden.

In another sermon Newman says: "Since that time passion and reason have abandoned their due place in man's nature, which is one of subordination, and conspired together against the Divine light within him, which is his proper guide. Reason has been as guilty as passion here."[50] Let us note that these words correspond to Cortés's lack of the direction of gravity proper to man.

48 O. Schreiner, *The Story of an African Farm*, 224–225.

49 G. Himmelfarb, *The De-moralization of Society*, 192.

50 *PPS*, 1023.

Neither reason itself nor passions alone, but the whole person in his or her integrity should be aimed at.

If independence is not his natural state, man is always dependent on someone or something, so obviously we may ask on whom or what man can depend without any harm to himself. The first man was sinless and perfect, but "he tired of being upright from the heart only, and not in the way of reason. He desired to obey, not in the way of children, but of those who choose for themselves."[51] The fallen state has occasioned all the negative results in us, namely, that emotions are not subordinated to reason, and reason is not subordinated to faith, whereas, ultimately, reason should surrender to faith. The first principles are admitted, as we have already said, on faith. They do not result from deliberation. Cortés, called the Cassandra of his Age, was particularly vulnerable to the appalling consequences of the Fall. We have already quoted him with regard to man's state of prevarication.

The Spanish writer is even more radical about this disarrangement that entered human nature. Cortés's prevarication and Newman's disarrangement describe the same consequences of the human condition. Contrary to the views of rationalism or empiricism, it is not enough to take for granted, somewhat metaphorically, that the person is a simple union of reason and will prepared for the cognitive task in practice, but is a dynamic entity that often fails to keep up with the challenge or goes in the opposite direction. Religion and morality call for a practical application of principles; primarily, they do not consist in a theoretical debate. In order to face it in the proper way, he must be ready for a journey of personal conversion. Let us also observe a difference Newman pointed out, namely "the way of reason" as set in opposition to "choosing for themselves."

Newman's thesis about independence is very interesting. Indeed, we are entering a network of many dependencies, living among people. We imitate various models of conduct. Since the very beginning of our lives, in the process of our upbringing, we are dealing with attitudes recommended to us. We imitate others in a more or less conscious manner. Because we are social beings and, in many spheres, depend on others, for we are not able to satisfy our own needs, then indeed we should accept dependence as something more natural and in accordance with the actual state of affairs than independence. Man has turned to his own products and by magnifying their importance, an attitude that had earned the name of scientism, has begun to magnify himself.

51 *Ibid.*, 1020.

The American neoconservative writer Irving Babbitt put it nicely when he affirmed "that what is specifically human in man and ultimately divine is a certain quality of will, a will that is felt in its relation to his ordinary self as a will to refrain." This will to refrain is intrinsically related to "the idea of humility, the idea that man needs to defer to a higher will" and "the recognition of the supremacy of will" which, as Babbitt states, is "imperative in any wise view of life." Inasmuch as Newman would agree with this view, especially this deference to a higher will, he would disagree with Babbitt's claim that the "interest in the higher will and the power of veto it exercises over man's expansive desires is humanistic rather than religious," and the fact that he rejects "outer authority in favor of the immediate and experimental."[52] Newman would readily accept "the idea of humility" and this surrender to a higher will.

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Our human condition is to live in *shadows and images*, often in contradictions, and the distance between man and God is infinite. Man cannot overcome this distance by virtue of his cognition because God is the greatest mystery. The only way to approach God is to adopt an attitude of contrast: awe and reverence; fear and love. There are two classes of men who deny awe and reverence with regard to God, thinking that either Catholicism is too strict in its claims or that, owing to the sacrifice of atonement, they have already been forgiven all their transgressions. Now, if we consider God as infinite and all-perfect, nothing stands in comparison to Him and nothing is pure enough as to be His equal. First of all, we should not remove the idea of personality from our thinking about God. He is "a living and intelligent Governor."[53] And Newman delves into the primitive source of this want of reverence, which is not in words, but in reality. We read in his sermon: "all which shows that it is no question of words whether men have fear or not, but that there *is* a something they really have not, whatever name we give it."[54]

The claim that we should *realize* rather than merely *comprehend* is all too clear, when we consider the question of awe and reverence vis-à-vis God, as Newman saw it. Therefore, he explains that "if men do not fear, it is because they do not act as they would act, if they saw Him."[55] Put another way, they do not *realize* His presence. To have an adequate disposition, we need to realize

52 I. Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership*, 6.
53 See, *PPS*, 962.
54 *Ibid.*, 964.
55 *Ibid.*

the presence, not merely to understand the words. We should feel God's presence with our imagination, put ourselves in His presence, so that there is no distance between us and His all-penetrating sight. Naturally, this kind of contact surpasses conceptual communication, for these two beings are completely incommensurable. Even in the case of another person, when present, we qualify our words and are at pains to be considerate, for we do not wish to hurt him; and we can never know *everything* about the other person. This considerateness should be all the more powerful in the case of an All-seeing Being. The presence of fear is, in this case, co-equal to faith; to feel fear is to have faith.

Because Newman focuses on human acts, the role of imagination is always significant, one could say even it is of primary importance. How can we put ourselves in the presence of the future (as in hope) or in the presence of the past (as in memory) other than by way of imagination? I think he rightly observed that images affect us more effectively than words, just as practice affects us more than theory. We look forward to the future in hope, and we look backwards to the past in gratitude. And the only guiding principle, apart from imagination, is faith. For looking backwards, how can one gain advantage of all the past sequences and, what is more important, make sense of them? A person should stick to his own life and treat every portion of it as needed, and an opportunity to change, so that he enjoys his freedom without succumbing to deterministic fate or necessity. Only this particular person, in the temporal space between yesterday and today, can make sense of the two extremes a meaningful whole, walking the path of faith and being ready to changes. It must be added that they are not changes for changes' sake, but changes enlightened by the recognition of truth. Admittedly, many elements of the past may seem accidental and devoid of sense; the temptation of deterministic necessity then intrudes itself. We could resort to the utilitarian manner of calculating all the pros and cons of concrete moments of life, but the ending would certainly be no more effective and conclusive than the beginning.

Let us observe that the role of imagination is indeed mysterious, for it must be noted that when we use our imagination in the creation of some future states, we do not yet know them. Therefore, there is a discrepancy between what we have at our disposal and what we wish to perform. Now, how come that we call this new state inventive in relation to the previous one, if the only context that we have is the old state? And why do people accept something new as a creative invention, if they still do not know its relationship to the old context? At which moment does it happen that otherness starts being regarded

as a new and accepted form? Undoubtedly, imagination is accompanied by faith and moral prowess. It must be noted that imagination, for Newman, was the faculty of creating images, i.e. of visualizing realities. Imagination, then, enables us to *see* what words can only describe.

CHAPTER 4

Certitude or "I Know That I Know"

The noted twentieth-century American Quaker David E. Trueblood rightly observed that religious experience is cognitive and personal in character. And that those who are expected to report on it become equivocal and awkward in rendering into words what they have experienced. He points out that "it is not easy for men to tell others *what* they know, since language here becomes more inadequate than it ordinarily is, and poetry becomes inevitable, but this is not the important point." Trueblood then proceeds to say that religious experience "characteristically recorded is of the kind which we normally associate with persons," it "has about it, as aesthetic experience has, the augustness which we cannot expect contact with a mere 'thing' to inspire […], and most strikingly in the experience of Jesus, the relationship is consciously personal."[1] Such words are particularly appropriate for Newman's description of our experience of conscience. Trueblood must have read Newman, for he is quoting the *Apologia* in his paper.

There was much misunderstanding of Newman's intentions. Especially when he said that "England should be more superstitious." Obviously, he did not mean superstition to be a positive attitude as such. Rather, superstition was suggested as a riposte to the spirit of disbelief in anything that could not be proven in a learned manner. By way of analogy, we might say that when orthodox believers with their views, for instance, on the sacred character of life and indissolubility of marriage are accused of being backward, one might retort: "I wish we could have more such backwardness now." Of course, by saying this no-one is claiming that backwardness is a desirable attitude. Demanding "more superstition," in fact, is a rhetorical figure, when we on purpose exaggerate, using certain subversive declarations in order to obtain the opposite feeling. Having published his *History of the Arians*, Newman was accused of wishing to re-establish the Inquisition, but he simply sought to elicit the valuable elements of the past.

Newman used this language of strong expressions, bordering on insults, especially when he sought to effect indignation that might lead to a fundamental re-thinking. When writing about the critical situation of the Church of England in one of his Anglican sermons, he wrote: "I had rather the church

1 D. E. Trueblood, *The Evidential Value of Religious Experience*, 438, 439.

were levelled to the ground by a nation, really, honestly, and seriously, thinking they did God service in doing so [...], than that it should be upheld by a nation on the *mere* ground of maintaining property, for I think this is a much greater sin."[2] Who would be so naive or pusillanimous as to claim that Newman wanted to eliminate his Church? It would be absurd to maintain that he actually wanted to demolish the Church. He firmly believed that every act, even though it may pass as being committed with bad intentions, when done in sincerity is more worthy than an act done by the person having contrary intentions, that is, without the person's engagement, and therefore, ultimately, being unreal.

In this respect, Newman's attitude resembles Biblical radicalism. The following passages from the Old and New Testament alike come to our mind when we ponder these matters: "Because zeal for your house consumes me," and: "Zeal for your house will consume me."[3] Newman also uses blunt passages in his critical texts.

We often identify thinkers by certain well-known phrases which have become the heritage of generations. We may call them their "trademark." Socrates is credited with "know thyself," Augustine with "love and do what you will," Descartes with "I think, therefore I am." And Newman can be credited with the phrase "I know that I know." He formulated it in his *Grammar of Assent*. When writing about certitude, he observed the following:

> Certitude [...] is the perception of a truth with the perception that it is a truth, or the consciousness of knowing, as expressed in the phrase, 'I know that I know,' or 'I know that I know that I know,'—or simply 'I know;' for one reflex assertion of the mind about self sums up the series of self-consciousnesses without the need of any actual evolution of them.[4]

Let us note that the phrase "I know" is co-equal with "the consciousness of knowing," therefore, it is not only a linguistic expression, but, at the same time, a testimony: I say something and I feel what I am saying. The verb "to know," as has been pointed out, has two referents, the subject and the object, or, in other words, the agent and the contents. Thus, we have "I know what," "I know how," "I know why," and "I know that." Modernity focused on "I know what," on the contents of the mind, or on "I know how"—the technical competencies. Therefore, for empiricists, we are masters of our minds; they are composed of the ideas that come from experience or result from the making of the mind

2 *PPS*, 612.

3 Ps 69: 10; J 2: 17.

4 *GA*, 163.

(Locke). The culture of modernity can be called the culture of "the what" (concepts and definitions) or "the how" (instructions and procedures, the technical management of the world); Newman introduces the culture of "the that" (the existence of hidden/tacit/latent truths).

Newman's "I know that" reports on the state of the person. When I say "I know that I know," I testify to the exceptional unity of my person, of which I may not even be aware, let alone explicitly enumerate all the elements of this unity. The statement "I know that I know" is an existential declaration: I experience the whole of my being at one place and time, I speak from the innermost centre of my person as one integrated being. I have subordinated my emotions, or I am at one with my emotions. I am at one with myself and experience no dissociation of my identity. Obviously, we could say "I know that he is an excellent specialist," but in this case the sentence can just as well be reduced to "I know what," therefore it does not fall under the category of "I know that" from Newman's example.

It follows from the above considerations that the discrepancy under discussion consists in the following fact: I know *what* to do (I have the respective theoretical knowledge), I know *how* to do it (I have the respective technical instruction), but it has not dawned on me yet that I *should* do it, a mere theoretical knowledge is insufficient to inspire obligation. And this is the point Newman noted as the heritage of modern (enlightened) culture. He does not posit it like the Humean dilemma, although there are apparent similarities, i.e. he does not say that there is no transition from "is" to "ought," but simply shows the discrepancy, pointing at some ways out, namely, the examples of other persons (personation) and the impact of images. He posits that one may lack a complete knowledge of "what" and of "how," but the person knows "that" he should do it. Newman would, therefore, say that there is a transition from "is" to "ought," but it does not reside entirely in the theoretical knowledge of "what" or the technical management of "how." If theoretical knowledge and technical instruction on the part of "what" and "how" are found wanting, then faith and love on the part of "that" will remedy the deficiency and suggest the right decision. And even if theory and instruction are not wanting, they are not powerful enough to make us act. Such is Newman's reasoning in this practical matter, i.e. in the area of belief and morality. He rightly claims that a mere multiplication or enhancement of theoretical knowledge and technical instruction does not necessarily bring about the duty of "that."

The phrase "I know that I know" goes counter to the empiricist view. I know more than I can comprehend and, contrary to Locke's claim, there is nothing irrational in it. "To know" is greater in scope than "to comprehend." Anyone who hears this declaration tends to ask: what do you know? We ask this

question because we have a tendency to treat the contents of our minds solely as thematic, we have a tendency to thematize. In this manner "I know that I know" without any contents seems to be empty without thematization. But I deem this non-thematic character of the human mind as the most important of Newman's contributions to our understanding of the human person in acting. And this is also his way out of the dilemma of modernity, and his way to the Roman Catholic Church.

There are two fundamental moments in the rational (and moral) life of a human person: decision and action. Because of the intentional moment of each decision and the associated sense of responsibility, there is usually a temporal gap between decision and action. What comes in between is reflection. While reflection is natural and important, it can also distract a person from his or her actual action or even invalidate it. The best safeguard against such an outcome, especially when the action is right and expected, as Newman seems to suggest, is to keep decision and action as close as possible to one another. A right conscience, or a clear view of reality, makes this possible. Action is right and expected when one has learned the truth and is called upon to respond to it.

Certitude, the conscious report of which is "I know that I know," closes this gap between decision and action. Reflection increases the distance between our decision to act and action itself; the wider the distance, the longer the hesitation, and the greater incertitude. Newman's "I know that I know" does not allow any distance between the truth and my duty to realize it. Let us note in passing, that it is indeed fascinating that a nineteenth-century thinker who grew out of the Newtonian deterministic world, with its emphasis on the immutable rules governing the natural world, was to presage the space of probability so typical of our contemporary world, that is, of the world of quantum physics and of mystery. And in this world of probability, man is able to achieve certitude.

"I know that I know" symbolises the culmination of a long and arduous personal process, with its explicit and implicit moments, through which the person has passed and reached an endpoint, but cannot expose to objective analysis. Let us also note that the phrase "I know that I know" has a normative value, which is of utmost importance for personalists (such as Karol Wojtyła); in like manner, the recognition of truth (*I know*) has a normative character. This is not surprising, since we find things that require emulation rather than a detached view of reality. It is *I* who *know*; it is *I* who *have recognized* the truth. Moved, on the one hand, not by the theoretical reflections of others, but above all by their testimonies, their lived experience, and on the other by the solid dogmatic foundation of the Church, Newman arrives at his destination.

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In his *Grammar of Assent*, Newman analyzes the relationship between the contents of our minds and the consciousness thereof; and the discrepancy between knowledge (in its explicit form) and consciousness of this knowledge (in its implicit form). What determines the final decision must, therefore, be of a more subtle nature than the mere intellectual capacity for logical inference or the Kantian imperative to adhere to the most universal principle in action. He gives us an insight into how he understands this correspondence between two minds:

> Whether his mind will ever grow straight, whether I can do anything towards its becoming straight, whether he is not responsible, responsible to his Maker, for being mentally crooked, is another matter; still the fact remains, that, in any inquiry about things in the concrete, men differ from each other, not so much in the soundness of their reasoning as in the principles which govern its exercise, that those principles are of a personal character, that where there is no common measure of minds, there is no common measure of arguments, and that the validity of proof is determined, not by any scientific test, but by the illative sense.[5]

Then he refers to memory which is "a vast magazine of such dormant, but present and excitable ideas," yet we constantly seek to bring them to the conscious level, even though we should rather be "guided by an unconscious idea."[6] I understand by this that we always try to define the truth and render it in its explicit form. Meanwhile reason, for Newman, let us stress this point, is placed within the framework of the first principles, otherwise it is lost in a thicket of ratiocinations. Religion is more than our knowledge about the religious tenets, which is explicit, which is "I know what."

This quest for concrete knowledge, for certainty (rather than certitude) often ends in frustration. As Newman describes it in his fine rhetoric:

> Moreover, it is a question whether that strange and painful feeling of unreality, which religious men experience from time to time, when nothing seems true, or good, or right, or profitable, when Faith seems a name, and duty a mockery, and all endeavours to do right, absurd and hopeless, and all things forlorn and dreary, as if religion were wiped out from the world, may not be the direct effect of the temporary obscuration of some

5 *Ibid.*, 321.
6 *Ibid.*, 300, 301.

> master vision, which unconsciously supplies the mind with spiritual life and peace.[7]

Let us note that this "master vision" is not the mind's product, so it goes against the logic of empiricism. Nevertheless, it "supplies the mind with spiritual life and peace." Newman sought it, therefore it can be understood as coterminous or congenial to certitude. Certitude brings peace and serenity, i.e. spiritual life and peace. The conclusion seems obvious: it follows that we should rely on what is implicit, not invented by the mind.

Contrary to the empiricist view, Newman maintains that the ideas we have in our minds do not have to be present at the conscious level, as we have frequently emphasized it here. We may say, for instance, that every good deed leaves some invisible trace behind. It was already in his Anglican *University Sermons* that he developed his theory of developments, which, for him, was the most important theory. It was more important than the question of the infallibility of the Church, the individual, or the first ages. Put another way, the whole doctrine is nowhere to be found, for it is spread over the ages. Dogmas express the impressions of the Revealed Truth. They are explicit forms of some implicit influences. This explicit form, however, is not necessary for the "genuineness and perfection" of the implicit truth. Therefore, even simple people may be recipients of what they cannot explain, for the main purpose is to encourage them to a certain course of action rather than a certain mode of thinking. In his *University Sermons*, we read a relevant text that directly addresses the workings of what Newman called "unperceived impressions." Newman explains it again in his impeccable style:

> what is remarkable at first sight is this, that there is good reason for saying that the impression made upon the mind need not even be recognized by the parties possessing it. It is not proof that persons are not possessed, because they are not conscious, of an idea. Nothing is of more frequent occurrence, whether in things sensible or intellectual, than the existence of such unperceived impressions.[8]

They imperceptibly penetrate the interior of our minds, gradually turning us into believers, inasmuch as we ponder over, and respond to, them.

7 *Ibid.*, 301.
8 *Ibid.*, 300.

Again, we can see that there is an essential discrepancy between knowledge and the awareness of this knowledge. The unperceived sphere entails the implicit. Newman explains: "We see more of the next world than we knew we see. […] For the most part we have gained truth, and made progress from truth to truth, without knowing it."[9] Most of the content that makes up our knowledge is tacit, silent, and invisible to concepts. We have already discussed this crucial element of Newman's doctrine so succinctly encapsulated by the phrase "I know that I know." Such a person with a non-thematized mind has two ways of sanctioning the validity of his certitude: personal peace from within and visible testimony for others, but no intellectual means to report on the subject matter of this certitude. We might just as well say I do not know *what* I know, but I know *that* I know. Even in religious matters, we may honestly confess certain truths, but we only gradually learn to apprehend their true meaning, a situation which is no fault of ours. Put another way, we can say that we see and experience more than we can master. Therefore, Newman was always wary of hasty declarations without due time spent understanding them. We gradually wake to a knowledge of ourselves, to a real apprehension of what we are. We can say that Newman anticipated existential philosophy with his conception of non-thematized consciousness.

In this text we have the same elements we have already mentioned; the fact of being possessed by the truth rather than possessing it. Christianity is under development by inspiring people. Unlike in empiricism, consciousness of being in possession of an idea is not necessary. Additionally, the idea is never in its entirety in one mind as a well-defined concept; it is not a logical formula, but a living influence that takes concrete shape through various persons. They become witnesses to its vitality. During his sojourn in Sicily, as has already been said, Newman visited Catholic churches. The idea of a lost unity, of the Apostolical succession, of the Catholic rites being reflections of the primitive Church, might have crossed his mind. It did not effectuate an abrupt change in him, but stimulated him to embark on a thorough study of the origins of Christianity. Indeed, it was like an *unperceived impression*, a minute ruffle on the surface of a lake, which then, in time, penetrated the depths. We find here again the basic difference between the implicit aspects as set against the explicit. The British academic Derek Attridge rightly notes that "to experience something is to encounter or undergo it, to be exposed to and transformed by

9 *Ibid.*, 1240.

it, without necessarily registering it—or all of it—as an emotional, physical, or intellectual event."[10]

It must be noted that, by referring to *unperceived impressions*, Newman objected to the empiricists' claim that whatever there is in the human mind is always at the level of consciousness. The rational person is such that is *aware* of what this person has in his mind. In any case, according to Newman, this is the way that God manifests Himself to us. We receive various impressions, but often do not reflect upon them or do not realize them, do not apprehend what they are supposed to mean for us and how they should change our conduct.[11]

10 D. Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature*, London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2017, 26.

11 Cf. *PPS*, 1246.

CHAPTER 5

The Guidance of Conscience

Every careful reader of Newman must have already noticed that conscience is pivotal in his writings; all the elements of his doctrine we have touched upon converge in the notion of conscience. This follows from what has already been written here, because the notion of conscience is present throughout this text. Real assent, real words, certitude, belief—all of these terms converge like different rivers and are guided by a well-informed conscience. Newman's views of conscience penetrate and inspire the other areas of his activity. The way he understands the role of conscience in individual life was of key importance for his decisions. Conscience is referred to in his numerous papers. He treats it as a safeguard on the way to the truth. In his *University Sermons* he writes:

> Nay, so alert is the instinctive power of an educated conscience, that by some secret faculty, and without any intelligible reasoning process [...], it seems to detect moral truth wherever it lies hid, and feels a conviction of its own accuracy which bystanders cannot account for; and this especially in the case of Revealed Religion, which is one comprehensive moral fact.[1]

Let us observe that conscience in this passage is "some secret faculty" and it leads us "without any intelligible reasoning process." An educated conscience, i.e. well-informed, helps "to detect moral truth." Such a conscience is like an instrument of high definition. In this sense, it is coequal to natural inference and the Illative Sense. Conscience has rights because it has (transcendent) duties—as Newman put it—hence the judgments of a well-informed conscience are not mere private views.

How about those who commit some glaring crimes? Are they deprived of their consciences, or, rather, are their consciences mute although they are understood as faculties which speak? Newman explains the problem as follows:

> Their conscience still speaks, but having been trifled with, it does not tell truly; it equivocates, or is irregular. Whereas in him who is faithful to his own divinely implanted nature, the faint light of Truth dawns continually

1 *US*, 80.

> brighter; the shadows which at first troubled it, the unreal shapes created by its own twilight-state, vanish; what was as uncertain as mere feeling, and could not be distinguished from a fancy except by the commanding urgency of its voice, becomes fixed and definite, and strengthening into principle, it at the same time develops into habit.[2]

In order to portray the situation of a man who has trifled with his conscience, let us use a literary example. The classics are always helpful. The most impressive degeneration of conscience, the result of numerous rationalizations, we find in Shakespeare's *Tragedy of King Richard III*. What philosophers seek to describe in long theoretical passages, the writer's genius can put in a few words. We are in Richard III's tent. The bloody king has just woken up from his dream, in fact a nightmare, in which he was harassed by the ghost of his former ally, Buckingham. King Richard begins this penetrating soliloquy with himself:

> O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me! [...]
> Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
> What! do I fear myself? there's none else by:
> Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
> Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am:
> Then fly: what! from myself? Great reason why:
> Lest I revenge. What! myself upon myself?
> Alack! I love myself. Wherefore? for any good
> That I myself have done unto myself?
> O! no: alas! I rather hate myself
> For hateful deeds committed by myself.
> I am a villain. Yet I lie; I am not.
> Fool, of thyself speak well: fool, do not flatter.
> My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
> And every tongue brings in a several tale,
> And every tale condemns me for a villain.
> Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree:
> Murder, stern murder, in the dir'st degree;
> All several sins, all us'd in each degree,
> Throng to the bar, crying all, 'Guilty! guilty!'
> I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;
> And if I die, no soul will pity me:

2 *Ibid.*, 95.

> Nay, wherefore should they, since that I myself
> Find in myself no pity to myself?[3]

Indeed, few lines in world literature can compare to the above powerful description; it is like Newman's functional disarrangement in its starkest form. Psychology would call this description cognitive dissonance, a term we have already mentioned here. King Richard's rationalized conscience speaks "several thousand tongues," and each tongue brings a different story. Thus, we obtain an excellent picture of a disordered personality. The king loves himself and hates himself; he knows he is a liar, and denies being a liar. A person who has thus rationalized his conscience contradicts himself: praising himself for the same thing for which he is rebuking himself. When the two murderers from the play talk to each other about the murder with which they have been commissioned, one of them says: "Some certain dregs of conscience are yet within me."[4] And if we go back, we find in Act I, Scene II, yet another fascinating example of Shakespeare's genius of penetrating observation. Lady Anne has just learned that Gloucester (King Richard III) killed her husband, nevertheless, when she is offered a ring by the murderer, she accepts it, saying: "To take is not to give." What an excellent portrayal of conscience's rationalization in its practical application!

Richard III experiences cognitive dissonance, so he is trying to assuage this discrepancy between what he really thinks and feels, and what he is actually saying by an attempt at rationalization. Such may be human concrete dilemmas which can wreak havoc on one's personality. This is what Newman meant by the well-known phrase *shadows and images*. To use the Kantian idiom we could say that the transcendental 'I' is incapable of guiding the empirical "I," so that we could accede to Kantian formalism. Newman was interested in the empirical and concrete 'I', and that 'I' is capable of distancing himself from what is useful and expedient. For him, such a distance can be found in conscience understood as the voice of God. Therefore only on condition that it is well-informed and free from rationalized hypocrisy. Shakespeare brilliantly painted a picture of rationalized conscience in his tragedy. Richard is in despair because he cannot bear his empirical 'I', and at the same time he finds no respite in his conscience because he has worked hard to hush its voice. Paraphrasing Eliot's *Waste Land* (cited before), we might say: "between conscience and I falls the Shadow." That is why Richard ascribes his grievous and justified remorse to

3 W. Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of King Richard*, London: Henry Pordes, 1984, Act V, Scene III.
4 *Ibid*., Act I, Scene IV.

cowardice, which makes his case hopeless, for such a conscience ceases to be his guide. Of course, the most important thing here is the precondition that conscience must be obeyed from the start, not from the moment when various processes of self-delusion have already been set to work. And when we understand, as Newman did, that it is God Himself who thus speaks to man through his conscience, its voice is a personal invocation. This surrender is not Kantian subordination to the dictates of practical reason, for Christian God is not a postulate of practical reason, but a Person who demands obedience.

The issue of rationalization is extremely important; rationalization is destructive for conscience, and it renders the human being unreal. Bishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895–1979), in his book *Peace of Soul*, paints a beautiful and persuasive picture of what we are talking about here, where we read: "We often justify ourselves by saying that we *are* following our consciences, when we are only following our desires. […] We try to keep religion on a speculative basis in order to avoid moral reproaches on our conduct. We sit at the piano of life and insist that every note we strike is right—because we struck it."[5] This example shows clearly the distinction between subjectivity and subjectivism; Newman naturally focused on subjectivity when he wrote that we have to use ourselves, and he rejected subjectivism when he warned his readers against having their own way. Now, coming back to Sheen's illustration, striking the note is subjectivity, but claiming that it is the right note is subjectivism. What germinates in my individual action is all that matters—this is subjectivism; we are the authors of our own actions—this is subjectivity inherent in the reality of our persons.[6] Newman's "egotism is true modesty" equals with subjectivity, not with subjectivism.

Newman's focus on the person had nothing to do with individualism or subjectivism. Rather, it was his clear vision that freedom is not only given to us, but that we are called to fulfil it. This was also the personalistic position of John Paul II. As Newman beautifully put it in one of his parochial sermons, that the feelings of believers should "retire deep into their hearts and there live."[7] They should be living principles of their lives, not merely topics for enlightened discussions.

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5 F. J. Sheen, *Peace of Soul*, New York: Permabooks, 1954, 101.

6 See more on this in K. Wojtyła (John Paul II), *The Acting Person*, trans. by A. Potocki, Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979, 56–59.

7 *PPS*, 1232.

The most devastating blow that Newman inflicted on the usurpations of modernity under the guise of liberalism was his response to Peel's address on the occasion of the opening of the Tamworth Reading Room. This event became an opportunity for the promotion of scientific progress, a reason that, in itself, might sound innocent, but the intention of its proponents was to show this progress as something that could replace moral development, that could in itself become moral. In 1841, Newman published his radical refutation of the modern claims formulated by Lord Henry Brougham (1778–1868)[8] and Sir Robert Peel[9] (1788–1850). The general tone of their revelations and, to say the least, raptures boil down to offering enlightenment via the natural sciences. The physical science was supposed to be instrumental not only in broadening our knowledge about the world, which would be understandable, but also in improving our moral nature. As a consequence, mere intellectual knowledge and the accumulation of facts meant to be of a moral nature as well. Newman pitted his linguistic capacities against such claims in bursts of fine rhetoric. His pamphlet (which he submitted to the *Times*)is also an excellent encapsulation of his views in general. Let us look at some passages. First of all, Newman, paradoxically, calls Peel's message "so dark an oracle." This is paradoxical because Peel's address was supposed to be a very optimistic and enlightening address. At the same time, it expressed the dominant spirit of the nineteenth century, namely that material progress would bring about moral progress, which Newman thought to be a very naive expectation.

Newman puts it clearly that he is not afraid of the facts that may come from the world of science. He says it would "ill become" him if he were "afraid of truth of any kind, to blame those who pursue secular facts, by means of the reason which God has given them, to their logical conclusions: or to be angry with science, because religion is bound in duty to take cognizance in its teaching."[10] He is well aware of these various ways by which Christianity is being attacked. And he knows that many people are perplexed on account of that, but he does not criticize them, for he can also see that the picture of the opponent is hazy. Therefore, he states that "at the moment it is so difficult to say precisely what it is that is to be encountered and overthrown."[11] The opponent,

8 British statesman and Lord High Chancellor who played a prominent role in passing the 1832 Reform Act and 1833 Slavery Abolition Act.

9 British prime minister in the years 1834–1835 and 1841–1846; he was well-educated, the first Oxford man to take First Class Honours in both Classics and Mathematics; and the Dean of Christ Church, associated with the ruling class.

10 *Apo*., 176.

11 *Ibid.*

because of his varied nature, has not been defined. Newman knows the differences of minds and the various results they obtain in their investigations, some of which are not in accordance with the teaching of the Church. And, in his time, there were many of them that might have aroused uneasiness, for example the theory of evolution. He also shows a good command of the nature of science which develops by fits and starts. Hypotheses appear, some of which are mindboggling, but then they are refuted or accepted and translated into a theory. Meanwhile, some people might become unnecessarily upset, while hypotheses have remained hypotheses and have never become theories. We must remember, that Christianity, especially Catholicism, firmly believed in a harmony between faith and reason (*fides et ratio*). This means that we can *understand* the claims of *faith*; the two faculties supplement each other. The fact that Newman devoted so much time to historical studies is excellent evidence that he did not disregard reason.

Newman does not feel like standing up to the dangers from the field of science because it might look like a quixotic fight against phantoms. If an alleged theory is still at the stage of being a mere hypothesis, no one knows whether it will be transformed into a theory at all. The Catholic should rather be patient than alarmed or upset. His conduct shows clearly how collected and reasonable a person he was. And Newman surrenders to the authority of the Church in her principle of reserve, so that she should not act too rashly. Her position saved him, as he ascertains, from being a controversialist.

Let us go back to Peel and Brougham. In accordance with Aristotle, Newman points to the discrepancy between theory and practice, emphasizing that in the case of virtue it is practice that matters most; knowing duty is not the same as doing it. Newman opens his address to the *Times* (under the penname "Catholicus") with a brief characterization of Peel's message (which he doubts to be genuine):

> Education is the cultivation of the intellect and heart, and Useful Knowledge is the great instrument of education. It is the parent of virtue, the nurse of religion; it exalts man to his highest perfection, and is the sufficient scope of his most earnest exertions.[12]

And he continues further in his pamphlet:

12 *DA*, 215.

> To know is one thing, to do is another; the two things are altogether distinct. A man knows he should get up in the morning,—he lies a-bed; he knows he should not lose his temper, yet he cannot keep it [...], the consciousness of a duty is not all one with the performance of it. There are, then, large families of instances, to say the least, in which men may become wiser, without becoming better.
>
> Mr. Bentham would answer, that the knowledge which carries virtue along with it, is the knowledge how to take care of number one—a clear appreciation of what is pleasurable, what painful, and what promotes the one and prevents the other. An uneducated man is ever mistaking his own interest, and standing in the way of his own true enjoyments. Useful Knowledge is that which tends to make us useful to ourselves.

Then Newman proceeds to describe the human mind:

> Now, without using exact theological language, we may surely take it for granted, from the experience of facts, that the human mind is at best in a very unformed or disordered state; passions and conscience, likings and reason, conflicting,—might rising against right, with the prospect of things getting worse. [...] Not a victory of the mind over itself—not the supremacy of the law—not the reduction of the rebels—not the unity of our complex nature—not an harmonizing of the chaos—but the mere lulling of the passions to rest by turning the course of thought; not a change of character, but a mere removal of temptation.

Such being the case with the human mind, it is futile to employ it in serious matters which should be preceded by respective preparation. It is like, to use a sporting metaphor, encouraging an unprepared man to take part in a marathon. Therefore Newman says that Sir Robert Peel "makes no pretence of subduing the giant nature, in which we were born, of smiting the loins of the domestic enemies of our peace, of overthrowing passion and fortifying reason; he does but offer to bribe the foe for the nonce with gifts which will avail for that purpose just so long as they *will* avail, and no longer. [...] They will countenance, with his high authority, what in one form or other is a chief error of the day, in very distinct schools of opinion,—that our true excellence comes not from within, but from without; not wrought out through personal struggles and sufferings, but following upon a passive exposure to influences over which we have no control.

Now, independent of all other considerations, the great difference, in a practical light, between the object of Christianity and of heathen belief, is

this—that glory, science, knowledge, and whatever other fine names we use, never healed a wounded heart, nor changed a sinful one; but the Divine Word is with power. […] Knowledge is not 'power' […]. You must go to a higher source for renovation of the heart and of the will. […] Christianity, and nothing short of it, must be made the element and principle of all education. […] But if in education we begin with nature before grace, with evidences before faith, with science before conscience, with poetry before practice, we shall be doing much the same as if we were to indulge the appetites and passions, and turn a deaf ear to the reason."

Theoretical knowledge is an insufficient and even inadequate tool in making human beings better, we need to practice a life of faith. There is no clear and simple transition from what you *know* to what you *ought* to do. Virtue, as has often been stressed here, is not primarily about a theory of principles, but seeks to make us practice these principles. Newman continues his critical remarks:

> The ascendancy of Faith may be impracticable, but the reign of Knowledge is incomprehensible. […] Science gives us the grounds or premises from which religious truths are to be inferred; but it does not set about inferring them, much less does it reach the inference;—that is not its province. It brings before us phenomena, and it leaves us, if we will, to call them works of design, wisdom, or benevolence; and further still, if we will, to proceed to confess an Intelligent Creator. We have to take its facts, and to give them a meaning, and to draw our own conclusions from them. First comes Knowledge, then a view, then reasoning, and then belief. This is why Science has so little of a religious tendency; deductions have no power of persuasion. The heart is commonly reached, not through the reason, but through the imagination, by means of direct impressions, by the testimony of facts and events, by history, by description. Persons influence us, voices melt us, looks subdue us, deeds inflame us. Many a man will live and die upon a dogma; no man will be a martyr for a conclusion. A conclusion is but an opinion; it is not a thing which *is*, but which *we are 'certain about'*. […] I have no confidence, then, in philosophers who cannot help being religious, and are Christians by implication. They sit at home, and reach forward to distances which astonish us; but they hit without grasping, and are sometimes as confident about shadows as about realities. […] Logicians are more set upon concluding rightly, than on right conclusions. […] To most men argument makes the point in hand only more doubtful, and considerably less impressive. After

> all, man is *not* a reasoning animal; he is a seeing, feeling, contemplating, acting animal. He is influenced by what is direct and precise.

Newman finishes with his emphasis on action whose origin is faith:

> Life is not long enough for a religion of inferences; we shall never have done beginning, if we determine to begin with proof. We shall ever be laying our foundations; we shall turn theology into evidences, and divines into textuaries. We shall never get at our first principles. Resolve to believe nothing, and you must prove your proofs and analyze your elements, sinking further and further [...] Life is for action. If we insist on proofs for everything, we shall never come to action: to act you must assume, and that assumption is faith.[13]

This passage is a precise exposition of Newman's views, which he will later develop in his *Grammar of Assent*. I called it an encapsulation of his position, indeed, a résumé of the most important points of his personalism; we could even say that the above words compose the heart of Newman's doctrine, that they are his trademark. Let us focus on selected elements to bring home to mind their significance. His stylistic capacities are indeed at their best. To begin with, Newman is against ethical intellectualism—the untenable view we know from the school of Socrates—for he states that knowledge is not virtue. The Greek philosopher maintained that human vice resulted from human ignorance. Newman follows Horatio and St. Paul[14] in pointing out the discrepancy between moral knowledge and moral behaviour, i.e. man "*knows* he should not lose his temper, yet he *cannot* keep it." He emphasises the importance of imagination (images) and examples as worthy incentives for personal conduct. Virtue does not arise where there are no temptations, but where temptations are overcome; we can put this even more bluntly, following Aristotle's argumentation: the more temptations, the better, for virtue takes shape through adversity; besides, training the intellect is not the same as training the will. Brougham and Peel, therefore, propose a stoic rather than Christian agenda with a strong positivist and scientific background. Unruly nature, so argues Newman, should be trammelled and placed under control, not soothed by

13 *Ibid.*, 262–295. The pamphlet was then published in a volume of collected texts entitled *Discussions and Arguments*.

14 I am referring to the famous quote from his Letter to the Romans: "What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate. [...] For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want." (Rom 7:15, 19).

diversions. The remedy they propose leads to naturalism and the indulgence of all kinds of inclinations in the naive hope that they express freedom, while they truly manifest only purposeless licence. Of course, the spirit of Rousseau can be deduced from the authors of the Tamworth address, yet it runs counter to the spirit of the Gospel, for the French philosopher held that the good man should rather reform society than himself; the message of the Gospel goes in the opposite direction, it is man who should first focus on his own repentance and conversion. Rousseau's aim was to create ideal conditions, then the good man will arise like a phoenix from the ashes.

It is interesting to note that at that time Newman was against Peel because Peel was in favour of Catholic emancipation; the latter became part of the liberal programme. The prime minister regarded it as a matter of expediency; as Zeno noted, "he preferred emancipation to an Irish civil war."[15] Politicians, for pragmatic reasons, often prefer political motives to moral ones, and mere political motives are usually supposed to gratify some calculated purpose. Newman in general was very critical about motives resulting from expediency. Moreover, as we have said, he "considered Catholic emancipation a fruit of Liberalism."[16] These two facts, paradoxically, emphasise Newman's value of the purity of motives. He abhorred double-dealing and political calculation. And, let us add, as he had not acquired the right grounds to accept it, he rejected the decision.

Newman criticises Bentham's utilitarianism with its dominant interpretation of human nature ruled by two masters: pleasure and pain. He describes the "disordered state" or, as we have already defined it here, the functional disarrangement of the human mind, hence a mere calculation of pros and cons will not suffice to arrive at the right conclusion. In other words, the human mind is not a ready-made mechanism for correct thinking in practical matters, such as religion and morality, e.g. man cannot arrive at the right conclusions in the matter of virtue if he does not seek to be virtuous. Therefore he will resort to inferior motives. Especially if we remember that which is useful is frequently not virtuous, at least these two objectives do not come together. The mind is *part and parcel* of the whole human being, and it should strive at making the human being an integral creature. As such, it cannot be disconnected or isolated from the rest, i.e. the intellect cannot be disconnected from morality. Horatio and St. Paul noticed this fundamental cleavage in human nature that introduces conflicts. Such is the human condition, the mind no

15 Zeno, *John Henry Newman and his Inner Life*, 53.
16 *Ibid.*

longer lends itself easily to argument. As useful as science may seem, the mere accumulation of scientific facts will not contribute to moral improvement. We should resort to a more diversified spectrum of influences, not only by means of words, but, above all, by images and examples in which "deeds inflame us."[17] We have already focused on this crucial aspect of Newman's personalism. The human being is so complex that a mere acquisition of scientific knowledge is inadequate to satisfy all aspects of personal existence.

We must begin from principles, not conclusions, and these principles should be accepted on faith. The sphere of religion and morality is not primarily an intellectual activity. Demanding evidence leads to an unending process of analyzing, going backward, and, ultimately, scepticism. We assume faith without waiting for proof. Newman's conclusion does not mean, as I have already noted, that he was an anti-intellectual, just as he was an anti-naturalist. He simply took man as a real creature, neither invented nor imagined, therefore he could not agree that theoretical knowledge is sufficient for his right conduct. Newman rightly observes that "deductions have no power of persuasion" that would lead to action.

Only a person can translate a formal truth into a living example. Man possesses an immediate apprehension of the unity and totality of his "I," whereas the sciences divide the human beings into various aspects and examine them from their separate points of view. But the person grasps his being as a whole. The person grasps the unity of this being in an internal experience; it is not a successive enumeration of the individual parts of one's being, but an intuitive grasp of the whole. Individual sciences can, and do, study numerous aspects of the person, but they cannot provide an overall system of the whole being. Sciences cannot, nor are they interested in, for instance, the explanation of the origin and ultimate end of human life, the definition of man's ultimate destiny or the profound sense of his life. This is a task for philosophy and religion. If the sciences seek to do so, they fall into contradictions.

17 The image of deeds which inflame to emulation evoke the atmosphere of the medieval inhabitants of the Anglo-Saxon world. We could say that Newman's *method of personation* was at work among those gathered in the halls around their lord. Then the bard would sing edifying stories about heroic deeds. It will suffice to mention the most classic example of the heroic Beowulf, who fought against the evil monster Grendel, a story which most probably the Anglo-Saxons borrowed from some Germanic legends. I am sure it was not only the mead they drank from their cups that inflamed them, but the examples of disinterested sacrifice, loyalty, and solidarity that made them wish to follow suit. Christian missionaries could easily translate such stories into religious exemplars of the eternal struggle against the devil. The listeners resonated with the trembling voice of the *scop*, their hearts melted and opened.

Newman criticizes the naturalistic approach, expressed by Brougham's and Peel's admiration for human accomplishments, which, supposedly, is to bring forth a religious attitude. And rightly so, he concludes, neither admiration for the wonders of nature nor human artefacts held in high esteem are capable of evoking religious feelings or leading to the expected moral conduct. Newman ridicules such naive naturalistic (and positivist) claims, writing that their authors' hope of evoking such feelings might just as well be compared to someone who would like to "stay [his] hunger with corn grown in Jupiter, and warm [himself] by the Moon." The belief in the religiously imbued veneration of science reminds us of the American Transcendentalists who, in their turn, had great reverence for the sanctuaries of the woods, and believed that intimacy with nature could cause moral improvement. In his comments on Newman's response to naturalists and proponents of scientism, Sheridan Gilley rightly observes that the wonders of nature may "confirm faith, not to create it."[18] Such an after-confirmation of faith may, for instance, strengthen one of Aquinas' ways of proving the existence of God, namely the way from design. I do not agree with Gilley that Newman underestimated the positive contribution of applied sciences to the sum of human happiness. It is true that they do contribute, but we should not forget their destructive effects as well; generally speaking, the total balance of pros and cons is never a simple matter. Newman had no doubts about their positive contribution to the facilitation of human life, but was simply criticising not so much the short-sighted view of devotees who saw in science not only more than it could give, but what it could never give.

Let us leave such considerations aside. The only thing that I would like to stress is Newman's realism. He did appreciate the positive fruits of scientific endeavours, but opposed an unqualified admiration for their advantageous effects in *all* spheres of human life. And he vehemently protested against replacing religion with science, and ridiculed the simplistic belief in the moral prowess of science. Newman's reaction then to Brougham's and Peel's statements was not his evaluation of the sciences as such (he himself was interested in their research, especially in mathematics), but rather a critique of the two gentlemen's idolizing attitude. And, last but not least, Newman, despite the climate of romanticism, would never accept flight from the present; the present, be it so unwelcome in its complexity, is always a task for the concrete human being.

18 S. Gilley, *Newman and his Age*, 197.

We find his realistic disavowal of revolutionary outbursts and subversive attempts, so typical of his age, in his *Sermons*:

> From considerations such as the foregoing, it appears that exercises of Reason are either external, or at least only ministrative, to religious inquiry and knowledge: accidental to them, not of their essence; useful in their place, but not necessary. But in order to obtain further illustrations, and a view of the importance of the doctrine which I would advocate, let us proceed to apply it to the circumstances of the present times. Here, first, in finding fault with the times, it is right to disclaim all intention of complaining of them. To murmur and rail at the state of things under which we find ourselves, and to prefer a former state, is not merely indecorous, it is absolutely unmeaning. We are ourselves necessary parts of the existing system, out of which we have individually grown into being, into our actual position in society. Depending, therefore, on the times as a condition of existence, in wishing for other times we are, in fact, wishing we had never been born. Moreover, it is ungrateful to a state of society, from which we daily enjoy so many benefits, to rail against it. Yet there is nothing unbecoming, unmeaning, or ungrateful in pointing its faults and wishing them away.[19]

Amid the utopian dreams of socialists and communists, so popular in the nineteenth century, Newman's voice sounded reasonable. Note, too, that in writing this he was coming to terms with his Anglican position, as if to say that this was his starting point, his subsequent development, so that it would be pointless and fruitless to complain about or reject it. He might as well renounce his life. An attitude such as this perfectly shows that, for Newman, his individual life was not so much a burden, but a task. It must be added that the present is not the last resort, but it unveils a more profound sense endowed on it by the Creator. In like manner, man, contrary to Hegel's view, looks to the otherworldliness from his present. Unfortunately, however, such statements may, at most, point to a "Divine Intelligence" or a "great architect of nature," in themselves descriptive terms in keeping with the deistic approach, but they will not refer us to the "Moral Governor," the belief vital for theism. And we need to remember one important thing: Newman never thought about religion as a political programme. Therefore, when he is writing about Anglicanism and its slide into secularist tendencies, he only wishes to restore its religious and dogmatic

19 *US*, 80–81.

strength, not its political position. As long as the High Church retained, or at least sought to retain, its place as a religious body, the situation was correct. But when it was attracted to a body of comprehensive views, i.e. the latitudinarian position, an openness to liberal modifications in theology, then the result was destructive for the Church as a spiritual body. I understand Newman's reserve toward some overall changes as his restraint and disbelief in social action; rather, he propounded a belief in the personal influence of a converted person. A person living in the unity of his whole being is like a living truth emanating with its healing fluids. And it is not only a matter of better knowledge, but a question of the right disposition of the heart on the one hand, and the constant infusion of the revealed word on the other. The revealed word, however, cannot bring forth its beneficial effects, for that would be deterministic and contrary to human efficiency, without a voluntary response (although not necessarily a conscious one) on the part of the receiver. By "conscious" I mean capable of explaining why he or she has chosen one way rather than another.

Let me explain what is meant here. By doing the right thing, I open myself to the influence of the religious Truth even without being aware of it. We should repeat here what has already been said, namely Newman's precaution against the intrusions of an unchecked intellect or the influence of "unconscious holiness." It is a consequence of the empiricist approach that the intellect seeks to have all of its ideas under control. Ultimately, it is open only to its own immanent logic or to the universal and closed to that which transcends its comprehension. Such are the personal underpinnings of the person's acceptance of truth. Such were Newman's attempts to debunk the theories of naturalism, utilitarianism, and scientism.

The only thing that worried him was that such views supported a nondenominational Christianity, i.e. they undermined the dogmatic, or, in other words, the doctrinal foundation of Christianity. Now, if Christianity is only a theory which hoards numerous private opinions, without any doctrine or system, it ceases to be a religion, but rather resembles a club to which anyone can have an access or leave at will; such a religion has no claims to universal truths about human nature, human life, or human destiny. It is true that Christianity may help support social order or attend to social cohesion. As positive as such a purpose may be, it is not Christianity's main goal, for that goal ultimately transcends all mundane and expedient prospects. Newman's tenacity at perceiving Christianity as a doctrine independent of a political body's aspirations holds good.

PART 2

Historical Studies

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Introduction to Part 2

The second pillar of Newman's intellectual and spiritual quest was historical research. He researched on his Church's past not as an uninvolved observer, but as a *living intelligence* with a sincere commitment to personal knowledge of the truth. He did not want to make hasty decisions, but to mature his own response. In his historical studies, we can also see his personal system in action: real assent, real words, method of personation, certitude and conscience.

CHAPTER 6

The Church of England and the Church of Rome

We have discussed so far the main tenets of Newman's personalism, i.e. his epistemology, grammar of assent, conscience. Now let us look at his historical studies. Personalism and history were the two lungs with which he breathed and followed to his ultimate goal.

How can we discriminate between two bodies which lay claim to be the true teachers? And Newman meant here the Church of England and the Church of Rome. It is indeed interesting that he writes, still before his conversion (e.g. in 1841), that "we must conclude that Providence foresaw that the difference between them would never be so great as to require of us to leave the one for the other."[1] Despite the fact that *the difference was apparently not so great*, Newman had not yet decided to leave the Church of England. The time span between 1841 and 1845, the year of his conversion, however, is very short. This corroborates his belief that human life is dynamic and likely to change. We can interpret the above words as follows: his belief that "Providence foresaw" this little difference between the two Churches was only theoretical and notional, the assent he always thought the weakest; perhaps the fact that they seemed to have been so close, paradoxically made the decision the more difficult. Someone might ask: why should I join the other Church, if we are so similar? Now, when it came to pass that he was actually confronted with the final decision, which agreed with the judgment of his conscience—whose sanctions are never theoretical and general, but always concrete—he could do nothing but to submit to this sanction. Certainly, some people may call his attitude procrastination, but I would like to say his behaviour was in accordance with his wish to be real, i.e. not to make any hasty decisions before he felt sure that they came from his inner belief.

How can we discriminate between the true teacher and the false one? It seems that the true teacher comes in the name of God, and the false teacher comes in his own name. As simple as this conclusion reads, we may still be justified in our doubts as to who is who. Our situation at present appears to be hopeless, taking into consideration that so many messages circulate in both our real world and our virtual world. In Newman's times, the main centre of news dissemination was the press. Nowadays, we are bombarded with millions

1 *ESS*., II, 358.

of messages from the press, the mass media, and the Internet, practically without any chance to check the trustworthiness of the source. Various scandals we learn about make matters worse. Nor does it facilitate our choice when we consider the fact that some of the incriminating charges have proven to be trumped-up. We seem to be at a loss, without any test to distinguish between the true prophets and the false ones; in other words, it is a question of authority. Writing about the Church of England and the Church of Rome, Newman states that "[t]his parallel is not happier than the former, for a test was to distinguish between them, which does not decide between the Church of Rome and ourselves. This test is the divine accomplishment of the prophet's message, or the divine blessing upon his teaching, or the eventual success of his work, as it may be variously stated; a test under which neither Church, Rome or Anglican, will fail, and neither is eminently the foremost. Each Church has had to endure trial, each has overcome it; each has triumphed over enemies, each has had continued signs of the divine favour upon it."[2]

We must remember that the author of these words is not trying to settle the matter in some general terms, but is trying to solve it for himself. He notes that even at the beginning of Christianity there were differences among its teachers; he is well aware that there must be a choice, and this choice must appeal to this concrete person. If we are exposed to different teachers and remain under their influence, we naturally may be overlaid with their own individual errors. Indeed this is a very grave dilemma, for if we are encouraged to find teachers and act in accordance with their teachings, what shall we do when their teaching is erroneous? Now that we have decided it may be wrong to think for ourselves and extol independence, and have found false teachers, there seems to be no way out.

And in 1841 Newman still believed, as was mentioned before, that there was not much difference between the Church of England and the Church of Rome; therefore, schisms were not only inexpedient, but they were also illogical. In like manner, although there were differences between St. Peter and St. Paul in the primitive Church, joining the one and rejecting the other would have merely amounted to party feelings and interests; choices superimposed on such motives can never be indicative of a true Christian spirit. Therefore the author concludes that it is not

> our duty to leave our place and join them [the Church of Rome];—nothing would be gained by so unnecessary a step;—but our duty is, remaining

2 *Ibid.*, 359.

> where we are, to recognize in our own Church, not an establishment, not a party, not a mere Protestant denomination, but the Holy Church Catholic which the traditions of men have partially obscured,—to rid it of these traditions, to try to soften bitterness and animosity of feeling, and to repress party spirit and promote peace as much as in us lies.[3]

The reader of the above words may sense a certain undertone of hesitation running beneath the actual verbal formulations. I think I should repeat here what I have already written previously, namely, that Newman is trying to muster his notional inferences on what he otherwise is tacitly getting ready to give his real assent to, and to explain it away. It is still not the right moment and, as he frequently admits, to say more than one feels is a sure sign of unreality, and he shuns being unreal. Hence, the author of *Apologia* does not find sufficient reasons for his private judgment, concluding:

> We may believe that our own Church has certain imperfections; the Church of Rome certain corruptions: such a belief has no tendency to lead us to any determinate judgment as to which of the two on the whole is the better, or to induce or warrant us to leave the one communion for the other.[4]

It seems clear that his conclusion here can be read as follows: a mere private judgment is helpless in making someone realize and act according to the truth they have recognized; a mere calculation of pros and cons will not give a satisfactory conclusion. Intellectual cognition is not coequal to a real comprehension which leads to respective action. Such dilemmas, as is typical of him, provide room for a display of his literary talent and rhetorical pursuits, writing "that it must soil our fingers to touch any other Church whatever upon the earth, in north, east, or south."[5] There is yet one more argument that can be used in favour of the Church of Rome and against the Church of England, namely that the latter is in "the arms of the State," while the former is Catholic. Newman reduces the charge against the Churches into two objects: the Church of England is called schismatical and the Church of Rome idolatrous, the charges traditionally levelled against the two Churches in his times. His implication is, as Gilley notes, "that Rome and England were equally Churches,

3 *Ibid*., 361.
4 *Ibid*., 363.
5 *Ibid*.

though equally defective; and if Rome had corrupted the ancient Church, the Church of England now fell short of a full Catholicism."[6]

Now meandering between the dangerous rocks of schism and idolatry the question arose: where is the truth? Which community was true? Indeed, Newman found it difficult to decide on the basis of concurring and converging probabilities. Yet, buttressed by his historical studies and unprejudiced studies, he succeeded in this personal task.

6 S. Gilley, *Newman and his Age*, 185.

CHAPTER 7

The Church Fathers

In the 1830s, Newman received a present of thirty-six volumes of Church Fathers from his friends and pupils.[1] This event coincided with the fact that it took place at the time when he was deprived of tutorship, for Provost Hawkins had assigned no students to his classes. This situation, as usually happened in Newman's life, turned out to be a blessing for him, and to be more precise, a blessing in disguise; that is why he was always open to any unexpected events he had not planned. Having no classes, he had plenty of time to study the history of the united Church. This gift of books appeared to be a milestone on the path of his individual development. From the moment he embarked on reading the Fathers, he virtually became a Patristic scholar, one who sought to present a lively picture of early Christianity and prove that the Church of England was a continuation of this tradition. Here, let us observe that, as important as Froude was, he was not powerfully drawn to the Primitive Church, where Newman sought a solution to the discontinued unity.

Having received the Fathers in 1832, he set about reading them. In his studies of the primitive Church, he concentrated on the Council of Nicaea (325) because he was commissioned with writing a history of the Principal Councils for a Theological Library. As it came out, the text was published under the title *The Arians of the Fourth Century*. In fact, the Council of Nicaea covered only about twenty pages. It was then, but Newman could not exactly identify the moment, that he "first learnt to consider that Antiquity was the true exponent of the doctrines of Christianity and the basis of the Church of England."[2] He was particularly attracted by "the great Church of Alexandria," and was literally "carried away" by the philosophy of Clement and Origen. And here, again, the musical metaphor came to his mind, just like when he discovered Keble and sought to describe the latter's influence. The teaching of Clement and Origen appeared to be "like music to my inward ear, as if the response to ideas, which, with little external to encourage them, I had cherished so long. These were based on the mystical or sacramental principle, and spoke of the various Economies and Dispensations of the Eternal."[3]

1 See J. R. Vélez, *Passion for Truth. The Life of John Henry Newman*, Charlotte: TAN Books, 2019, 129.

2 *Apo.*, 17.

3 *Ibid.*, 18.

The phrase "inward ear" naturally denotes the reader's innermost self, or his heart in its spiritual meaning. Is it not an excellent corroboration of what we have already said about the intrinsic liaison between probabilities and man's personal response? There was something in the philosophy of the Fathers congenial to Newman that converged at the right moment, giving rise to his positive reaction. Such elements cannot be left unnoticed, especially when we analyse the philosophy of a person who devoted so much space to the tacit understanding and implicit contents of the human mind. These are the moments when philosophy and art go hand in hand, an outcome which is no surprise in the case of a mind of such versatility that sought to express itself through various styles. This absorption of a message is very close to what Newman called *realization*, and he explains it in his Anglican sermon where he writes that we should "lay the foundation of our religious profession in the ground of our inner man."[4]

I would like to call such moments in this book "Newmanian moments of revelation." In the elucidation of his thought he was convinced that the human mind is exposed to so many idiosyncratic influences that it would be impossible to track them all down and define them. As fleeting and ephemeral as they are, nevertheless they are capable of exerting a powerful influence and put the stamp of authority on a mind open to them. The point is that they should be real, not only notional.

Just as in the case of an individual life, certain elements are simply preparation for something. The pagan Greek poets and sages could also be called prophets, for they announced more than they could understand, or at least they were people endowed with remarkable intuition. Indeed, we often interpret Plato's philosophy as having proto-Christian contents, a preparation for the Gospel. They are "the manifestation to our senses of realities greater than itself."[5] I understand this as follows: nature being a parable and the Scriptures an allegory—as Newman himself interpreted them—we are prepared through literary images that appeal to our senses for some more magnificent apprehensions. They constitute but "the outward framework," which "had never been intended to last"; it only "concealed yet suggested the Living Truth." The whole process had been done "by rule and measure [...], first one disclosure and then another, till the whole evangelical doctrine was brought into full manifestation."[6]

4 See *PPS*, 1030.
5 *Ibid.*, 18.
6 *Ibid.*

This state of knowing more than we can say is a very important element in Newman's epistemology, as we have already observed in Part 1. We may perhaps call it "the transcendent moment," for one transcends one's experience. Some trace Newman's inspirations to Hume, for the latter defined cognition as transcending, and he undermined the role of reason in morality. At the same time, we know that Newman was a lonely scholar who walked his independent paths in which theological inspirations mingled with philosophical insights. It would be better to say that it was his own analysis of human experience that had brought him to such conclusions, namely that we know more than we can report. Literature, again, provides a very apt example. In John Bunyan's classic work, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, we find a conversation between Christian and Pliable. Christian had set out on a journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, and Pliable decided to join him. Then Pliable enquires of Christian about the exact purpose of their journey and what kind of joy they were supposed to find in their destination, and Christian responds: "I can better understand them with my mind than speak of them with my tongue."[7]

We have here an illuminating example of an analogy that Newman learnt from Joseph Butler. When we look at the history of mankind, we observe the same cumbersome and long-drawn-out process of discoveries and inventions in science. People discover new laws and principles which govern nature via painstaking trials, failures and triumphs. The truth is never revealed at once, but in due season. It is also interesting to note that this revelation is not a deterministic occurrence, so that each recipient should freely assent to it. This season is in turn congenial to the preparation of the respective individuals. The complete divine interpretation of the visible world is yet to be seen in the future, therefore the visible Church under the process of development, with all her failures and triumphs, will remain to the end of the world. We shall never learn here the whole truth about our existence and its ultimate goal. The human mind is, for the time being, unable to understand it. Newman acknowledges the fact that the contents he learnt while reading the Fathers had already been brought home to him when he was reading Butler and Keble. He had simply found yet another confirmation of his prior gentle inspirations.

Newman's general cognitive preference is always the Personal over the Abstract. Such being his approach, the question arises: why have other persons not arrived at the same conclusions, given the same evidence? This question has actually been already asked here before. We may surmise that Newman's response would run as follows: I do not know, I can only speak for myself.

7 J. Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, London: Collins Classics, 2013, 11–12.

Have all the parts of the matter under analysis been taken into consideration? Have they received the same amount of attention? Has the investigation been impartial? We shall never learn the answers, for it is natural that in the area of practical philosophy each person must give such answers individually, but it is a long and arduous process.

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As we understand it, the fact that the Roman Church was recognised by Anglicans as being in schism determined that she should not be joined. In any case, both Churches were considered imperfect. Newman concludes:

> It is then a Note of the Christian Church, as decisive as any, that she is not idolatrous; and any semblance of idolatrous worship in the Church of Rome as plainly dissuades a man of Catholic feelings from her communion, as the taint of a Protestant or schismatical spirit in our communion may tempt him to depart from us. This is the Via Media which we would maintain; and thus without judging Rome on the one hand, or acquiescing in our own state on the other, we may use what we see, as a providential intimation to *us*, not to quit what is bad for what may be worse, but to learn resignation to what we inherit, nor seek to escape into a happier state by suicide.[8]

The basis of the doctrine of the *Via Media* was not "a servile imitation of the past, but such a reproduction of it as is really new, while it is old."[9] As he decides to abide by the Via Media, i.e. to remain in the Church of England, although it is labelled schismatical, he abstains from following all of the Fathers. Now, this is much to the logic of private judgment that one can choose which Father or prophet to imitate. Newman agrees that they are teachers, "but not our confessors or casuists; they are the prophets of great truths, not the spiritual directors of individuals."[10] These matters concern conduct, and in the area of conduct each has to decide for himself. At this stage of Newman's development he is still in doubt that the questions decided in the fourth century could be adapted to the nineteenth.

We must constantly bear in mind that Newman was also an heir to modernity which ushered the independent subject with his right to private judgment

8 *ESS.*, II, 370.
9 *Apo.*, 68.
10 *ESS.*, II, 371.

onto the stage. Weighing all the pros and cons of the two institutions, he had apparently realized that, facing schism and idolatry, private judgment is safer on the grounds of schism than idolatry. Sticking to our artistic metaphor, i.e. viewing life as a work of art, his own life was like a huge painting. The canvas was only partly unveiled. Then, gradually, further portions were unveiled for him to be filled in with his own colours. Thinking from the position of modernity, Newman still firmly believed that all the elements of judgment should be explicit, but when he realized that he himself was tending to go in the direction he had not premeditated, he stood in awe before his own life. And in line with what we have said before, he might have believed that it was safer for him to honestly remain in erroneous schism than give in to idolatry for reasons he could not yet persuade himself of.

In line with the modern approach, Newman is trying to defend the concept of private judgment, but his judgment turns into a personal response, not a mere intellectual weighing of arguments. It is indeed fascinating to observe this process of personal transformation in the course of which private judgment fades away and recedes, or is redefined and succumbs to the voice of conscience. Judgment, as the fruit of reason, itself becomes more complex when it gradually dawns on Newman that more vital decisions emerge from the "infinite abyss of existence" of his person, an abyss that is ineffable, from the tacit depth produced by the implicit accumulation of probabilities, from unperceived impressions rather than by explicit (clear and distinct) concepts. These probabilities converge and create a powerful vision that appeals to this particular person. The vision that emerges is not deterministic, so that individual freedom is still respected. It attracts the concrete person with its enticing and hidden power. The implicit elements of human personality are hoarded throughout human life; therefore, we observe an almost miraculous, for it is difficult to account for it, convergence of the power of the truth.

It was from his own experience that he apprehended life not as a conceptual scheme, but as a living development in which the agent must be open to various influences and signs. The deistic position, in which the individual creates his or her conceptual deposit, had proved inadequate in bringing man to a truth that transcends human understanding. If we consider the human being not as the Lockean punctual self—reduced to the transitory moment of awareness—but as a history, it is from the depths of this history that we speak and evaluate the matters at hand, no wonder that we find it difficult to really assent to the truth when called to act accordingly. This is the problem of memory between past and present. We never approach current dilemmas as pure spirits for whom logic would suffice for comprehension, rather we approach them as certain beings who have many things to regret, who in their past

memories find elements to be ashamed of. Therefore, every conflict we are about to grapple with calls for the arduous job of recollection and conversion. Newman is clearly aware of his, let us say, anti-Lockean approach when he writes in his university sermons: "All through life we may suffer the penalty of past disobedience; disobedience, too, which we now can hardly enter into and realize, which is most foreign to our present principles and feelings, which we can hardly recognize as belonging to us, just as if no identity existed between our present and our former selves."[11] Placid Murray, who edited Newman's unpublished oratory papers, even aspires to demonstrate "in detail the identity and continuity between Newman's spirituality as an Anglican and as an Oratorian, between the Vicar of St. Mary's and the Father of the Birmingham Oratory."[12] In other words, Newman is always an integrated being in his consistent intent to search the truth. He is well aware, as we have often repeated here, that the dynamic human being must be ready to change his views, but never lax in his sincerity.

In his *University Sermons*, Newman stresses this point of historical development, when he notes that "the Revealed system compared with the Natural—teaching religious truths historically, not by investigation; revealing the Divine Nature, not in works, but in action; not in His moral laws, but in His spoken commands; training us to be subjects of a kingdom, not citizens of a Stoic republic; and enforcing obedience, not on Reason so much as on Faith."[13] This discrepancy between living and speaking about life, and the necessity to restore unity between the two, is of the utmost significance in Newman's writing. In other words, we mean the discrepancy between living a life and reflecting on it. Reflection always presupposes an intellectual distance, i.e. it introduces a certain mediation that comes from the working of the mind, from the intrusion of the subject. And this point may introduce self-complacency rather than an openness to the truth from the revealed word. History, as it is unveiled over time, is authentic; narration is in danger of colouring history.

Christianity combines contrasting feelings, such as joy and fear, which a true believer is supposed to manifest towards God, so it is difficult to explain in words how they are realized in practice. It is indeed difficult to describe the condition of the true Christian. In his *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, Newman defines him as a creature "beyond hopes and fears, suspense and jealousy, so also […] patient, cool, discriminating, and impartial."[14] The Christian lives

11 *US*, 121.
12 P. Murray (ed.), *Newman the Oratorian*, 3.
13 *US*, 48–49.
14 *PPS*, 992.

in this world, but at the same time is beyond this world. The words "joy" and "fear" should be correctly understood. Christian joy has nothing to do with vulgar freedom and familiarity; and Christian fear is not a slavish dread or the gloom of despair. This coexistence of joy and fear is of the utmost importance, for it secures a certain balance which saves the Christian on the one hand from irreverence (fear) and on the other from despondence (joy). We have to observe again that words fall short of showing how to reconcile fear and joy; the reader will certainly notice a parallel between, on the one hand, the pair of fear and joy, and on the other awe and reverence as we have already discussed. Newman all the time stresses the fact that many areas of Christian life belong to practice, which a theoretical consideration fails to express. Therefore, he himself, when called to account for his own life, just like any other person, becomes clumsy and vague.

Therefore, in his composure, he is set against ostentation and in favour of tranquillity. Such is his definition of the true Christian who "is serious, sober, discreet, grave, moderate, mild, with so little that is unusual or striking in his bearing, that he may easily be taken at first sight for an ordinary man. There are persons who think religion consists in ecstasies, or in set speeches,—he is not of those." And he "has a deep, silent, hidden peace."[15] Of course, Newman has in mind real Christians, not nominal. At the same time, he warns his listener/reader that there are people who adopt such attitudes because they show little concern for the values that underlie them. There is nothing virtuous in what one has if it is not gained through hard work against his natural disorderly inclinations.

The thought of Rome struck Newman as something at first hardly visible on the horizon, as an intriguing, almost impious, idea. It was disquieting, for how could someone for whom the Church of Rome was the seat of the gravest error, cherish some positive thoughts about this Church. It dawned on him steadily, as new elements of the horizon dawn on him whose eyes gradually accommodate themselves to an unknown landscape. The process was gradual because, as we know, Newman did not want to act emotionally, triggered by the spur of the moment. He was guided by his historical studies which he diligently continued. The Polish scholar, Stanisław Brzozowski, stressed Newman's idea of combining personalism with historicism, as evidenced especially by the latter's book *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*; at the same, it must be noted that its author avoided historical relativism.[16] Furthermore, he did

15 *Ibid*., 995.

16 A. Walicki, *Stanisław Brzozowski – drogi myśli* [Stanisław Brzozowski – the Paths of Thougths], 310–311.

not let new inspirations that might have come from different sources, pass by. He was a diligent student of history and an astute observer of the present day. Respect for history, then, does not mean that truth is relative and subjective, but that we need to analyse a person's circumstances if we want to understand his decisions, or else if he wants to understand himself.

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St Augustine's palmary words *securus iudicat orbis terrarum* (the Church as a whole judges rightly) kept ringing in his ears, and eventually became revealed to him, i.e. he *realized* them. He did not react to them immediately, but only after a period of time. We might metaphorically say that whatever he heard for the first time, he let it grow roots in him and see first its fruit in his own mind and heart before he decided to speak up about it and follow. This approach is very much in line with Newman's personal doctrine—words should flow primarily not from the mouth, but from the innermost self, from the heart. They cannot be a mere repetition of sounds, but should convey a personal meaning. This is what is meant by his motto 'heart speaks unto heart'. It must be noted that the kind of attitude he adopted calls for time and patience, and Newman would spare neither time nor patience. After all, new truths, especially those so upsetting and remodelling, deserve both. He intimated to Henry Wilberforce in a picturesque manner: "a vista has been opened before me, to the end of which I do not see."[17] Or, perhaps, he should have said: "the end of which I am afraid to see," for it seems that Rome was already lying unseen, far off on the horizon, but it was not yet the moment to have admitted it. Indeed, his companion, Wilberforce, was "thunderstruck at the thought of Rome [...], [and] hoped that Newman might die first."[18] For Newman, the words *securus iudicat* sounded like the stirring words *tolle, lege* (take it and read it) Augustine himself heard at the moment of his conversion. And Newman concluded in his *Apologia*: "By those great words of the ancient Father, interpreting and summing up the long and varied course of ecclesiastical history, the theory of the *Via Media* was absolutely pulverized."[19] In general, we can say that he follows Augustine's conception of interiority, for the philosopher from Hippo also experienced conversion as his most private event. All of these elements are interesting from the point of view of Husserl's phenomenology, especially with regard to the problem of memory, interiority, and reflection. In his analyses, Newman was brought back

17 A. Mozley, *Letters and Correspondence*, cited after S. Gilley, *Newman the Oratorian*, 184.
18 S. Gilley, *Newman the Oratorian*, 184.
19 *Apo*., 78–79.

in memory to his past, and then, guided by historical reflections, studied his interiority which was composed of implicit and explicit elements. The drama of interiority and soliloquy concerned both Augustine and Newman, and they both found their certitude within.

At that moment, he came through some electrifying experiences. He had visions of a hand on the wall and a shocking message crossed his agile mind: "The Church of Rome will be found right after all."[20] This message was a follow-up to Augustine's *securus iudicat*. In explaining his life, or rather accounting for it, Newman is giving his readers a real insight into the "living intelligence" as if he wanted to say: "you should venture to go the path I have walked and only then will you be able to pass a judgment." Perhaps such a person, having delved into all of these mind-boggling details, should refrain from condemnatory judgment in general. After all, they took place in the life of this particular person and not in any one else's. As we can see, Newman's conversion was accompanied not only by some spiritual visions, but even physiological sensations. Gilley notes: "The stomach-ache, the leak, the vista, the shadow of a hand, the ghost, the rising spirit, the opening heaven, like the Monophysite in the mirror and the incantatory power of the words themselves, convey Newman's subtle movement from a strident anti-Romanism."[21] I think there is nothing extravagant in enumerating such descriptive elements; they all confirm Newman's personalistic view, namely, that a reliable analysis of personal experience should take into account concrete circumstances, even what he called *unperceived impressions* which imperceptibly and implicitly accumulate. Newman is simply sincere, showing that he is a real person of mind and body. The details he provides sound almost like a friendly confession and invitation to read one's intimate biography, or an invitation to considerate sympathy with the agent, as if he wanted to ask: "Look what I have gone through. Do you really think I could have acted differently?"

From that moment onward, Newman became reluctant to criticize so harshly the Roman Catholic Church as he used to do earlier. He was ready to admit that both Churches had their failures. As I have already noted, in his view the Church of England was schismatical and cut off from Catholicity, and the Church of Rome was idolatrous and cut off from Antiquity.

The intriguing thing is that, for example, he was worried about Robert Williams (the translator of the Roman Breviary) who might secede to Rome, but the man became a dogmatic Protestant—further evidence that one can

20 *Ibid*., 79.

21 S. Gilley, *Newman the Oratorian*, 184.

hardly predict exactly all the details of personal decisions. This must have bewildered Newman and was clear evidence that individual choices are just as mysterious as individual lives, and, truly, no universal measure between two minds can be established; this lack of a common measure between minds evidently goes against the logic of the Kantian categorical imperative. We share general truths in common, but in our practical decisions our minds are incommensurate. In our practical dealings we are surrounded by probabilities and yet we are capable of making decisions or acquire certitude, thus being mysterious to even ourselves. I have written the word "mysterious," for indeed the human person is not a mere logical creature, but a living organism. As such, it responds with the whole of its inner maturity rather than with only its intellectual capacity. When we focus on some selected aspects, then obviously we can employ the intellectual apparatus, and this is what we do, usually when pondering theoretical matters.

Newman sets out on a discussion of the two Churches' position in his text *Catholicity of the Anglican Church*. The facts that he manages to settle in this text are much more balanced on account of the Church of Rome. He acknowledges that the Church of England is in schism, but still maintains that the origins between the two Churches are much more shared than is commonly admitted. As far as unity is concerned, the Church of England is divided and consists of colonies rather than one body. Nevertheless, the author still claims that the origin is the same and it is the origin that imparts unity to the Church; he acknowledges then that both Churches have descended from the same original source.

Newman is convinced that the Church of England has the Apostolical Succession, which is necessary for a Church to be called Christian. Given different branches of the Church of England, without one head and centre of unity, this Succession "is necessary in order to their possessing claim of descent; but that being secure, each branch is bound to conform to the country, and form alliance with the institutions, in which it finds itself, quite irrespectively of all the rest. Each Church is independent of all the rest, except indeed so far as the civil power unites any number of them together. They are in consequence, as Churches, under the supremacy of the state or monarch whom they obey in temporals, and may be used by him as one of the functions of his government, as his ministers of public instruction."[22]

Newman rightly observes that, such being the case, "the Church, though really possessed of powers, is precluded from exercising them without the

22 *ESS*., II, 18.

leave of the State, and has no jurisdiction independent of it."[23] And this position, although it may indeed be called "a formal state of schism," for the Church (or, in fact, its branch) is absorbed by a political institution, yet politics "does not touch the life of the Church."[24] Let me remind the reader that this is what Newman still claims in his text on the Catholicity of the Church of England. Individual branches, as separate as they are, do not have to have anything in common as long as they have the Succession, the Episcopal form, the Apostolic faith, and the Sacraments. Such seems to be the essence of Catholicity, its substances, while any mutual intercourse between them is only an accident, and therefore of little importance.

At this stage of his development, Newman referred to such writers as Edward Stillingfleet (1635–1699), Henry Dodwell (1641–1711), and George Hickes (1642–1715), divines who claimed that the Church of England was perfect in each separate branch and no union between them was necessary. It suffices for their bishops to have contact with God; thus, the Church of England establishes no visible system of networks. It seemed that the problem of the schism had been solved. As Newman explains: "If so, [the bishops] are neither capable of direct communion one with another *as* bishops, nor of schism one from another, since their only communion as bishops is with Him whom they represent, and they have communion with each other in and through Him; and while they have communion with Him, they have communion one with another, though they never saw, never acted with each other."[25] And in this logical reasoning, starting from their presumed premises, Anglican divines sought to defend the Reformation idea of an Invisible Church, one that remained in accordance with the modern philosophy of subjective epistemology. And they did away with the question of hierarchy or a highlighted point of view. Each bishop is the ultimate centre of unity, hence we have various centres of unity drawn together by the centripetal force of attraction to the Revelation, but mutually independent.

It must be noted that having accepted such a system, we accept at the same time the message of a new epistemology in which there is the right to private judgment. In this approach, a schism would mean to set one branch in opposition to another or to combine one branch with another. Therefore "an organized union of Churches, though proper and fitting, does not enter into the formal notion of a Church; and the fact of dissensions between Churches, though a breach of the law of love, as little avails to unchurch them, as lukewarmness,

23 *Ibid*., 19.
24 *Ibid*., 20.
25 *Ibid*., 23.

or corruption of doctrine, or ambition, or covetousness. Intercommunion is a duty as other duties, but is not the tenure or instrument of the communion between the unseen world and this; and much more is the confederacy of sees and churches—the metropolitan, patriarchal, and papal systems—mere matter of expedience, or of natural duty from long custom, or of propriety from gratitude and reverence, or of necessity from voluntary oaths and engagement, or of ecclesiastical force from the canons of Councils, but not necessary in order to the conveyance of grace, or for fulfilment of the ceremonial law, as it may be called, of Unity."

The author of these words concludes that "the Bishop of Rome, the head of the Catholic world, is not the centre of unity, except as having a primacy of order."[26]

In line with the empiricist vision, we have thereby separate branches like separate minds with their own depository of ideas. And the only criterion they are expected to hold on to is the criterion of the immanent logical cohesion of ideas, when accepted as clear and distinct. And just like a schism in this kind of theological vision is a departure from one branch or a demand that it be united with other branches, likewise in philosophical terms such expectations on the part of ideas would be deemed enthusiastic, i.e. irrational. Hence, it is only logical to conclude, as Newman did, that "there is nothing in the Apostolic system which gives authority to the Pope over the Catholic Church, more than to any other bishop."[27] Was Peter appointed the head of the Church? And the answers were as follows: his supremacy cannot be defended, it is just an ecclesiastical arrangement, a matter of custom; it does not come from revelation. There is no duty to obey one Church more than the other that can be directly elicited from the Gospel.

Dodwell holds that each bishop is Christ's representative, therefore schism, as separation from a bishop, is in fact separation from Christ. He focuses on St. Cyprian's texts. Dissenters should be urged upon "the necessity of conformity, but he does not carry on the argument to conclusion favourable to the Church of Rome, and this, by the maintenance of the simple principle that Bishops everywhere, and not the Pope, are the elementary centres of unity."[28] Dodwell agrees upon the crucial points that there is one Church, and this Church is Catholic, the Bishop of Rome is instrumental in uniting people with the Church, and St. Peter is the principle of unity. The question is whether the Church is the local Church, or the extended Church "of all Christians everywhere viewed as

26 *Ibid*., 23–24.
27 *Ibid*., 25.
28 *Ibid*., 29.

one body under the supremacy of the Pope."[29] Dodwell would not go as far as this. He maintained "that the whole Church is [...] crystallized out of a number of independent organic and complete units. Schism then, in its formal sense, is not the separation of Church from Church, which when separated from each other are still perfect, but laceration of the organic structure of the particular or local Church itself." And, in order to confirm his claim, he cites St. Cyprian's words: "The episcopate is one which each bishop shares *in fulness*."[30] It follows from this text that each Church is a sign of unity in itself; individual Churches do not need to have intercommunion.

If the Bishop, by which is not meant here the Pope, and being at one with him suffice for unity, then indeed the Anglican Church is not in schism. Dodwell eagerly refers to the authority of the eminent Father St. Cyprian. For a unity to reign supreme, it is sufficient to be united with one's local Bishop, or with the local Church under this Bishop. But if such is the case, there is no question about being schismatic with regard to individual bishops. How can the matter of schism be decided, then? Newman holds that St. Cyprian meant St. Peter's authority as extended to all bishops, but at the same time he states that separation "from St. Peter does not mean separation from Rome, but from the local see wherever a man finds himself,"[31] and he points to St. Cyprian's controversy with Pope Stephen on the subject of heretical baptism. We sense some hints in Newman's exposition of these points of his future emphasis on the supremacy of conscience because he even mentions St. Cyprian's critical remarks addressed to the pope as being audacious and insolent. Therefore, the phrase "supremacy of Peter" is "not meant to designate the power of the Pope," but "it remains that it must designate that of the Bishop."[32]

Such is the Anglican theory of ecclesiastical unity, as Newman summarises it. Each Church is its own and ultimate centre of unity, the Episcopal jurisdiction is of divine right, and all jurisdiction belongs to the temporal sovereign, for the secular ruler is the head of the Church "beyond ministry of the word and sacraments."[33]

This doctrine may indeed result from the writings of St. Ignatius and St. Cyprian, but, Newman observes, St. Augustine, with his *securus iudicat orbis terrarum*, does not seem to hold it. For him, the principle of unity "lay, *not* in each individual bishop, but in the body of the Church, or, if in any one bishop,

29 *Ibid.*
30 *Ibid.*, 30.
31 *Ibid.*, 31.
32 *Ibid.*
33 *Ibid.*, 32.

in the Pope," and the union of Church with Church "were *not* a mere accident, but of the essence of ecclesiastical unity—not for the sake of convenience or piety, but as a sacramental form; and as though schism were separation from this one whole body, and from this or that bishop only as far as he was the organ or representative of all bishops, that is, of the Bishop of Rome."[34]

This idea must have been revolutionary to Newman, something that he, as a thorough and diligent scholar, could not disregard. If he were to scrutinize the writings of the Church Fathers, he would do so in earnest. Therefore, the arguments that it was his self-interest, let alone hypocrisy, were preposterous and unfair. Here we find a good example of that 'living intelligence' which should not be considered in isolation from its context, often besieged by difficulties peculiar to it from within and from without, and yet defying hypocrisy in its genuine attempts to examine all the evidence with the diligence required. Newman's attention now shifts from individual bishops, as holders of authority, to the whole of the Church. Philosophically speaking, we might say that the whole of the Church, epitomized by Rome, is substance but whose individual bishoprics are only accidents.

The Church is united and wholesome not in its individual local institutions, but in its unity with Rome. Friendly intercourses between branches may be worthy in themselves, but they do not constitute the essence of the Catholic Church. The visible active communion between individual Christians is, of course, of high value and should not be disparaged, yet, perchance, that is not the substantial essence of the Church's unity. St. Augustine's interpretation of St. Cyprian's *De Unitate* is different than Dodwell's. Therefore, Newman notes that the Anglicans' position is unlike the position of "the profligate Arians or the fanatical Donatists," the heretics in the era of the primitive Church. Their task in the nineteenth century, the task undertaken ever anew, is "to investigate the essence of the Church, and the elementary idea of unity, in order to ascertain what our duty is, in certain painful circumstances in which we find ourselves."[35] This means to rethink the question of schism and not to satisfy themselves with the interpretations by Stillingfleet, Dodwell, and Hickes. Let it be observed that the underpinning idea of development can be found here as well, because what does it mean to be ready to rethink something that has had a time-honoured tradition, and change one's views?

In this new approach to unity, the Aristotelian-Thomistic principle of the whole, which takes precedence over the parts is at work here. St. Augustine's

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Ibid.*, 34.

statement was, for Newman, an eye-opener. Unlike for the Anglican divines, in this view there is visible intercommunion among Churches under the supremacy of the Pope. Therefore, a question arises, how to follow St. Austin's interpretation with regard to the Anglican Church which "is cut off from the Catholic body, a ray from the sun, a branch from the tree, a channel from the fountain? I answer,—by such considerations and facts as the following, which will be seen to be tenable without any breach of respect and piety towards those holy men, to whom both Roman Catholics and ourselves appeal."[36]

Note the delicacy of expression and the sublimity of metaphors ("a ray," "the sun") with which Newman approaches this difficult matter of unity and its various understandings. He keeps emphasizing all the points held in common respect by the two denominations. The phrase "those holy men" naturally refers to the Church Fathers revered by both the Church of England and the Church of Rome. I think that his intuition was indeed correct. Instead of focusing on mutual recriminations, he deemed it more accurate to go back to the origin of the still united Church.

Let us enumerate all these elements commonly held in the beginning in its divine origin: the first one is perfect intercommunion. Newman still asks if intercommunion was a necessary element, or, perhaps, Christians could remain Catholic, just like Israel remained holy, the demolition of the Jewish Temple notwithstanding. And he concludes: "in the same way we may be part of the Church, even granting, for argument's sake, that *as far as this particular note is concerned*, we have it not in the degree in which the Roman Church has it."[37] He argues that truth can have various notes of various cogency, so we need to answer which is the essential note. The dynamism of Newman's grappling with the issue of unity is truly fascinating; his untiring will not to leave a single doubt unanswered deserves our profound respect.

What is the essence of the Church, then? Is it intercommunion or the possession of Apostolic Succession? Intercommunion, as important as it is, may not be a *sine qua non*. Because all moral propositions are general, Newman suggests that it may also be true in the case of ecclesiastical matters. Apostolic Succession notwithstanding, the Church is in the right to introduce changes, i.e. the practice of infant communion was dropped, and celibacy was enforced, so evidently the apostolic age is not the necessary rule. Newman also agrees that the Fathers were of a conservative tone; novelty is not a value in itself, "yet, as they themselves maintain, the Church has power of altering or renovating in

36 *Ibid*., 39.
37 *Ibid*.

matters of discipline."[38] This is the moment when the significance of tradition comes into play.

Newman is well aware of the development at work within the history of the Church. He mentions Aristotle and his dialectic, which was viewed as unfit for Christianity (!). Tertullian called him "miserable," Nazianzen included Aristotle's philosophy within "the plagues of Egypt," Faustinus referred to Aristotle as "the Bishop of the Arians," and Damascene said that the Stagirite was made "a thirteenth Apostle" by the Monophysites.[39] The main enemy was the dialectic viewed as the abstract art of accepting, stating, proving, then refuting a thesis. Put another way, it was regarded as the futile juggling of words. This attitude towards Aristotle, which, as we know well, has undergone a profound development, made Newman think. Thus, St. Ambrose's critical remarks that God did not save His people through dialectic and that critical thinking is crucial are both true. Dialectic here is understood as synonymous with philosophy, and any condemnatory words that may be spoken, including Newman's distance towards philosophy, should not be comprehended as condemning dialectic (or philosophy) itself, but as condemning the position in which one focuses on theory and disregards practice, or else when one claims that faith is a matter of arguments.

Therefore Newman acquiesces to the arguments of the Romanists who "say that all systems have their development; that nothing begins as it ends; that nothing can come into the world *omnibus numeris*, that the seed becomes a tree, and the child a man [...], that the full-grown fulfilment, to superficial observers, necessarily seems different from what it was in its rudiments, just as a friend, not seen for many years, is strange to us at first sight, till, by degrees, we catch the old looks, or the well-remembered tones, or the smile or the remark, which assure us that, with whatever changes of age or circumstance, he is the same man."[40]

The substance is the same, but its accidents change. The substance remains identical to itself. I think that such were the thoughts about change and development which gradually endeared Newman to the Roman Catholic Church. As he himself states, "there is a great deal of force in this view; it does seem to

38 *Ibid.*, 41.

39 *Ibid.*, 42. Monophysites (monophysitism) was a doctrine that held that Jesus Christ had only one nature—the divine. In the fifth century, there was a heated debate between the theological schools of Antioch and Alexandria. Nestorius was a prominent representative of the Antiochian school. Those who argued that there was only one divine nature were later referred to as Nestorians (Nestorianism).

40 See *ESS.*, II, 43.

reconcile one to much that otherwise it is difficult to comprehend in the history of religion; only we would propose to carry it out a little further."[41] Perhaps change was intended at the very beginning of the Church? But granted that this is the case, yet another idea crosses Newman's mind. If we agree that change was the spawning ground of the Church, it may have also been intended that it should be transformed into a monarchy? Just as the Church of England did. Indeed, in the beginning of Church history the power of the pope was unclear, and the bishops were fairly independent. Newman is probing various paths of his intellectual endeavour to make himself assured and he has not neglected anything, so that perchance he may have made a hasty decision.

This is a very interesting suggestion, for it resembles the Hegelian view of history. Its individual parts put together are rational and ultimately explained in a synthesis of History. To be more precise, they may not be rational in themselves as results of individual choices, which are still subjective, and therefore liable to errors, but on the whole coalesce into a pan rational History. Perhaps we could explain in this manner all of the heresies and infidelities of the past. One cannot fail to note a certain deterministic undertone in this kind of thinking. Newman, however, envisions history as the development planned by Providence whose plan is hidden from man, and it is not deterministic. The past events are explained away in this course of events, but judged with regard to good and evil.

If we can imagine one substance with its accidents that change, we should perhaps venture to think about the changes within the Church in the similar manner. Then one may ask:

> shall the decrepitude of the nineteenth century more interfere with the inward life and perfection of the Church than the inexperience and feebleness of the Antenicene era? Shall Dionysius be called the forerunner of Arius, yet in truth be a great saint? Shall Cyprian live in the Church as a glorious martyr, though he erred in his controversy about baptism? And shall the names of Andrewes or Butler be erased from the catalogue, because they were in less intimate union than was abstractedly desirable with Christians of the south, or were prisoners in an Erastian court? It is surely unfair to carry on the development of the Church only just to the point which serves our purpose, and to be indulgent towards tyranny within it, while we make no allowance for insubordination.[42]

41 *Ibid*., 44.
42 *Ibid*., 45.

And it is again St. Augustine who impedes Newman from making this truly Hegelian step; as we can see in the above text, "the development of the Church" transcends our logic, and does not serve "our purpose." Now that we may feel scandalized by the deeds committed by certain hierarchs, we should believe, with Newman, that the Church as a whole judges rightly. The Saint of Hippo stands firm with his declaration that "the general Church's judgment is final against particular branches."[43] It is above its branches, and he does "elsewhere insist on its being above the decision of the Pope."[44] And he proceeds to argue on behalf of the Church of England that since there were differences in the primitive Church as regards her Fathers, so the vision of development provides room for such differences. Perhaps the Church was intended to bear a different appearance in different ages, so

> that branches estranged from the rest of the body, may, nevertheless be part of the body, let us proceed to show that what *may possibly* be, is *probably*, as regards the English Church. As soon as it is granted that active intercourse is not *absolutely necessary* as a note of the Church, an opening is made for adducing *other* circumstances which may serve to be an evidence of that, which such intercourse would evidence, if it existed. We conceive then that, in spite of our being separated from Greece and Rome, shut up in ourselves and our dependencies, and looked coldly on or forgotten by the rest of Christendom, there is sufficient ground for still believing that the English Church is at this time the Catholic Church in England.[45]

The Church of England may be schismatical or heretical, but it is there, maintains Newman. Assuming there were so many differences and varieties of proposals in the past, it is difficult to decide which branch is true. It had its own confessors and martyrs, and a clear lineage to Canterbury. And Newman invokes the Fathers to defend the Catholic character of the Church of England, although in schism (but schisms appeared to be popular in the primitive

43 *Ibid.*

44 *Ibid.*

45 *Ibid.*, 47. Newman is indeed right about some vital differences. For instance, Donatus "insisted that no ordination was valid unless conferred by a person in a state of grace [...]. The Church's position was, as it had been earlier in the case of baptism performed by heretics, that a sacrament rightly performed, with valid intention, is efficacious by its own virtue." (A. Fremantle [ed.], *The Papal Encyclicals in their Historical Context*, New York: Mentor Books, 1956, 41). In the Catholic Church the validity of the Sacraments is acknowledged though they be administered by very unholy priests.

Church), and he writes: "Would that our Fathers could plead somewhat for us in the affections of our opponents, and bring them to relent from the cruel purpose with which they follow after us to destroy us!"[46]

This persistent question begs an answer: must the part yield to the whole? Is this subordination the *sine qua non* of unity? And yet another important question arises: can we rescue private judgment in this subordination? The Donatists denied the Church of Rome its Catholic character. They doubted that this Church could hold other branches heretical. Newman mentions Tichonius, one of the Donatists' bishops, who claimed that because Augustine criticized another bishop from Hippo, they were both schismatical. This is an interesting point, for the Anglicans also deny the possibility of setting one altar in opposition to another altar. They are both right in their own spheres, since, as Anglicans, they acknowledge the existence of various branches. If one altar cannot be set in opposition to another altar, no one can be accused of schism, including the primitive Church, in fact, and so the problem of schism, following this subtle didactic, disappears.

Then Newman suggests another problem. Perhaps the Roman Catholic Church is deprived of the "*orbis terrarum*" since she is not a whole because the Anglican Church is in schism; let us note in passing that this is a very clever approach to this issue—the Church of Rome has lost her complete character because the Church of England is outside of it. Therefore, can she still judge rightly? And he argues that usually sectarians receive their names after their leaders, a fact which emphasizes that they do not derive from Christ or the Apostles. Now, the Church of England has no names to follow; the Anglicans are not called Cranmerites, which would denote the heritage of the Anglican bishop Cranmer (1489–1556), unlike the Protestant branches which are called Calvinists or Lutherans. And he argues that if indeed the Church of England has let slip "Catholic," it may still keep the word "Church." In common understanding, "Catholic" may be understood in Britain as the Roman Catholic Church, as a place of worship, whereas "Church" may be understood as the Anglican Church.

The final test of a body being a Church is life. Newman notes: "The Church is emphatically a living body, and there can be no greater proof of a particular communion being part of the Church than the appearance in it of a continued and abiding energy, nor a more melancholy symptom of its being a corpse than torpidity. We say an energy continued and abiding, for accident will cause the activity of a moment, and an external principle give the semblance of

46 *ESS.*, II, 48.

self-motion."[47] This Church may be, at times and under certain circumstances, asleep. Newman insinuates that perhaps the Church of England is in this situation now, without the note of intercommunion with other Christians, like the Roman Church was in similar circumstances in the past. (When we look at the history of the Church in the tenth century, or when there were as many as three popes, we might think of a similar situation). Even sectarians may have some glimpses of life in the beginning. They resemble a heap of glowing embers which can still set dry matter on fire, but then die down; therefore Newman suggests we should look at the end, not the beginning, for

> life *is* a Note of the Church; she alone revives even if she declines. Heretical and schismatical bodies cannot keep life; they gradually become cold, stiff and insensible. They may do some energetic work at first from excitement and remaining warmth, as the Arians converted the Goths, though even this seems, as the history shows us, to have been an accident, for which they can claim no praise; or as the Nestorians spread in the East.[48]

Heretical and schismatical bodies become cold like liquid rock that pours forth from a crater, sets on fire the surrounding vicinity and is then petrified. Here, again, we have a consequent suggestion of a system; we need to look at the whole of the system that is evolving from a certain doctrine, and its trademark is *continuance* and *stability*. Heresies and schisms do not give what they promise, for "whatever be their promise at first, and whatever be their struggles, yet gradually and surely tend not to be."[49] Their scope is "utter dissolution […], or, if the principle of destruction in them be not so living as to hurry them forward in their career, then they remain inert and motionless, where they first are found, kept together in one by external circumstances, and going to pieces as soon as air is let in upon them."[50] Newman's metaphorical language is at its best here. Sects resemble a piece of matter in decay which may still remain wholesome, but when exposed to the sun falls apart, like the literary portrait of Dorian Gray from Oscar Wilde's novel.

In his analysis, Newman takes the position of a church historian for whom, as William Clebsch notes, "church history is continuous and meaningful" in which "the sacred and the secular […] are never really separable dimensions

47 *Ibid.*, 53.
48 *Ibid.*, 54.
49 *Ibid.*
50 *Ibid.*

of the human experience."[51] Newman looks at the history of his (Anglican) Church replete with facts that made it survive despite contrary trends. Clebsch, as a historian of religion, also ideally captures Newman's situation. We read in his book that there is no historical method to "distinguish the way men and women personally and socially understood their universe from the way their universe was then and there [,] the only then-and-there universe to which the historian of religion has access is the universe as it was for those who were there." In like manner, "pre-moderns [...] did not make sharp distinctions between actualities and the apprehensions of them, [...] moderns [...] do drive such wedges."[52]

Thus, we have different world views, for concrete people participate in the world which is constantly changing. The conclusion we are entitled to draw from the above words is all too obvious for me: we fail to assess the past of persons unless we enter the "then-and-there universe" they participated in. Culturally, pre-moderns and moderns differ because they lived in different, philosophical and historical, contexts. And I agree with Clebsch's statement that religion has been culturally conditioned. Let us hasten to add that there is no hint of relativism in this. If religion goes through its various stages and is carried on by individual people under the Eye of Providence, it is only natural that it should be painted by the colours of individual eras. Additionally, it sounds very Newmanian to assert that "what appear to have been innovations were really the unfolding of implicit traditions, or the developing of the pristine form of the religion, or the recapturing of what had fallen into disuse." Therefore, his book searches "for persons and movements that exemplify ingenuity in developing religiously novel expressions for culturally novel situations."[53] Despite a cultural disenchantment introduced by the "enlightened" of rationalism and empiricism, Christianity has managed to retain its core message.

At the beginning of the 1840s, Newman still believed in the Church of England and her power of life, for he could always point to some great names produced by this Church, among whom he mentioned Joseph Butler. The intriguing thing is that, at that time, it did not occur to him that the inspirations brought forth by these divines would lead him to conclusions he could not even have suspected at the outset. Therefore he states, with some enthusiastic undertone: "Thus our divines grow with centuries, expanding after their death in the minds of their readers into more and more exact Catholicism, as

51 W.A. Clebsch, *Christianity in European History*, 3.
52 *Ibid.*, 4–5.
53 *Ibid.*, 7.

years rolled on. Nay, even our errors and heterodoxies turn to good," and with a flurry of excitement he adds that, despite errors and divisions,

> there is *life* there, perceptible, visible life; rude indeed, undisciplined, perhaps self-willed, but life; and not the life of death, not that heretical restlessness, which, as we have observed, only runs out the quicker for its activity, and hastens to be no more, but, as we may humbly trust, a heavenly principle after all, which is struggling towards development, and gives presage of truth and holiness to come.[54]

Is it not amazing that he should still believe, five years prior to his conversion, in the "truth and holiness to come"? And does it not testify again to the purity of intention in the author of these words? He could not have thought otherwise, for he was not ready yet, and strove to keep his words at one with his thoughts. The question of the Church's life was one of the most essential, for life, in Newman's understanding, meant a genuinely spiritual reality, not part of a sublime intellectual culture. The Tractarians decided to probe their Church to find out her true value. In his reflections on Anglicans, when he was already a Roman Catholic, Newman writes that when the Tractarians "feared that the good seed would fall, not on a congenial soil, but on hard, or stony, or occupied ground, they were fearing that the National Church, though they did not use the word, had no *life*. Life consists or manifests itself in activity of principle."[55] Naturally, there are various modes of activity: social, political, economic, or cultural. The Church as a national body may actively participate in all of them, but these were not the kind of activities that Newman (and other Tractarians) expected of a Church, because the Church is distinct from the State, an observation so powerfully put forward by St. Augustine, and in the nineteenth century by Lord John Acton. Newman rightly noted that "the life of the body is not the same as the life of the intellect; nor is the life of the intellect the same in kind as the life of grace; nor is the life of the Church the same as the life of the State."[56]

This conclusion that his Church had no (spiritual) life dawned on Newman. It was like a secret and tragic message that those sensitive people (the Tractarians) sensed, but would not like to admit openly. Activity is an

54 *ESS.*, II, 57.

55 *Diff.*, vol. I, 43; the words "hard," "stony" and "occupied" refer to the Biblical parable about the effect of sowing (Mt 13, 1:8).

56 *Diff.*, 44.

important sign of life, but one needs to know the nature of this activity. And Newman proceeds to examine his Church's life with ironic undertones:

> the religion of gentlemen, of scholars, of men of substance, and men of no personal faith at all. If this be life,—if it be life to impart a tone to the court and houses of parliament, to ministers of state, to law and literature, to universities and schools, and to society,—if it be life to be a principle of order in the population, and an organ of benevolence and almsgiving towards the poor,—if it be life to make men decent, respectable, and sensible, to embellish and refine the family circle, to deprive vice of its grossness, and to shed a gloss over avarice and ambition,—if indeed it is the life of religion to be the first jewel in the Queen's crown, and the highest step of her throne, then doubtless the National Church is replete, it overflows with life; but the question has still to be answered, Life of what kind? Heresy has its life, worldliness has its life.[57]

Let us observe again that all of his conditional "ifs" are critical and ironical. Therefore, the final question "Life of what kind?" is, in fact, rhetorical and should elicit only one answer: "this is not the life of a spiritual body." Such a life runs counter to his personalistic epistemology. In this excellent recapitulation on the essence of the Church, the author outlines her most important task, as was already stated in the epistemological outline of Newman's views. Good and noteworthy as charitable deeds are, they are not an essential part of the Church. We may say that as long as she is not distinct from the State, and only doubles its work, she remains nothing but a political institution devoid of supernatural life. The Church may wield enormous influence, and yet may be found wanting.

The above words were written in a text published in 1850 and dedicated to Bishop William Bernard Ullathorne (1806–1889) and addressed (in twelve lectures) 'to the Party of the Religious Movement of 1833'. Therefore, they were a kind of post-factum reflection on the purpose of the Movement. Meanwhile, in 1840 he compares his Church to the Holy Jerusalem, a figure often used by the Protestant pilgrims to the New World; the Church is budding and blooming, yielding fruit. The sign of authenticity is suffering, as is usually the case with authentic Christianity. Therefore the Church of England is "the Militant Church," which is "rebuking the world," which is "hated" and "pillaged by the world," for "the true Church [...] has ever been on the religious side."[58] Unlike

57 *Ibid.*, 47.
58 *ESS.*, II, 58.

her sister branches, the Church of England remains faithful. The true Christian should always be on the side of truth, in spite of corruptions or errors. He should side, for instance, with Gregory VII (Hildebrand),[59] in the latter's conflict with the German Emperor Henry IV, and with Becket against Henry II; the history of the Church, especially in the Middle Ages, saw a succession of collisions and cooperation between kings and popes, but more often than not there was compromise. We might also add that, for instance, More was right in his conflict with Henry VIII. Gregory VII, for his part, sought to free the clergy from familial and feudal entanglements; the danger of covetousness was not limited only to some classes.

Taking all of these facts into account, Newman states affirmatively that "the English Church is at present on God's side, and therefore so far God's Church," but with regard to English Romanism the situation is much worse. It is "a very galling thought to serious minds who profess it, to feel that they are standing with enemies of God, co-operating with the haters of truth and haters of the light, and thereby prejudicing religious minds even against those verities which Rome continues to hold."[60] We shall observe over and over again how Newman is open about the radical changes in his life, as if he wanted to say: "the individual has the right to make mistakes, reformulate his life, and redefine his goals." Put another way, we might say that each decision has its appropriate time.

The author of these words holds, as we can see, that the two Churches are Catholic and they abide by similar principles. So the Church of England is one body with other Churches, although there is no intercommunion with Christendom. But this Church, Newman affirms, "has the note of possession, the note of freedom from party titles; the note of life, a tough life and vigorous; she has ancient descent, unbroken continuance, agreement in doctrine with the ancient Church."[61] The Church of England seemed to have survived

59 Hildebrand (Gregory VII) is on the list of strong popes (after 1050) who insisted on a celibate clergy. The laity lived in the natural state of matrimony, but the priest should be the custodian of the supernatural. The Pope explains his controversy in the following points: "1) that the spiritual power is superior to the temporal power, being derived from God Himself, whereas the temporal power generally originates in despicable human passions; 2) that kings and emperors, like any other of the faithful, can be punished by ecclesiastical penalties including excommunication; 3) that the superiority of the spiritual to the temporal power implies the right of judging the rulers for their temporal activities; 4) that the papal right to bind and loose can be used against a guilty ruler and that it can absolve his subjects from their allegiance." (A. Fremantle [ed.], *The Papal Encyclicals in their Historical Context*, New York: Mentor Books, 1956, 61).

60 *ESS*., II, 58.

61 *Ibid*., 59.

the predicaments of Lutherans and Calvinists; it escaped the dire straits of rationalism and heresy. It had grown, Newman claims, "towards a more perfect Catholicism than that with which it started at the time of its estrangement; every act, every crisis, which marks its course, has been upward."[62] The reader is invited to say that the author is very benevolent towards the history of his Church. The Church had gone through its crises in the reigns of Edward and Elizabeth I, but managed to revive its true doctrine.

Henry VIII, who had governed the Church of England after Thomas Cromwell's[63] execution, was notorious for his doctrinal conservatism; he made every effort to change as little as possible in the Catholic image of the Church. After his death, the Duke of Somerset, who was Protectorate of the young Edward VI, became leader of the Protestant faction in the Privy Council and pushed for further reforms. Edward VI became a bigoted Protestant too. Consequently, soon afterwards the Henrician doctrinal legislation was repealed, and certain practical steps were taken. Archbishop Cranmer was ordered by the Privy Council to remove images from places of worship, then "[s]hrines, and the jewels and plate inside them, were promptly seized by the Crown; the statues and wall-paintings that decorated English parish churches were mutilated, or covered with whitewash."[64] All of these measures were taken evidently to stamp out any Catholic remnants. Protector Somerset ultimately completed what Henry VIII only timidly initiated. He finalized the destruction of shrines, "ensuring that the native art, sculpture, metalwork and embroidery associated with Catholic ritual were comprehensively wiped out."[65]

Declarations were then issued to the contrary, namely that the driving force of all these steps was not greed, but the concern about the purity of the doctrine. And the question of uniformity loomed in the air too. This problem is indeed interesting, for how can we terminate controversies in the otherwise divided Church (divided by a definition that was elicited from the principles of *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*) in any other way than by using political or military force? The philosopher Thomas Hobbes, for that matter, being afraid of the animosities spawned on the ground of divided denominations, recommended one religion imposed by the ruler. Cranmer was in favour of this ideal, but very

62 *Ibid*., 55.

63 Thomas Cromwell (1485–1540), not to be confused with Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), a major figure in the English civil war.

64 K. O. Morgan, *The Oxford History of Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, 295.

65 *Ibid*., 296.

soon realized that he could have either unity or uniformity, not both.[66] He wrote a letter to Albert Hardenberg, leader of the Bremen Reformed Church:

> We are desirous of setting forth in our churches the true doctrine of God, neither have we any wish to be shifting and unstable, or to deal in ambiguities: but, laying aside all carnal considerations, to transmit to posterity a true and explicit form of doctrine agreeable to the rule of the scriptures; so that there may be set forth among all nations a testimony respecting our doctrine, delivered by the grave authority of learned and pious men; and that all posterity may have a pattern which they may imitate. For the purpose of carrying this important design into effect we have thought it necessary to have the assistance of learned men, who, having compared their opinions together with us, may do away with doctrinal controversies, and establish an entire system of true doctrine.[67]

But it turned out that Protestants were less capable of consensus than were Catholics. Catholicism was the spiritual bond of Europe, or, as Francis Bacon put it about religion, "the chief band of human society," adding that "it is a happy thing when itself is well contained within the true band of unity."[68] Uniformity was approved by Parliament and enforced by the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity (1558). The fact that doctrines and ceremonies rested on parliamentary authority, not on the supreme head and its legislative independence, paved the way for further Protestant reforms. Elizabeth I followed suit. She had no "preconceptions," as Morgan notes, she was not a "conviction-politician," but had a taste for *realpolitik*.[69] Despite problems with her reign she had an instinct for power. In 1552, Parliament introduced bills to re-establish royal supremacy and full Protestant worship. She sought to complete her father's break with Rome. Ex-monastic property returned to her. In 1563, the Convocation approved the Thirty-Nine Articles, thereby defining the Anglican Church's doctrine. England became officially Protestant in 1559, saving the country from religious civil war. Elizabeth inherited Henry VIII's anti-papalism and Edwardian Protestantism. It was a time of suppressing the Catholic remnants. Parliament enacted a law according to which priests who

66 And this is "the fundamental lesson of the English Reformation," writes Morgan, *The Oxford History of Britain*, 297.

67 Quoted in K. O. Morgan, *The Oxford History of Britain*, 296.

68 F. Bacon, *Essays*, London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1981, 8.

69 K. O. Morgan, *The Oxford History of Britain*, 301.

had been ordained by papal authority since 1559 were convicted of treason without any additional proof needed.

Admittedly, Elizabeth I detested evangelicalism and sought to escape polarization, for she "had no sympathy with hardliners in either camps,"[70] those who sought to extirpate Anglicanism of any Roman Catholic elements and retain its Catholic character, and those who wanted to make it more Protestant. In her search for consensus, she wanted to satisfy compromisers and zealots, a task doomed to failure from the start. Therefore, Tombs comments rightly, "Elizabeth's religion entered the minds and hearts of most people, as a generation grew up which thought of the Pope as Antichrist, the Mass as a mummery, and their Catholic past not as their own."[71] This result may have been against Elizabeth's intentions, but if one seeks to marry water with fire, one can expect only disaster, especially since polarization between the "Catholic" and "Protestant" camps began to sweep over the European continent. And the seventeenth century saw its rapid eruption during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648).

We need to mention the vigorous thrust of the Puritan faction within Anglicanism (to be distinguished from the actual Puritan movement). In its zeal, their members sought to extirpate corruption and 'popish rituals' from the Church of England. It soon turned out that this otherwise 'godly' plan, for, at least intentionally, it is always praiseworthy to fight against corruption, boiled down to the mere satisfaction of very earthly ambitions and became counterproductive. Strict conformity to the newly Protestant intrusions, including submission to royal supremacy and the Thirty-Nine Articles, was required. Polarization in Europe on religious grounds began, and England became its Protestant champion.

Newman must have travelled a long way—it is impossible to tell how long—for the distance between his approving remarks about the Church of England and his decision to leave it is immeasurable, especially if we consider the latent interplay of implicit elements which our author emphasized so much. He faced all of these legislative innovations in the nineteenth century, as part of his Anglican heritage, and, simultaneously, he witnessed the slow process of departure from them. He must have been in two minds about what was going on: whether he should abide by his Anglican tradition, which admittedly had retreated from the Catholic tenets, or leave it as well. One can only imagine how mindboggling and exasperating his dilemmas were, and at which

70 R. Tombs, *The English and their History*, 181.

71 *Ibid.*

point exactly he found the solution. Therefore, it is a discreet value, filled with implicit data, not merely concrete elements of ratiocination. Of course, the discreet elements are surrounded by concrete studies, but they only amount to probabilities, antecedent probabilities. Then, on the basis of these probabilities, the person is encouraged to take a step forward, a step in trust and confidence. The certitude that comes as the gratification of such probabilities suffices for this particular person, but not for another. This certitude is manifested, as we already know, by the statement "I know."

The moment Newman realized that his Church "had no life," whereas several years before he still thought it did, came unexpectedly, in a way. "In a way" because it was preceded by a process of preparation; "unexpectedly" because the exact time could not be predicted with knife-edge precision. Such things may happen only in individual lives taken seriously. For amid the turmoil of arguments and counterarguments one may rightly ask: where is the truth? Is it only a matter of expediency, the actual political situation, a matter of power and whose is going to prevail? Newman undoubtedly began to ask such questions. He wondered where this ideological turning point was which England had taken and whether it was the right way to take an individual course.

I think Newman understood that no plots, and there were plenty of them in history, could restore the country back to its Catholic course. It could not be a political movement, although the Oxford movement could have been regarded as one. He envisaged conversion as his own personal decision, that is, a matter of his own conscience. When he suddenly realized, allegedly to his own surprise, that the Anglican Church 'had no life', there was no way to withdraw. Heresies and schisms, as Francis Bacon claimed, are even worse than the corruption of manners. And he had a point here, for the centre of unity, i.e. free from heresies and schisms, may still serve as a beacon even for corrupted believers, and thus serve as an axis of attraction and hope for future unity. It fulfils its role on condition that it is constantly revitalized by unity and vibrant with life. We know well from physics that bodies with distributed energy lose the strength of their impact.

If we want to find the origins of Newman's ideas, we ought to seek them not among the philosophical writers who might have inspired him (if they did, for he had a very individual approach to his reading matter), but above all among the heroes of faith and hope of old, the likes of Abraham and Jacob. One can sense a genuine admiration for them in Newman's sermons. This means that they should constantly be not merely people of the past, who once lived, but should be treated as living exemplars of his and our existential trials. Moreover, he had his unique approach to texts. It seems that he was guided by some inner sense of the appropriate, that he knew very well what he was looking for. And

if he found the book wanting in this respect, or that it was merely a theoretical discourse on what should become a lived experience, he grew bored and put it aside. And we have to remember that Newman's *method of personation* (of personal experience) is at work all the time in whatever he is writing. Therefore, even in his Biblical exegesis the historical approach to Church documents recedes backwards on behalf of the personalities set up for our examples. He is always focusing on the reality of the message one can draw from individual persons. When he is writing in his sermons about Saints, he encourages his listeners (readers) "that we must copy them."[72]

Profound historical studies can be likened to wading through density. Because one cannot demonstrate what one has found (attained certitude), this wading can only be performed by faith, not by sight, and not without personal effort on our part. This is what Newman meant as "walking by faith." For the wanderer can only refer to his internal conviction, which is composed of explicit and implicit elements. The implicit portion of this conviction is of utmost importance, but it cannot be demonstrated by its very nature of being implicit. The Cartesian mind assents when struck by a clear and distinct certainty of formal ideas; the Newmanian mind assents when his inner responsiveness is congenial with the truth it is called to assent to.

His internal agony with himself is truly fascinating. In view of the Augustinian principle of *orbis terrarum*, he finds out that intercommunion with Rome is not necessary, for he comes upon additional facts which seem to have confirmed this point. He analysed several figures who first were Arians, then left them and established a faction of Semi-Arians. They were very highly spoken of by the Fathers, and treated with respect. He mentions Meletius, the Bishop of Antioch, and Theodoret who was very highly spoken of by Gregory Nazianzen and Gregory Nyssen. Accordingly, Newman concludes with regard to Theodoret "that want of intercommunion with Rome, Italy, France, Spain, Africa, and Egypt, was thought no disadvantage to his memory."[73] And some of them were not acknowledged by the Pope of their day (like Meletius).

It appears that the accumulation of probabilities at that moment, having considered all the available historical facts with an impartial eye, was still insufficient for his assent to the Church of Rome. Besides it must be observed that indeed the primitive Church was in turmoil when it was very difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish who was right. Let it suffice to mention the conflict between anti-Pope Laurence (Laurentius) and Pope Symmachus during

72 *PPS*, 1197.

73 *ESS*., II, 64.

which the Church called for arbitration from king Theodoric the Great (454–526). Symmachus was even accused of bribery, so some people withdrew from communion and entered communion with Laurence. Symmachus was exiled, then fled and returned to Rome. A synod was held in 502 and Laurence ruled for four years as Pope. Theodoric was implored to intervene on behalf of Symmachus (later on canonised as a saint). An open question may arise and Newman himself may have asked it himself: why did the Church take rather this course and not the other one? Why did she ultimately follow Symmachus, not Laurence? And it definitely had occurred to Newman that the Church was not of human making. A profound believer and a thorough student of the Church's past, as he was, would have probably answered: *digitus Dei est hic* (here is the finger of God) who makes people He chooses, even lay rulers, instrumental in His own purposes. On the list of saints there are those who were called schismatics. Studying history, therefore, does not provide a satisfactory answer as the one we obtain in formal sciences. Nevertheless one can always venture a question, for instance, would the Church have been the same had it followed Laurence rather than Symmachus? And the answer can only amount to probability, for we cannot explain all the events, let alone such that have not taken shape. Such cases again prove Newman's resolution to walk by faith, not by sight, since he had allowed to ground his assents even on probabilities.

It must be noted that the comments made in his sermons and historical sketches are abundant evidence of his acute sense of observation. They further serve as sources for his general remarks and philosophical comments in the *Apologia* and *Grammar of Assent*. In this sense the conflict between the two popes introduces us more into the metaphysics of the Church than the actual course of affairs. They may be interesting in themselves and today they would certainly make the headlines of all the newspapers (along with a host of fake news and a host of foretelling), but it calls for a believing mind to look behind the scenes of what is visible and find their meaning.

Newman mentions Meletius who was separated from the brethren of the West and South, so there was no intercommunion, and yet he was so admirably spoken of by the Fathers Nazianzen, Nyssen, and Chrysostom that he was even called a new Apostle. Gregory Nyssen, in his funeral sermon, honours Meletius in a sublimely poetic epitaph: "We have lost our head, and together with our head have disappeared our precious senses. […] They sent forward an ark, and they receive back a bier. An ark […] was that man of God, an ark, containing in itself the divine mysteries; there is the golden pot of the divine manna, of the

heavenly food. In it were the tables of the Covenant, inscribed on tables of the heart by the Spirit of the living God, not with ink."[74]

Such words hardly need a comment as to the positive intentions and admiration of their author. They must have filled Newman with a sense of respect for the individual person as to his character and personality, no matter which side of the political scale he was on. And as it did not matter to St. Gregory Nyssen, it did not matter to Newman either. Let me draw the conclusion that Meletius must have been, for him, yet another example of reality; in his eyes, Meletius had passed the test of earnestness. And St. Chrysostom honours the memory of Meletius in his sermon as well. He acknowledges how they all are so affectionate towards the departed and how they tried to commemorate his name: "On the stones of rings, on cups, on jugs, on the walls of their chambers, many there were who had engraved his sacred likeness."[75]

Newman continues in the same vein: "It is remarkable how distinct and consistent is the picture which all accounts give us of this holy and most amiable man; whose meekness, gentleness, sweetness or temper, and generosity of feeling, seem to have been notes of his churchmanship, which outweighed his separation from Rome and Alexandria, and prove that saints may be mature in a state which Romanists of this day would fain call schism."[76] Well, Newman is good proof of these words, for his sainthood matured in separation from Rome. And his *method of personation* is at work here, for its main tenet is that history is carried on by individual people, that faith is conveyed through the mediation of genuine believers.

As we can see, even in his historical studies Newman is constantly faithful to his *method of personation*, putting emphasis on individual persons, their singular development, and their personal decisions. He reminds us that: "The Bishops of the whole Catholic Church, with a few exceptions, had been seduced during the preceding two years, by Arian address, into signing the ambiguous formulary of Arminum. Athanasius and the rest decided that, on submitting to the creed of Nicaea, they might be acknowledged in their sees."[77] And he claims that in troubled times "of the Church much allowance ought to be made on all hands for jealousies, misunderstandings, estrangements between the parts of the Church; and that it is a very serious matter for any individual to pronounce what perhaps the whole Church alone can undertake, that this or that part of itself is in formal and fatal schism. Nor are we aware, taking Romanists on

74 Cited in Newman, *ESS*., II, 64.
75 Cited in Newman, *ESS*., II, 65.
76 *Ibid*.
77 *Ibid*., 66.

their own principles, that their Church has ever given such a sentence against ours."[78] He also mentions that in ancient and modern times there were canonized persons "who have lived and died in communion with an anti-Pope, on the plea of involuntary ignorance."[79] On this occasion, he mentions Paschasius, who took the side of the anti-Pope Laurence and who died in schism, and yet he is on the list of saints. Such people were wrong in their judgements based on available data, but they were pure in their intentions. The conclusion is all too obvious: they were free from the charge of hypocrisy. This is why Newman, at the moment of his real assent to the Roman Catholic Church, stated: "I am no longer [ignorant]." In other words, he could have said: I would be a hypocrite if I did something contrary to what *I now know*.

This dynamic struggle of the mind shows Newman as an individual person who seriously sought the truth. He did not want to be called an enthusiast, let alone a hypocrite, if he were to claim what had not yet taken roots in his innermost self. He wanted to encounter the truth at a point, chosen by the truth, to express it somewhat metaphorically, not by himself, not to his own liking, but at the moment and place it actually occupied: neither preceding it impatiently, nor unnecessarily lingering behind it when it had already met him, although he had missed its appearance. This is how we can understand Newman's idea of congeniality. The truth, which is greater than the mind, for it is not just a secondary idea superimposed on the primary experience, as in Locke's empiricist system, is accepted by it, nor does the mind demand demonstrative proof for its legitimacy. If such a proof is missing, Locke stops short of a conclusion, while Newman makes a bold step forward.

Let me remind the reader that we are considering Newman's conversion against the backdrop of his individual decision, i.e. without any claims to universality that could be applied under any conditions and by different persons. Such decisions are always *personal results*. And those schismatic Churchmen had their chance to arrive at the truth as a personal result. In order to explain why they failed to do so, we would have to analyse their lifetime, which is impossible, for we have only access to its external manifestations. We are, therefore, trying to find out whether such a decision can come about as a result of formal inference; our author claims that it cannot. By writing about Semi-Arians, Newman shows respect for individual challenges as they manifest themselves in single biographies, which are always unique.

78 *Ibid*., 67–68.
79 *Ibid*., 68.

To say that Newman arrived at his decision by studying the history of the primitive Church is to say very little, or even to miss the point at all. We might just as well say that he applied a certain method of analysis and came to the right conclusion, but this was not the case. His decision was occasioned by many factors, as I have underlined repeatedly in this work. If he had followed the rationalistic scheme, his conclusion might have been treated in that way, but he applied none of that. If he had, anyone could have reached the same conclusion, but this was not the case. Rather, he approached the problem with the whole of his person, that is, together with the vacillations he had at given moments, and the result was his personal response. There are many other factors that come into play here. Why did the same person reach a certain conclusion at this point and not at another one? Why did he come to this conclusion at time t_1 rather than at time t_2, since he was considering the same thing? What is the difference between these two temporal moments? Of course, Newman had always claimed that each person should be open to change, life is for change, and to live is to change often. In the quest for the truth, one should never predict the end, for this would annul the very quest. The essence of the quest is the thirst for truth, and the searcher does not know the truth at the starting point, for, if so, why would he endeavour to search at all?

Furthermore, if there were a ready-made algorithm in this quest, anyone could apply it (just as in science) and thus reach the same conclusion. In religious and moral matters, or, in general, in practical matters, this is not the case. The final decision is not just a conclusion in a chain of formal inferences. The searcher is struck by the truth, it comes upon him like a revelation; he is surprised and astonished, yet he cannot resist assenting to what he has realized. The truth satisfies not only his intellect, but it reaches his heart, his innermost self.

Considering all of these arguments as an *argumentum ad hominem*, Newman closes his reflection with the conclusion that "they also prove that schism is not necessarily a forfeiture of grace and hope."[80] He claims that the Anglican Church has still a note of sanctity. The schism of the sixteenth century, at the time of Henry VIII, did not destroy it. He turns to Roman Catholics with a special kind of appeal in which he pleads not to be accepted on anything else but his genuine Christian virtues:

> Account us not yet as a branch of the Catholic Church, though we be a branch, till we are like a branch, so that when we do become like a

80 *Ibid.*, 69.

> branch, then you consent to acknowledge us. Unless our system really has a power in it, making us neglectful of wealth, neglectful of station, neglectful of ease, munificent, austere, reverent, childlike, unless it is able to bring our passions into order, to make us pure, to make us meek, to rule our intellect, to give government of speech, to inspire firmness, to destroy self, we do not deserve to be acknowledged as a Church, and we submit to be ill-treated.[81]

These words sound like a challenge and they clearly result from his analyses of primitive Christianity. Their author does not wish to be acknowledged in a formal manner if his practice lacks the real foundation for acknowledgment, which is, first and foremost, testimony, real assent to the truth, and the manifestation of Christian tenets in daily life. The case of Meletius is indeed an extraordinary one. On this occasion, Newman stresses the fact that unity is not as important as the purity of intentions, and the example of Meletius seems to furnish a case in point. The above words encapsulate the programme of a genuine Christianity, no matter what denomination it is. I think this point is extremely important, for the underpinning sense in Newman's confession is that the primary goal is not to change the Church, but to live a true Christian life; at least, such was the case at this moment of his personal development.

Therefore, in the year 1840 Newman is still writing boldly, as a representative of his nation,

> We Englishmen like manliness, openness, consistency, truth. Rome will never gain on us till she learns these virtues, and uses them; then she may gain us, but it will be by ceasing to be what we now mean by Rome, by having a right, not to 'have dominion over our faith', but to gain and possess our affections in the bonds of the Gospel. Till she ceases to be what she practically is, a union is impossible between her and England; but if she does reform, (and who shall presume to say that so large a part of Christendom never can?) then it will be our Church's duty at once to join in communion with the Continental Churches, whatever politicians at home may say to it, and whatever steps the civil power may take in consequence. And though we shall not live to see that day, at least we are bound to pray for it.[82]

81 *Ibid.*, 70.
82 *Ibid.*, 72.

The author of these words must have been astonished that he did see that day of reunion with Rome in his own person. It is true that it was not an institutional unification, but his personal decision, a personal result, one should add. The interesting question here is that Newman seeks to liberate himself from the shackles of his culture, for he renounces slander and hate, affections guided by politics, and appeals to Christian virtues.

It follows from his analysis that the Church is still Christian and Catholic when it provides space for the maturation of saints, because such a Church can lay claims to genuineness, purity, and authenticity. And we can note Newman's constant effort to consider every minute doubt, so as not to leave anything untried. Simultaneously, let us mention, that he seeks to gather arguments in favour of the Anglican Church, because if he were to leave it, he does not want to make a rash decision. We are witnessing the process of accumulating probabilities, and yet on the purely intellectual level the outcome is still uncertain. Where does the final decision come from? Not from a series of self-evident premises that definitely lead to an indubitable conclusion.

Newman was right that our reasoning is grounded on the first principles. As he wrote in his *Sermons*: "Some things, nay, the greatest things, must be taken for granted, unless we make up our minds to fritter away life, doing nothing."[83] Here we find yet another declaration that goes against the empiricist claim that only those ideas which result from deliberation can be ushered into the mind. The very phrase "taken for granted" refutes deliberation, for the first principles must be accepted on trust, not debated. If it is assumed that the voice of conscience is the primary source of moral decisions, this assumption must be preceded by yet another assumption, namely that we should obey it. Therefore, obedience comes forth as the first principle. Such principles are taken for granted, and one can hardly be persuaded to accept them upon reasoning. In this respect, Newman seems to have been following Thomas Reid who wrote in his text *The Moral Faculty and the Principles of Morals* that it is futile to convince someone with whom we do not share the same first principles, for we "may possibly convince him by reasoning, that it is his interest to observe this rule; but it is not to convince him that it is his duty." A good example is justice: "To reason about justice with a man who sees nothing to be just or unjust, or about benevolence with a man who sees nothing in benevolence preferable to malice, is like reasoning with a blind man about colour or with a deaf man about sound."[84] Let us observe that Kant also understood moral

83 *PPS*, 1384.

84 T. Reid, *The Moral Faculty and the Principles of Morals*, in: P. Edwards, A. Pap (eds.), *A Modern Introduction to Philosophy*, New York: The Free Press, 1973, 300.

law as imposing on us the categorical maxim of practical reason, not action; the universal maxim can posit a justification of one's action, but will it impose a duty?

The above quote shows the discrepancy between general statements and practical guidelines that lead to action. If in practice we can never rely on certainty, for we are dealing with a mere accumulation of probabilities, and yet we need to make a decision without waiting for a clear and distinct perception, we must act on faith. In this area, impressions are more powerful than inferences, and principles are more trustworthy than bare facts. Some might try to look for the sources of this inspiration in Hume, but I think it would be more apposite to find it in Augustine. Newman had carried out a very thorough study of the period in which the Saint of Hippo lived. And one comes across a fitting citation in the latter's *Confessions*: "The uninstructed start up and take heaven, and we—with all our learning but so little heart—see where we wallow in flesh and blood!"[85] It appears that the primitive minds (if we may put it this way) are more prone to submit themselves to obedience. At least they do not venture out on some inquisitive search in forbidden areas. They have retained the primordial moral sense. If Newman grounded his analyses of his historical studies of the Arian heresy, we are entitled to draw a fine conclusion. He was not interested in the original philosophical solutions that appeared in later eras, but in something that one might call universal human experience. Such an experience could be found in the fourth century just as in any other period, its essence being a reliance on the inner moral sense rather than on external authority. Newman was struck by the fact that in the time of heresies so many learned divines followed the heretical views, while many simple people abided by the true doctrine. This was one, or perhaps the main, reason why he embarked on his study of the workings of the mind, especially on how this mind comes to assent to given propositions on the one hand, and to realities on the other.

The French sociologist and economist Frédéric Le Play wrote in 1865: "we must first put right the ideas. What we need to do is to improve the substance of things in the light of the principles."[86] In the context of this quotation, Henri Delassus speaks about errors, as Le Play calls them, in the social and economic spheres. He means the socialist and communist solutions. Delassus traces these errors to Rousseau, whom he calls "the evangelist of the modern

85 Augustine, *Confessions*, Book Eight, Chapter Eight, trans. Albert C. Outler, ttps://www.ling.upenn.edu/courses/hum100/augustinconf.pdf [accessed on 19th Jan. 2022].

86 Quoted from H. Delassus, *Vérités sociales et erreurs démocratiques*, Villegenon: Editions Sainte Jeanne d'Arc, 1986, 9. [the translation from the French is mine].

times, whose ideas had brought all revolutionary ideas. And his underlying idea claimed that the man was born good and was depraved by society."[87] For Donoso-Cortés, whom we have already mentioned here, the main adversary was Proudhon with his socialist and anarchist ideas, all of them yet another echo of Rousseau's erroneous proposal; and Newman is also clear about man's evil, rather than good, nature.

The Spanish and French critics (except Proudhon, that is) share certain essential elements with Newman, one of which is the fact that they all bemoan the loss of the metaphysical principles in modernity. This turning to the self, the reduction of mysteries to problems, which can thereafter be solved by the intellect empowered with logic, resulted in a complete (more today than in their day) departure from reality. The lonely self among the creations of his mind finds no respite from his baffling problems. The dilemma seems to be insolvable, for if such a subject were to remain within his immanent world, he would end up in scepticism,[88] and if he demanded aid from without his immanent world, he would immediately be afraid of losing his freedom and intellectual sovereignty.

The enlightened watchword is *sapere aude*, and as such it was promoted by the Kantian quest for the autonomous self. He found this self in the universal character of the law, and the law-making ability of the human mind. This approach liberated it from the dilemmas of self-interest. In other words, once we rely entirely on the immanent capacity of inferring, we end up in *aporias* that cannot be overcome because their solution calls for a perception from without; the immanent perspective shuns such a perception. As I have already pointed out, the self is jealous of its own notional depository, and it was not discouraged by modernity from clinging tightly to it.

Of course, in different sciences there are different first principles. In morals, it is the moral faculty and its immediate dictates. Such immediate dictates and perceptions are crucial in the sphere of conscience. Furthermore, it must be observed that the propositions about religion are notional. We learn about it through the mediation of writing, although this is not the only way. In order

87 See H. Delassus, *Vérités sociales et erreurs démocratiques*, 11.

88 We can find an excellent literary picture of scepticism resulting from the overload of reflection in a play by the Polish twentieth-century playwright Sławomir Mrożek. In his play *Indyk* [The Turkey], he portrays groups of people from various social strata (artists, soldiers, and peasants). Instead of following the natural rituals of their duties, they embark on an intellectual analysis of the underlying reasons why they should be doing what they have naturally always been doing. The conclusion is all too obvious—no social group is immune to the dangers of excessive reflection and resentment towards the first principles.

for man to understand, the messages are simplified or abbreviated, so that the recipient cannot know the whole of what is in God's mind; he can only trust that he is acting in accordance with what God wants him to do through the mediation of his well-informed conscience. What can such a recipient do, but to trust the one who communicates the incommunicable? The simple minds seem especially prone to be prepared for such communication; and God, Newman argues, may speak to simple minds directly (without the intrusive interposition of reflection). Newman rendered this incommunicable conversation in his well-known phrase: heart speaks unto heart. Simplicity seems to be the prerequisite for such a communication. No one is exempt from it, for even intellectuals can surrender to the level of simplicity. It is not a matter of any genetic endowment, but it is the spiritual effort that one can make.

But what to man is a mystery, to God is a cause.[89] The person has to liberate himself from the view that language, i.e. the necessity of notions, is the only means of communication. Newman would say: there is much more to cognition than mere notions. The human person is like a sensitive device open to various influences, and has to sieve them through his intellectual and moral apparatus. He is expected to exercise control over them, or at least examine them. We need to deny ourselves even lawful things, to subdue our thoughts and feelings, to wean ourselves from the world. Such is the attitude that well becomes a true Christian, for this is to open oneself up to mysteries.

We need to take a more distant view of the matter at hand, taking into consideration the history of the problem. Then it usually turns out that the Church was right in withholding her assent to certain discoveries. Newman is ready to point out cases which might show the Church's infallible character to its disadvantage. He wishes the adversaries were as fair as she was. The decrees of the authority on purely physical subjects have no hold over him because they have not the power to do so, hence they do not interfere with his private judgment. And he concludes by asking "whether authority has so acted upon the reason of individuals, that they can have no opinion of their own, and have but an alternative of slavish superstition or secret rebellion of heart; and I think the whole history of theology puts an absolute negative upon such a supposition."[90]

Newman looks in retrospect at the history of the Church and observes that there were not many cases of unanimity, which means that the belief in infallibility did not destroy the independence of the mind. The Middle Ages, for

89 *PPS*, 1212.

90 *Apo.*, 178.

instance, was the period "when the intellect of the educated class was [most] active" and the Church's authority was slow "in interfering!"[91] Newman argues that the Church in general is very slow in intervening, so that before she issues a sanctioning note, the matter has already been settled by reason.

The infallible character of the Church, Newman seems to be arguing, saves from the futile thrashing of controversialists. They may even wish, as if contrary to themselves or even mocking themselves, that someone might intervene and stop them, for their unending maelstrom of ideas gives them no respite. It is just fascinating how Newman arrived at the idea of infallibility, which was dormant in the Church from her very beginning. Then, gradually, this tacit truth was given its explicit form as an official dogma. I have already mentioned here the revolutionary statement *securus iudicat orbis terrarum* (what bishops and people say all over the earth, that is the truth). Owing to this principle, or, to be more precise, to the internal empowerment, the early Church managed to reject the heresies of Arianism, Nestorianism, and Monophysitism, and hammer out the Trinitarian and Christological dogmas.

This work focuses on the human person and his or her responsibility, hence the question of infallibility is important because it apparently eliminates private judgment, which in turn may suggest the elimination of responsibility. Newman argues that this is not the case. What has been tacitly hidden in the Church from the very beginning is then given a definite form, and does not contradict the judgments of reason. The wisdom of the Church is the hidden treasure as her deposit of faith. In like manner, we may say that infallibility was present in the beginning, but had no official dogmatic form, and that mistaken views had been rejected. Otherwise, it would indeed be difficult to explain why, in the maelstrom of contradicting views, in the fire of turbulent opposition, the right doctrine was eventually given its explicit form; it was like a pearl hidden beneath the trash of controversies. From a contemporary point of view, the observer may even come to the conclusion that it is a miracle, taking into consideration all of these varied and idiosyncratic positions. Newman's intuition is therefore splendid, especially his distinction between explicit and implicit truths. The Church came ultimately onto the right track, despite the disruptive ideas, because she had, as one whole, the hidden dogmatic infallibility. And glimpses of this infallibility, as I understand it, were granted to certain individuals.

Francis A. Sullivan rightly noted that "Divine Providence […] safeguards the original revelation from being corrupted in its transmission in the faith of the

91 *Ibid.*, 179.

Church" and "must also preserve the Church from error in its acceptance of such developments as articles of its faith."[92] Newman found traces of implicit infallibility in the primitive Church, in the writings of the Fathers. Thus the Church was endowed with infallibility from the very beginning, but had to develop in order to give it a dogmatic form. One conclusion is of utmost importance, and we have been returning to it throughout this work: the truth does not need to have an explicit form to be true. It may empower people despite the fact that it still lacks such a form. In other words, if the dogma of infallibility had not been formally communicated in the nineteenth century, it would have been communicated later on. Once a certain truth is latent in the bosom of the Church, it is only a matter of time before it will be revealed.

We may also say that revelation transcends whatever we already know about it. This does not mean that we are supposed to find new facts which will contradict what has already been transmitted, but that it is rich and we only gradually discover its true meaning. This only means that the revelation was potentially whole, and that humans need to learn slowly to give it its explicit form. Newman came to the conclusion that that which the Roman Catholic Church believes in must have been contained in the original revelation. There is harmony between "passive infallibility" and "active infallibility;" passive infallibility means that the body of the faithful "can never misunderstand what the Church determines by the gift of active infallibility."[93] In a letter to his friend, written after the First Vatican Council (1868–1870), Newman explains that infallibility is not inspiration, and its nature is negative, i.e. the Church "never can be *permitted to go wrong* in the truths of revelation."[94] Philosophically then, infallibility is of a transcendental nature, and it is given a priori. The Church is the divinely appointed Teacher, therefore infallibility is her prerogative, a fact which does not mean that the process of consultation and deliberation is to be neglected. The only thing we can say is that, such being the nature of infallibility (transcendental and a priori), individual members of the Church may err, and they often do, but the pronouncements of the Church as a whole are true and binding. Newman simply defined infallibility as the wonderful prerogative of the Church and a safeguard against the human controversialist intellect.

And it is also interesting to note that once he became a Roman Catholic, the infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church became his certitude anchored

92 F. A. Sullivan, *Infallibility*, in: Ker, Merrigan (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman*, 158.

93 J. H. Newman, *Letters and Diaries*, quoted in Sullivan, 159.

94 F. A. Sullivan, *Infallibility*, 159.

in St. Augustine's principle *Securus iudicat orbis terrarum*. Put another way, it was difficult for him to have accepted it when he was an external observer, and under the influence of anti-Catholic criticism, but once he became part of the system, surprisingly he found it easy to acquiesce. And because human reason is not suspended from the process, although it must surrender to faith, one can obtain ever newer confirmations that the Church's pronouncements are ultimately right, as Newman had found such confirmations in his historical studies. Reason, for instance, must succumb to the virtue of patience, when certain truths are not understood yet, because, as has been mentioned before, it is not the proper time. The moment may be inopportune. The inquiring intellect needs patience and reserve. Another thing that seems to me to be essential here is that, such being the case, we do not add anything essential to the original deposit of the Church. She had the whole dogmatic structure at the moment of her establishment. Of course, we are talking about the essential tenets of faith, not about some circumstantial changes, like the introduction of national languages into the Liturgy, the priests facing the congregation during Mass, etc.

Newman retained his private judgment upon entering the Catholic Church. Roman Catholicism ceased to be a harness for his freedom once he accepted its principles and adopted the whole system. He illustrates the relationship between Infallibility and Private Judgment as follows. Let us imagine some person who may cherish certain ideas, which are then scrutinized and, for instance, found to be erroneous. Thereafter, he is happy to abandon them. We may see such a person under constant surveillance by authority. His every single sentence is carefully examined. But the Church is not like this, she rather resembles the giant from Shakespeare's play, who is reserved in the manifestation of her own power. Successive authorities were indulgent at the time of controversies. The Popes, writes Newman, "have commonly been slow and moderate in their use of [their power]."[95]

Newman claims that, despite the authority of Infallibility, the Catholic Church provides room "for the legitimate exercise of the reason" and can host multitudes of Europeans. He somewhat prophetically provisions that "all European races will ever have a place in the Church," a process which the recent conversions apparently show. And he is thankful to Pius the Ninth that he gave the English a Church of their own, thus preparing "the way for our own habits of mind, our own manner of reasoning, our own tastes, and our own

95 *Apo.*, 180.

virtues, finding a place and thereby a sanctification, in the Catholic Church."[96] The Church respects the diversity of people and does not wish to shape people into one mechanistic and replicable template; ultimately, each person has his or her own path to the truth. Therefore, diversity does not mean that the truth is relative. The *Apologia* starts with indignation at Kingsley's charges and it ends not so much with a justification (for Newman does not feel like justifying his decisions, but only explain the circumstances in which they came about), but with admiration for the universal character of the Catholic Church. And we can draw yet another conclusion from what has been said here: namely, that such being the case with human idiosyncrasy and freedom, only individual persons can find the true path to the Church. Individuals who are determined in all earnestness to find the Truth.

John Henry Newman knew that modernity ushered in the right to private judgment and individual investigations. Modern man became oversensitive to any encroachment upon his intellectual territory; at the same time, he was easily affected by a host of opinions. The latter, in turn not only encroach upon his private territory, but additionally shape his views and model his mind. Such is the complicated situation of modern man—always bound up in contradictions, like those New Men and New Women of the nineteenth century. Newman well knew the individual place and time in which one should fulfil one's vocation. The Church shows respect not only for the individual, but also for the national character. Therefore, she is one and simultaneously different in different places. It suffices to mention the European Church and the African Church. It follows that, contrary to accusations of enforced levelling, it indeed takes place wherever Erastianism, Gallicanism (France) or Josephinism (Austria) entered the stage; when the Church is linked with political authorities, as in the aforementioned doctrines, they enforce unification with the State, and demand subservience to its goals.

Newman, in line with the climate of his era, focuses on practical reason, on what is personal and concrete, on what is idiosyncratic as opposed to the general and abstract. How can man's concrete life adjust itself to eternity? Eternity from the point of view of the concrete appears to be abstract, and we do not need to intellectually apprehend it.

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96 *Ibid*., 180, 181. The Pope reorganized the Church in England and reactivated Catholic hierarchy.

Newman embarked on the examination of the past of the Church in the hope that he would find confirmation of the primitive sources of his Church, that he would probably find fault with the Church of Rome and the Church of England would be exonerated from all charges. At the same time, as a reliable scholar, he must have been unbiased towards any discoveries. To his great surprise, it appeared that most of the charges against the Church of Rome were of a political nature, and unfounded.

In his analysis of the first council, Newman looked to the Church of Alexandria and the Council of Nicaea, convened by the Roman Emperor Constantine I. The main problem the council sought to resolve was the nature of Jesus, whether He had been "begotten" by the Father, therefore having no beginning, or else was created out of nothing, therefore having a beginning. Athanasius took the first position, whereas the popular presbyter Arius adopted the second. It is from his name that the term Arianism took its origin. For Newman, who marvelled at the course of certain doctrines, it was just mysterious that Athanasius's position should have prevailed. It was for him yet further proof that, on the one hand, persons are truth-bearers, especially those prepared and obedient to the spirit of God, and on the other hand, in such weighty a matter as this, he would add, there was the hand of God. The fact that the creed of Nicaea was defended almost single-handedly by Athanasius was, for Newman, still one more corroboration of the vital role of well-prepared (intellectually and morally) individuals who can brave the dangerous tide of errors and win. I think that, at such vital moments, he found that his *method of personation* did work. It is through persons that significant ideas take shape and are made real.

It is also interesting to note that Newman found some parallel between the Antiochene tradition, represented by Arius, the Church of Alexandria, represented by Athanasius, and his own modern times. Daley explains Newman's reconstruction of the historical event clearly: "the Antiochene tradition [...] combined the 'Jewish' biblical literalism of modern Evangelicals with the broad, philosophical relativizing of religious doctrine practised by the liberal wing of the English Church; both groups mistakenly took the Church's Protestant character as an invitation to reject classical doctrine and sacramental practice; and the key to resisting both, for those who took classical doctrine seriously, was to seek out a more spiritual, God-centred understanding of Jesus and the Church, as represented by the tradition of Alexandria."[97] These words only confirm again the *method of personation*. Admittedly, the individual person is

97 B. E. Daley, *The Church Fathers*, in: I. Ker, T. Merrigan (eds.), *John Henry Newman*, 31.

also an unstable structure, for it is through persons that errors come as well. The person is a dynamic being.

I think we should also stress certain patterns of intellectual activity that becomes almost proverbial. The same mistakes are made in the past and then repeated in the present. Human nature does exist and it has some constant elements and imponderables in its content, that is, on the one hand we have the formal principle "do good and avoid evil," and on the other the same temptations and evil inclinations. The formal principle must be translated under a concrete circumstance into actions; and evil inclinations must be overcome. Newman's history and the way he interpreted his own life stress the importance of the person's agency and responsibility.

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The term *Disciplina arcani* (the Discipline of the Secret) must be mentioned here. It was coined in the seventeenth century by the Calvinist writer and minister Jean Daillé (1594–1670). It denoted that the central doctrines of Christianity were revealed to believers but concealed from non-Christians. As Daley explains, the "Mysteries of the Christian faith were not publicly available through creedal formulas or written treatises, but were only communicated to full members of the Church at the time of baptism, Newman suggests that the central dogmas of the Trinity and the Incarnation remained within this orally communicated tradition until public controversy, in the fourth century, made it impossible to keep them private any longer."[98] Some authors deny the existence of this discipline.

Once the Tractarians started publishing *Tracts for the Times*, and criticising the liberal government of Peel, Newman incurred a wave of criticism, even from his friends. Blanco White accused him of joining ranks with "the most violent bigots" and with manifesting "the mental revolution." Such were the turbulent 1830s in the life of our author. It is curious that no one noticed that such was the life of a man who had decided to radically submit to his conscience, not to the compelling advantages of political reasons. The latter are measured according to expediency or utilitarian benefit. And we have yet another evidence of the basic argument of this work, i.e. that human life is never revealed in its entirety to external observers, that there are secret and hidden motives. No one has at his disposal an adequate insight into the interior of another person. In his letter, Blanco White notes:

98 *Ibid.*, 33.

> my heart feels a pang at the recollection of the affectionate and mutual friendship between that excellent man and myself; a friendship, which his principles of orthodoxy could not allow him to continue in regard to one, whom he now regards as inevitably doomed to eternal perdition. Such is the venomous character of orthodoxy. What mischief must it create in a bad heart and narrow mind, when it can work so effectually for evil, in one of the most benevolent of bosoms, and one of the ablest of minds, in the amiable, the intellectual, the refined John Henry Newman![99]

All of these complements and nice words must have pained their addressee, as usually happens when we are criticized by our friends and we know we have not deserved such criticism. At the same time, we know we cannot explain our motives, especially when they touch upon self-sacrifice (*secretum meum mihi*). It must have been even more alarming to read about "the venomous character of orthodoxy," rather than about the unyielding and incorruptible character of conscience. We may also surmise that Blanco White expected some apologies or refutations from Newman. Nice words, then, could also serve, paradoxically, as a dangerous temptation; White might have expected that Newman would recant his words. Alas, such people completely misunderstood his uncompromising attitude. At the same time, those divines, well-versed in the Bible, seemed to have forgotten about Jesus' admonitions: "If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."[100]

Undoubtedly, Newman felt such an urge, and, apparently, had taken these words seriously. When an individual person feels called upon to follow another path, such that is divergent from the previous one, he must be ready to do so no matter what other people will say; this decision calls for courage and resolution. It is also interesting that Newman quotes White's words at length with such openness; not that he might have had some doubts about his own bold action, but that he held their friendship in high esteem. This also shows that his friends' opinions were not indifferent to him; nevertheless, he could not help doing the contrary just to assuage their confusion, nor could they help criticising him. Put another way, there are situations when the truth is at stake, and compromise is impossible. Such a situation recedes into some mysterious regions, perfectly rendered by the famous phrase *secretum meum mihi*. In this respect, it resembles the circumstances of Thomas More, whom

99 *Apo*., 32.
100 See Lk 14:26.

we have already mentioned here. This sixteenth-century martyr and chancellor was respected by King Henry VIII, and personally held no grudges against the ruler, but valued his own voice of conscience higher than allegiance to the king, which then brought him to his dramatic end. The choice between the satisfaction of a mundane ruler, and thereby saving one's life, and submitting to the voice of conscience and duty, is the most dramatic. The examples of More and Newman, and many others, remind us that there are things which are more important than one's wellbeing, even than one's life.

At such moments, the defence and responsibility of an individual life reach their climax. White's letter can also be interpreted in keeping with Newman's epistemology. Those who failed to understand his decisions might have assented to Christian tenets merely in the notional manner. Such being the case, they naturally could not come to terms with the reality of one's duty, i.e. that it may (as it usually does) run completely contrary to others' expectations. And here we also find a confirmation of what we have already said—that only the individual person can put truths into practice, i.e. can translate notions into working principles.

No wonder that Newman's history was so enthusiastically received by the people of literature, e.g. the British writer Graham Greene. The *Apologia* is indeed a wonderful portrait and record of the dynamic character of human decisions. In real life they are not made in the cosy atmosphere and comfort of quiet offices. Moreover, in his *Apologia* Newman is telling his reader: "look, I have made it, so can you. Don't waste your time on bemoaning your weak personal faculties or your external circumstances. There are few things you can choose for your own benefit. You can reach your goal with your personal endowment. It must be sufficient, were it otherwise God would certainly have made you a different person. He does not want to have someone else. Evidently, He wants to have you."

Newman defines his position in the period of 1833–1839 as follows. The main target of his struggle was the defence of the principle of dogma and criticism of liberalism. Liberalism seems to have been comprised of both, because it was anti-dogmatic. And he stated he had remained in this position ever since, and he had "nothing to retract, and nothing to repent of." From an early age, he writes, "dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion; I know no other religion; I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion; religion, as a mere sentiment, is to me a dream and a mockery."[101] And dogma seems to have been the fundamental principle of the Movement of 1833.

101 *Apo.*, 32.

Brian Daley precisely defines the role of Newman in the beginning of the Oxford Movement, writing that "he found himself caught up in a new movement in the Church, which consciously sought to present the Church of England as rooted in classical Christian doctrine, in the traditional structures of Church office and sacramental worship, yet in critical opposition to the central leadership and teaching authority of the Roman papacy – a *via media* or middle way [...] between the Evangelical or liberal Protestantism of the time and Catholicism."[102] Let us add "Roman Catholicism."

On the list of his basic principles was the existence of a visible Church, her sacraments and rites—the channels of invisible grace. And he believed that such was the early Church and the Anglican Church. His points of reference were the Scripture and the Anglican Prayer Book. He accepted the Episcopal system on the basis of the Epistles of St. Ignatius, therefore he acquiesced to the authority of his bishop as if he were *in persona Christi*. His obedience was not only formal, but also personal. After all, he sought to be real. As he confesses: "My own Bishop was my Pope; I knew no other; the successor of the Apostles, the vicar of Christ."[103] In this attitude, he perfectly adjusted himself to the Anglican theory of Church Government, a fact which shows his earnest intentions to reform the Church of England, not to subvert it. We have discussed it here at length, while commenting on Newman's *Historical Sketches*. Now, let it suffice to say that his words testify to the high esteem in which he held his bishop.[104]

Newman's attitude shows that he did not seek enemies, nor tried to proselytize. He was indeed "self-protective" and had in mind his own person in the first place. He was convinced that his position with regard to dogma had not changed. It was the same in 1816, in 1833, and in the year in which he launched his *Apologia*.

The only thing that changed was his attitude towards the Church of Rome. We have already said that Newman had grown in a milieu of outright hostility to the Pope, and he firmly believed him to be Antichrist. Then, under the influence of Froude, he eased his censure. In 1832–1833 he "thought the Church of Rome was bound up with the cause of Antichrist by the Council of Trent," and St. Gregory I was the first pope that was Antichrist.[105] At the same time, he acknowledged that this pope was a great and holy man.

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102 B. E. Daley, *The Church Fathers*, in: I. Ker, T. Merrigan (eds.), *John Henry Newman*, 29.

103 *Apo.*, 34.

104 His Bishop at that time was Richard Bagot (1782–1854).

105 *Apo.*, 35.

He then gave up the notion, but he could not point out the precise moment when it happened. It must have been a process of infiltration by some implicit elements. As he says, "I had a shrinking from renouncing it, even when my reason so ordered me, from a sort of conscience or prejudice, [...] up to 1843."[106] Such confessions are of particular interest for me in this work, as I am tracing the individual development of such a great figure; and the like confessions are the best evidence of human dynamism, which Newman approved of. Let me stress again that many turning points came as a surprise to our author himself. This is to prove that human life is a result of numerous influences that overlap. Such phrases as "had a shrinking" or "a sort of conscience or prejudice" show that their author is not sure himself what was the main reason for his change when struggling against some residual inclinations that retained in his self. His reason "ordered" him to renounce the Church of Rome, and yet he could no longer do so freely. All of these vacillations show a person in real life placed amid contradicting forces; that which comes from his reason seems to be immediately annulled by that which stays in his cultural, political, and religious tradition. He still does not know what this shrinking means, therefore he calls it "a sort of conscience or prejudice," apparently for want of some better term. Such, let us say, phenomenological moments are especially interesting and remain within the scope of this book, as it aspires to be more of a philosophical analysis than theological, although it is impossible to separate one aspect from the other. This "shrinking" may have come from some authority to which reason has to surrender. This "vague" authority can also denote the heritage of his culture.

Newman's example, therefore, confirms an existentially well-known fact that a person may find it difficult to renounce some long-held views because it is like leaving a familiar landscape and setting out on an unknown journey. The question arises, what should determine a man to do so. How strong and sound should be the reasons which would make man leave what is, admittedly, not perfect, but safe? And who is supposed to measure these reasons? By what standards? The person has only at his disposal his own faculties, the presence, and the past that can be studied.

In that period he was still indignant at the veneration paid to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints in the Church of Rome. Then, as he himself came to terms with this practice, he felt sorry that the Virgin and the Saints should be venerated by so unworthy an institution as this Church. It is simply fascinating, let me stress again, how sincere our author is in telling the reader in detail

106 *Ibid.*

about such matters. He seems to be wary of omitting even the minutest elements of his psyche, which worked as hindrances on his way to conversion, i.e. to the attainment of certitude and the realization of the truth he had come to apprehend. It looks as if he were inviting his readers into his personal experience. In this sense, the *Apologia* is a peculiar inspection in which we can learn every detail of a biography, together with hints at what is incomprehensible. The point all the time is not to show an individual lifetime as an ideal pattern, but to refute the charge of hypocrisy and strengthen those who are still on their path to certitude. Furthermore, Newman firmly holds on to an integrated view of the human being, which means that we are not divided into separate parts, which has already been mentioned, with the intellect, the will, and emotions going their own separate ways, but we are wholes. If we are to confront reality, we must do it with all these areas united and poised to make the right decision. The stakes are enormously high. There is no repetition, no going back to some moments in the past to relive them anew.

The practice of worshipping Our Lady and the Saints in the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church was regarded as idolatry by the Anglicans. Froude thought it injudicious as well. From ignorance, he attributed the practice of the Carnival to the Romans. The trip to Sicily was indeed a turning point in Newman's approach to the Church of Rome. It was like discovering an unknown and long-forgotten land. Additionally, it was a land surrounded by much hostility and misjudgement. While being in Sicily, Newman saw "many great places, venerable shrines, and noble churches," which "much impressed [his] imagination." He recalls one particular visit to a small rural church early in the morning. The church was full of believers taking part in a mass; such experiences must have left some powerful and indelible impressions on the traveller from Britain. There were numerous elements he approved of in the Church of Rome: celibacy, the Apostolic tradition, and "faithful agreement with Antiquity." He learned "to have tender feelings towards her; but still [his] reason was not affected at all [,] for [his] judgment was against her, when viewed as an institution, as truly as it ever had been."[107]

Here we have again the same problem like in the previous case regarding the Roman Church as the Antichrist. Then, his reason "ordered" him to treat her so. And now, too, his "reason was not affected" by tender feelings. Emotions precede reason, reason—being naturally cautious and prone to analysis—stays behind. Newman was convinced that it is the whole person who should accept the truth. Otherwise, the person would not be real. The point was

107 *Ibid.*, 36.

to bring reason round to agree with the affections. As Aristotle wrote in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, we naturally feel joy or displeasure towards certain acts; the virtuous person is such that has these affections at the right moment, i.e. feels attraction towards a good act (and feels joy in committing it), and repulsion towards an evil act (and feels sadness in committing it). We may surmise that Newman was speaking of such agreement, in the context of unity and reality, and that this was what he sought.

It was also the moment when his theory of cognition was put to the test. Reason was fed on evidence, but faith could fare well without evidence and stay satisfied with probabilities. At the same time, Newman was well aware, and he wrote about it in one of his Tracts of 1834, that the justified animosity he might feel toward the Church of Rome was if she did not preach the truth. Then, despite any warm feelings he might have, he should oppose her. He felt it to be his duty. The aim, therefore, of his intellectual inspection was to examine the origins of Christianity, and find out whether the Church of Rome was their continuation.

We see Newman in the grips of his cultural surroundings. He read the Oxford theologian of the sixteenth century, Bernard Gilpin (1517–1583), who argued that the only reason for the Protestants' separation was that they claimed the Pope was the Antichrist. As an Anglican, he felt it was his duty to protest against the Church of Rome, but he did not like the task. At the same time, he was ready to say all the negative words against her "to protect [himself] against the charge of Popery."[108] The charge of Popery was culturally (and religiously) sanctioned.

He still firmly believed in the principles of Anglicanism, so he felt safe that any deficiencies he might expose would not endanger his belief or bring him close to the Church of Rome. He was also convinced that he would find nothing against the Church of England in the Fathers. As he noted down, not without a sense of satisfaction and self-persuasion, that if "there was any thing in the Fathers of a startling character, this would be only for a time; it would admit of explanation, or it might suggest something profitable to Anglicans; it could not lead to Rome."[109]

Newman admits that he was not the kind of person to influence others. He says he "had been influenced, not influencing; and at no time have I acted on others, without their acting upon me." By saying this, I think, he wanted to stress the fact that the Movement was not a premeditated process of attaining

108 *Ibid.*, 37.
109 *Ibid.*

conversion. His disciples heard what he said and then distributed it in their circles and parishes. Therefore, the Movement, Newman says, "viewed with relation to myself, was but a floating opinion, it was not a power." And if it were in his hands, it would have remained so, for his principle was, "live and let live."[110] He simply experienced a not-so-rare situation, when some ideas go adrift contrary to their authors' intentions; we may also suggest the powerful working of the truth.

Two things are worth emphasizing here. First, that his *method of personation* is at work here, for it is through the mediation of persons that vital messages are spread; and, second, that the truth should be working on its own, for it contains explicit and implicit elements. The implicit ones work despite our willingness to make them work; they penetrate our innermost centres. And here again we see Newman's respect for individual lives. As being their senior, he did not want junior colleagues to follow his suggestions in the form of blind imitation. As we already know, he protested against calling their Movement a party. In view of this self-imposed distance from the effects of the Tracts, or even from the process of editing them, he was often confronted with opinions opposite to his intentions. The general purpose was still the same—to defend the Church against liberal encroachment. Newman stresses the role of Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800–1882). Pusey was a sober and grave man. Some people thought that he was near the Church of Rome, but Newman thought he never was. Let us state this clearly: our author always thought that a decision about such vital things as a conversion was a very personal matter.

In 1837 he published *The Prophetical Office of the Church viewed relatively to Romanism and Popular Protestantism*. Its main purpose was to give an account of the Roman and Anglican systems. The tone of the text is very critical of the Church of Rome, so much so that the two could not be confused. The text is "very fierce" with no hope for reconciliation between the two Churches. In the same spirit, he thought it was brave to speak publicly against the Whigs and their liberal government in *The Prophetical Office* on which he worked from 1834 to 1836. Nevertheless, he felt no satisfaction. As he confesses, he was "in a state of moral sickness, neither able to acquiesce in Anglicanism, nor able to go to Rome."[111] He did not want to make any hasty judgments, or jump to

110 *Ibid*., 39. These words illustrate what Thomas à Kempis wrote in his *Imitation of Christ*: "And also of other men's deeds deem nothing rashly nor meddle not nor imply (implicate) thee not with things that art not committed to thee and it shall be trouble to thee little or seldom" (*Imitation of Christ*, New York: The Modern Library, 1943, Part Three, Ch. XXIX.

111 *Apo*., 44.

conclusions, without being personally ready. Moreover, he was wary of any motives that might come from his deluded self, especially when warped by emotions, not under the control of reason. He acknowledged all of the gifts that his Church of England had, such as sagacity and learning, but the Church still needed "peculiarly a sound judgement, patient thought, discrimination, a comprehensive mind, an abstinence from all private fancies and caprices and personal tastes,—in a word, Divine Wisdom."[112]

We may surmise that reflections such as those above must have led their author to the conclusion that he needed to rethink the modern philosophical tradition. It is true that he oftentimes abstained from calling himself a philosopher, yet he later undertook the trouble of proposing his own understanding of the notion of assent. And assent is the foundation of epistemology. Meanwhile, as if to defend his position of hesitation, he came up with the concept of the *Via Media*.

In a certain sense, the phrase *Via Media* resembles Aristotle's way of virtue, i.e. abstaining from defect and excess, and, in general, from extremes. In religion, however, it has a certain negative connotation, for the proponent of the middle way is like someone who hesitates to take sides; the point was to be neither Protestant nor Roman Catholic. Newman characterizes it as being "not as yet objective and real, it had no original anywhere of which it was the representative." It was, as Newman notes "a paper religion." At the same time, he believed that one day it might become "a substantive religion."[113] It was based on dogma, the sacramental system, and anti-Romanism. The Anglicans still held on to the Apostolic succession. He found in the Church of England elements in common with the Church of Rome. As he wrote, they "might [be] boldly welcome," and those things that they felt obliged to denounce, they "should do so with pain, not with exultation."[114]

Let us stress this conciliatory tone. In all of these considerations our author had not yet touched upon the new philosophy on which the Church of England relied. Furthermore, Tract 71 was devoted to the regeneration of the Anglican Church, a task that Newman considered of prime importance before the reformers would decide to improve others. The main purpose was to show his Church as "a living Church, made of flesh and blood, with voice, complexion, and motion and action, and a will of its own."[115]

112 *Ibid.*, 45.
113 *Ibid.*, 46.
114 *Ibid.*, 47.
115 *Ibid.*, 48.

While analyzing the Lutheran doctrine of justification, he published *Essay on Justification* in 1837. In this text, he saw no difference between the high Church and the low Church, and pointed to his *University Sermons* where he discussed the subject of Faith and Reason. This issue is interesting because—as has been mentioned before—Newman gradually became aware of the need for some philosophical considerations and solutions. He rightly observes that the question of the relationship between faith and reason is of the utmost importance. As such, it is "an inquiry into the ultimate basis of religious faith," and it "is prior to the distinction into Creeds."[116] He did discuss this in his *University Sermons*, but of course returned to the problem on a more scholarly basis in his *Grammar of Assent*. In the summer of 1838, he published a Pamphlet whose purpose was to place the doctrine of the Real Presence on an intellectual basis. He also mentioned an idea to which he had long been attached, namely "the denial of the existence of space except as a subjective idea of our minds."[117] Space as a subjective idea might be an obstacle on the way to understanding the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, for the Real Presence presupposes the real existence of space. If Christ is present, He must be placed in space, although this space may be understood differently than the space in which we locate material bodies. In any case, it cannot be apprehended merely as a subjective quality. After Transubstantiation, Christ really enters our reality.

Newman expressed his belief in the Real Presence when he wrote in one of his Anglican sermons: "but it is what our Lord says it is, the gift of His own precious Body and Blood, really given, taken, and eaten as the manna might be [...], at a certain particular time, and a certain particular spot."[118] I feel that these words clearly show the event of the Eucharist, during which Transubstantiation takes place. At the same time we read in his Anglican sermon the official interpretation then of Transubstantiation:

> I allude to the doctrine of what is called Transubstantiation, which we do not admit; or that the bread and wine cease to be, and that Christ's sacred Body and Blood are directly seen, touched, and handled, under the *appearances* of Bread and Wine. This our Church considers there is no ground for saying.[119]

116 *Ibid.*, 49.
117 *Ibid.*
118 *PPS*, 266–267.
119 *Ibid.*, 1265.

Newman discussed this issue at length in various texts.[120] He comes to terms with Transubstantiation when he adopts the Roman Catholic system in its integral totality. He considers in one of his sermons the nature of the soul, and concludes that just as it is difficult to define the exact *place* of the soul, we too cannot determine the place of the Spirit of God. Therefore, it can be present in heaven and in the Eucharist, truly and simply. And he postulates an interesting hypothesis, namely, that the moment of presence can also be imagined as an act of taking the human soul up to God. At the same time, he admits that it could equally be in the reverse order, i.e. Christ coming to man. Newman does not decide the question of whether a body can be present in two places; he calls it a mystery. At this point in his life, Newman interprets Christ's invitation to eat His Body and drink His Blood not in its literal sense (as Roman Catholics understand it), but as a message whose meaning is mysterious and beyond human comprehension.

Did Jesus really cover a physical distance to be seen by St. Paul on his way to Damascus? What does it mean for a resurrected body to cover distances? The interesting case is when Jesus appeared to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. Perhaps He appeared to them in another form than when He was alive, for they had only impressions of their hearts burning within them, and only afterwards did they realize they had seen Him. Newman explains it as follows: "He for one instant manifested Himself to their open eyes; manifested Himself, if I may so speak, while He passed from His hiding-place of sight without knowledge, to that of knowledge without sight."[121] It follows that faith and sight cannot be combined; faith goes without cognition, cognition is deprived of the knowledge through our senses. We need to be accommodated to a different meaning of space. After the resurrection, Jesus is not in any physical locality, like when He was in His body, but He is, by faith, everywhere. He is, Newman writes, "not present with us locally and sensibly, but still really, in our hearts and to our faith."[122] His speculation touches indeed upon an important point, that of a fundamental qualitative change in the communing of human beings and Jesus after resurrection. Once He ceased to be physically present

120 He wrote about it in his *Letter to the Rev. Godfrey Faussett, D.D.* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1838), where he comments on Hooker. The latter maintained that "Christ's Presence is in the soul,—that it comes into the soul from without,—that it comes through the Sacraments, and is not in the Sacraments." (p. 66) See more on the question of Transubstantiation in J. Van Amberg, *A Real Presence*, Leiden * Boston: Brill, 2012, *passim*; J. S. Mariaselvam, *The Real Presence of the Person Christ in the Blessed Eucharist*, Romae: Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, 1996, *passim*.

121 *PPS*, 1259.

122 *Ibid*., 1260.

in this concrete locality, He became present in ubiquity. We are, therefore, dealing with a mysterious interpenetration of space in our physical sense and space in its spiritual sense.

There is nothing contradictory about Newman's views on Transubstantiation if we treat them, as we should, as case studies of this *living intelligence* and not as models of some life in general. Newman's *Apologia* is like an invitation to enter into *his* circumstances and his reasoning at given moments. We know that in his individual history he went through a phase of Evangelicalism, for example, that he was strongly influenced by anti-Romanism. Protestant Churches usually understand Transubstantiation as consubstantiation: Christ is only really present at the Eucharist (Lutheranism), or He is present spiritually (Calvinism), or it is only a symbolic remembrance of the Last Supper (Zwinglianism and some Protestant Churches). In the Roman Catholic Church, Transubstantiation is understood according to Aristotelian metaphysics, mediated by the teaching of Thomas Aquinas: the whole substance of the bread and wine is transformed into the whole substance of the body and blood of Christ, and only the accidents (the appearance of the bread and wine) remain.[123] If the main feature of human life is change, it should not be surprising that people can cling to different positions and then abandon them until they settle into what they *recognize* and *realize* as their doctrine.

In that period, Claude Fleury's[124] translation of *Church History* was commenced. This text is important, for—as Newman admits himself—it unsettled him in his Anglicanism.[125] It is interesting that Newman should so often stress the various influences that came to him from outside. I understand his logic as follows. He broke with the rigours of the modern mind in which every step should be well-defined and evidenced; at the same time, it came to him as a challenge for his own mind. If there was something he did not seek and yet he found it, we may surmise that he treated it as a God-given inspiration; he was suspicious all the time of what may come only from his immanent world (subjectivism), or else from a blind imitation of others (inauthenticity, unreality). Therefore, he stresses that his change of opinion arose "not from foreign influences, but from the working of my own mind, and the accidents around me."[126] In other words, it was not devoid of reflection or without respect for reality. And, again, the *method of personation* is at work here, for the text was proposed

123 See Transubstantiation, [in:] F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, 1390–1391.

124 Claude Fleury (1640 – 1723) was a French priest, jurist, and ecclesiastical historian.

125 See, *Apo*., 49.

126 *Ibid*.

to him by Hugh Rose; as we already know, other persons are instrumental in his growth. Again, he wants to stress that there were no subversive intentions with regard to the Church of England. Newman's confession is of the utmost importance because it succinctly recapitulates his personal path. We must always bear in mind that the *Apologia* is not a diary, but a retrospection. Therefore, we are entitled to assume that that which he wrote in it characterized his life throughout.

Other influential books were *Life of Pope Gregory VII* and the series of the *Lives of the English Saints*, and there was little "that was congenial with Anglicanism."[127] He then worked on the Tract *On the Roman Breviary*. Like with all his inspirations of this kind, the text was suggested to him by a friend. On Hurrell Froude's death, in 1836, he was asked to select a book as a keepsake. This friend suggested the Breviary Froude used. And this friend, as Newman noted, is still in the Anglican Church, whereas he is out. Let me stress two points here: 1) the situation resembles the famous story of St. Augustine we have already alluded to when the saint of Hippo heard a child singing in a nearby garden "Tolle, lege" (take it and read it), and took these words as being addressed to him personally; 2) the calling and its response are always individual, since the friend remained in the Church of England. Generally, none of these events directly advocated the cause of Rome.

127 *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 8

Tract XC and the Articles

Newman was asked to give his opinion on the Articles of Anglican Faith. In 1841, his judgment against Rome was still strong. But then, he was not certain how to interpret the word "Rome," which may have different connotations. And Newman enumerates them: 1) the Catholic teaching of the early centuries; 2) the formal dogmas of Rome (continued in the later Councils, especially the Council of Trent);[1] and 3) the actual popular beliefs and usages sanctioned by Rome. He called them the "dominant errors."[2] Newman started to make distinctions. He was not willing to condemn every element of the Catholic doctrine. The term "Rome" ceased to be unanimously or self-evidently negative for him. He came to the conclusion that Catholic teaching was not condemned in the Articles, whereas Roman dogma was, and that these two things were often mistaken; Roman dogma was then not condemned, but common error was.

In his analysis of the Thirty-Nine Articles, Newman adopted the same methods he used in his personalistic approach, i.e. the valid decision is the decision of the whole body, and it is confirmed by the believing persons. Therefore he writes that "no good can come of any change which is not heartfelt, a development of feelings springing freely and calmly within the bosom of the whole body itself."[3] As we can see, he would always stress the prevalence of such spontaneous processes, rising within the minds and hearts of the faithful. Let us observe that such is also the logic of dogmas. The changes should be "the fruits [...] of the quiet conviction of all."[4]

1 In the sixteenth century, Rome established her own definitions by the Council of Trent (1545–1563), and England established hers. Clerical commissions prepared formularies which were then sanctioned by the Crown and Parliament. Among these formularies we find the Ten Articles of Henry VIII, and the Thirty-Nine Articles incorporated in the Prayer Book during the reign of Elizabeth I. The fact that the definitions given in these documents were sanctioned by the State meant that they had to be accepted by all. The recalcitrant was subjected to penalties (from burning at the stake to fines or an inability to discharge public functions). In this manner, they sought to enforce unity. Thus, citizens were not allowed to follow their own conscience. During the reign of Elizabeth I there was some latitude, i.e. more leeway was given to the followers of John Knox and those rejected by Calvinists.

2 *Apo.*, 52.

3 J. H. Newman, *Remarks on Certain Passages in the Thirty-Nine Articles* [Number 90], https://www.newmanreader.org/works/viamedia/volume2/tract90/tract90-1.html.

4 *Ibid.*

Newman ascribed such mistakes to the obscurity and misrepresentation brought forth by "a dominant circumambient 'Popery' and 'Protestantism'."[5] These terms were treated as having a self-evident pejorative connotation, without any need to discern their true meaning. Such connotations were, one might say, culturally approved interpretations. Whereas Newman came to the revolutionary (and devastating) conclusion, namely that "the Articles do not oppose Catholic teaching; they but partially oppose Roman dogma; they for the most part oppose the dominant errors of Rome. And the problem was [...], to draw the line as to what they allowed and what they condemned."[6] He wanted to test the elasticity of the Articles, that is, how far they could go toward the Roman tenets.

It is interesting to note that he "was even embarrassed at [himself] that [he] should wish to go as far as was possible in interpreting the Articles in the direction of Roman dogma, without disclosing what [he] was doing to the parties whose doubts [he] was meeting; who, if they understood at once the full extent of the licence which the Articles admitted, might be thereby encouraged to proceed still further than at present they found in themselves any call to go."[7]

As we are trying to understand Newman's individual twists and turns, we should pay particular attention to such psychological confessions. An introspection into this genial mind is indeed fascinating. One may justifiably ask whence came this wish. Was it his desire for unity? Or, perhaps, his appetite for curiosity to probe into the matter at hand to its very end? His reservation to keep his revelations from others may have arisen from two sources. Either he trusted himself or was prudent enough to know when to stop, so that he did not cross certain barriers; or, he was worried that others, without thoroughly examining the issue, might feel prompted to go forward and jump to conclusions they did not yet understand. In like manner, they might become passionate partisans and unreal hypocrites rather than peaceful and serene believers who sank back into the embrace of their well-tried certitude, the kind of certitude that one does not feel like proving to anyone, the kind of certitude in which passions and reason are not at odds and they coalesce in the one statement "I know that I know." And "I know that I know" does not call for any further explanations. In this quote, we find the very Newmanian element that we should not proceed further than we find in ourselves "any call to go." If he was worried about his colleagues, he must have been certain about himself, i.e. that

5 *Apo.*, 53.
6 *Ibid.*
7 *Ibid.*, 54.

he knew when to stop going any further. One should first find in oneself a call. Where does this call come from?

These intricate paths of his thinking are very telling and informative about the working of the human mind. Newman took it for granted that the Articles had been drawn up against Popery, so that even those things which seemed to him in agreement with the Church of Rome must be merely his subjective feeling. He expresses this conclusion as "transcendently absurd and dishonest to suppose that Popery" was "patristic belief," and that "Tridentine dogma, or popular corruption authoritatively sanctioned,—would be able to take refuge under their text."[8] And he immediately refuted this objection, explaining that the idea of Popery, as was held during the reign of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, was primarily political. Both Henry and Elizabeth opposed the Supremacy of the Pope because, they believed, Supremacy was contrary to their sovereignty. Therefore we have two ways of understanding Supremacy in the foreign jurisdiction: in the political sense and in the religious sense.

What did the compilers of the Articles have in mind? Put another way, Newman was asking about the boundary of the term "Popery." And he came to the conclusion that this derogative word could not have been addressed against the Tridentine Council, which was still in progress when the Articles were drawn up.[9] By imposing the Articles, the Government wanted not merely to get rid of "Popery" but to gain the "Papists." Apparently, just like the Arians they used ambiguous language addressed to reluctant or wavering minds. Such is the role of the so-called "self-evident" words, which many people repeat (sometimes with undue reverence), but hardly anyone understands their meaning. Such was the objective of the Articles—to induce the reluctant and wavering minds on the basis of antecedent probability, one of the key Newmanian terms which is at the heart of his understanding of faith. When Newman analyzes the position of the Pope, he does not mean him supreme in the political sense. We should not wonder that, by reducing the question of "Popery" addressed by the Thirty-Nine Articles to the political issue of Supremacy, he blunted their thrust and evoked furious criticism, for it opened the way to much bolder comparisons between Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism.

We need to remember that, as Robert Tombs rightly notes, the term "popery" was not solely a religious concept, but it was a political one.[10] The British had kept in their memories the notorious Gunpowder Plot of 1605. They were

8 *Ibid.*

9 The Articles are dated 1562, and the Canons of the Council were officially promulgated by Pope Pius IV in 1564.

10 See T. Tombs, *The English and their History*, 253.

ready to accept a Catholic minority as long as it was apolitical, but when they sensed some influence from France they became alarmed. Rumours were spread around about a "popish plot" to assassinate Charles and place James on the throne; religious issues intermingled with political ones; secret and unchecked accusations added momentum to the atmosphere of suspicions and recriminations. The "plot" was fabricated by Titus Oates (1649–1705) in 1678, an English priest who had been previously shortly trained as a Jesuit, hence this alleged plot is, therefore, referred to as a Jesuit plot. A number of Catholics were executed and some peers were impeached. Earl of Shaftesbury and his able secretary, John Locke, took the lead in this campaign and insisted on the adoption of anti-Catholic legislation. It is interesting to note how ever new intrigues are always being invented to get people's attention, from Nero down to our present times. Catholics were accused of malevolent intentions to upset the social order, or to kill the sovereigns like the English ruler in the seventeenth century. As we know, it is always easier for some animosities to take root than be uprooted, and the ruling authorities are all too ready to take advantage of even implausible theories if, thereby, they can lay the blame for their own failures on others, or at least shift and focus social attention on something else. Tombs concludes: "It became increasingly clear that Oates's 'Popish Plot' [...] was an invention."[11]

In his view of Roman Catholics, Newman must have cleared his mind of all those invented plots about coups allegedly organized by them. For the average Anglican, the Romanists were commonly depicted as calculating and bloodthirsty conspirators. Let it be also noted that John Locke, himself a philosopher, participated in the dissemination of this false message (today we would call it fake news). In order to render a more complete picture of the anti-Catholic atmosphere, we also need to mention the Lollard movement, preceding Henry VIII's schism, which had earlier triggered the whole process of disowning the Roman Catholic Church in Britain and wrought profound cultural changes. Psychologically, it is difficult to admit someone is right when one has bequeathed property, even if in a dishonest manner the religious reforms that ensued were then mingled with economic measures which encroached upon the properties that the Protestants coveted.

In antecedent probability, we draw conclusions about what is likely to happen. Unlike the Puritans of old, especially the radical ones, who claimed that the "purity" of Protestantism called for a purge of all Roman Catholic elements, Newman realized it was likely that the compilers of the Articles might look at

11 *Ibid.*, 254.

their work with a much more benevolent eye. And they might agree not only to their Catholic, but also Roman, elements.

As far as the 1571 Convocation was concerned, which received and confirmed the Articles, there was "an extreme probability" for Newman that it would not reject the Roman doctrines. And, again, he stressed the vague and indecisive language of the Articles. I am not going to quote all his objections. Let it suffice to mention the big issue with Protestantism's relation to works versus grace and justification. In the Protestant doctrine, works are of no account before grace and justification; they are only acceptable after grace and justification. Newman rightly asks: how about works "*with* God's aid *before* justification."[12] The latter solution is indeed Roman Catholic in its form and content. When his Tract XC appeared, it caused indignation and suspicion. Its author still believed in the grievousness of the "dominant errors" of Rome, but to his great surprise he was led to positions he had not planned. At the same time, we need to say that the events taking place fit well into Newman's overall epistemology—he started to be *possessed* by the truth.[13] Obviously, it came to a clash with his circle of friends. They wanted him to withdraw the tract or at least not defend it. And that was a very personal and existential moment, indeed a trial: either to submit to their wishes and thus, perhaps, gain external peace, but simultaneously betray himself and risk a conflict with his conscience; or to stand firmly his own ground, restore his internal peace, but risk his social and academic position. Such is the universal challenge of many people who are called upon to defend the truth they have found, and they know it should be defended at any cost.

He realized that he could no longer "acquiesce in a mere Protestant interpretation of the Articles,"[14] without the danger of becoming unreal, for that would be contrary to himself. Tract XC caused a storm, for it proposed a Catholic interpretation of the Anglican Articles. Newman was the first, as Trevor observed, to undermine the view that the Articles were "a bulwark against Catholicism."[15] No one before had given a thought to the Thirty-Nine Articles, much less doubted their validity, or wanted to probe them critically; it was like risking the overturn of the entire construction upon which the previous belief stood. Their ideological message seemed obvious and unambiguous; Newman dared to disclaim this view and show that they could also be interpreted along the lines of the Catholic tenets. The charge was levelled against

12 *Apo.*, 58.
13 See *US*, 321.
14 *Apo.*, 60.
15 Trevor, *The Pillar of the Cloud*, 242.

the Tract's "popery [...] and the evasive hypocrisy of the author."[16] I do not need to persuade the reader that once "popery" was formulated, it was self-evident that the text should be rejected.

After this criticism, he parted with the Movement. In his farewell letter, its author struck a very positive note, writing:

> I have nothing to be sorry for, but everything to rejoice in and be thankful for. I have never taken pleasure in seeming to be able to move a party, and whatever influence I have had, has been found, not sought after. I have acted because others did not act, and have sacrificed a quiet which I prized. May God be with me in time to come, as He has been hitherto! and He will be if I can but keep my hand clean and my heart pure.[17]

Let us draw attention to certain terms in this letter. First, he has nothing to regret in participating in the Movement or in writing the tract. He takes it to be an important stage in his life. Then he reminds his reader what we have already mentioned here, i.e. that he did not want to establish a political party, nor did he have any political ambitions in general. And we also find what I deem to be the most important element in Newman's epistemological system, or, in other words, a typically Newmanian element: he underlines that the influence he may have gained "has been found, not sought after." Contrary to the enlightened paradigm, Newman was very suspicious of the immanent contrivances of the mind. They are often illusive, not under the control of reason, but biased by party spirit, emotion, prejudices, and inclinations. He did not want to have his own way, but to follow God's way; and he trusted God would show it to him through his obedience to conscience. Newman firmly believed that if there was a truth for him to know, he should find it (or, to be precise, be found by it), rather than seek it. This means not staying passive, doing nothing. On the contrary, to be ever more diligent in fulfilling one's duties with full commitment, in earnestness and sincerity. Sooner or later, it is the truth that will find *him*. Newman did not undermine the human intellectual capacities; in no way was he an anti-intellectual, as we have often repeated here. He was wary of the natural inclinations that might lead him astray, i.e. the heritage of the Fall. At the same time, however, he believed firmly that the natural capacities should not be exaggerated, or be isolated from the person. It is the *whole* person that should grow towards knowledge. And the last point is as equally important as

16 *Ibid*., 243.
17 *Apo*., 61.

the previous one, i.e. his wish that he will keep his "hand clean and [his] heart pure," namely that his words will remain real, free from hypocrisy and double-dealing. We may surmise that that which Newman meant throughout his life was this: that the truth will be given to a man with clean hands and a pure heart. In this way, obviously, he sought to satisfy the requirements of David's Psalm 24: "Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god."[18] And the practical conclusion reads as follows: keep your hands clean and your heart pure, and the truth will find you. Let us also note that Newman's parting with the Movement is similar to his sojourn in Sicily where he was laid up in bed with malaria, almost dying, but with a firm belief that he would not die because he had not sinned against the light. We have already described this moment here. His not sinning against the light I find as being equal to his keeping his hand clean and his heart pure. Let it be also noted that in relying on the truth that finds man, he trusted divine providence.

It is my firm belief that such is Newman's message, that human thinking in practical matters, such as religion and morality, depends on the person's moral condition. We find similar hints in the Book of Wisdom, where "perverse counsels," those who plot evil, "senseless counsels," "stealthy utterance," those who utter "wicked things" are not accepted.[19] And in Chapter 6 of that Book we read that Wisdom "hastens to make herself known in anticipation of men's desires;" by analogy, we may say that an integral and prepared man, such as he who makes every effort to live in reality to his innermost self "shall find her sitting at his gate."[20]

It is in this atmosphere of storm and criticism that he preached his sermon "The Cross of Christ the Measure of the World." Unlike Socrates who, as we remember from Plato's *Apology*, called upon the god at Delphi to be witness to the existence and nature of his wisdom, Newman places the cross as the measure of the world. It is not the utilitarian approach, in which people follow their inclinations and "are guided mainly by pleasure and pain, not by reason, principle, or conscience; and they do not attempt to *interpret* this world, to determine what it means, or to reduce what they see and feel to system."[21] We are given to understand that he himself has placed the Cross as the anchor of his system. In this system, there are three main pillars: reason, principle,

18 24: 3–4.
19 Wis, 1.
20 *Ibid*., 6: 13–14.
21 *PPS*, 1229.

and conscience. Reason is one, for otherwise he would not have started his detailed study of the Christian past, if he had deemed reason to be completely useless. It is by way of analogy, which he learned from Butler, that the Church translates certain experiences into dogmas, for God *speaks* through persons. In the natural sciences, we observe some phenomena and then try to formulate rules that guide them. In a similar manner, on the basis of vivid human religious experience, we come up with dogmas. The case of religion, however, is different. Here, we need to take into consideration the idiosyncratic character of religion in which the explicit truths live side by side with the implicit ones.

The Cross, not human wisdom, is in the centre. Unlike Socrates, Newman would not go round asking representatives from various social classes: politicians, artists, or simple crafts people. One may rightly say that Socrates was using irony in his defence. And the Greek philosopher, naturally, did not know the notion of conscience, much less the Christian conception of conscience. What else could Newman have mustered for his defence but his own conscience? And because conscience is an innermost principle, the only thing he could point to was the Cross. The voice of conscience is a personal experience and, at the same time, such that demands obedience to its claims. Socrates is thought to have encapsulated his ignorance in the famous "I know that I know nothing." This can be compared to Newman's "I know that I know," with the basic difference that Socrates seems to be pointing to the contents of his mind, whereas Newman is simply reporting on the personal-existential state of his very being; therefore, there is something solid in Newman's statement without any need to put it to the test. At the same time, there are certain implicit similarities, because we remember that Socrates obviously *knew* that it was right to do justice and it was wrong to do injustice. Apparently, it would be difficult to explain why. Certainly, Socrates *knew* that it was right to choose death and drink his cup of hemlock rather than disavow his teaching, and leave prison. Consequently, we can say that Socrates knew "something." At the same time, however, we might say Socrates and Newman are similar in the sense that both claim the primary significance of first principles, e.g. it is better to do justice than injustice, it is fundamental to be obedient to one's conscience. And there is no reason to ask why, for the only answer one may receive is "I know that I know." Newman's "I know" is congenial to Socrates' "knowing" in the sense that in either case it is impossible to explain the call of inner duty, especially when its consequences are so radical, completely devoid of utilitarian calculations.

We may go on like this, enumerating those who "knew that they knew," this time using Newman's maxim we have discussed at length earlier. Daniel surrendered to King Darius's order, St. Thomas More bowed his head before

the executioner. Placing the Cross in the centre of worldly matters is like placing a mystery inside human affairs. Why is the Cross the pulsating heart of Christianity? In one of his prayers, Newman writes: "My God, I know well, you could have saved us at your word, without yourself suffering; but you did choose to purchase us at the price of your Blood."[22] He acquiesces, then, that the Cross is a mystery, and therefore its message cannot be translated into any explicit truths and put forward in the form of self-evident propositions.

22 *A Newman Prayer Book*, 23.

CHAPTER 9

The Logic of Dogmas

We are surrounded by man's "vacant visions" that pass into our mind unheeded by the mind's judgment present. And the accumulation of such visions works changes. Newman gives an example of infants who have impressions without reflection, and he claims that they are important. They suggest "the reality and permanence of inward knowledge, as distinct from explicit confession." And then he proceeds to apply this important distinction between *inward knowledge* and *explicit confession* to the logic of dogmas. He continues:

> The absence, or partial absence, or incompleteness of dogmatic statements is no proof of the absence of impressions or implicit judgments, in the mind of the Church. Even centuries might pass without the formal expression of a truth, which had been all along the secret life of millions of faithful souls. Thus, not till the thirteenth century was there any direct and distinct avowal, on the part of the Church, of the numerical Unity of the Divine Nature, which the language of some of the principal Greek fathers, prima facie, though not really, denies.[1]

Certain ideas may remain latent in the Christian mind, dormant in the mind of the Church, and it is a mystery why and when they become explicit, i.e. in the form of an official dogma, at that particular moment and not another. The ideas come from the bosom of the Church in time as humankind develops. For dogmas to be true, it is not important that they be proclaimed at once. They have time to grow and mature in the minds of the believers. This is an interesting view; it shows that the history of the Church develops together with her people. Dogmas are not imposed on them perforce. It follows that, in order for an implicit truth to develop into an explicit dogma, respective conditions must be provided. The Church is like fertile ground for the growth of dogma. It must be borne in mind, however, that this fertile ground consists of real, not nominal, believers. To conclude, dogma is primarily not a theoretical statement that one can read as a whole, but a reality that we come to know gradually. It is like the slow process of opening a door through which the whole landscape unfolds to us by degrees, as we grow in maturity. We need to observe

1 *US*, 301–302.

that, in Newman's vision, this unfolding of a dogma into its explicit form runs its course through the mediation of believers (*sensus fidelium*), therefore it is not an arbitrary announcement of a certain external authority. (Let us suggest in passing that, by way of analogy, we could postulate a similar development of scientific theories: they are all given or present for mankind at the very beginning, but they lack their explicit form, so we need to wait for the right time for this form to be explicitly unfolded).

Newman's message seems to read as follows: we do not have to seek the truth, but rather live in such a way that it should find us. If we come to think it over, we have to say that Newman has a point here, for is it not safer to *realize* and *fulfil* what we *know*, i.e. our duties, than to fervently seek what we do not know yet, i.e. the truth? In the Gospel according to St. John we read: "and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."[2] The person who does not seek will *know*, or will be *given to know*; and the person who finds must seek first. Is it not interesting that we have the verb *know* here, not *find*? Or, to imitate the Book of Wisdom, we shall find wisdom sitting at our gate. The only question a person can ask is the following: how and when shall I know it? Unfortunately or fortunately, there is no answer to this question. The truth will be revealed, inasmuch as this person fulfils the duties that result from his or her position. Consequently, and this is what happened in Newman's life, after years of such faithfulness the truth is revealed to concrete persons, or, to use Newman's term, they become *possessed* of it. This perception clearly results from Newman's suspicion of the subjective intrusions of self-interest and the culture of immanence, both of which prevailed in the Enlightenment. Newman never intended to find *his* truth, but *God's* truth. No superhuman measures, no extraordinary or exceptional steps need to be taken, for in the confrontation between Goliath and David, it was David who triumphed, although by human standards he should have been the loser.

That is why those who allegedly are fervently seeking the truth, actually may be only seeking the satisfaction of their own selves. The truth surpasses our ideas, so we cannot anticipate its course, unless one is seeking only the confirmation of one's own self. Indeed, this is quite logical, since if we are seeking something, we define it somehow as our goal; otherwise, we should deem it impossible to seek something unknown. But how can one seek what transcends one's actual knowledge? Such was Newman's case; the transition from Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism seemed, humanly speaking, impossible. Now, if we stick to what we know, i.e. the range of duties we have in the various

2 Jn 8:32.

departments of our lives, we seek what we know. And then the impossible happens: while seeking (realizing) the well-known, we find the unknown. In one of his prayers, Newman wrote: "I shall be a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it."[3] Let us add, not intending, but diligently fulfilling my duties.

We are guided by supra-logical judgment, and this judgment – as Newman intimates – "is not mere common-sense, but the true healthy action of our ratiocinative powers, an action more subtle and more comprehensive than the mere appreciation of syllogistic argument."[4] This "healthy action of our ratiocinative powers" is accumulated in real assent and in the Illative Sense, those faculties that help us grasp the truth without engaging the reflective capacities, for reflection can often put us off the right track. Evidently, Newman arrived at this conclusion on the basis of his own example. The person in action has all of his natural powers at his disposal.

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Newman is not naive in his historiosophical deliberations. He does not believe in the naive hopes of the self-regulating principles of "commercial enterprise and the reign of the useful and fine arts," as neither the former nor the latter can provide a fulcrum for mankind. Nothing can stand up to "the wild living intellect of man," therefore it stands to reason that Providence might grant "the prerogative of infallibility in religious matters."[5] His views of the dogma of infallibility result from his understanding of dogmas we have discussed. Being a Catholic, Newman noticed he could believe in doctrines he had rejected before. This is the essence of development that helps one to change. In his book *The Rational and the Moral Order*, Kurt Baier writes about society-anchored reason,[6] a phrase that could be applied to Newman as well. Man is often enslaved to certain views from which he needs to liberate himself.

Newman describes the intellect as aggressive, capricious, and untrustworthy. And here again, defending his individual position, he goes back to the original charge, namely that he holds doctrines he cannot "possibly believe in [his] heart."[7] As we can see, the charge came from a deistic position, which means that no one can impose on others a new set of *credenda* with a claim

3 *A Newman Prayer Book*, 4.

4 *GA*, 251.

5 *Apo.*, 164–165.

6 K. Baier, *The Rational and the Moral Order. The Social Roots of Reason and Morality*, 233 and ff.

7 *Apo.*, 165.

to infallibility. The latter was contrary to the empiricist view that in the mind there are only ideas that are derived from experience or are made by this mind. And he holds that no true conversion can be carried out in this manner.

The Catholic Church, as Newman understands it, insists "that all true conversion must begin with the first springs of thought, and to teach that each individual man must be in his own person one whole and perfect temple of God, while he is also one of the living stones which build up a visible religious community. And thus the distinctions between nature and grace, and between outward and inward religion, become two further articles in what I have called the preamble of her divine commission."[8]

As we can see, conversion is not only about individual restitution, but it also has a communal aspect to it. The Church with her dogmatic structure is the right remedy against the restless intellect for which it is beneficial to surrender to a higher authority. We are witnesses to a duel between Authority and Private Judgment. Newman is indeed a genius at such penetrating insights. We have already noted that he perfectly characterizes the modern era as the time of Private Judgment. But it is only from the point of view of some transcendental vision that hierarchy is something unnatural and out of place in humankind. Newman explains:

> Every exercise of Infallibility is brought out into act by an intense and varied operation of the Reason, both as its ally and as its opponent, and provokes again, when it has done its work, a reaction of Reason against it; and, as in a civil polity the State exists and endures by means of the rivalry and collision, the encroachments and defeats of its constituent parts, so in like manner Catholic Christendom is no simple exhibition of religious absolutism, but presents a continuous picture of Authority and Private Judgment alternately advancing and retreating as the ebb and flow of the tide;—it is a vast assemblage of human beings with wilful intellects and wild passions, brought together into one by the beauty and the Majesty of a Superhuman Power,—into what may be called a large reformatory or training school, not as if into a hospital or into a prison, not in order to be sent to bed, not to be buried alive, but […] brought together as if into some moral factory, for the melting, refining, and moulding, by an incessant, noisy process, of the raw material of human nature, so excellent, so dangerous, so capable of divine purposes.[9]

8 *Ibid*., 166–167.

9 *Ibid*., 169–170.

Reason reacts to Infallibility differently, as an opponent or an ally. It opposes its judgments when they go against Private Judgment, and it allies itself with Infallibility when Authority has its proper claims. I have already written here about Newman's "I know that I know," i.e. about the unity of his very person, the unity at a profound level which cannot be translated into an explicit form. Put another way, I cannot "show" my unity, I can only say that "I know," thereby testifying to my certitude. Once Newman reached the port of the Roman Catholic Church, he *knew* that he was in the right place. This moment can be analyzed from various points of view: the transcendental, the phenomenological, etc. I think that the most appropriate would be the personal point of view. Newman had this intimate experience of having a complete command of his whole person. Karol Wojtyła, for instance, found such a moment every time the person says "I." The conscious "I" is a unifying factor, as has already been stated. It is not theoretical but practical, so whenever one says "I" one is not aware of all the components that belong to this "I." It suffices that on the grounds of this statement one can say "I," thereby collecting all of the dispersed elements that belong to "I."

Newman's "I know that I know" seems to be following the same pattern. Throughout our individual lives we collect various elements that accrue to the "I," some of which are perceived, some unperceived, as mention has already been made of Newman's *unperceived impressions*. Gradually, they become part and parcel of the mind's deposit. Newman did not have to refer to the transcendental level at which the a priori forms are preconditions of our experience. It sufficed for him to introduce the reality of faith. We know more than we can report because we receive more on faith than in an explicit (scientific) manner. Therefore, we can transcend what is (empirically and factually) given to us because we believe.

Newman uses the metaphor of a *moral factory*, which means that there are various processes at work. Indeed, the person is being processed towards an appointed result. What is this appointment? Are we supposed to be merely reflections of one template? Not in the least. It is a process in which every single person reaches his or her destination. This process varies with respect to individual persons. We live our idiosyncratic histories and reach the end in our singular manner. The endpoint is the unity of the person, a kind of stronghold we obtain, which can be translated in psychological terms into peace and repose. It is like arriving at a safe shelter in stormy weather.

Newman defends the concept of Infallibility against the objections from Private Judgment, and he finds an apt term in St. Paul: edification. Infallibility's purpose is not to "enfeeble the freedom or vigour of human thought in religious

speculation, but to resist and control its extravagance."[10] And I find it a very satisfactory argument, bearing in mind what we have already said about the mind's original state of disorder. In the case of important dogmatic matters there must be some final *fiat*. And Newman finds historical evidence that corroborates his view of Infallibility; the Pope's decisive judgment put an end to many heretical opinions.

The scope of Infallibility and its pronouncements are well-defined. Their proper subject-matter is bound to "the great truths of the moral law, of natural religion, and of Apostolical faith."[11] Infallibility is placed within such boundaries, so there is nothing revolutionary about it, and nothing contrary to the idea of Private Judgment, for the fundamental truths of Christianity and morality based on Christian tenets are not private opinions! For example, the fact that human life starts with the moment of conception and ends with natural death is not a private opinion, but a universal truth. This universal truth protects individual life from any unjustified intrusions, if such a truth were only a matter of someone's arbitrary opinion. From our contemporary point of view, we know that European history has had such tragic moments when certain peoples were defined as subhuman. Therefore, our perspective can only serve to confirm Newman's position.

The Pope's pronouncements sanctioned by Infallibility are always within the confines of the great truths. Infallibility cannot sanction anything that is completely new and contradictory to the truths that have already been received. If something new is announced, it "must be at least homogenous, cognate, implicit, viewed relatively to the old truth."[12] Many truths are comprehensible and can be accepted by the Catholic mind, even though it is unlearned. Therefore, individual Councils express a body of necessary truths. Newman wonders why so many people find it difficult to believe in the truths he can believe in. He writes: "Be large-minded enough to believe, that men may reason and feel very differently from yourselves; how is it that men, when left to themselves, fall into such various forms of religion, except that there are various types of mind among them, very distinct from each other?"[13] He disavows the charge of hypocrisy, that he can believe in truths others cannot. Neither are Catholics hypocrites. Newman explains that Catholics believe in dogmas not because they have been defined, but because they first believed; dogmas, then, are official confirmations of what is already in believers' minds.

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10 *Ibid.*, 170.
11 *Ibid.*
12 *Ibid.*
13 *Ibid.*, 171.

He acknowledges that "the great trial to the Reason" may be those things which "lie beyond its own proper limits" for the authority. Therefore, the Catholic claims "to animadvert on opinions in secular matters which bear upon religion, on matters of philosophy, of science, of literature, of history, and it demands our submission to her claim." These censures are not doctrinal, but "measures of discipline." Such issues do not fall under the question of faith, for "what is matter of faith is true for all times, and never can be unsaid."[14] Newman suggests that this power of Infallibility can sometimes be used harshly, for it is employed by the people. He compares the Church to a giant, as we remember, that should not use her power like a giant, for only the use of power like a giant would be tyrannous.[15] His argumentation is, again, at its utmost. He seems to be referring to Aquinas' distinction between substance and accidents. The power of Infallibility is like the substance, therefore it is always "right and expedient," although its manner may be faulty. Let us look again at the above illustration. The Church is a giant, so she should show her power of Infallibility with special prudence and moderation.

The Protestant should not hold such a charge of hypocrisy against Catholics, for they themselves were often silenced by royal command, and had to comply. Moreover, prohibitions are laid upon actions, not upon thoughts. Therefore, if a man is forbidden to publish libel, this injunction has no bearing upon the exercise of his reason. Newman mentions Origen and St. John Chrysostom as being attacked by their opponents, and he especially pities the latter. The interesting thing is that now, being a Roman Catholic, Newman finds it much easier to come to terms with the problems he could not understand when he was an Anglican. Now he seems to see more clearly, and he acknowledges the factor of time, namely, that even good reforms can fail when introduced in an inappropriate or unseasonable time.

One thing is of utmost importance, namely that human reason cannot be let loose, that it needs to be disciplined by some external authorities. One should always examine whether it is the right time, even for some otherwise just reforms. Rashness in such matters often spoils the chance for someone

14 *Ibid*., 172, 173.

15 Newman is referring to Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, Act II, Scene III, where Isabella says to Angelo: "So you must be the first that gives this sentence, And he that suffers. O, it is excellent To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous To use it like a giant." Shakespeare's play is about the relationship between political power and justice with reference to the Biblical warning that we should weigh our judgments. In the Gospel according to St. Matthew we read: "For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you" (Mt 7:2).

else who might complete the work in the future, i.e. when the right time comes. Newman's cognitive and historical approaches coincide, as he convincingly explains that such a person "may seem to the world to be nothing else than a bold champion for the truth and a martyr to free opinion, when he is just one of those persons whom the competent authority ought to silence; and, though the case may not fall within that subject-matter in which that authority is infallible, or the formal conditions of the exercise of that gift may be wanting, it is clearly the duty of authority to act vigorously in the case."[16]

Posterity will judge this act as tyrannical and such that goes against private judgment. There are obviously rational grounds for religious beliefs and we seek, as Newman rightly remarks, almost instinctively to reconcile theory and fact. And we must be careful not to encourage with our criticism those who may be "led away in a bottomless liberalism of thought," bottomless here meaning unchecked. For the liberalism of the day, as Newman saw it, "is nothing else than that deep, plausible scepticism, of which I spoke above, as being the development of human reason, as practically exercised by the natural man."[17]

Starting with modernity, the main philosophical effort was aimed at gaining an indubitable knowledge about the world and avoiding mistakes. Descartes devised an analytical method of cognition, so that we divide each step of inquiry into smaller units until we arrive at a clear and distinct idea that strikes our intellect with its self-evidence. Newman would say that the purpose is not to avoid mistakes at any costs, but to avoid double-dealing and hypocrisy, so that man can attain certitude of his person rather than certainty of propositions, and there is an essential difference between the two. This tendency towards a universal approach, i.e. when certain knowledge is the target, is coequal with going away from the real human being. The purpose of papal infallibility is to keep the fundamental doctrine from the *shadows and images* of human deviousness.

16 *Apo.*, 174.
17 *Ibid.*, 175.

CHAPTER 10

The Individual Journey Has Reached Its Destination—1845 and Thereafter

In the years of 1839–1841, Newman's awareness steadily grew until his radical decision. And in 1845 he finally emerged out of shadows and phantasms into the truth (*ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem*).[1] It is worth noting that this adage can be interpreted in two ways. The ultimate moment of this 'emergence' occurs at death; perhaps we can call it 'the Platonic moment', since death is the point at which man enters true reality. However, the first moment may have already occurred when Newman decided to join the Roman Church.

Newman opens this part of his recollections by employing his fine rhetoric. This time we learn about the multitude of subtle influences that might have crossed his mind, so many that he himself is incapable of enumerating them all. This passage again shows his realism, for he takes man as he is, surrounded by numerous influences. The person resembles a sensitive string that vibrates even with the minutest variations of the air. Newman vibrated when affected by what he had read, assuming he deemed it true and earnest, and when influenced by others. I gather this metaphor of a musical instrument as being especially apt in his case, for, as we remember, he preferred a reaction unmediated by reflection, but rather as a response to one's moral nature. Such is the character of real assent.

In keeping with this musical metaphor (Newman himself was a good violinist), conscience has rights because it has duties, such is Newman's claim. What are its main duties? Obedience to God's laws, Newman would answer. Thus, conscience becomes like a well-tuned instrument which gives the right sound when struck. This exemplification with striking the right note is especially apt when we consider the fact that, for Newman, it is ultimately real assent that matters most. As important as certitude is, it results from reflection and there is always an opportunity for a subjective intrusion. Newman brilliantly notes in his *Sermons* that Adam was "fenced off even from himself […] in his inclosed garden."[2] Such was his "infant state," free from self-reflection, but ready to obey. Obedience overpowered by reflection gave forth disobedience.

1 This Latin adage is inscribed on his tomb.

2 *PPS*, 1018.

Newman admits that his position in the Anglican Church in 1839 was "at its height," and yet he acquiesces that his status was "controversial."[3] Despite the criticisms heaped upon him, he was convinced that his views on the Church of Rome came from his own mind, and not affected by any Roman Catholic sources. His system of religion, then, was unlike the Protestantism of the day. Newman relied on the Anglican authorities. And he shared his view on Transubstantiation with Hooker, claiming that it should not be the reason for any breach of communion. He also believed that the General Council never erred in a matter of faith, a belief that resembles the Roman position of infallibility. All of these views, let us stress, were drawn from Anglican divines.

Describing his entrance to the Church of Rome, Newman uses a maritime metaphor. On joining the Roman Catholic Church, he felt like a traveller who had reached port after a long and arduous voyage on a stormy sea. His ship had been tossed on waves and attacked by a storm of criticism. Everything ended when he came into port. He calls this moment "happiness," and confesses he has "no further history of [his] religious opinions to narrate."[4] Let us make two reservations here. First, the declaration "I have no history to narrate" is not a literal admission that he had no theological subjects to study and discuss. Rather, this means that he "had no variations to record, and have had no anxiety of heart whatever," that he was "in perfect peace and contentment," that he "never had one doubt;" that he experienced "self-command," and "had no more fervour."[5]

He experienced repose and serenity. It is unlike Fukuyama's announcements about the end of history, when the author proudly and, to say the least, naively interpreted the demolishing of the Iron Curtain as the end of Communism and heralded the era of universal reconciliation. From now on, the history of Europe was going to run a smooth course. We know all too well how utterly he was mistaken. Newman is on the safe side, for he makes no declaration about the global situation of the world, an attitude that is typical of him, i.e. not to be concerned with matters that have not been entrusted to his care, personalism focusing on the human person in his or her concrete situation. He limits his analyses to himself; conversion is always a private matter, as he constantly keeps repeating: "I am speaking for myself only."[6] Reaching the port can be compared to a man who stands firmly on solid ground amidst quicksand. He

3 *Apo.*, 62.
4 *Ibid.*, 160.
5 *Ibid.*
6 *Ibid.*, 162.

is surrounded by various unsteady processes, there are still problems to deal with, and yet he feels safe.

Once Newman was anchored at the Roman Catholic Church, he felt certitude that he was at the place he should be. The linguistic expression that describes this experience reads "I know that I know." Let me remind the reader of what we have already settled upon. The verb "to know" can be used in several senses: "know what," "know how," and "know that." Newman's "know that" focuses on the state of the subject and is distanced from the tension between "subject" and "object." When I say "I know that I know," I report on the state of my consciousness. This state has nothing to do with subjectivism, although at first glance it may look so. Newman was not a proponent of subjectivist idealism. He joined the Church because of her solid dogmatic foundation, her history of the Apostolic Succession. His declaration "I know that I know" is not a declaration of Locke's punctual self. It is a declaration of someone who has undertaken a thorough study, who has gone a long way to certitude; his declaration is preceded by a detailed examination. Because in his knowledge there are explicit and implicit elements, he cannot enumerate them all. There are contents that lie tacit in him like *unperceived impressions*, of which mention has already been made. The only thing he can say is to report what he experiences as a certain completeness. He has nowhere else to go. He is satisfied that he has gone that far. Now he can apprehend his whole being.

Kant criticized the empiricist approach. His attempt was to eliminate the tension between subject and object by making the subject the master of his object. The law-making subject creates his own object of experience. Newman envisions the person that can reach the point in which the intellectual and the moral spheres converge, where there is no discrepancy between thinking and acting, and it is from that perspective of a profound unity of my being that I can say: "I know that I know."

He is still able to see difficulties, but he can no longer see any connexion "between apprehending those difficulties [...] and [...] doubting the doctrines to which they are attached."[7] Difficulties do not eliminate the doctrine one holds. Difficulties are incommensurate with doubts; likewise, understanding the truths of faith is incommensurate with our belief. We may not understand them, but nevertheless our faith in them is powerful all the same. I think one can interpret it as follows: once we hold on to a true doctrine, we do not have to understand it in the same manner as we understand scientific propositions. And assuming we stick to this analogy with science, we could, for instance, say

7 *Ibid.*, 160.

that we do not have to know how to solve certain scientific problems in detail in order to claim that this particular science can give the right answers. Thus, being in the Church of Rome is a personal experience, not a mere theoretical position.

Once he became a Catholic, he found it easier to accept the dogmas, for instance, of Transubstantiation or the Trinity in Unity. If a man realizes that, in fact, little can be predicated of the Incommunicable God, he finds no difficulty in accepting all such truths. Newman always speaks from the depths, or from the innermost centre, of his being. And that centre is his conscience. He writes: "Were it not for this voice, speaking so clearly in my conscience and my heart, I should be an atheist, or a pantheist, or a polytheist when I looked into the world."[8] The world is characterized by a plethora of views, and this variety can be grasped only by a solid moral centre, for on the mere intellectual level they all present solutions just as plausible as any others.

As far as proof for the existence of a God, drawn from ontological considerations, they leave Newman indifferent; they "do not warm [him] or enlighten [him]; they do not take away the winter of [his] desolation, or make the buds unfold and the leaves grow within [him], and [his] moral being rejoice."[9] In his philosophical descriptions, Newman often makes use of such poetic metaphors; this shows him at his best, and at the same time defines the specific character of his approach, i.e. he wants to understand his experience for himself, and turn it into a personal message. A mere theoretical opinion often leaves the other person intact, or elicits, at most, notional assent. Newman does not look at the world as a disengaged observer. He seeks to find sense in all complex human endeavours, this mixture of suffering and respite, of helpless efforts, of the evil rewarded and the good punished, and he finds none. No human effort, however strenuous, can give a satisfactory account of it.

Our experience of the surrounding world is that of chaos; and we can see it perhaps much more clearly in our own times than in Newman's. Thus, the theological category of original sin appears to be indeed of explanatory value. The world is out of joint, it is in an abnormal state, in a state of anarchy. And his notion of functional disarrangement comes to mind again. Newman always focuses on practical philosophy in his analyses. He agrees that "truth is the real object of reason, but of reason as it acts in fact and concretely in fallen man," and the faculty of reason in fallen man, considered "actually and historically," tends "towards a simple unbelief in matters of religion."[10]

8 *Ibid.*, 162.
9 *Ibid.*
10 *Ibid.*, 163.

In classical philosophy, the proper object of the intellect is truth, and the proper object of the will is good. In like manner, truth fulfils the intellect, or it is the perfection of the intellect, and good fulfils the will, it is its perfection. Such is the theoretical view of the matter at hand. When St. Thomas Aquinas considers his five ways by which we attain the existence of God, he means that right reason (*recta ratio*) can do so, and right reason is more a theoretical construct than a reality. Newman considers "the faculty of reason actually and historically." As we can see, he treats the terms "reason" and "intellect" alternately. And it follows from his actual and historical analyses that the (unaided) intellect tends to atheism, despite advanced education and technological progress. Drawing on what we have already said about his retort to Brougham and Peel, we can conclude that it is historical evidence that gave Newman yet another incentive to disavow the inflated claims of these two gentlemen.

Conclusion

John Henry Newman embarked on a retrospective analysis of his life when he was challenged to do so by a critical pamphlet. We may assume that he would not have done this had he not been provoked. Such would be his natural reaction, i.e. not to explain the motives of his rightful actions. The main goal that he set for his work was to be as sincere as possible in rendering his own history. Newman's opponent charged him with hypocrisy and insincerity as regards his decision to join the Roman Catholic Church. This accusation triggered one of the most beautiful and powerful responses, with regard to its form and content. My thesis here is that, although the author of *Apologia pro Vita Sua* is writing about his own life, it is in fact a defence of individual life, and an excellent exposition of a person's pursuit of truth and responsibility. I have therefore approached the *Apologia* as our guide to how persons can reach their destination, despite changing contexts and circumstances.

Newman begins with his juvenile religious experience. Then he leads his reader through the meanderings of his first reading list, his Italian trip, the Oxford Movement, his historical studies, up to the moment of his critical decision. We witness this magnificent journey in which Newman constructs his life into a system, into one integral whole. The main pillars of this construction are as follows: personal result, method of personation, real assent, realization, certitude, conscience, obedience, real words, probability as the guide of life, and action. These all constitute elements of his personalist epistemology. The elements of this system can again be included in his epistemology which, contrary to the modern model, consists of explicit and implicit elements. Newman confronts modern certainty with his personalist certitude, reinforced by the central thesis that despite probabilities, man can achieve certitude. He does not have to wait for clear and distinct ideas, for certitude can be approached through a well-informed conscience. The implicit elements, ruled out in modernity, now regain their due place. Under the guidance of faith they drive the individual towards certitude. And certitude, unlike certainty, is personally confirmed and manifests itself in inner peace and fulfilment.

This is what Newman experienced at the moment of the vital decision he made in 1845; to be more precise, he was brought to this decision. The human intellect, starting with its functional disarrangement, can be formed and made capable of apprehending the truth that surpasses its understanding.

In Newman's example, we could see how personal experiences coalesced with historical studies and brought forth an entirely new quality. His task was indeed very complicated. First, he had to grapple with the heritage of

modernity: its rationalism and levelling tendency. Then he had to undergo a thorough examination of primitive Christianity, starting with the times when the Church was still one. Having combined the two activities, he had to constantly sieve them through the watchful eye of his conscience, so that nothing was left aside out of some baser or self-seeking motive. And, on this way forward, many other implicit elements interfered. Above all, Newman had to manifest his freedom against the cultural ethos and overcome it.

In his *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, Newman gives us to understand that a detailed picture of individual life is much more complex than it may seem at first glance. He holds it as an integral process in which intellectual and affective elements are combined, in which the conscious and extra-conscious factors count. The importance he attached to the conscious (explicit) factors shows that he was not an anti-intellectual; the respect he showed for the extra-conscious (implicit) factors proves that he adopted a profound personalistic attitude. The human person is not an isolated system liable to be studied by the sciences, but—as Newman wrote—a *living intelligence*. Newman's life and his rendition of his own life place enormous significance on any individual life. Each life has a chance to be fulfilled. It is not on account that man was born good, but that the human being was created in the image and after the likeness of God. This is the source of a person's non-negotiable dignity.

Newman praises the glory of magnitude and the seriousness of individual life. Each man has received respective faculties to go his own way to turn his life into a meaningful system, which is his personal result. Only an individual life, understood as a commitment, has a value, for only such a life may be the important and proper response to a human being. Newman unfolded the mystery of his life by standing on two foundations: the personalist theory of cognition, and historical studies. The personalist theory of cognition helped him ward off the dangers hidden in modern thinking, and to modify the enlightened paradigm which reduced human beings to the intellectual capacities and technical management of the world. Historical studies helped him learn the true identity of the Church of Rome and find repose in her.

Newman's lesson is a lesson in humility towards one's own and someone else's life. Each person marches in his own way, each with his own difficulties known only to him. It is at the same time a very encouraging lesson, for each can reach this goal, each can perform the task given by God. We have seen how Newman's personalist approach combined with his historical studies to bring about his vital decisions. The *Apologia* is a testimony to his individual life in which he struggled to attain the truth, or, to be more precise, to be *found* by it, through ups and downs, errors and corrections, but hiding nothing; in like manner, it becomes a corroboration of his honesty in personal decisions.

The other texts show the rich personal landscape with its culminating moment illustrated by the declaration "I know that I know."

Newman opposed mainstream modern philosophy with its ambition to build a predictable world based on deistic and Newtonian laws, a world freed from human randomness, a claim that culminated in Kantian transcendentalism. Newman, on the contrary, sought to stake his claim on the person's capacity to achieve certitude, even if much of what is hidden in the secret interior of the human being cannot be revealed (*secretum mihi*), that is, made explicit. A person can be a strong fortress not only when fortified by the formalisms of predictable laws, but when guided by a well-informed conscience. Such a person does not need the certainty of propositions for his or her choice, since his or her certitude can feed on probabilities and yet be complete and integral.

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Truth and Responsibility: A Personalist Reading of Newman

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Jan Kłos (Ph.D., 2007) is Professor of Philosophy at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland. His publications include *Faith, Freedom & Modernity. Christianity and Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Grand Rapids, 2010), *Freedom as an Uncertain Cause in Graham Greene's Novels. A Philosophical and Literary Analysis* (Lublin, 2012), and *Heart Speaks unto Heart – On the Kinship of Spirit and Thought: John Henry Newman and Edith Stein* (Leiden, 2021).

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