

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expositor-series-1.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php)

and execration He orders him off: "Get thee behind Me, Satan; for *it is written*, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve"; and the Lord *My God* I mean to worship, and Him only to serve.

What I wish to press here is *the one attitude* in which our Lord met the tempter throughout. It was that of a *believing Man, resting His faith on the word of God written*, and overcoming by faith, as the Leader and Commander of His people.

One word more. At the cross, among the jeers that saluted Him, was this, "He *trusted in God* that He would deliver; let Him deliver Him." And the great apostle, whose penetrating vision in the Old Testament I find in its element in this epistle, when shewing the identity of nature in the Sanctifier and the sanctified, quotes some choice passages to prove this from the Old Testament, one of which is "*I will put my trust in Him*" (Heb. ii. 13).

DAVID BROWN.

## PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF CARDINAL NEWMAN.

### II.

I BEGAN the article which appeared last month with the remark that it was with some reluctance that I had undertaken to write sundry reminiscences of the great Cardinal for publication. It is true that in August, 1884, nearly a year after I had left Birmingham, I wrote for the *Pall Mall Gazette* a short sketch of the Oratory there as a "Centre of Spiritual Activity," in which of necessity Newman was the chief if not the only figure; and this sketch I know he read with something like approval. But later I had my doubts whether, considering my peculiar position, it was quite in good taste for me to make public a view of his life

and character which I had formed when living as, in a sense, a member of his family, and I declined the offer of the editor of an important London journal that I should write a biography of the Cardinal for him. More recently I saw reason for somewhat modifying this opinion, and I concluded that, provided no "family secrets"—should such exist—are disclosed, it is only right that one's judgment should be put on record, or that at any rate sundry incidents which went to form that judgment should be noted down, as likely to assist those who knew him less intimately in forming a correct opinion about him. This view was further almost forced upon me when I read some of the notices of the Cardinal that appeared in the press after his death. With the carping and contemptuous tone of the writer of the biography in the *Times* I had of course no sympathy; but, on the other hand, the inaccurate rhetoric of most of the other notices stirred me to give what little aid I could in drawing a more correct and intimate picture: for, after all, it is in the little domestic touches that the really human interest of even the most distinguished careers is found.

That Newman was a successful ruler of men or an able administrator of affairs he would never have thought of claiming. In his relation with persons he showed a marked favouritism, such as is commonly and naturally a characteristic—I do not mean of course in any gross sense—of celibates. With sundry of the older members of his community—men who had followed him and had lived with him beneath the same roof for years—he would be for long periods barely on speaking terms. Not that he was hostile to them; he was simply indifferent. In other cases, those of men who left him, no doubt there was more feeling. Newman was emphatically what Dr. Johnson calls "a good hater"; and any one who disappointed him or thwarted him found him to an extraordinary degree implacable.

There was, in fact, no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. A complete submission might mend matters; but the offender would for ever afterwards remain in the outer circle. There have been several members of the community who after such an experience left it, for the Oratory is not bound together by vows. On the other hand, no man was ever more responsive to personal reverence and affection, and towards those who thus approached him he showed a friendship that might best be described as love. His tender relations with Father Ambrose St. John he refers to himself in his *Apologia*; and though after Father Ambrose's death in 1875 no one ever filled precisely the same place, it is certain that he valued most highly the simple and blind fidelity of Father William Neville, while from time to time some new comer had at any rate a temporary experience—it might extend over three or four years—of close friendship with the venerable man, so singularly winning, so courteous and considerate, so feminine in his affection (if the epithet may be allowed as implying no disparagement), yet withal so dignified and so fitted to command respect. But as far as the government of the community was concerned, there is not much that can be said. Perhaps he was by his temperament unfitted to be a ruler. At any rate the normal condition of things was the *régime* of king Log, the superior apparently knowing and caring nothing about what was going on, while occasionally it would thunder unexpectedly when the sky seemed clear, and a well-meaning but over-zealous and indiscreet novice would experience a sharp rebuff. For the most part, of course, the men he had to govern were not of the kind to need external moral supervision, and the Oratory School was only indirectly under his control. There was however an instance which came to my knowledge shortly before I left, in which his inaction some years previously seemed to me hardly less

than culpable—inaction due no doubt to his dread of causing a public scandal, a scandal that would have been great in proportion to its unexpectedness. It is enough to say that an episode in the old age of Eli might have been used in illustration.

In his administration of affairs of a purely secular kind he showed less knowledge of the world than might have been expected of a banker's son. He was singularly fond of bricks and mortar and of the ring of the builder's trowel, and his plans were commonly on a grand scale. But the cost was not well counted beforehand; and though friends were generous over and over again in providing the means to enable him to carry out his building schemes, and though some thousands of pounds were expended by him with hardly adequate results, nothing was done continuously, nor was any one plan definitely adhered to, much money being frittered away in temporary arrangements and alterations. This was notably the case in the extension of premises required by the establishment of the Oratory School. Adjoining property was purchased, and that more than once, at fancy prices, and money was raised by mortgage to meet the cost, a process which had itself to be repeated from time to time, as the accounts of the community showed annual deficits. For all these details Newman was really himself responsible, though the community became so nominally by agreeing always to his proposals. It was the story over again of the Abbot Hugo of St. Edmundsbury, told so graphically by the monk Jocelyn de Brakelonde. Even with the humorous exaggerations with which Carlyle has embellished the tale in his *Past and Present*, it remains a very apt illustration, not even excluding the *quædam tacenda*, as noted above. The likeness was pointed out to me while I was in the house by one who had known Newman intimately for nearly thirty years; and when once suggested it was im-

possible not to recognise it, and afterwards impossible to forget it. But I believe that he was freed from all anxiety in regard to money matters some few years before his death by the accession of new members to the community who were in a position to put its finances straight.

He inspired fear as well as affection even in those who knew him best. There were marked contrasts in his manner. At times, at the hour of "recreation" after dinner, when the community sat round the fire, as in an Oxford "common room," and discussed whatever was uppermost, he would be animated, amusing, satirical, full of anecdote, and altogether delightful. Other evenings, under just the same circumstances, he would sit silent and apparently distressed, hearing or affecting to hear nothing; and, as soon as he could without discourtesy, he would hurriedly make for his private room. Disapproval he commonly expressed by silence, but at times his voice and manner would betray a certain fierceness within: and it was just the uncertainty of these outbreaks, as well as their rarity, which made him to be feared; but it must be remembered that he was always loved far more than he was feared.

With his conversion to Catholicism, or at any rate in consequence of it, all traces of what is called sabbatarianism disappeared. Of course he kept strictly to the Catholic rules of hearing mass and resting from servile work on the Sunday; but he had left behind all the Puritan extra-observances of the Sabbath. Thus, in spite of remonstrances from Protestant neighbours, he supported the boys of the Oratory School in playing cricket and other games on Sunday afternoons; while at the same time within the house the recreation room was made merry with the sound of violins and other instruments, he himself never failing to be present when any concerted music that interested him was to be performed.

I never knew him to express any definite opinion on what is most conveniently called "Darwinism," meaning by that rather the evolutionary account of the origin of things as they are, as opposed to the orthodox view of creation. I think his position was, that the Church should wait and see. I recollect his snubbing one of the community who was triumphantly adducing some difficulty raised by Mivart which Darwin had admitted to be serious and deserving consideration. This same priest, with a very superficial knowledge of modern ideas, had taken it to be his mission to refute all infidels and heretics, and had preached a course of sermons against the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, whose works he had never read. I cannot recall the terms in which Newman shut him up; but we took him to mean that he was opposed to all premature attacks on the position occupied by science. "We know so little," was a common phrase of his, and one very characteristic.

He himself, in his *Apologia*, has told us that as a boy he was superstitious, and used to cross himself—an act that certainly more deserves to be accounted superstitious in a Protestant child than in a Catholic one, to whom it is a matter of course. I cannot but think that he never was free from a somewhat superstitious habit of mind. Of course from the non-Catholic point of view most of his religious practices were superstitious; but this is not what I mean. Catholics must believe in the miracles of Scripture, but they are allowed some discrimination in regard to those outside it. Newman never seemed to care to avail himself of any such liberty of discrimination; and was as ready to believe in a mediæval miracle as in any event which the day's newspaper might record. To him the universe was a cluster of mysteries; even astrology he would not have placed out of court. I do not say that he actually believed in it; but I recollect his referring to the text, "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera," as

indicating scriptural authority for the view that there might be something in it.

He seldom expressed any decided opinion in politics. No doubt he was at bottom a Tory of the old school; but so far as contemporary questions were concerned he took account of men rather than of measures, and certainly had more sympathy with Gladstone than with Disraeli. Of the latter he never spoke without a smile. He admitted his cleverness, but never believed in his sincerity. On the other hand, when one of the community was complaining that by the County Franchise Bill Mr. Gladstone was going to place power in the hands of people who would be unable to vote intelligently, he defended the statesman on the ground that the measure (which in itself he did not defend) was the outcome of his unshaken trust in the instincts of the people; and he even went out of his way on another occasion to defend Mr. Gladstone's policy in withdrawing from Afghanistan and the Transvaal. I believe, however, that he did not follow him in regard to Home Rule for Ireland; but that is since my day.

One of his short poems, "The Married and the Single," written in 1834, expresses very clearly the view of the relation between the two sexes to which he held consistently throughout his life. It is the view of the Catholic Church, which makes the celibate state essentially the higher one for all. The outcome of this view is to degrade the idea of all love between man and woman that is more than friendship; and it was remarked to me of Newman, by one who had known him long and well, that he never could distinguish between such love and lust. Doubtless there were women, a few, for whom he entertained a sincere regard. There was notably a Miss Giberne, whom Mr. Mozley, in his *Reminiscences*, styles "the *prima donna* of the Tractarian movement." I only knew her in later years, when she was an aged nun of the Visitation at



Autun, in France. She had been for some time in a convent of the same order at Paray-le-Monial, but had proved too much for the sisters there when the place became a favourite one for English pilgrims through the growth of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. Even at Autun, where I saw her twice behind the convent grille, she retained at eighty years of age her extraordinary vivacity, and could have talked of Newman for ever. He had quite intended to pay her a visit either going to or returning from Rome when he was made a Cardinal; but his relapse at Leghorn on his way home made this impossible, and she could never get over this disappointment. He corresponded with her frequently and cordially, and said mass for her weekly as one of the benefactors of the Oratory; and there were a few other ladies to whom he also wrote, and with whom he was glad to have a few words when they called. But on the whole he held the sex in something like contempt. "You know I think them great liars," he once said to me, smiling; and then seemed shocked at his own boldness. He was strict too about the rules which excluded women from the rooms of the Oratory, though such rules are generally absurd enough in their operation. When one of the community, for example, was dangerously ill from pleurisy, his mother was not allowed to come up to his room to see him, the exclusion being due doubtless to a fear of making a precedent.

One secret of Newman's power when he took up his pen was his familiarity with current events through his never ceasing, while I knew him, to read his daily paper. It gives piquancy to the utterances of a man commonly thought of as an unworldly recluse when he can garnish them with apt illustrations from the news of the day. For many years it was the *Times* he used to read; but he changed it, I forget when, for the *Standard* on account of a sudden passion for economy. I think he went back to the

*Times* when the other paper had showed itself particularly ill-informed in its telegrams about him while he was in Rome. He attached much importance to the articles in the daily papers, and though he would lament at times over the total change of tone in them in regard to Christianity, which in earlier years they had all assumed as a part of the law of the land, I believe that he was more gratified by a laudatory leading article referring to his doings than by a similar letter from his bishop. No doubt the explanation of this would also explain how much more marked was the welcome given by him at the Oratory to an Anglican clergyman than to a Catholic priest. In the latter case, even though the visitor might be a distinguished ecclesiastic from the Continent or from America, it was often with difficulty that he obtained access to Newman at all, though this was not his fault. But setting that aside, he had little to say to such visitors when he received them, and was seldom otherwise than reserved. The visits, at one time pretty frequent, of his own bishop, Ullathorne, he hardly affected to treat otherwise than as a bore. But a Protestant visitor, such as Dean Church, Canon Liddon, Lord Coleridge, or whoever else it might be, was sure to be well and even affectionately received, and would carry away a delightful impression of his brightness and affability. These visitors approached him because they had reverence for his career and his person; the others presumably came as sight-seers, and were incapable of understanding his past. Such I think was his general view of those who came to see him, though doubtless in sundry cases this rough classification would have been quite unjust.

Much was said at times by people outside about the absence of friendly relations between Newman and Pius IX., between Newman and Manning, and between Newman and the London Oratory. To take the last first: Newman and Faber, though they had so much in common, were not men

who could with comfort live and work together ; and when the London offshoot was established, first in King William Street, Strand—on the site, it may be worth noting, where Toole's Theatre now stands—it must have been a relief on both sides. It was no whim of Newman's, but an ordinary carrying out of the traditions of the Oratory, which made the London community distinct and independent of that in Birmingham ; but it was partly his doing that the two houses practically ceased to have intercourse with each other for something like five and twenty years. There would be no use in going into details ; it is enough to say that there were jealousies and suspicions, for the most part unfounded and foolish, and in any case trivial ; but community life, such as that of the Oratory, which is more confined than that of a great religious order, tends inevitably to magnify trifles and to foster a narrow and clannish spirit ; and this may help to explain how that, though there were the usual " faults on both sides," neither side would have found it easy to state a serious case against its rival. The breach was apparently healed when, as Cardinal, Newman could visit the London house and graciously receive its inmates on their knees ; but it may be questioned whether the misunderstanding was ever entirely obliterated so far as the older members of the two communities were concerned.

With regard to Cardinal Manning a similar explanation holds. That distinguished prelate is before all things an administrator, a man of the world, and a philanthropist, and he has the characteristics that go to make a statesman, or at any rate a diplomatist, rather than a theologian or a thinker. The charge of ambition, commonly brought against him by those who know him only from outside, is just so far true in that he has always been ambitious to secure a position of recognised dignity for the Catholic Church in England, and further, in that his success in this

direction has necessarily involved his own personal advancement. Newman has always been to him somewhat unintelligible. He has distrusted his subtle minimizing of Catholic doctrines with the aim of rendering them less unacceptable to those outside. He has perhaps even suspected some kind of disloyalty to the Church in Newman's close personal relations with sundry Protestant friends. Anyhow the two men have been as little able to understand one another as a dog is able to understand a tortoise. And on that account Manning has doubtless from time to time done what he could to thwart Newman in undertakings which he thought would be disadvantageous to the interests in this country of what is most conveniently called ultramontanism. The Oxford scheme he thus interfered with and prevented; and there was some evidence to show that he opposed Newman's elevation to the cardinalate, and that the rumour that Newman had been offered the hat and had refused it, originated with him.<sup>1</sup> At a later time, however, the two cardinals met at Birmingham, apparently on friendly terms; and when Manning found that he had been mistaken in anticipating any results unfavourable to Catholic interests from Newman's accession of dignity, he ceased opposing him. The moderating influence of the pontificate of Leo XIII. also contributed to effect their reconciliation. Newman himself thought very highly of Manning's gifts as an administrator, and he also told me that he regarded him as the best English preacher he had ever heard.

<sup>1</sup> Such at any rate was the impression we had at the time, though I am not very willing to accept it as correct. But it is certain that in February, 1879, some one from the "insolent and aggressive faction," as Newman had described the ultramontanes, was inspiring the press in a sense unfavourable to his being made a cardinal. I myself brought under his notice a paragraph which asserted (when the pope's offer could no longer be denied) that Leo XIII. meant by it to recognise the great work done by the London Oratory, and especially by Father Faber, *i.e.* by the men who had mistrusted and opposed him for so long; and I well remember his expression of disgust and impatience as he read the lines, but he said nothing either then or later.

What was true of Manning in relation to Newman was also true of Pius IX. He could not understand him, and consequently he distrusted him; and the feeling was doubtless mutual. This had been the case for some years before the summoning of the Vatican Council; but the estrangement was widened by the opposition of Newman, private and confidential as it was, to the pope's favourite project. Some ten or twelve years earlier Newman had refused the somewhat contemptible honour of being made a Monsignor, and after that Pius was certainly not disposed to offer him anything else; though it is absurd to blame him for not having made Newman a bishop, when he was (as he would have been the first to admit) totally unsuited for such a position. But after July, 1870, the pope seems to have anticipated having to deal with Newman as he dealt with Döllinger, and perhaps was even disappointed when no occasion arose. I was presented to him in 1876, just after I had been received into the Church; but when the pope was told that it was Newman who had received me, he exclaimed, "Padre Newman? Bah!" and passed on to some one else.

But Newman's relations with the Holy See assumed quite another character when Leo succeeded Pius and was persuaded by the Duke of Norfolk, a year after his accession, to raise the neglected Oratorian to the purple. There is of necessity something unreal in the cordiality with which the head of the Church receives habitually men whom he has never seen before, and is likely never to see again; but in the case of Newman there can be no question as to the genuineness of the affection with which Leo welcomed him in 1879. There was some natural sympathy between the two; and beyond that, the pope had been much impressed by the enthusiasm which had been evoked among all English-speaking people by the step which originally he had decided upon with some diffidence. Of course the

intercourse between them on the two occasions of their meeting was limited by Newman's want of fluency in Latin, Italian, or French; but it sufficed to link them together with an union of hearts close enough to put an end for ever to all suspicions or surmises about Newman's permanent fidelity to the Holy See.

Not that there had been at any time any real ground for such suspicions. Newman himself had on several occasions, and notably in the famous passage in the Postscript to the 2nd edition of his letter to the Duke of Norfolk, stated most positively that he had never since his conversion to Rome had a moment's doubt or faltering as to the legitimacy of the claims to which he had given his assent; and there is no reason to question his assertion. It has sometimes been insinuated that his heart always remained in the Church of England; and this is true in the sense that he never ceased to feel most tenderly towards old friends whom he had left in it; but as to any belief in the Anglican Church as a branch of the Church Catholic, or any lingering doubt whether he might not have remained within it, and have saved his soul by conforming to its religious system (whatever that may be), one has only to read his "Difficulties of Anglicans," in which the whole tangle of Tractarian theology is steadily and remorselessly unravelled, thread by thread, and as steadily rejected, to be assured that any other interpretation of his supposed tenderness for Anglicanism is wholly without foundation. He was interested, certainly, in the progress of ritualism, and used to notice with surprise the hold it seemed to be gaining over a section of the middle classes. He acknowledged the movement as an outcome of the earlier one at Oxford; but the legitimate outcome of the latter he always maintained was Catholicism; and though he had friends whom he respected among the Ritualists, he seldom referred to their proceedings without a smile.

At the time that I first knew him he had lately ceased to hear confessions in church, and I do not think he had ever heard many there since his return from Dublin. In the earlier days of his priesthood, when the Oratory was in Alcester Street, Birmingham, his penitents had been more numerous, and I recollect his referring with something like horror to his first experience of the coarseness of the confessional as it necessarily is among the poor of a large town. In later years he seldom heard confessions at all; and it was only in his room that he heard them, thus practically restricting himself to members of the community. One of these went to him regularly for some four or five years; but as the rule of the Oratory is confession three times a week, it may well be understood that it was a very brief and formal affair. Newman had nothing in common with those priests (mostly Jesuit priests), who make the confessional their special interest, and devote all their gifts, natural and acquired, to the edification of those with whom they are thus brought into contact. He rarely added a word to the bare formularies of absolution; and to those who came expecting much he was as disappointing in the confessional as he was in the pulpit. Probably his natural shyness and sensitiveness would go far to explain this.

With regard to what has been said about the specially Roman and Italian flavour of the Catholicism which Newman seemed to affect, it must be remembered that this was a necessary consequence of his being an Oratorian and of his having introduced the Oratory into England. He became a true son of St. Philip Neri, and had a genuine devotion to him. This is well illustrated by the hymns which he wrote in his honour. There is a touch of tenderness in them, and much felicity of expression, and they were very popular with the "brothers of the little Oratory," as well as with the school children and the ordinary congregation

in the church. And a necessary consequence of devotion to a special saint, when the life of that saint is known in all its details, is some sort of conformity of ideas and mode of life with his. There was much in Newman's character predisposing him to become a true Oratorian; and it may be taken as certain that, apart from the troubles and anxieties incident to the position of superior (which he held for life, by a special brief of Pius IX., the post under ordinary circumstances being only held for three years), the happiness of his life as a Catholic priest was mainly due to his being a member of this institute, for which he was so well adapted.

A peculiarity of his, very familiar to all who knew him, but one which, nevertheless, should not be left unrecorded, was his extraordinary subtlety in replying to questions. It was impossible to forecast what his answer would be; and those answers were often so wide of the mark that it was difficult to take them seriously and not to conclude that they were merely meant to gain time, or to evade giving any answer at all. We sometimes used to say jestingly, "It is difficult to know what he means; but this is clear, he cannot have meant what he said." It was not that we thought he wished to mislead; there was something about him that forbade such a notion. Perhaps it was his sense of responsibility, his knowledge that an *ipse dixit* from him could not fail to come with authority, that made him seldom or never give a plain answer to a plain question. Perhaps the peculiar subtlety of his mind made him see other questions involved in the one that was asked, and that towards them he directed his reply. But whatever may have been the explanation, it certainly was the fact that his answers were not answers to the questions asked, and that this was characteristic of him.

It used to be thought by some people, and may still be



thought by a few, that he did not value his Cardinal's hat, and would rather have remained plain Father Newman to the end of his days. This is quite a mistake. From the date of the accession of Leo XIII. he was not without hopes of obtaining such an honour, and when the honorary fellowship at Trinity was given him, he said humorously it was as gratifying as being made a cardinal. But the latter honour he felt was more desirable because it would be a recognition of his integrity from a quarter whence for many years he had experienced nothing but coldness. He was very keen about the matter when the offer first came to him tentatively, through his bishop; and on his birthday, February 21st, 1879, he told us about it, and said pointedly that he had not refused it, referring to the newspaper paragraphs to that effect which had appeared, and with which he was seriously annoyed. I happened to be with him in his room when the letter definitely came announcing the pope's intention, and I remember well how he burst into tears, and after a pause said falteringly that he had always tried to do what he believed to be right, but had been misunderstood and doubted, and that now this would be a public recognition of the singleness of his aims. Those were not his exact words, but that is their substance; and he accepted congratulations quite simply on this clearing away of all clouds for the evening of his life. How deeply he felt the honour is seen in the fact that he, quite unnecessarily, determined to go to Rome to thank the pope face to face; and the story of his visit there is familiar to every one. And on his return he seemed to take a simple, child-like pleasure in all the details of his new dignity. For some years previously he had been thought too infirm to enter the sanctuary by the rather steep and numerous steps ascending to it to assist at high mass, and he had been accustomed to step up unobserved by an easier staircase at the back. But on his return from Rome as Car-

dinal, in spite of two severe illnesses he had suffered from while away, he found new strength and almost agility, and habitually ascended the steps in question, though wearing the numerous and cumbrous vestments used in pontifical functions. Nor was this all. We had supposed that he would wish his public appearances in church to be few and far between, as he could not appear publicly without more ceremonial than that to which he had been accustomed; and two of the community were therefore scheming to provide for him a small gallery, such as in Rome is called a *tribuna*, entered directly from the house, in which he could assist at the ceremonies in church without taking part in them or being seen by those present. But this scheme he crushed promptly as soon as he heard of it, and announced his intention of going down to the church not less regularly than before, a resolution to which he kept steadily in spite of the fatigues to which it subjected him. I recollect too that when he went down to St. Chad's cathedral for some special ceremony, and had afterwards to cross the road to the bishop's house, he lingered deliberately on the way, while passing through an enthusiastic crowd of poor Catholics, mostly Irish, who pressed round to kiss his hand and obtain his blessing. He seemed to take real pleasure in all such recognitions of his new dignity, and, like St. Paul, he did not fail to magnify his office.

ARTHUR W. HUTTON.

(*To be concluded.*)