



FAITH & REASON

THE JOURNAL OF CHRISTENDOM COLLEGE

Winter 1989 | Vol. XV, No. 4

NEWMAN AND THE POWER OF PERSONALITY

George W. Rutler



HE MANY ACCOUNTS OF NEWMAN'S MANNER, HIS LOOK, AND ABOVE ALL HIS voice, might make us think that we have read enough. And we certainly know by now that his voice was as silver and his style crystal. But there are those, among whom is anyone of reason, who would want more; and this because, as he stooped somewhat in the pulpit and dimmed the lamp before a sea of undergraduates who were missing their dinner to be there, the silver of the voice mellowed the way gold is meant to; and his pellucidity was less like a sensible equation and more like a sensual form.

This is a mystery of Newman, and one should want to learn more about it, for it is the mystery common to all persons: personality.

As a working definition, too slight to fill out a whole system, human personality is the vernacular evidence of the speechless soul, the natural expression of the supernatural endowments in will and intellect, much as graciousness is the declaration of grace. Man is an unfinished being, but he is not mute. A greatness of Newman is the way he represents the personality properly as a spiritual deduction and shows how its development, as any art, attains full worth when it is faithful to a spiritual theme. As every agnostic painting called "Mother and Child" is a surreptitious Madonna and Christ, so the "real character" begrudgingly respected by the cynic is a clandestine ikon.

Any list of Newman's inventive gifts to the modern critic must in some way include the illustration of how the higher reference perdures even as the cultural climate obscures it; into lengthening shadows of behaviorism, he pokes the glimmer of a thing good in content and holy in potential. He calls it personality and describes it in such a torrent of allusion that one would think the only perfectly mature personality has to be that of the saint.

To the latest catch-phrase about "growing as a person," Newman would reply that there is no other way to grow, and as for "getting in touch with your feelings," he would say precisely that there is no other way to touch. Actually, the Victorian Liberals anticipated the muddled thought behind the jargon, although they spoke it more elegantly; they shared the mistaken idea of perfection as endless growth rather than the attainment of an end, so that the substance of perfection is "not a having and a lasting but a growing and a becoming." That expression is not from the latest suburban sensitivity session; it belongs to Matthew Arnold. Now everyone knows that *persona* is defective until it obliges *personaliter*. But this is common sense only because there is an uncommon reason behind it. If the Liberal optimist sees the personality as a puzzle, the Christian knows it to be a mystery. For a mystery does not contradict reason; it compels the reason to acknowledge a depth beyond observable reference. Newman compares mystery to an island which seems to be alone and wafted in the water but which is the summit of a submerged mountain range. A mystery, we should then say, is the sort of mountain you do not climb, but descend, to conquer. This is the principle of depth psychology to which God shows a favor by his Incarnation. The self knows only part of itself until it acknowledges the unseen self. The cry of the isolated is: "I want to be me." Newman would persist: "Who else can you be?" But only the true principles beneath becoming and being, underlying contingency and its source, can make the man on an

island a man on a mountain, like St. Paul: "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me (Gal. 2:20)." This is the descent from the topical ego to the fundament of being. Newman's own life models what that means.

PERSONALITY AND THE OPERATION OF GRACE

Human participation in the way the world works, which is a sacramental economy, hinges on the distinction between subjectivism and personalism. An ennui of alienation sets the pervasive mood of moderns because the hinge has been broken. Newman dedicated himself to an exposition of certitude as a thing other than the "notional" impressionism of the Liberal school which sowed the seeds of modernism, and he proceeded to a fact which is almost too subtle for the secularized intellect and it is this: the phenomenon of revelation is a "method of personation" culminating in the evidence of the divine Word as an uttering person. Consequently, all truly perceptive life is the "service of a person." No social system and no expression of an idea is valid if it does not authenticate personal dignity.

The deliberate will of God made "Men, Not Angels, the Priests of the Gospel." Personality is a display of the unique character of a life for which Christ died, and thus can help mediate virtue; it is also a fallible vehicle of perception in consequence of original sin, and so it can impede the operation of any virtue. Though grace as the motive of virtue is a divine donation, it is received efficaciously in the measure by which faith obliges the personality to the will of Christ in the sacraments.

Now this touches on a touchy subject. The Catholic, with his concern for the agency *operato*, and the Protestant with his regard for the agency *operantis*, both at various times in their formulations, have been tempted to overlook the complementary principle which holds that the faith of the individual cannot be divorced from the faith of the Church. The "secret power of divine grace" is discerned in realizing that God looks in gratuitous love upon "the hidden man of the heart," and of this love "the visible Church is the expression, the protection, the instrumental cause, and the outward perfection."³

In his *Lectures on Justification*, Newman denies Luther any right to his narrow sense of private faith, in commentary, for example, on the Epistle to the Galatians; but Newman also rejects any ecclesial tendency to eradicate

the commitments of singular personality. The effective operation of grace in the Church rather requires of the personality its perfection by faith through voluntary submission to the likeness of Christ. While there are saints who, through the pursuit of a mystical course, seem to need no earthly sustenance and have no apparent natural affection (e.g. St. John, St. Mary Magdalene, the hermits and many of the holy virgins), there is a second class of saints in dignity equal to the first who "do not put away their natural endowments, but use them to the glory of the Giver" and who are "only made more eloquent, more poetical, more profound, more intellectual, by reason of their being more holy." Among these Newman ranks St. John Chrysostom (who "by his sweetness and naturalness compels one's devotion"), St. Athanasius, and "above all" St. Paul the Apostle.⁴ Detachment from the tainted things of the world is not detachment from colorful characteristics of the self. As you read the *Historical Sketches*, you can picture Newman's silhouette against the profile of St. Gregory who looms "as great theologically as he is personally winning."⁵ And as much as we stand in awe of the Jesuits among us, it is a matter of record that Newman admired Loyola but chose to walk with the sons of Neri who seemed possibly kinder, slightly more cheerful, and much better musicians. He prayed to St. Philip that we might "Not be the cold sons of so fervent a Father."⁶

He is capable of saying to a congregation:

The prophets have ordinarily not only gifts but graces; they are not only inspired to know and to teach God's will, but inwardly converted to obey it. For surely those can only preach the truth who duly feel it personally; those only transmit it fully from God to men, who have in the transmission made it their own.⁷

In words significant for any Hegelian enthusiast or some liberation theologians, he warns: "No great work was done by a system; whereas systems rise out of individual exertions." A sentiment familiar to his famous line: ". . . no martyr will die for a conclusion." The truth is communicated in human discourse through the "antagonistic principle of personality."⁸ This is no dialectic other than the dialect of conscience: *cor ad cor loquitur*.⁹ His natural affinity for the Alexandrian school and for the vibrancy of the primitive Church, he acknowledges, was influenced by a "preference of the Personal to the Abstract"; and his accord with Keble, recounted in the *Apologia*, stood on a fundamental epistemology:

It is faith and love which give to probability a force which it has not in itself. Faith and love are directed towards an Object; in the vision of the Object they live; it is that Object, received in faith and love, which renders it reasonable to take probability as sufficient for internal conviction. 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

In this certainly lies a clue to what so many have called, hardly without exaggeration, the “enchantment” of his oratorical diction. It is not true, as some of the same have claimed in fits of piety, that his public recitations involved “the complete elimination of the personality of the reader.” It is true that Newman would have been petrified by the current vulgar idea that lecturers in the Liturgy have to “put feeling” into what they are reading. Yet through, and not in spite of, his naked diffidence, one was aware of God the Creator speaking “as He speaks through creation ... by the articulate voice of man.” The more he effaced himself, the more one “thought only of the majestic soul that saw God.” Here was the antagonistic principle of personality at work, quite as it had been the guiding method of the *Tracts*: it was no “private motive, and no personal aim” but an attempt through the imagination to render an abstraction persuasive, to create “a living Church, made of flesh and blood, with voice, complexion, and motive and action, and a will of its own.”¹¹

He proclaimed, with *wry* astonishment on top of ingenuousness, “to the last” a total obliviousness to the power his personality had over others of whom “of late years I have read and heard that they even imitated me in various ways.” Friends held this from him because they “knew too well how disgusted I should be at such proceedings.” He took it as a case of how an intrusive personality, not submissive to a higher will, “diverts men from God.” Personality disintegrates when the empirical ego becomes an imperial ego. In the proper scheme, though he would have denied the choice of example, the effect *ex opere operantis* should be as an elderly woman described it to Cosmo Gordon Laing: “Mr. Newman used often to wear a rather dirty surplice, but when he read the lessons we thought he was in heaven.”¹²

PERSONAL AND SACRAMENTAL CHARACTER

Few, if any, of his fellow Catholics preached as regularly as he on the biblical and patristic understanding of what we now call the integral personality. The personal element, which he condemned in its severely individualistic form among the Protestants, found its proper display in the eschatological dimension of sacramental life. But his experience had taught him to reverence the place of faith in this economy and not to set up personal character as an absolute contradiction of sacramental character. While he condemned in Protestantism “...the flocking to preachers rather than to sacraments (as if the servant were above the Master, who is Lord over His own house)...,” he also admitted that “it is not an easy matter to determine that the self-appointed preachers in question do really convert the hearts of men, that is, do cast out devils, do work miracles, as they say they do.”¹³



Lacking is the objective certitude of the operation, for, as he summons Prayer Book Englishness to say, “what seems good, is often not good.” The certitude is to be had through the universal testimony of the Church, without which the individual who is made in the image of God easily degenerates into a reflection of private error. But the individualistic confidence in justification gained by faith as by an instrument, *ex opere operantis*, is not in itself without Catholic substance. For example, the “benefit arising from the use of holy water accrues not *ex opere operantis*, through the devout mental acts of the person using it, and the prayer of the Church.”¹⁴ Such is the normal case with sacramentals (although he does not use that term here), but it also pertains to the sacraments themselves. Baptism by water regenerates *ex opere operato*; but, under prescribed conditions, the same effect may be had through baptism by blood. And “... the Sacrifice of the Mass benefits the person for whom it is offered *ex opere operato*, whatever be the personal character of the celebrant” but it benefits him more or less, *ex opere operantis*, according to the degree of sanctity which he has attained, and the earnestness by which he offers it.¹⁵

By an epistemology which locates the image of God in the conscience rather than in the pure mind, it was inevitable that Newman would bring to his description of the Catholic economy an especially high estimation of the personal character as an influence in percep-

tion. Through the intuition of God as an acting, judging person instead of a static essence, it follows that we come to encounter him in acts and choices. The idea compares with St. Thomas's concept of God as existence but also differs in the account of apprehension. In the Scholastic tradition, individual acts cannot be diverse or false since we judge by acquired species instead of a subjective intuition; for Newman there is a closer identity between the individual who acts and the image for which he acts. The individual alone is able to know his perception of God. On the other hand, the universal validity of the perception can be determined objectively only by its harmony with the faith of the Church. In this association of the individual *ex opere operantis ecclesiae*, Newman delivered himself from the subjectivism of which he was often accused but which he professed himself to abhor.¹⁶

In the particular case of the preacher, but with application to all who confess the Faith, Newman says "he comes to his hearers ...with antecedents."¹⁷ The choice of words is significant. The sacerdotal kingship of Christ is in the line of Melchizedek who has no personal associations or antecedents; but it is no less for that attached to a prophetic tradition in which personal commitments are instruments of inspired communication:

People are drawn and moved, not simply by what is said, but by how it is said and who says it. The same things said by one man are not the same as when said by another.¹⁸

The inspired word is "but a dead letter (ordinarily considered), except as transmitted from one mind to another."¹⁹ The transmission is the means of "real assent" as opposed to "notional assent" and affects the speaker as well as the hearer, for the preacher may grow in faith even as he preaches: "What is so powerful an incentive to preaching as the sure belief that it is the preaching of the truth?"²⁰ In this is the key to the impression Newman gave of being part of his own audience. Froude said: "He seemed to be addressing the most secret consciousness of each of us, as the eyes of a portrait appear to look at every person in a room."²¹ Father Neville remembered Newman instructing him: "Let me know where (the undergraduates) sit in the Church, that I may picture beforehand how I shall have to stand when I preach, in order to see them naturally, and address them."²²

What is this but the practical working out of the movement from notion to reality? Notional assent,

which consists in self-contemplation, becomes "real" when the mind attends to external objects represented by an impression left upon the antecedent imagination. Real assent appropriates the truth as part of one's entire existence, and so it affects the total personality and is not exclusively a matter of the intellect.²³ If his analysis of the "antecedent" process lost anything by being pre-Freudian as a moral psychology, it gained more by being pre-Determinist. The rhetorical Newman was his theory of cognition on display.

Working from the premise of grace operative through discourse, he developed his "most characteristic and effective" technique, namely the exposition of his listener's own reactions to doctrine; he "crystallizes the question, or problem, or truth in such a personal way that the answer itself has an immediate and personal significance."²⁴ Had Gladstone tried this, Queen Victoria might not have complained that he addressed her as though she were a public meeting. But the gift for empathy was precisely a gift and not a device. Newman described it in one of his own sermons:

Do you not know what it is to so love and live upon a person who is present to you, that your eyes follow his, that you read his soul, that you see its changes in his countenance, that you anticipate his wants, that you are sad at his sadness, troubled when he is vexed, restless when you cannot understand him, relieved, comforted when you have cleared up the mystery?²⁵

He actually entitled one sermon "Personal Influence, the means of Propagating the Truth"²⁶ in oblique tribute to the Aristotelian philosophy of rhetoric to which he never lacked recourse:

The ethos of the speaker is a cause of persuasion when the speech is so uttered as to make him worthy of belief; for as a rule we trust men of probity more, and more quickly, about things in general, while on points outside the realm of exact knowledge, where opinion is divided, we trust them absolutely.²⁷

"Thus," writes Sillem, "he preferred St. John Chrysostom, whom he felt he knew, to Aquinas, whom he never did come to know personally...He sought objective truth by the method of dialogue, in and through the experience of innersubjectivity (to use the modern jargon), that is to say in the intercourse of man with man, and the action of mind and mind."²⁸

This has its limits. As early as the *Parochial Sermons*, he observed:

The religious history of each individual is as solitary and complete as the history of the world. Each man will, of course, gain more knowledge as he studies Scripture more, and prays and meditates more; but he cannot make another man wise or holy by his own advance in wisdom or holiness.²⁹

But if one cannot compel, one may encourage. If the rod is not at hand, there is always the staff. So Newman made St. Philip Neri the telling model for his technique with souls:

(Neri) preferred to yield to the stream, and direct the current, which he could not stop, of science, literature, art and fashion, and to sweeten and to sanctify what God had made very good and man had spoilt ... he would be but an ordinary individual priest as others: and his weapons should be but unaffected humility and unpretending love. All he did was to be done by the light, and fervor, and convincing eloquence of his personal character and his easy conversation.³⁰

The subjective influence of the subjective character, then, had a certain objectivity, even when it could not claim to effect actual sanctifying grace in the manner of the sacraments themselves. Empathy promotes a widespread sympathy for acts of virtue, disposing a soul toward grace. Newman composed this prayer for his own use, and in our day that celebrated embodiment of empathy, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, had mandated its use by the Missionaries of Charity as a thanksgiving after Mass:

Make me preach Thee without preaching - not by words, but by my example, and by the catching force, the sympathetic influence, of what I do - by my visible resemblance to Thy saints, and the evident fullness of the love which my heart bears to Thee.³¹

As a visual aid, there could be nothing so direct as the word picture he creates to describe the priest in the Liturgy, and these comments remain tenable despite the onslaught of some contemporary liturgists:

Clad in his sacerdotal vestments, (the priest) sinks what is individual in himself altogether, and is but the representation of Him from whom he derives his commission. His words, his tones, his actions, his presence, lose their personality; one bishop, one priest, is like another; they all chant the same

notes, and observe the same genuflexions, as they give one peace and one blessing, as they offer one and the same sacrifice. The Mass must not be said without a Missal under the priest's eye; nor in any language but that in which it has come down to us from the early hierarchs of the Western Church. But, when it is over, and the celebrant has resigned the vestments proper to it, then he resumes himself, and comes to us in the gifts and associations which attach to his person. He knows his sheep, and they know him; and it is this direct bearing of the teacher on the taught, of his mind upon their minds, and the mutual sympathy which exists between them which is his strength and influence when he addresses them. They hang upon his lips as they cannot hang upon the pages of his book.³²

Current trivializations of worship have reversed this order, unduly personalizing the canonical parts even while bureaucratizing the pastoral facts. But if Newman's description survived the romantic excesses of his own day, it is likely to surmount the balloon Masses and bubble Catechisms of ours.

THE CONSECRATION OF PERSONALITY

The *Apologia* was Newman's fitting equivalent of a Summa since only the personal exposition of his own character's formation could be an adequate vehicle for that idealist epistemology modified by a sensationalist psychology with which he described individual assent to divine propositions. It was a complete rejection of abstract and rationalist philosophies in favor of a personalist theory by which the individual grasps the truth by reasoning in response to definite points. Psychological and phenomenological as the approach was, it was also metaphysical since the entire order had been constructed through the providence of God. Integral conduct cannot be anthropocentric.³³

As a pioneer in theological anthropology, Newman was a precursor of the personalist method of Pope John Paul II. The Cardinal's appeal to patrology as a way of personalizing Thomist realism parallels the Pope's reference to the phenomenological existentialists for the same purpose. The great issues of human consciousness, participation in history, man and the moral good, figure large for both. The author of the *Grammar of Assent* might have called *The Acting Person* in some way his

own. Wojtyla's collaborator, Mieczyslaw Krapiec, may be doing by the philosophical anthropology of his book *I-Man* what Newman undertook in the *Development of Doctrine*. Not for nothing has Wojtyla matched Newman's enthusiasm for inventive literary drama, the most instinctive vehicle for expounding the phenomenon of consciousness.

Newman's affinity for the Oratorian ideal, albeit clerical, and his principles in *Consulting the Laity*, gave off sparks of that existentialist personalism which has motivated Pope John Paul's promotion of lay spirituality through movements which confound many clericalists at the moment. Newman might have said in similar language what Wojtyla said some time before ascending the Petrine throne:

We maintain the principle of personalism against that of individualism and totalitarianism. Both these conceptions destroy in the human person the possibility and even the ability of participation. They deprive man of his rights to participations.³⁴

The Pope's "Lublin Thomism" is to some degree the fruition of what we might call Newman's "Birmingham Thomism."

Although Newman intimated the election in this century of a pope from a distant land, he did not defer his personalist theme to a later and greater authority. It reverberated in his first book when he said that Revelation serves men in the way it "clears up all doubts about the existence of God as separate from and independent of nature; and shows that the world depends, not merely on a system, but on a Being, real, living and individual."³⁵ The reason no one will be a martyr for a conclusion is that martyrs in one sense are the conclusion. The conclusion is the resolution of an affinity for something greater than the self. Christian martyrs conclude the indwelling in their souls of the Holy Spirit himself and, through him, of the indwelling of the Father and the Son. The life of grace, which frees the person from the tyranny of the "I" also introduces the personality to friendship of the "Thou."

Newman rejected any Nonconformist tendency to stress belief rather than the object of belief (which is why he objected to Evangelicals who preached "conversion" instead of Christ), and he opposed any proclivity among Catholics to portray grace as some kind of au-

tonomous quality or entity in the soul. Justification could mean but one thing, and all accounts of grace had to heed it: "... to receive the divine presence within us, and to be made a temple of the Holy Ghost." Grace is "a personal favour, a loving presence" and thus Newman, in the words of Dessain, "refused to separate the presence of God as a friend from the change in his creature that was a consequence of that presence."³⁶ In complement to this reality, he embarked upon a career of mortification which has been much ignored by biographers; this meant, of course, the constant mortifications of temperament in his dealings with others, but also corporal mortifications including the fervent use of the discipline. As early as *Tract 21*, it was recognized that no saint had made the mistake of denying death to the lower senses. Decline of the interior life of the soul, and especially in the Religious orders today, is directly attributable to that inflated error.³⁷ This egoism permeates society, so that from the unmotivated cleric to the hyperactive "young upwardly-mobile professional," the personality provides the world little because the person is primarily occupied with consuming. Every instance of decadence in piety is evidence of an attempt to replace habitual grace with constant gratification. A neurotic personality consumes distractions because it is bored; the weaker the personality the more likely is it to follow trends. The consecrated life is nothing if it does not contradict this banality. Newman knew that in his own age, but would surely have been astonished by how Catholics themselves have become symptomatic of banality in the present age. The Preacher called this "vanity of vanities." That means: a man who will not conclude who he is, will always behave as an hypothesis.

Positively speaking, Newman's model of total psychological consecration has had an enormous effect on Christian apologetics, not only schematically as with the highest voices in the Church, but also methodically in the case of modern writers who have been compelled both by Newman's grasp of being and the way he expressed it: Gerard Manley Hopkins, Hilaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton, Evelyn Waugh, the early Graham Greene, Paul Claudel, Flannery O'Connor and, perhaps even through more obscure associations, Sigrid Undset. Words of Newman have their place in the modern literary canon, so that:

The more a man is educated whether in theology or secular science, the holier he needs to be if he would be saved. That devotion and self rule are worth all the intellectual cultivation in the world.

That in the case of most men literature and science and the habits they create, so far from insuring these highest of gifts, indispose the mind towards their acquisition.³⁸

God has made man to become man, not half a man or a man arrested in conscience, but a man alive to authenticity. Within this comprehensive outlook, Newman's Christian humanism influenced some practical advice on the training of youth. The Oratory school at Birmingham had a remarkably free system of regulations, for instance. It represents his respect for the natural endowments of the soul, a theme to be amplified by the teaching of Vatican II and the Revised Code of Canon Law on personal freedom. The natural man has an autonomy of his own: "... he is this sentient, intelligent, creative and operative being, quite independent of any extraordinary help from Heaven or any definite religious belief..."³⁹ This is not anthropocentrism; it is sheer sensible anthropology. On the specific matter of priestly formation, he writes this most delightful passage in a private letter:

I have little belief in true vocations being destroyed by contact with the world - I don't mean contact with sin and evil - but contact with the world which consists of such intercourse as is natural and necessary ... The thought is awful, that boys should have had no trial of their heart, till at the end of some years, they go out into the world with most solemn vows upon them, and then perhaps for the first time learn that the world is not a seminary ... Moreover I dread too early a separation from the world for another reason - for the spirit of formalism, affectation, and preciseness, which it is so very apt to occasion.⁴⁰

He was equally convinced, more than most intellectuals in his era of progressivist optimism, that man has to be taught himself anew, recovering what he has lost of self-knowledge through the "form of infidelity of the day" which we would call secular humanism. As sin imposes an unrelieved conformity upon souls, so true maturation in holiness secures the most creative individuality, which is greatly different from individualism: "Moses does not write as David; nor Isaias as Jeremias; nor St. John as St. Paul ... Each has his own manner, each speaks his own words, though he speaks the while the words of God. They speak for themselves ... with their own arguments, with their own deductions, with their own modes of expression."⁴¹ Newman simply witnesses to the ele-

mentary principle of redemption: *gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit*. Grace, both sanctifying and habitual, delivers the personality from the worst of all tyrannies, slavery to the self. Slavery such as this masquerades as a species of liberation when, in fact, it is an arrested development. The less mature the personality is, the more anonymous it seems. There are no two saints alike; this cannot be said of sinners.

In the *Apologia*, for instance, the noble characters are singular, like the most accomplished Augustan portrait busts; and the baleful ones woven in and out of Newman's gossamer pages are more like stereotypes of certain pathologies and less like heroically tragic figures. Were the writing superficial, the sadder characters would be brighter; but it is precisely because Newman is so careful to reveal all that can be revealed that he exposes the illusion of the vibrant muddle and original cliché. What is his right to do this, but that egoism is not self-absorption, for it is really absorption in everything else as though it were the self? So the victim gains the whole world and loses his own soul in the transaction. The egoist in fact betrays the vital ego by behaving as though the self were anything but the self. Newman marked it among those of his own day who defined themselves as Gentlemen, and he would observe it today in the Determinist who cannot organize his own life and so decides to restructure Guatemala. Once a party or a nation or an economic theory substitutes for the person, then it is easy to conclude that God himself is only a self-projection. That merely shows too high an opinion of the self, or too low an opinion of the projection. In any case, it disorders the person and disorients the personality. On a cosmic scale, this makes Hell the state where persons are alone together. Whatever its music, it must be in the earphones you see on people today walking through streetcrowds as though there were no crowds. Here is the high-tech repetition of the Heraclitean inability to answer the question of the one and the many.



Newman had seen his culture already in need of this remonstrance as it was fast abandoning, through the negligences of Liberal individualists who thought that contingent being can be its own source of perfection, both the cosmic sense of creation in the sacramental order and kinetic personalism as it obtained in the classical assumptions about universal man. The first stabs of modernity were aggravating an old moral wound:

Cicero says that Plato and Demosthenes, Aristotle and Isocrates, might have respectively excelled in each other's province, but that each was absorbed in his own; his words are emphatic; "quorum uterque, suo studio delectatus, *contempsit* alterum." Specimens of this peculiarity occur every day. You can hardly persuade some men to talk about any thing but their own pursuit; they refer the whole world to their center, and measure all matters by their own rule, like the fisherman in the drama, whose eulogy of his deceased lord was, that he was so fond of fish.⁴²

Something like the fisherman was the radical feminist who recently wrote in of an indulgent bishop: "He affirmed me in my okay-ness."

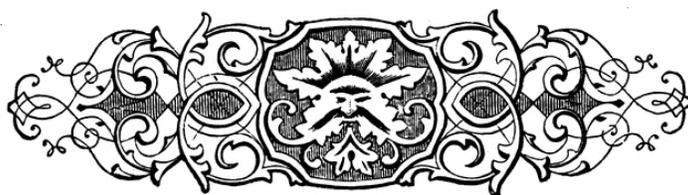
The Ciceronic spectrum, as it shone on mediaeval and renaissance horizons, was vanishing around Newman, and he could detect the rudiments of a new thing cruel in its vapidness: a society little offended by heresy and schism because it has little commitment to truth and unity, disposed to collectivism because it cannot comprehend universality. This was his intimation of what would come to be called the post-Christian age by moderns whose confidence at this very moment is being shattered by somewhat more reflective thinkers who are coming to call themselves post-modern. But that is another matter.

The matter at hand is Newman. For if we have approached his theory of personality, we have done that theory little credit unless we see that we have been dis-

cussing himself. And if his theory is that personality can be a power, then he is that theory's proof. The way the very recollection of his name compels us to think about this, is proof of the proof. The more he sought to disappear, the more vividly he emerged as testament to the force of "unaffected humility and unpretending love." He did not think the world had anything to lose in 1845 when, at the age of forty-four, he decided that his creative years were over. But the sunset of his life lasted forty-five more years. In it he settled his earthly affairs by completing the substance of volumes, including what is possibly the most influential epistemology of modern record, and the greatest autobiography in the English language, besides his thousands of letters. Controversial as often as he renounced controversy, his hymns were still sung by those who figured him out of harmony with the age. And with disregard for the normal bounds of its editorial policy, he was eventually canonized by the London *Times*. It was a constructive use of retirement, a conspicuous power of effacement.

In the youth of his maturity, he had gazed at his audience with bright eyes in a dim light; in the fullness of that maturity, he watched another audience more dimly in a brighter light. When the eyes at last were shut, Cardinal Manning, who did not often give the impression of eagerness to place the light of Newman on a lampstand, swept aside the external dispositions which impede the empathy of great men for each other: "A noble and beautiful life is the most convincing and persuasive of all preaching, and we have all felt its power."

This was a fair thing to say of one whose personality may yet be judged by the Church to bear the stamp of heroic purity, humility and devotion. If so, the great Church will know universally what the little congregation at Littlemore knew precisely when it was parted long ago from one who "told you what you knew about yourself or what you did not know; has read to you your wants or feelings, and comforted you by very reading..."



NOTES

- 1U.S. pp. 28-29.
- 2Mix., p. 45.
- 3S.V.O., p. 58.
- 4Ibid., pp. 92-93; JHN to J. L. Patterson, 30 January 1867, in Wilfrid Ward: *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman*, Vol. II (N.Y.: 1912), p. 134.
- 5H.S., II, p. 93.
- 6*Meditations and Devotions of the Late Cardinal Newman* (London: 1911), p. 259.
- 7Mix., p. 364.
- 8Apo., pp. 27-28; G.A., p. 93.
- 9V. Philip Boyce: "John Henry Newman a Cardinal: One Hundred Years Ago," in the *Clery Review*, Vol. LXIV, No. 12 (December 1979), p. 431.
- 10Apo., pp. 18-19.
- 11Ibid., p. 48. Cf. *Fathers of the Oratory: Sermon Notes of Cardinal Newman* (N.Y.: 1913), p. xii; William Lockhart, in *Correspondence of John Henry Newman with John Keble and Others, 1839-1845* (London: 1917), pp. 390-391.
- 12The report of one of his parishioners, given to Archbishop and in turn to R. D. Middleton: *Newman and Bloxam. An Oxford Friendship* (London: 1947), pp. 12-13.
- 13VM. II, p. 39; P.S. 192-293. Cf. Placid Murray: *Newman the Oratorian* (Dublin: 1969), p. 47.
- 14Diff. I, p. 85.
- 15Ibid., p. 86. This helped him as a Catholic to explain how he had been devoted to the Anglican Eucharist; grace had been at work but, separated from the indefectable prayer of the Church, it had come in the Anglican ordinance *ex opere operantis* and not *operato*: v. Diff. 1, pp. 81-82; Murray, op. cit., pp. 69, 124.
- 16Cf. Harold Weatherby: *Cardinal Newman and His Age* (Nashville: 1973), pp. 200-201.
- 17Idea., p. 425.
- 18Ibid.
- 19US., p. 18.
- 20Mix., 18.
- 21J. A. Froude: *Short Studies on Subjects IV* (London: 1883), p. 278.
- 22Conversation April 6, 1867, in Ward II, op. cit., p. 138. Cf. M. Nedoncelle: *Introduction to Sermons Universitaires* (Bruges: 1955), p. 7.
- 23V. Peter Collins: "Newman and Contemporary Education" in *Educational Theory*, Vol. XXVI (February 1976), p. 366; G.A., pp. 79ff.
- 24Eugene M. Burke: "The Salvation of the Hearer" in *American Essays for the Newman Centennial*, ed. J. K. Ryan and E. D. Benard (Washington, D.C.: 1942), pp. 92-93. V, eg, S.V.O., pp. 1ff.: "Intellect, the Instrument of Religious Training."
- 25S.V.O., p. 36.
- 26U.S., pp. 91ff.
- 27Aristotle: *Rhetoric*, tr. Lance Cooper (N.Y.: 1932), pp. 8-9. On *ethos*, cf. Werner Jaeger: *Paideia, the Ideals of Greek Culture I* (Oxford: 1945), p. 20.
- 28Edwin Sillem, ed.: *The Philosophical Notebook of John Henry Newman* (Louvain: 1969), p. 8. Cf. "St. Paul's Gift of Sympathy" in S.V.O., pp. 106ff.
- 29P.S. VII, p. 248. In the sermon "The Individuality of the Soul" he says: "We cannot understand that a multitude is a collection of immortal souls."
- 30Idea., pp. 425-426.
- 31*Meditations and Devotions*, op. cit., p. 365.
- 32Idea., pp. 425-426.
- 33Cf. Charles Dessain: "Cardinal Newman Considered as a Prophet" in *Concilium*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (September 1968), p. 42. Cf. Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians: "Toward the Meeting of Religions" (21 September, 1967).
- 34V. David Q. Liptak: "The Pope's Personalism" in *The (Hartford) Catholic Transcript* (February 8, 1980).
- 35*Arians*, p. 184.

36Dessain, op. cit., p. 42.

37On mortification, cf. *Tracts* 14, 18, 21, 66, 86; *Letters and Diaries*, V, pp. 1-2; also Meriol Trevor: *The Pillar of the Cloud*, pp. 203-4, 332, 453-4, 538-9.

38JHN to W. Ward in *Ward I*, op. cit., pp. 515-516.

39Idea., p. 222. Cf. Ibid., p. 234: “She (the Church) fears no knowledge, but she purifies all; she represses no element of our nature, but cultivates the whole.”

40JHN to Bellasis in *Ward I*, op. cit., p. 595.

41Mix., pp. 367-368.

42Idea., pp. 399-400.

