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## NEWMAN AND THE MOTHER OF GOD

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IN THIS ESSAY WE WILL EXAMINE CARDINAL NEWMAN'S VARIOUS WRITINGS ABOUT the Mother of God, but I almost need to begin with something like an apology for I will be discussing Newman as a controversialist, rather than as a theologian or devotional writer. It does indeed seem unworthy of either Newman or Mary, the Queen of Peace, to revive old controversies, but as is well known, Cardinal Newman never wrote without a "call," or some very good reason why he thought it necessary to respond to some charge or book; and many of his writings on Our Blessed Mother, unfortunately, fall into that category. As reluctant as he generally was to put forth any personal revelation about himself or his faith, he was even more reluctant to discuss one of Catholicism's greatest treasures, the patronage of the Mother of God. Yet, we really cannot understand Newman's genius as a writer unless we examine the issues to which his works were directed.

My paper has three parts. The first is concerned with what might be loosely called the "tractarian" view of Mary, namely the Marian devotions put forward by Newman and his mentor John Keble during the first Oxford Movement. The second part consists of a description of the Anglican charge to the effect that Roman Catholics, as part of their system, encouraged or at least tolerated the "worship" of Mary. The third and final part is concerned with Newman's writings on behalf of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the devotions that surround Mary.

As I have briefly noted, these controversies are painful to describe, even at this distance in time, but from these controversies it should emerge that Newman indeed was one of the great champions of Our Lady. His critics were not silenced, but Newman's various works on this subject did a great deal to explain Catholic belief on the rightful homage that belonged to Mary and to make converts.

### I

The Oxford Movement is commonly dated from 1833 to 1845. In his *Apologia* of many years later, Newman described John Keble as the "hidden author" of the revival of 1833, and his sermon *National Apostasy* as its formal beginning. Scholars have disputed the accuracy of the Newman comments, and it might be useful to briefly describe the influence of Keble as far as my subject is concerned.<sup>7</sup> In 1827 Keble published anonymously a book of poems entitled *The Christian Year*. The Keble volume turned out to be the most popular volume of religious poetry ever published in England, and there are several poems in the collection that describe Mary in what we might call Catholic language. In one, for example, she is addressed as the "Queen of Heaven," and in another we find a stanza that perfectly describes the devotion of Roman Catholics:

Ave Maria! Thou whose name  
All but adoring love may claim. (Annunciation)

I am not sure if these poems and others which praise the life of celibacy had any influence on Newman's development. But in the *Plain and Parochial* sermons we find abundant evidence of Newman's own devotion to Our Lady. Mary was always identified in Newman's mind as the person who was closest to Christ. In one of his sermons Newman went very close to an avowal of a belief in the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, for it must be that the one who was chosen to bear the Son of God was unique in the history of mankind. There is a mystery in any direct act of providence, but the scheme, as St. Paul said, of God "being made of a woman," absolutely reversed the judgment that had been given against Eve; in Newman's words:

Instead of sending His Son from Heaven, He sent him forth as the Son of Mary, to show that all our sorrow and all our corruption can be blessed and changed by Him. The very punishment of the fall, the very taint of birth-sin, admits of a cure by the coming of Christ. (Vol. II, p. 145.)

A second portion of the curse, that the "husband shall rule over thee," was also repealed when "Christ came as the seed of the woman," for St. Peter and St. Paul had been emphatic on the honor that was due to women. The slavery of pre-Christian times had been forever "done away with."

But Mary was also "blessed and favoured" in herself in addition to the great benefits she helped to confer on humanity.

Who can estimate [said Newman] the holiness and perfection of her, who was chosen to be the Mother of Christ? If to him that hath, more is given, and holiness and divine favour go together, (and this we are expressly told,) what must have been the transcendent purity of her, whom the Creator Spirit condescended to overshadow with His miraculous presence? (Vol. II, p. 147.)

But there was a dilemma with our human understanding of Mary's role in the Church and in the scheme of salvation. In what follows we find one of the most persistent themes in Newman's devotion to our Lady and why, as an Anglican, he was suspicious of the Roman Catholic system of devotions towards her. With such high honor that is implicit in Mary's title as Mother of God, it was extraordinary that scripture had so little to say about her. In that scriptural silence about Mary, Newman drew forth a great lesson that she offered to us:

Scripture is written to show us the course of God's good and marvellous Providence, and we hear of those Saints only who were instruments of His purposes, as either introducing or preaching His Son. Christ's favored Apostle was St. John, His personal friend; yet, how little do we know of St. John compared with St. Paul; - and why? Because St. Paul was the more illustrious propagator and dispenser of His Truth ... with somewhat a similar meaning [scripture] had hid from us the knowledge of His Mother and His friend. These were not to be exposed, as unfit for the world to know, - as dangerous, because not admitting of being known, without a risk lest the honour which those Saints received through grace, should eclipse in our minds the honour of Him who honoured them. Had the Blessed Mary been more fully disclosed to us in the heavenly beauty and sweetness of the spirit within her... She would have seemingly been introduced for her sake not for His sake. (Vol. 11, p. 149.)

In the above passage we see Newman's general reserve about Our Lady, versus the poetic expressions of love that we find in the poetry of Faber and numerous other Victorian Catholics. There was something almost unseemly in making much in a public way of one's love for a human being. Yet Newman's own praise, while not poetic in its form, exceeds that of most of his contemporaries, for Mary was the model of faith and the guardian of orthodoxy. In one of his final sermons as an Anglican, Newman made explicit his idea that Mary was at once the patron of the unlearned and the doctors of the church:

She does not think it enough to accept [faith], she dwells upon it; not enough to possess, she uses it; not enough to assent, she develops it; not enough to submit the Reason, she reasons upon it; not indeed reasoning first, and believing afterwards, with Zacharias, yet first believing without reasoning, next from love and reverence, reasoning after believing. And thus she symbolizes to us, not only the faith of the unlearned, but of the doctors of the Church also, who have to investigate, and weigh, and define, as well as to profess the Gospel; to draw the line between truth and heresy; to anticipate or remedy the various aberrations of wrong reason.<sup>2</sup>

Newman's approach to Mary in the above is almost wholly intellectual. The main part of the sermon is directed to the proper understanding of faith, of which Mary is chosen as the perfect model. At the time of this sermon (1843) Newman was attempting to resolve some of his difficulties with Roman dogmas and studying the Fathers of the church with an intense vigor. The result of his studies, of course, was his conversion and a book entitled *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. One feature of the *Essay* might be mentioned here: Newman's attack on the idea of private judgment as far as the teachings of the apostolic fathers were concerned. Many of the early fathers had been extravagant in their praise of Mary, and Newman faulted himself for accepting some of the patristic teachings and rejecting or ignoring others.<sup>3</sup> It is also worth noting that in his last letter as an Anglican to Dr. Pusey he blamed himself and the Tractarian program for its tendency to "pick and choose" its doctrines, versus the ideal of accepting the whole of patristic tradition.<sup>4</sup>

The patristic tradition about Mary was in fact ignored by the community of Anglican scholars in the nineteenth century, possibly because so many of them, like Newman, took their teachings in a secondhand way, via the divines of the seventeenth century. Whatever the source of the Anglican prejudice against Mary, Newman insisted that those countries which had eliminated devotion to Our Lady, by way of establishing a "purer" form of faith, had ended up with a failure to honor her Son as God.<sup>5</sup>

## II

At this stage in my paper I would like to briefly turn away from Newman and concentrate on the leaders of the Tractarian party who had remained behind, namely John Keble and Dr. E. B. Pusey, who gave the name "Puseyite" to the Anglo-Catholic party.

I have already mentioned Keble's early veneration of Mary, and his poetic sentiments were complemented by a large portrait of the Madonna which adorned the wall of his room at Oxford during his undergraduate years. At the time when Newman was known to be moving towards Rome, 1843-1845, Keble composed a new series of poems, the *Lyra Innocentium*, "*Songs about Children*." There is a story about the *Lyra* that concerns my topic, for one of the poems about Mary was judged to be too Catholic for publication at such a critical time. Keble

was advised not to publish it, and he reluctantly agreed to drop the poem, "Mother Out of Sight," from the collection. But he grumbled to his friend and advisor, John T. Coleridge, about the Anglican opposition to the poem: "... no one thing [said Keble] has seemed to me to tell so much against our Church, as your scruples plus those of the Dysons, on the B.[lessed] Virgin." Such scruples, according to Keble, showed how far removed the English church was from other Catholic bodies, but scruples is not exactly the right word to describe the attitude of those in the Keble circle of friends, for some denied that there was anything at all distinctive about Mary.<sup>6</sup>



There is a more drastic change in Keble's outlook than is suggested in several of the poems in the *Lyra Innocentium*. No longer do we find her exalted as the "Queen of Heaven," but in a role expressing her subordination to Christ, which is of course a legitimate expression of the Catholic view. What is more painful to witness, however, is Keble's acceptance of the common Protestant attacks on the "idolatry" of the Roman Church. The charge of idolatry was especially common in 1845, when Catholics were trying to secure funding for one of their seminaries from the British government, and the Evangelical party up in arms at the prospect of funding an idolatrous church.<sup>7</sup> This idea that Catholics were idolators was not confined to "vulgar" Protestants. Newman's own brother, Francis, described the cultus of the Blessed Virgin as "disgusting."<sup>8</sup>

Keble's change of heart on this matter is recorded in his correspondence of 1845 through 1846, at a time when he was concerned with the controversy that would follow Newman's conversion. In several letters he encouraged his friends to prepare arguments to be used to prevent massive conversions in the wake of Newman's move, and it appears that he settled on the convenient charge of idolatry. In several letters he made reference to the Roman "worship of the B.V.M." as an illustration of the corruptions of the practical system of Roman Catholicism. In the Preface of 1848 to a new edition of his sermons he repeated the charge of idolatry as one of the major reasons not to go over to Rome, whatever might happen to the discipline and doctrines of the Church of England.<sup>9</sup>

With Dr. Pusey there was a whole new set of charges against Roman dogma, but in a letter of 1847 he told Henry Manning, who did not go over until 1851, that his major grievance against Rome was its system of devotions towards the Blessed Virgin. If it was true that the English church would endure anything but a hint of Catholicism, that problem was better than being asked to accept such devotions.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, Pusey's objections were so strong that he was once led to change a traditional reading of scripture to "Him who would crush the serpent's head."<sup>11</sup> Pusey, then, was speaking primarily of himself when he described the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the devotions paid to Mary as the "special crux" of Anglicans with the Roman church.<sup>12</sup>

As far as I have been able to discover, Pusey did not write anything at the time of the definition of 1854 on the subject of Mariolatry. But the Anglo-Catholic press, then and much earlier, was filled with articles on the "Mariolatry" of Roman Catholics." It was an established fact in the minds of the English churchmen of every theological opinion that the Roman church sanctioned "idolatry." The charge (and I remind you that however much it might amuse us today is one of the most serious that any Christian can level against another) was used in 1850 to diminish the various humiliations that were brought about by the forceful erastianism of the time. Thus, the comments of St. Alphonsus on Mary, "We have one advocate in heaven, and it is you, O Blessed Virgin," was especially relevant since St. Alphonsus had only been canonized very recently.<sup>14</sup> The comment was used to show that the Roman church sanctioned its own form of heresy and therefore no one ought to go over to Rome, whatever the state courts might do to Anglican doctrines.

There were several other trials of Anglican doctrine by the English courts in the years after Newman's conversion, but the one trial most relevant to my paper occurs in 1860, over a collection of essays in one volume,

entitled *Essays and Reviews*. The book seemed to question basic doctrines such as the literal inspiration of scripture and the eternity of hell, and in an effort to secure the legal condemnation of the book, Pusey and the leader of the Ultra-Protestant party made peace and took the book to court." This common effort of two very different religious groups in the Church of England did not succeed, and the Catholic press took up the charge of erastianism and Dr. Pusey's inconsistency. In 1864 Archbishop Manning entered the debate with a series of pamphlets in which Dr. Pusey's inconsistency was attacked.<sup>16</sup> Manning should not have challenged Pusey, but his charge was valid, for Pusey had spent much of his life attacking the Ultra-Protestants. Bear with me. I know that your interest

in such controversies may be limited, but it was out of this controversy that Pusey's first *Eirenicon* was composed. *Eirenicon* means "peace-offering," and the circumstances were hardly favorable to any kind of discussion of union between Rome and Canterbury: and much less so was Pusey's *Eirenicon* of 1865.

The first of Pusey's *eirenicons* - he wrote three - consists of two distinct parts. The first part was a defense of the Catholic claims of the Church of England and the second a series of extracts from Catholic writers on the subject of Our Lady. The devotions paid to Mary, as well as the dogma

of the Immaculate Conception, were Pusey's special problem with the Roman system, and the extracts from the Marian writers includes a wide variety of theological and devotional writers mixed rather indiscriminately together. Whatever was Pusey's ultimate intention with his *Eirenicon*, the material he supplied gave powerful support to the Anglican charge that Roman Catholics did worship Mary.

Pusey went further and stated that there was no scriptural or patristic support for the doctrines attached to Mary in the Roman Church, and even less sanction for the popular cultus that was so evident in Catholic countries. The standard Protestant inference about the



idolatries of Rome and the intellectual and moral weaknesses which the Roman church fostered because of such devotions received a powerful statement in Dr. Pusey's *Eirenicon*. Catholics in general were outraged by the volume, and responded with a series of books and pamphlets against the *Eirenicon*, in which every aspect of Pusey's allegedly "almost infinite learning" was given a sharp challenge.

At the same time, there was a certain brilliance in Pusey's strategy, for much of the *Eirenicon* serves as a rebuttal to Newman's *Apologia*. For one, Newman had raised and then answered the perennial question as to when Dr. Pusey was going to become a Catholic, which had been anticipated since 1842. Newman remarked in the *Apologia* that Pusey had never been near to following him to Rome, a remark that bothered Pusey enough to cause him to write to Newman about his meaning. A more vulnerable item in the *Apologia* was Newman's defense of the recent definition of the Immaculate Conception and his study of the fathers which had brought him into the Catholic church. Pusey contended that there was no patristic support for the Marian dogmas or cultus, and seized upon Newman's defense of the 1854 definition to show the dangers implicit in the Roman method. Here is the Newman passage on the Immaculate Conception, though it should be noted that he was answering a different charge in his appeal to the mind of the laity. In the *Apologia* we read the following:

Indeed, it is a simple fact to say, that Catholics have not come to believe it is defined, but that it was defined because they believed it.

The it, of course, is the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, and Newman's concern was to show the interaction of the mind of the laity with the "official" mind of the church. The argument of the passage was that Catholics were more than ciphers of the arbitrary will of the Pope. Pusey's *Eirenicon* was aimed at showing a soft-spot in Newman's defense of the mind of the laity, for if the doctrine of 1854 had been defined in that manner, what was to prevent other "pious opinions" about Mary or anything else from being defined in the future by a similar process. The first *Eirenicon*, needless to say, was filled with such "pious opinions" about Mary, including a series of writers that had long been judged heretical and therefore placed on the index.<sup>17</sup>

Newman rightly understood that the *Eirenicon*

was directed against his theory of development in doctrine and against some of the passages in the *Apologia*. Thus, Pusey, like Charles Kingsley of the preceding year, had provided Newman with a "call," which Newman required before he could write. It is in this context that Newman's most elaborate commentary on the role and place of Mary in the Catholic church was written and why Newman at least deserves some credit for bending his mind and will to discuss the Pusey volume as a real *eirenicon* when his intellect told him otherwise.

It has been said of Johann Sebastian Bach that he always sounds like Bach; well, Newman is rather like that: He always sounds like Newman. The arguments in favor of Mary date back to his Anglican sermons, except in that one critical area that was the source, humanly speaking, of his conversion: the witness of the fathers. Whereas Pusey has stated that there was little patristic support for the Roman system, Newman argued that the witness of the early church on Mary's behalf was extremely strong. A score of fathers were named who had given abundant proof of their own homage to Mary and their belief in her state or condition of sinlessness. Yet the development of the Marian cultus could only take place with the definition of her real motherhood in bearing Christ. We all take so much of this for granted that it might be useful to remark that there were almost a half-dozen heresies in operation at the time when Mary was declared to be the real and actual Mother of God, and a person therefore of extraordinary holiness to fulfill that role. Again the title that we recite with some regularity "Mother of God," was such a high and lofty devotion that scarcely any devotional title, however extravagant, could rival it. In Newman's words:

It is the issue of her sanctity; it is the origin of her greatness. What dignity can be too great to attribute to her who is as closely bound up, as intimately one, with the Eternal Word, as a mother is with a son? What outfit of sanctity, what fullness and redundance of grace, what exuberance of merits have been hers, when once we admit the supposition, which the Fathers justify, that her Maker really did regard those merits, and take them into account, when he condescended "not to abhor the Virgin's womb"? Is it surprising then that on the one hand she should be immaculate in her Conception? Or on the other she should be honoured with an Assumption, and exalted as a queen with a crown of twelve stars, with the rulers of day and night to do her service? Men sometimes wonder

that we call her Mother of life, of mercy, of salvation; what are all these titles compared to that to that one name, Mother of God?" (p. 66)

All of this is clearly anticipated in Newman's Anglican sermon on the subject of the holiness of the Blessed Virgin. But Newman complemented his lofty version of Mary's dignity by offering a number of extracts from the Fathers of the Primitive Church, and insisted that Mary was an active part in the redemption of mankind. He remarked that the witness of the Fathers proved that Mary was more than the physical instrument of our Lord's taking flesh; she was an intelligent, responsible cause of it. In Newman's words, Mary supplied the example of faith and obedience:

Her faith and obedience being accessories to the Incarnation, and gaining it as her reward. As Eve failed in these virtues, and thereby brought on the fall of the race in Adam, so Mary by means of them had a part in its restoration.... not to go beyond the doctrine of the Three Fathers, they unanimously declare that she was not a mere instrument in the Incarnation, such as David, or Judah, may be considered; they declare she co-operated in our salvation not merely by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon her body, but by specific holy acts, the effect of the Holy Ghost within her soul; that, as Eve forfeited privileges by sin, so Mary earned privileges by the fruits of grace; that as Eve was disobedient and unbelieving, so Mary was obedient and believing; that, as Eve was a cause of ruin to all, Mary was a cause of salvation to all; that as Eve made room for Adam's fall, so Mary made room for our Lord's reparation of it; and thus, whereas the free gift was not as the offence, but much greater, it follows that, as Eve co-operated in effecting a great evil, Mary co-operated in effecting a much greater good. (p. 36)

Yet all of these affirmations of a dogma, as they were converted into popular devotions, admitted of corruption in the minds and hearts of the laity. Newman admitted that in Catholic countries this was often the case. In the *Letter to Dr. Pusey*, Newman cited a number of men who were famous for their devotions to Mary, but keenly sensitive to the prospects of "lying embellishment" that her high honor might foster. It was entirely possible, given the stuff of human nature, that a Sicilian bandit might pray for success to the Virgin before attempting a robbery, but this corruption of faith said

nothing in itself against the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church. As Newman remarked in several places in his Catholic works, but especially in his *Letter to Dr. Pusey*:

The religion of the multitude is ever vulgar and abnormal; it ever will be tinctured with fanaticism and superstition ... A people's religion is ever a corrupt religion, in spite of the provisions of Holy Church. If she is to be Catholic, you might admit within her net fish of every kind ... You may beat religion out of men, if you will, and then their excesses will take a different direction; but if you make use of religion to improve them, they will make use of religion to corrupt it. (p. 81)

The relevant phrase in the above is "if she is to be Catholic," for one of the themes in Newman's Catholic volumes is that the Catholic church did indeed include all sorts of corrupt persons, and thus escaped the Protestant heresy known to us as Donatism, whether in its ancient or modern form.

Newman's defense or explanation of the popular religion that showed itself in Catholic countries is vital to his image of the Church, but it might be useful to briefly examine some of the brief specimens of his private devotions by way of answering Faber's charge that he was cold in his devotions to Mary. Faber, in 1857, had called for an "Age of Mary," and scolded his co-religionists for their fears in declaring their faith in Mary to their Protestant countrymen. This material must have been offensive to Pusey and the other Anglo-Catholics especially since Faber linked the spread of Marian devotions to the defeat of heresy.

In the *Apologia*, Newman briefly mentioned the differences he experienced with other unnamed Catholics on the proper homage to Mary. He briefly remarked that he did not "love her the less" than his friends, but that not all types of devotion were suitable to the English temperament. Another part of the explanation lay in Newman's personal reticence. Devotional poetry, like that of Faber, sometimes sounded like love letters being read aloud in a court of law, a technique that Pusey used in his *Eirenicon*. For the material cited by Pusey, whatever its theological merit, was in the judgement of one of his most devout biographers "extravagant."<sup>19</sup>

There is one rather interesting illustration of this minor dispute among Catholics: Newman's trial for libel in the Achilli affair of 1851. Sister Imelda Poole had of-

ferred to exhibit the statue of Mary along with novenas to Mary for Newman's cause against Achilli. Sister Poole had great confidence in what the statue represented, and commented that Our Lady herself ought to put Newman in jail for his apparent doubting of her powers of intercession. Newman responded to the sister's playful letter by noting that there were proper and improper requests to make to Our Lady. It was essential, as Newman had frequently said, that Christians suffer for the Faith. Mary, as the chief doctor of the Faith, had a right to expect a willingness to suffer from her clients. But the sister was triumphant, and Newman went to the sister's convent to lead the devotions when the trial was over.

Notwithstanding his shyness or reticence on the matter of public declarations of his love for Mary, Newman has written some of the most beautiful devotional statements ever made about Our Blessed Mother. In his *Meditations* we have many examples of his abundant love for the Mother of God:

Mary is the most beautiful flower that ever was seen in the spiritual world. It is the power of God's grace that from this barren and desolate earth there have ever sprung up at all flowers of holiness and glory. And Mary is the Queen of them. She is the Queen of spiritual flowers; and therefore she is called the "*Rose*," for the rose is fitly called of all flowers the most beautiful.

But moreover, she is the *Mystical*, or *hidden* rose; for mystical means hidden. How is she now "hidden" from us more than are the other saints? What means this singular appellation, which we apply to her specially? The answer to this question introduces us to a third reason for believing in the reunion of her sacred body to her soul, and its assumption into heaven soon after her death, instead of its lingering in the grace until the General Resurrection at the last day.

It is this: - if her body was not taken into heaven, where is it? how comes it that it is hidden from us: why do we not hear of her tomb as being here or there? why are not pilgrimages made to it? ... Why then do we hear nothing of the Blessed Virgin's body and its separate relics? Why is she thus the *hidden* Rose? Is it conceivable that they who had been so reverent and careful of the bodies of the Saints and Martyrs should neglect her - who was the *Queen of Martyrs* and the *Queen of Saints*, who was the very Mother of our Lord? It is impossible. Why then is she thus the hidden Rose?

Plainly because that sacred body is in heaven, not on earth.<sup>20</sup>

Newman's devotion to Mary was very great indeed, but the devotional aspects of the above are not without a controversial element. For Newman was clearly anticipating the definition of the Assumption of Mary, and thus was not able to assure Dr. Pusey or others in his party that there would not be additional definitions of dogma in the future, which Pusey had in effect demanded as a major element in his "terms" for reunion of Rome and Canterbury. I return, then, to Newman's response to Pusey's general and apparently well-documented charge of "Mariolatry."



Newman always denied that he was any kind of theologian, and in his various works which discuss either the doctrines or the devotions paid to Mary, it is all the more interesting to note that he rested his case upon sources that might be verified by a candid reader; that is, he wrote as an historian, as one who constantly appealed to the factual evidence of a text or of human experience. In his defense of the popular devotions to Mary, he showed himself in sympathy with the exhibitions of devotion that so scandalized the English Protestant visitor to the continent. Indeed, even during his Anglican years, Newman remarked that such devotions, even with the corruptions of excess or superstition, were preferable to the arid indifference of the English laity and clergy. The devotions paid to Our Lady derived from the real (versus notional) idea that Mary was the Mother of God:

I say then, when once we have mastered the idea, that Mary bore, suckled, and handled the Eternal in the form of a child, what limit is conceivable to the rush and flood of thoughts which such a doctrine involves? What awe and surprise must attend upon the knowledge, that a creature has been brought so close to the Divine Essence? It was the creation of a new idea and a new sympathy, a new faith and worship, when the holy Apostles announced that God had become incarnate; and a supreme love and devotion to Him became possible, which seemed hopeless before that revelation. But, besides this, a second range of thoughts was opened on mankind, and unlike any other, as

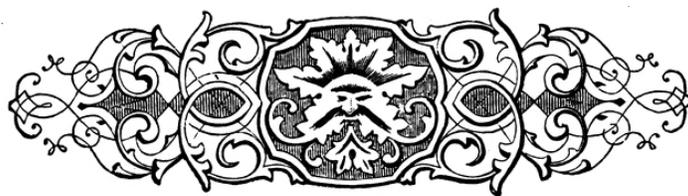
soon as it was understood that that Incarnate God had a Mother. (p. 88)

At almost the very end of his *Letter to Dr. Pusey* Newman wrote one of the most brilliant passages in the whole of his work:

And did not the All-wise know the human heart when He took to Himself a Mother? Did He not anticipate our emotion at the sight of such an exaltation in one so simple and so lowly? If He had not meant her to exert that wonderful influence in His Church, which she has in the event exerted, I will use a bold word, He it is who has perverted us. If she is not to attract our homage, why did He make her solitary in her greatness amid His vast creation? If it be idolatry in us to let our affections respond to our faith, He would not have made her what she is, or He would not have told us that He had so made her; but, far from this, He has sent His Prophet to announce to us, "A Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel," and we have the same warrant for hailing her as God's Mother, as we have for adoring Him as God. (p. 86)

The passage and what it represents is so wonderful that it seems academic to offer any commentary upon it. I would only remark that the comments on the "wonderful influence" Mary exerted on the church are two-fold in their implication. First, as Newman remarked in several places throughout the Letter and in his earlier Catholic volumes, Mary was and is the guardian of orthodoxy, at a time when even the idea of orthodoxy was being lost in the world of Christians; secondly, Mary's personal influence of restoring an ideal that had been given up in the Garden of Eden is almost as wonderful. As Mary's influence had destroyed the curse laid upon Eve, so Newman invoked the same influence to overwhelm those who might be numbered as "her foes," including Dr. Pusey, with the gentle revenge of "interceding effectually for their conversion." As I have remarked, Newman is always like Newman; and his invocation of Mary to intercede for the conversion of one of her most hardened critics is not unlike the ending of his first work as a Catholic when he offered something like a prayer that Keble's patron Mary would work for his conversion.<sup>21</sup>

I suppose it's always worthwhile to follow the spirit and integrity of Newman, but in his writings about Mary, he surely invites us to imitate his example.<sup>22</sup>



## NOTES

1Cf. J. Griffin, "John Keble," in *The Oxford Movement: A Revision* (Edinburgh, 1984).

2 "Theory of Developments in Religious Doctrines," *University Sermons*, ed. D. Mackinnon and J. D. Holmes (London, 1970), p. 313.

3Cf. "Developments," *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (11th ed., London, 1900), p. 94.

4Ms. letter, *Newman to Pusey* in Pusey, 1845, Birmingham, Oratory, England.

5 "Chapter XI," *Essay*, ed. cit., pp. 421ff.

6For a description and fuller annotation of this phase of Keble's life, see J. Griffin, "John Keble: A Report from the Devil's Advocate," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, XLVIII (June, 1979), pp. 219ff.

7Cf. E. K. Norman, ed., *Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England* (New York, 1968), pp. 144ff.

8F. W. Newman, *Phases of Faith* (3rd ed.; London, 1873), p. 104.

9John Keble, "Preface," *Sermons, Occasional and Academical* (2nd ed.; Oxford, 1848), passim.

10Cf. Ms. letters, *Pusey to Manning*, in Manning, Pusey House, Oxford.

11*Eirenicon: Part II: A Letter to the Rev. John Henry Newman* (Oxford, 1869), p. 78.

12*An Eirenicon: A Letter to the Author of "The Christian Year,"* (Oxford, 1865), p. 111.

13E. G., "Mariolatry," *Quarterly Review* (June 1855), pp. 143-183; also *English Churchman, 1850-1851*.

14*English Churchman* (Feb. 18, 1850), pp. 138-9: "But after all, is Mr. Gorham a greater heretic than the canonized Romanist who wrote the following: 'We have but one Advocate in Heaven, and it is you, O Holy Virgin.'" The most critical of all the trials of doctrine was the Gorham; for a discussion of its impact, see J. Griffin, *The Oxford*

*Movement*, chapters V and VI.

15 See I. Ellis, *Seven Against Christ* (Leiden, 1982).

16 *The Crown in Council: A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Pusey* (London, 1864); *A Second Letter to the Rev. Dr. Pusey* (London, 1864); *The Workings of the Holy Spirit in the Church of England* (London, 1864).

17 Cf. "The Roman Question," in *The Oxford Movement*, pp. 90ff.

18 *A Letter Addressed to the Rev. E. B. Pusey* (Christian Classics, ed., 1969); references will be given in text.

19 A. G. Lough, Dr. Pusey, *Restorer of the Church* (Oxford, 1982), p. 114.

20 John Henry Newman, *Mary: The Second Eve* (Herefordshire, 1983), pp. 28-29.

21 "John Keble," *Dublin Review* (Jan. 1846); reprinted in *Essays, Critical and Historical* (2 vols.; London, 1890), II, pp. 421ff.

22 For further reading, see "Newman and Our Lady," in J. Griffin, *Newman: A Bibliography of Secondary Studies* (Front Royal, Va.: Christendom Press, 1980).

