

THE MENTALITY OF J. H. NEWMAN.

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WHAT was Newman's mentality? What took Newman to Rome?

No mind in recent years has perplexed Englishmen more than the mind of Newman. In the last century he was both loved and hated. He attracted hundreds, if not thousands, to himself: he repelled many thousands more. He perplexed and infuriated the Oxford of his day, and he perplexed also the authorities of the Papal Church to which he went as a convert. At the time of his secession to Rome men thought that a deadly blow had been given to the English Church, and the Papists thought they had received into their fold a champion who would be to them a tower of strength. But the Church of England has not succumbed. Rome has been disappointed. It is clear that, if English Churchmen were puzzled by the subtlety of Newman's arguments and bewildered by his tortuous actions, the Romans were not less puzzled and bewildered when they got him. It would not be untrue to say that they never knew quite what to do with him; and, if the Oxford dons of his day treated him harshly and unwisely, his new friends were certainly not more kind or more wise. He was suspected there as he was here. He was thwarted in scheme after scheme by his new friends; and, although, to the world, he bore a brave exterior, his writings reveal his keen disappointment at his treatment. It was only when his relentless enemy, Manning, had lost his power at Rome, and not till then, that the Papal Court gave the broken and weary old man any adequate recognition.

Many who have only a casual acquaintance with Newman's career will speak of him as a subtle and deliberately dishonest worker for Rome; others will think of him as a man of brilliant talents for whom the English Church could find no niche. Neither conception would seem to be the true one. His *Apologia*—and it is only fair to hear what a man has himself to say in defence of his writings and actions, before judging him—is perhaps the best guide we have to his mentality, and a study of the *Apologia* will, we believe, convince a careful reader that, if Newman's brilliant talents did tend towards deception, he deceived himself as much as, if not more than, he deceived others.

It may help us to form some idea why Newman appeared to so many men of his day as un-English in his mentality if we remember that he was English only from the fact of his being born in England. His paternal ancestors were Dutch and Hebrew, and his mother was French.¹ The charge of dishonesty, which again and again has been made against Newman, becomes more intelligible if we remember

¹ *Modern Rome in Modern England*, p. 41, note 1. Professor N. G. D. White, *John Henry Newman*, p. 19.

his ancestry. The purely English method is blunt and direct, avoiding all subtlety. Englishmen become at once suspicious at any sign of subtlety. That Newman had a most peculiar method of logic any unprejudiced reader of the *Apologia* will probably frankly acknowledge; that his arguments are subtle almost to the point of disingenuousness must strike any reader. And yet, somehow, one cannot but believe that he really did not mean to deceive. He seemed to have the capacity, which many other distinguished men have possessed, of deceiving himself, and by subtle and sometimes puerile arguments convincing himself that he was right, even though he had, at different periods, taken diametrically opposing views on the same subject. With all the suavity of his phraseology and the easy charm of his writing, Newman was not a level-headed man. We all have a right to change our point of view. Most of us change by way of development, by the modifying of our youthful opinions through more knowledge, and the experience of life. Most men move forward slowly, changing direction only slightly, almost imperceptibly. But Newman proceeds by mental gymnastics. You find him returning by the same way he came, serenely confident that he was as right when he was going north, as when he was going south. He convinces himself that Rome is anti-Christ, and in ten years goes back upon every word and seeks his salvation in Rome—a complete and rapid change in direction, surely! He who at one time was the champion of the Anglican Church, in ten years turns round and, however sweet his words, scoffs at her, smites her hip and thigh. It is the custom of to-day to condemn the Oxford authorities for their manner of dealing with Newman, but, looking back, we can at least understand the confusion and bewilderment caused by his policy and writings. Newman complained of Manning: "I hardly know whether I stand on my head or my heels when I have active relations with you." The Oxford dons might justly have said the same thing of Newman. After he seceded from the Church of England his new friends were puzzled and afraid of him. The Papal Court thought him dangerous, and Father Perronne declared that "Newman confuses everything." It would be equally true to say of Newman that he confused himself. If Gladstone was "inebriated by the exuberance of his own verbosity," Newman was bewildered and bewildering by the subtlety of his own feelings, which he too often mistook for logic. He had the mentality of a clever woman, who is unable to free herself from her emotions when she should be using her reason. Perhaps the English Church has, on the whole, benefited by his secession. He certainly was dangerous to us and, according to Roman authorities, he proved dangerous to them. This man who *denied* the right of the *individual to reason concerning the faith* has, in the opinion of Dean Inge, proved himself the father of French and Anglican modernism, which is, in its extreme form, a strong rationalistic movement. Surely Newman could never have meant to originate such a movement—yet, there it is!

It is fashionable nowadays to condemn Kingsley for his blunt and (in the particular instance) his inaccurate attack upon Newman.

Although Kingsley was wrong in the particulars of the charge he brought, his English instincts were right.¹ Nothing that Kingsley said about Newman was one half so harsh as what his Roman brother, Lord Acton, said of him. "Newman," said Lord Acton, "is a sophist, a *manipulator* of, *not* a seeker after, truth." Carlyle impatiently, but inaccurately, declared that Newman had "no more intellect than a rabbit." Canon Meyrick seems nearer the truth when he says that "Newman was never guided by his reason, but always by his emotions." Archbishop Tait, who was in the middle of the Oxford Movement and could speak from personal experience, declared that Newman made up his mind first and then used his subtle intellect to prove that he was right. We may admire Newman's unworldliness, we may sympathise with the pathetic figure he becomes in the Papal Church, with all his grievous disappointments and persecution; but, after a fresh perusal of his *Apologia*, one feels that, as a guide in the sphere of history or theology, he is both unreliable and dangerous. His mind was as unbalanced as it was subtle. He was at his best as a preacher and, had he been content to place before his hearers the great ideals of the Christian faith, he would probably have been the greatest preacher of his generation. Here his emotion and eloquence would have had full scope.

It is impossible in a short paper to do more than recall briefly some of the questions that Newman mentions as influencing him in the direction of Rome. After his earlier outbursts against Rome, he seems to have felt the need for some sound historic and doctrinal basis for the claims of the Church of England. He sees it in the "Via media" principle, but Newman's idea of the "Via media" principle does not appear to be the same as that of the great English divines. He seems to confuse it with compromise and opportunism. No wonder then that, with his changing feelings towards Rome, such a principle failed him. But is the "Via media" a principle either of compromise or opportunism? Any student of the early period of the Reformation must see that the sudden break—not with the Catholic Church, but with the Papacy—wrought an enormous change. Men had to take stock of the new position. They had, to a large extent, to reconstruct their theology. It would be a revelation to many if they would read Pollard's book on Cranmer. Those who have always belittled the English Church have made much ado over what they call Cranmer's inconsistency or opportunism. The fact is that the whole task of reconstruction was practically in the hands of one man, and that man was Cranmer. Henry was in doctrine, to all intents and purposes, still a Roman. Cranmer was surrounded on the one hand by men who clung to the Pope, and on the other by men who hated the Pope—by men who wished to retain distinctive Roman doctrines, and by men who would have thrown over every link with the past except the Bible. Cranmer was only a man. He

¹ See Dean Stanley's remarks on the Controversy, *Kingsley's Life*, p. 228, Edition 1885; also on p. 229: "Last but not least a pamphlet was published by the Revd. Frederick Meyrick entitled 'But is not Mr. Kingsley right after all?' This pamphlet was never answered."

must have found it difficult, almost to impossibility, to place himself in the position of one who must be free from all prejudice, and strong and steadfast in his pursuit after truth. He was compassed by people who not only had been nurtured under the doctrine of Transubstantiation, but under all the vital consequences of that doctrine as well. You cannot shake these things off in a day. Cranmer's inconsistencies and hesitations are not surprising. They are just what anyone with an unprejudiced mind and knowledge of the facts would expect. Follow the changes in Edward's reign. Imagine the position of Elizabeth, isolated from Europe and yet unprepared for war, with a population seething with religious controversy. On top of that the Papal Bull was issued, which relieved Elizabeth's Papal subjects of loyalty, encouraged them to assassinate her and, further, invited Philip of Spain to attack England with a powerful force. Politics and religion were hopelessly intermingled, and the Pope was the main cause. Have we no sympathy then with Reformers struggling to do their work honestly under such hard conditions? And let us not forget that the Reformation was not settled for us until 1662, and that, during the period covered by the Reformation, we had produced liturgists, historians, and theologians, who have not been surpassed in any period of the Church's history.¹ That there were Papists and Protestants acting and reacting on each other all through this period we freely admit, but at the same time it must be borne in mind that the leaders of the Reformation in England never ceased to keep before them the principles upon which they worked—the Bible, the Primitive Church, and the Four Great Councils. The Prayer Book never once mentions the word "Protestant." While the compilers of the Prayer Book protest against the errors of Rome, they never lost sight of the true ideals of the Catholic Faith. To say that the Reformers were merely engaged on the work of "accommodating," at one time to the Protestant and at another to the Roman party, would not only be not true, but in direct contradiction to what the Reformers themselves said was their aim and object. This Newman entirely misunderstands or misrepresents. He makes great play with the phrase "Via media." If his subtle and refined satire had been supported by the facts of history, he would have dealt a deadly blow to the English Church; but, with all his brilliant genius, he was lacking in the most essential faculty of a really great man, lacking in that spirit which first makes sure of the facts and then exercises cool and impartial judgment upon them. Newman's charge against the Church of England is both untrue and unfair. Of all the nations concerned in the Reformation, England alone took a thoroughly courageous and independent line. She refused to recognise any longer the usurpations of the Bishop of Rome; she rejected Rome's novelties of doctrine and her gross superstitions; but she did not commit any breach of Catholic principle. When she had turned from the work of sweeping out the unwholesome and uncatholic accretions of medievalism, she set herself about to organise her new position, to

¹ See Lecky's *Map of Life*, 1913 Edition, pp. 209-14, 215.

set her house in order. In seeking the truth she was willing to learn from both sides—from the Continental Protestants on the one hand, and from those who were Papists on the other. Dr. Collins, who followed Bishop Creighton as Chairman of the Church Historical Association, puts the question of the "Via media" very well. Speaking of the early results of the Reformation, he says:

"In the South, the bonds (that is, the bonds of Papal tyranny) were knit yet closer, in the North, schism was the result; while England strove at least to realise that true 'Via media,' which is not so much an intermediate between two extremes as the larger truth which includes all that is true in both."¹

The English Church and nation broke the bonds of Papal tyranny without making any attempt or having any wish to withdraw from the communion of the Catholic Church. At the same time they purposed to restore to the laity their proper place and prerogatives in the Christian society, without in any way impugning the apostolic doctrine or the rightful position of the Christian ministry.

We next come to Newman's changing attitude towards Rome. It reminds one of a certain novel, in which the heroine of the story meets a man whom she at first cordially dislikes. His company is distasteful to her, but he presses his suit. Her dislike increases. Then he keeps away from her. She misses him. She welcomes his return and, although she still thinks she dislikes him, his powerful personality wins her against her reason. All through the *Apologia* there runs this strain of femininity. Newman thinks he hates Rome; he piles up arguments, one on the top of the other, against Rome; and yet all the time he is yearning for Rome. He does not like Rome, but he wants Rome. His emotions are dominating his reason. He only wants a little more to be said against his old love and he will go over to the new. He has not long to wait. Cardinal Wiseman writes an article in the *Dublin Review* on the Monophysite heresy. Without entering too much into detail, we may point out the salient facts of the controversy. In the middle of the fifth century the Eastern Church was full of metaphysical speculations, and this particular controversy largely centred round the Nestorian heresy, the point of which was that Christ was filled with divinity in the same manner as the prophets of old, only to a greater degree. Here came in the danger of the heresy of two Persons in Christ. The controversy raged and was carried on in anything but a Christian spirit. Eutyches denied that our Lord had two Natures after His Incarnation. He was condemned and excommunicated by Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople. Leo of Rome asked for a General Council over which he wished to preside. His presidency was rejected but he wrote a letter in which he controverted the doctrine that Christ had but one Nature. His statement that Christ had two Natures in one Person was, after disgraceful scenes, accepted by the Council. Here, said Newman in effect, you find the Bishop of Rome in the right: therefore Rome is *always* in the right!

This is one of the occasions when we are absolutely bewildered by Newman's mentality. No student of history would deny that,

¹ *The English Reformation and its Consequences*, C.H.S., p. 12.

although intellect was at this period more generally on the side of the Easterns, the Bishops of Rome possessed a kind of common sense that was an enormous help to the Church at large ; but Newman seemed to be utterly oblivious of the Rome of later ages. As Dean Church has said, Newman thought that the Rome of the Middle Ages and of modern times was the Rome of the fifth century. It is almost impossible to believe that he could have been influenced by such an argument. His *Apologia* itself supplies the reason. He wanted to go to his new love, and here was an excuse to move a step nearer.

We now come to "Tract 90," which caused an unprecedented commotion in the Church of England. We need only, here, indicate the principles which underlie this Tract. Newman's point was that the Thirty-Nine Articles referred only to the errors of Rome before the Council of Trent ; that they could be interpreted in a Catholic manner (or what he considered to be a "Catholic manner") ; and that they in no way conflicted with Catholic Tradition (or what he considered "Catholic Tradition"). He then set himself to prove exactly the opposite to what the Articles were written to declare ! The Articles were written by men who claimed that they were out to maintain the Catholic faith as set forth by the Scriptures, the great Creeds, and the Primitive Church. That was their sole object. Their purpose was to cleanse the Church from the errors of Medievalism, and also from the wild errors of the Continental reformers. But at this period Newman's idea of Catholicism was more than tinged with Rome's colour. He had *his* view of Catholicism, and the Church of England had *her* view. Unfortunately they did not agree.

For an English Churchman, the definition of Catholicism is settled once and for all time. It is to be found in the doctrines of the Book of Common Prayer. The objective of the Prayer Book is clearly stated in the Preface : it is to remove accretions which did not belong to the Catholic faith and to restore its primitive teaching. We must never forget that the Reformation in England was no sudden, isolated, or hasty settlement. It took one hundred and twenty years to effect it and in that period, as Lecky says, the Church of England had theologians and scholars unsurpassed in the history of Christendom. If she discarded some things which some men still think it would have been wise to retain, we must remember that these discarded doctrines had brought in their train many and grave abuses—doctrines which, were they to be restored, would be as likely to be abused to-day as they were in the Medieval Church. It would be difficult to deny that, wherever Newman's reason might be leading him, his sentiments were decidedly Romeward. The extraordinary argument that, *because* a Roman Bishop's suggestion, based on the Nicene Creed, was accepted at Chalcedon, *therefore* Rome must always be right—that extraordinary argument seems to have given Newman a fresh impetus towards Rome. He acknowledges himself that his teaching is leading men to Rome. He says :

"I fear I must allow that, whether I will or no, I am disposing them (his hearers) towards Rome. First, because Rome is the only representative of the Primitive Church besides ourselves: in proportion then as they are loosened from the one, they will go to the other. Next, many doctrines which I have held have far greater, or their only scope, in the Roman system."

Then follows a sentence which shows how completely Newman was able to blind himself to historic facts when they were not to the credit of Rome. He says:

"And moreover, if, as is not unlikely, we have in process of time heretical Bishops or teachers, an evil which *ipso facto* infects the whole community to which they belong, . . . strong temptation will be placed in the way of individuals already imbued with a tone of thought congenial to Rome to join her communion."

Here Newman seems quite oblivious of the fact that Bishops of Rome have themselves been heretics and inventors of dogmas quite unknown to the Primitive Church, of which he speaks so frequently. In one of his admirable historical essays, Bishop Browne, late Bishop of Bristol, imagines Augustine, the Missionary, coming to England to-day and finding himself, in doctrine, more Anglican than modern Roman Catholic.¹ Such a point of view of history seems never to have struck Newman. The dictum of St. Vincent of Lerins (fifth century): "Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus," was accepted by the whole Church in theory for centuries. How could Newman accept that dictum and still believe that the Papal Church was more Catholic than the English Church? He speaks of modern Rome representing the Primitive Church—but he never proves it. The fact is that, with all her faults, the Church of England set out, as she has stated in her formularies, to reform herself on the pattern of the Primitive Church, and it is difficult to imagine any unprejudiced student of history denying the general success of her endeavours. While Newman spoke of the Primitive Church, what he really had in mind, and what he really loved, was the Medieval Church and its accompanying novelties. And so, when he sought to give his followers (whom he had brought to the very threshold of Rome) some fresh reason for remaining in the English Church, he set himself to prove that the Thirty-Nine Articles could be interpreted in a "Catholic sense." Quite so. That was exactly what the Reformers had in mind, but their idea of Catholicism differed from Newman's. To quote Newman's own words: "I have asserted a great principle—that the Articles are to be interpreted *not according to the meaning of the writers*, but (as far as the wording will allow) according to the sense of the Catholic Church."

Now, the meaning of the writers was, as we have shown, to clear away abuses and accretions and to restore the Primitive faith. We have then this extraordinary proposition—we must interpret the Articles to mean what they were not intended to mean! The Church of England thought that she had built up a breakwater against error. Newman, with the imagination of a poet, the

¹ *The St. Augustine Commemoration*, Ch.Hist.S. Tract xxix.

simplicity of a child, and the subtle logic of the Jesuit, declares that the Church has not built up a breakwater. Nothing of the kind. She has opened a door! The Heads of Colleges at Oxford were startled and shocked, and well they might have been. They characterised his interpretation as "evasive." Newman says to a friend that this term did not hurt him; but, surely, most honest men would have been hurt. One of his intimate friends, W. G. Ward, gave the whole case away, however, by declaring that Newman had interpreted the Articles in a "non-natural" sense, and that he (Ward) approved of this method.

We all know the effect of the famous "Tract 90." Oxford Heads were furious, and their hasty action has been condemned. It has been said that, if Newman had been given twelve hours' respite, he might have so modified or so defended his views as to prevent the storm bursting; but Newman's mind was Romeward. Rome was pulling at his heart, and it only wanted some further excuse for him to make the plunge. This excuse came by the ill-starred policy of placing an Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem to look after the interests, not only of Anglicans, but Lutherans as well.¹ The scheme was inaugurated by the then King of Prussia, but unfortunately our two Archbishops consented without first consulting the Church. Here again Newman cannot swallow that gnat, though he eagerly gulps down the camel. He overlooked a much graver breach of Catholic principle, and that a fundamental principle, in the invasion of dioceses of the English Church by the Italian Mission. From this time onwards Newman's mind was so antagonistic to the Church of England, and so drawn to the Church of Rome, that the fatal step of secession could no longer be prevented. After his departure in 1845 all force and vigour seem to have left him. He says himself that his best work was done in the English Church, and later on he says that he longed for the praise of his old friends. The story of his return to Littlemore, told by Strachey in his sketch of Manning in *Eminent Victorians*, is, if true, profoundly touching. Think what one may of the tergiversations of Newman's mind, we cannot withhold our pity from him. It has been said that Rome can always find a nook for the outstanding man. They were not very successful with Savonarola, nor with Luther; nor did they fare much better with Newman. He passed from the English atmosphere to the Italian, and found himself in a maze of intrigue and persecution. We are told that we only know a small part of what he suffered. Purcell's book on Manning was very roughly handled by the censor before it saw light, but we are permitted to see enough to be sorry, very sorry for Newman. His belated honour, at the age of seventy-four, gave him great consolation, but his powers to use it were passed.

To sum up. No one will doubt the religious character of Newman. His Evangelical training gave him a spiritual outlook which he retained to the end. He undoubtedly possessed an extraordinarily magnetic personality. He was utterly unworldly and

¹ Though it had its "warm apologists such as Mr. F. Maurice and Dr. Hook."—Dean Church, *The Oxford Movement*, p. 317, Edition 1892.

without one sordid ambition. He was, notwithstanding distrust and hesitancy, a brave man. Under his meekness there lay the heart of the fighter. Mixed with a certain sweetness of disposition there was also a certain refined cruelty. He has in his suave and charming manner said the most biting things against the Church of his birth. As we have already noticed, his ancestry may account for what we cannot better describe than as a rather "un-English" character. He was passionately fond of music and, as far as we know, had no recreations other than his violin. His mentality has perplexed friends and foes alike. We have already spoken of his topsy-turvy view of Church history, but what perplexes most of all is his capacity for what we have called "mental gymnastics." He starts by declaring that the Papacy is Babylon of the Apocalypse; in due course he knocks at the gates of Rome and thankfully enters in. In his misconceived principle of the "Via media" he thinks he finds a rock of defence against Rome; later he explodes it himself. He affirms that an appeal to the Primitive Church cannot avail the English Church, because the Monophysites appealed to the Primitive Church and Leo quashed the appeal. He ignores the fact that it was not the Bishop of Rome *per se*, but an Œcumenical Council, which rejected the heresy. But he says it was Rome; therefore what Rome says to-day against England's appeal to the Primitive Church is final. Was ever there such reasoning from the mind of an educated man?

Then, with almost humorous audacity, he solemnly declares that the Articles mean exactly the opposite of what they were meant to mean. He moreover asserts that they were written *before* the Council of Trent, and therefore could not have condemned the dogmas promulgated at that Council. The assertion is not true. It is not borne out by *facts*. The Canons of the Council of Trent were confirmed by Pope Pius IV in 1564, whereas the Thirty-Nine Articles were finally revised and passed by Convocation in 1571. These dates, therefore, conclusively prove that the Church of England has deliberately set her imprimatur upon the Articles on at least two separate occasions subsequent to the promulgation of the Tridentine dogmas.

And then, because he thought the Church of England permitted a political bargain to be made over her head in the case of the Jerusalem Bishopric, she had committed an unpardonable sin! Newman forgot that the whole history of the Papacy, down to and as late as the reign of the Emperor Napoleon even, is mixed up with political bargainings, some of them of a not very reputable nature.

In 1841 he tells us:

"I could not go to Rome while she suffered honours to be paid to the Blessed Virgin and Saints which I thought *in my conscience* to be incompatible with the Supreme Incommunicable Glory of the One Infinite and Eternal."

Four years afterwards, without apparently a twinge of conscience, he accepts the whole thing—and his beloved St. Philip de Neri; and, moreover, he, as a member of the Roman Church, was committed to the blasphemous exaggerations of the *Glories of Mary*, written by that famous canonised doctor, St. Alphonso Liguori. Some sort

of disease seemed to have attacked his mind in later years. For example, after leaving Naples he visited Loretto and inspected the House of the Holy Family which, as is known to the faithful, was transported thither in three hops from Palestine.

"I went to Loretto," he tells us, "with a simple faith, believing what I still more believed when I saw it. I have no doubt now. If you ask me why I believe it, it is because *everyone* believes it at Rome; cautious as they are and sceptical about some things. I have no antecedent difficulty in this matter."

What can one think of a man of his standing making a statement such as that? If that is "simple faith," what then is superstition? He seems to have surrendered his reasoning powers to Rome, without reserve. Speaking of the Anglican Succession, he says:

"As to its possession of an episcopal succession from the time of the Apostles, well, it may have it and, if the Holy See ever so decide, I will believe it as being the decision of a higher judgment than my own; but, for myself, I must have St. Philip's gift, who saw the sacerdotal character on the forehead of a gaily attired youngster, before I can by my own wit acquiesce in it, for antiquarian arguments are altogether unequal to the urgency of visible facts."

With the interesting and instructive Life by W. G. Ward and the kindly yet critical essays by Dean Church, who to the end maintained his friendship with, and a great regard for, Newman, one would have thought that the world of to-day would have lost interest in Newman's career, but Dean Inge has written a brilliant Essay on Newman's curious attitude towards intellect as a factor in religion.¹ Lytton Strachey has also given us an interesting sketch of his life, and some intimate details of his early life have been given us in a book by Sidney on *Modern Rome in Modern England*. Recently the S.P.C.K. has published an able and sympathetic Life by Professor White, *John Henry Newman*. Why is it then that Newman, if he does not influence, still interests men? There were more learned men than he at the Oxford of his time; there have been more learned men in the Church of England since: such as Tait, Lightfoot, Westcott, Hort, or Temple, with Wilberforce, John Wordsworth, Stubbs, or Creighton. Why is it? It really seems to have been the charm of his writing, the tragedy of his life and, perhaps most of all, the mystery of his character. Men are apt to be drawn to anything in the nature of a mystery. He tells us that he did not sometimes understand himself and, if that be so, we can hardly be surprised if the rest of the world should be perplexed.

It is difficult to estimate Newman's influence on the English Church of the present day. The Tractarians undoubtedly awakened the Church to a sense of her corporate existence. They drew attention to the Catholic claims of the Book of Common Prayer and to the importance of the Sacraments. There has been a great improvement in the outward forms of worship. But do we not also see an awakening of what might be called "the Newman spirit"? For there does appear to be, nowadays, something of the same kind of logic and a like disposition to revive doctrines which have been

¹ *Outspoken Essays*, First Series.

rejected. It has been said that, had Newman lived to-day, he would not have gone to Rome. It may be so; because the very doctrines for which he contended—doctrines which it would be difficult, if not impossible, to harmonise with the Book of Common Prayer and her Articles—are now being openly taught by certain extreme sections of the Church, whose position seems to be Romanism without the Pope. How long such people will be able to remain in that position it is difficult to say. How long the authorities of the Church will tolerate them may be a more pertinent question. But, on the face of it, it would appear probable that the revival of this “Newman spirit” must eventually lead to Rome.

If the Book of Common Prayer and her Articles represent the minds of the great Anglican divines, then the great Anglican divines differ very vitally from Newman in their conception of the Primitive Church and what the Primitive Church taught. Sooner or later the matter will have to be fought out. And it would be well for the clergy (and laity also) to enter once more upon the study of the Scriptures in relation to the Primitive Fathers, and upon a thorough re-study of the Reformation—say, from the reign of Henry VIII to the Restoration. It is a very serious question; and we owe it to our Church, to ourselves, and perhaps, with all his faults, we owe it to John Henry Newman too, not to rest satisfied till we have probed it to the very bottom. Only let us beware of putting our emotions before our intellects, or our theories before our facts, else each one of us may become what Lord Acton said Newman had become—“a sophist, a manipulator of, and not a seeker after, Truth.”

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