

# NEWMAN, LIFE AND THOUGHT

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## Life and Thoughts

At the end of his great work, *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, John Henry Newman addressed his readers, "And now dear reader, time is short, eternity is long. Put not from you what you have here found; regard it not as mere matter of present controversy; set not out resolved to refute it, and looking about for the best way of doing so . . ." Then he continued with the words of a man about to take the plunge of conversion to Catholicism. ". . . seduce not yourself that it comes of disappointment, or disgust, or restlessness, or wounded feeling, or undue sensibility or other weakness . . ." And then he challenges his reader bluntly, ". . . wrap not yourself round in the associations of years past; nor determine that to be truth which you wish to be so, nor make an idol of cherished anticipations. Time is short, eternity is long. Nunc Dimittis servum tuum, Domine . . ." [Now You dismiss Your servant, O Lord . . . see Luke 2:29].

So Newman passed out of the Church of England. The Passionist missionary Bl. Dominic Barberi [Fr. Dominic of the Mother of God] came in from a rainy night in October 1845 to be confronted with a disturbed and excited man, forty-four years old, the sharpest mind of the Oxford Movement, the man whose pamphlet, *Tract Ninety*, had shaken England. In the kitchen at Littlemore, Newman the scholar, the great preacher, the hero with many disciples, was kneeling at the feet of a humble Italian priest, begging "admission into the One Fold of Christ", to use his own words. His life seems to have come to a climax at that point of conversion. He was in his prime. Great works of scholarship already lay behind him, equally great works lay ahead. In his conversion there was a dramatic break with Anglicanism, and yet a deliberate and conscious taking into Catholicism of all his past experience and academic achievement, except in those instances he isolated which contradicted Catholic truth and Christian charity.

Some have claimed that Newman's conversion marked a dismal turning point, that ever after his scholarship and charm deteriorated. This is not true. But it must be admitted that Catholicism cost Newman something he referred to in his *Apologia*, something he dramatized in his novel *Loss and Gain*. He was cut off from Oxford. He had to sacrifice the glory and prestige, together with the personal contacts and academic facilities of the great university. He had to set out on a path which led to the pastoral and missionary life of an English Catholic priest, a life, largely hidden from public view, largely concerned with non-academic affairs. Yet in that change, Newman found Faith, new zeal, a new drive, for at last he had embraced the confidence and splendour of the whole span of authentic Christian doctrine and life. So we look back from his conversion, and we look forward into his Catholic life.

## Anglican Days

Behind all Newman's theology and experience lay a basic evangelical piety. At the age of fifteen he had undergone a spiritual conversion, in which he became convinced that he was one of God's elect, that he had the gift of final perseverance. Fortunately this did not lead to priggish Puritan notions about everyone

else being damned. Later, at the age of twenty-one, he abandoned belief in predestination. But he always retained a confident faith in his first conversion. Jesus Christ and basic Christian doctrine became realities to this rather precocious teenager who went up to Oxford just before he turned sixteen.

As to what befell him in England's premier university, you may read all about it in his autobiographical work, *Apologia pro vita sua*. In this book we find, for example, the author's explanation for an unusual and unnecessary failure in examinations. A very old lady I knew, who recently lived in Oxford, and who is a distant relative of Newman, was very sharp indeed about his neurotic examination failure. From her point of view, Newman's weakness was further demonstrated by his conversion to "Rome", and she described one of the greatest Englishmen of his time, as "the black sheep of our family". Many attempts to analyse the personality and character of Newman have produced all sorts of theories; extreme examples of trying to psychoanalyse a dead man, more reasonable examples of hesitant jigsaw puzzle character analysis. The hostile approach may be found in Faber's *Oxford Apostles*. A deeper and less confident analysis runs through Meriol Trevor's great two-volume biography, *The Pillar of the Cloud, Light in Winter*.

Tentatively I will sketch some aspects of the character which developed in Oxford - intense, academic - but not dry; genuinely devout - but not obviously "pious"; humorous and ready to make jokes and resort to satire, yet capable of completely serious discourse. In himself he was pleasant company, quite handsome and well groomed, although at one stage he lost all his hair and sported a bright red wig until it grew again! He preferred male company, and maintained several deep and many general friendships. His female friends seem to have come mainly from the family circle and its associates, and he was personally committed to celibacy at an early age. He tended to see women in the Victorian romantic fashion, idealized noble creatures who came to one for spiritual direction and guidance. His strict self-discipline and self-mortification, which followed the traditional Catholic lines, never seems to have conflicted with several proper but real particular friendships. But no-one could ever say he was attached to earthly things or people. "Time is short, eternity is long" - this principle of living "sub specie aeternitatis" ['under the species of eternity'] dominated young Mr. Newman, middle-aged Fr. Newman and elderly Cardinal Newman.

Vocation to Anglican Orders came with his devout temperament and his own rejection of a career in Law. It is difficult to analyse his sense of vocation, rather it seems to have been a matter of duty, of gratitude to God for a youthful conversion. Even his later vocation to the Catholic priesthood is difficult to analyse, apart from the piety and spirituality of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. As with other converts, Manning, Benson, Knox, Vernon Johnson, the fact that they had been Anglican clergymen with personal belief in priesthood seems to have made Catholic Orders natural and inevitable. But as an Anglican, Newman took on both an academic ministry, while a fellow of Oriel college and a pastoral ministry, the curacy of the small Evangelical parish of St. Clement's. In Oriel College Newman fell under the influence of Richard Whately, later Protestant Archbishop of Dublin.

Whately inculcated the method of Oxford logic and a belief in the visible Church into his young disciple. This tempered the pious Evangelical personal religion, and the shy retiring nature of young Newman. In Oriel common room he was influenced also by the "broad church" school of thought, and the vicar of St. Mary's University Church, Mr. Hawkins, who destroyed Newman's tattered evangelical doctrines of predestination and election. At this time he was attracted to a study of the early Fathers, the main force behind the movement about to begin in Oxford. He also read the great, dull, yet hard-hitting *Analogy of Religion* by Bishop Butler, a famous body of solid Anglican theology which points consistently to the role of visible Church, visible authority and genuine interplay between faith and reason in Christianity.

## **The Oxford Movement**

In the late 1820's, as a full-time tutor clergyman in Oriel, Newman entered a friendship with two key figures of the Oxford Movement, John Keble, a traditional high-churchman and the scholarly Hurrell Froude, also a high-churchman - and a man quite open to controlled admiration of Catholicism. Newman's own position took on a further development, beyond Evangelicalism, beyond Oriel liberalism. The more

he read deeply in the Fathers, the more he worked on his famous study of the Arian heresy, *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, the more he appreciated Catholic orthodoxy on basic issues, the Incarnation, salvation, the Trinity. He came to hold to the value of sacraments and the apostolic succession, both of which he saw compromised by the now decadent Evangelical Church leaders. In 1832, with his health failing, Newman went with friends to Italy and Sicily, but admitted that his experiences of Catholic worship consciously had little effect on him. He was a convinced Anglican, high church and conservatively given over to a jealous pride in the rights of his Church.

In Sicily he fell ill, and strangely convinced that he had a great work ahead in England, he headed for home. Becalmed in a boat between Palermo and Marseilles, Newman wrote his famous poem, now a popular hymn. It seems to be the first clear sign of inner impatience, of a yearning for something, for something which at the time he would have described perhaps as eternal life in heaven, and yet the poem does not really fit that meaning alone.

"Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,  
Lead Thou me on!  
The night is dark and I am far from home -  
Lead Thou me on!"

Some have suggested that he should have written, "I am far from Rome - Lead . . ." But there was no clear call to Catholicism at this stage, just this wistful, yet cloudy, tugging at his soul, the first glimmer of what I would call "the vision of the City of God". It was the first mysterious intimation of conversion.

Back in England the Oxford Movement broke out into action and Newman was at the centre of it. The little circle of friends had a cause, a glorious cause - the re-catholicising of Anglicanism, from within. The cause captured Newman. His energy was devoted to it. But the cause directed him again and again to see the difficulty of Anglicanism. How could he reconcile the Faith and Church he found in the early Fathers with the divided, confused and essentially Protestant Church of England? As the *Tracts for the Times* rolled off the press, why were they greeted with such bitter opposition as well as with such enthusiasm? Newman was perturbed. He had minor clashes involving his conscience and the local ecclesiastical structure, for example he refused to marry a Dissenter to an Anglican. Nevertheless he put his faith in dogma and the apostolic nature of Anglicanism as he saw it. He expounded it to a critical but enthusiastic audience in St. Mary's church. He put forward his position in a work entitled *The Via Media*, the middle way, not Anglicanism as it was then, or now, but the "Anglo Catholic" position. Newman himself admitted that this had not yet emerged. His admission reveals a sense of doubt. Would it ever emerge?

In 1839 Newman saw the Anglican position mirrored in the position of early heretics, the Monophysites. He had to admit that Rome stood for orthodoxy in the Patristic age. He found that his *Via Media* had dissolved. His only case against the Catholic Church was to cite her alleged errors. He had no positive theology of his own, no distinct Anglican position. His efforts to find a Catholicism which was not *Roman* Catholicism led him to write *Tract Ninety*. In this work, which burst like a storm on the Church of England, Newman tried to do the impossible. He tried to take the Thirty Nine Articles of Elizabeth I's reign, and explain away their anti-Catholic principles and details. He was greeted with accusations of intellectual dishonesty. He was hounded and abused. He did not realize it until later, but he had taken another step forward. From trying to find his "Via Media," Catholicism but not Roman Catholicism, he had moved to the point of trying to find Roman Catholicism but not the Catholic Church.

## **Towards Rome**

In 1841 he received what he called "three blows which broke me". Again he discovered the parallel between the Anglican position and a compromise heresy in the early Church, Semi-Arianism. Again he saw that Rome then, and perhaps now, stood for orthodoxy. He had the painful experience of seeing the Anglican bishops attack him one by one, he, Newman, the stout defender of the apostolic order and authority of these men. He saw the Church he believed to be Catholic at heart willing to allow a German Lutheran prelate act for it in Jerusalem, and Newman and his circle knew that Lutheran ordinations were

invalid. Early 1842 saw Newman living at Littlemore, near Oxford, soon to be joined by his friends in a sort of monastic community. Already he was moving into that half-world, a man at sea with his own opinions, drawn in a certain direction, yet not consciously aware of any desire or intention to take the final step.

In 1842 and 1843 Newman lived a monastic life at Littlemore, apart from a Church he barely believed in, yet refusing to submit to the Church which he claimed erred concerning Our Lady and the Pope. His mind was agitated by a theory which seemed to explain the dynamic quality of Catholicism, a theory of the development of doctrine. He was an expert in the great theological battles of the Fifth Century. These and the Nineteenth Century ideals of progress and development seemed to present him with an answer to the objection that he was merely digging up a corrupt dated religion. But these ideas only led him to make the admission to a friend, "I am a Roman in my heart". After the Lent retreat he took the firm step of resigning the parish of St. Mary's University Church. On Monday, 25th September, 1843, he preached his last sermon at Littlemore. It was a moving sermon, a farewell, quiet and dignified, the "parting of friends". At the end of the sermon he threw his academic hood and gown over the altar rail. This was a sign to all present that he had virtually laicised himself.

Two years later, in October, 1845, he was finally received into the Catholic Church. This two-year delay is mysterious, a dismal half-world, but it was the time in which Newman thought out the basic argument in positive terms for becoming a Catholic, the dynamic argument of the development of doctrine. Up till this time he had only negative reasons for becoming a Catholic. He saw what the Church of England was not. He still had to learn for himself what the Catholic Church is. He still had to settle the burning spiritual desire for the fullness of sacramental life and his close family and friend ties in Anglicanism. He was tortured by this. He was tortured by spiritual scruples and uncertainty. Yet, by early 1845 he was well into writing the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, his own bridge to the Church. The essay came to a gradual halt, virtually finished, when its author took the last step. He became a Catholic in October, 1845, not merely because he saw what Anglicanism was not, but because he saw what Catholicism is, the dynamic authentic fullness of Christianity.

## **Newman as a Catholic**

We will not linger over Newman's early career as a Catholic. His initial doubts about being worthy for priesthood were dispelled. He went to Rome, completed a brief course, was ordained, and entered the famous association of secular priests, the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, to whom he always held a firm devotion. Newman found that theology in Rome was in a patchy, higgledy-piggledy state. He found his own theory of development under fire as possible heresy. But he wrote much later (1863) of "the happy days, thank God, at Propaganda".

In the Second Vatican Council we find two areas of doctrine directly influenced by Newman.

1. the theology of doctrinal development seems to underline the thinking of the Council.
2. the theology of the consensus of the faithful is clearly visible in *Lumen Gentium*, 12.

### *1. How does doctrine develop?*

Newman is very careful here. Doctrine does not change. Development implies continuity, not a succession of new dogmas which do not rest in scriptural or apostolic tradition. Newman affirms that living ideas must develop, but to test genuine development he provides seven criteria, and these criteria Newman sees as evidence that genuine development only takes place in the Catholic Church. He sees the development of doctrine as something unique, related to the development of ideas generally, but constantly protected by the unchanging revelation in Christ. We take this for granted today. In Newman's age, just when the evolution row was about to burst, many theologians viewed his theology with suspicion and hostility. To them it seemed to undermine the belief that Christ gave all truths for all time to his apostles. Newman's case was quite formidable in the face of this simplification of theology. He pointed back to the great theological battles of the early Church, out of which the formulations of the Incarnation and Trinity were defined.

His historical evidence had marked effect on many scholarly Anglican readers, for they were committed to doctrines which had been defined through development. Newman's logic also pointed them in the direction of "Rome".

## 2. His theology of the laity is interesting.

It created a sharp debate in his own lifetime, and yet found its way into Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* 12. In 1859, Newman published an article in the Catholic Journal, *The Rambler*, "On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine". The title raised many pious eyebrows. "What's this? Newman claims the laity can define dogma? What next?" We can see the misunderstanding and stupidity of this rash reaction when we examine what Newman said. Unfortunately it did not protect him from sharp controversy. Newman wrote of the *consensus fidelium*, not a lay *magisterium* but the faithful as one of the many witnesses to genuine apostolic tradition. ". . . the body of the faithful is one of the witnesses to the fact of the tradition of revealed doctrine, and because their consensus through Christendom is the voice of the infallible Church." Nevertheless, he went on much later, ". . . the gift of discerning, discriminating, defining, promulgating, and enforcing any portion of that tradition resides solely in the *Ecclesia docens*". [the teaching Church']. Newman appealed to history and to the recent definition of the Immaculate Conception to show how the people of God often lead the way in endorsing and preparing for definition of dogma. He was able to cite cases from the patristic age, when sophisticated theologians and prelates fell into heresy, but the humble faithful clamoured for truth. He even saw this consensus as an 'instinct' in the Church. Vatican II follows this element in Newman's doctrine and speaks of the *sensus fidei*, that gift of the Holy Spirit to God's People that is an instinct against error and in favour of truth.

*We may return to some major aspects of Newman's life as a Catholic. In 1848* he played the leading role in establishing the priests of the Oratory in Birmingham, where they are to this day. The Oratorians wear a sort of double-breasted soutane, with sash and a linen collar of the Sixteenth Century form. They have only one binding promise - charity among the brethren. Each priest may own property, yet must live in community, eating and praying in community, and working in parish duties as well as using his own talents. The Oratorians are usually priest scholars and music plays an important part in their lives. Newman played the violin with some skill, and certainly enjoyed the Oratorian tradition of Renaissance liturgical music. In London, the Brompton Oratory was built in what became a very fashionable area. This huge baroque church attracted many wealthy and cultivated converts who enjoyed the company of the clergy there. In Birmingham, by contrast, the Oratory ministered to a mixed congregation, largely working-class and Irish immigrants. Newman, for all his exalted reputation, loved to work amongst the ordinary people, and I believe his doctrine of the *consensus fidelium* may have received its practical force from the faith of Bridget the seamstress or Michael the factory hand in Birmingham.

## The Dublin Fiasco

There was one large portion of Newman's Catholic life which turned into a bitter disappointment. This was the project for a Catholic University in Dublin. The great university in Dublin, Trinity College, was not open for Catholics, at least officially, and according to the hierarchy. Archbishop Cullen, of Dublin, was determined to create a Catholic university. He invited Newman over to Dublin in 1851, and Newman went over to discuss the scheme, although he remarked, "Curious it will be if Oxford is imported into Ireland . . .". He planned to return to Ireland to give lectures on what this new Catholic university should be, but he was involved in perhaps the most painful embarrassment of his life, the famous Achilli case. Newman had attacked a profligate ex-friar, Giovanni Achilli, whom the Protestant Alliance had welcomed to England with a special hymn, "Hail, Roman Prisoner, Hail!", fit welcome for an ex-Catholic about to begin a fiery crusade of preaching against the Church. Newman had dared to expose bluntly, and before a large audience, the various sexual indiscretions of the shady ex-Dominican. Achilli and the Protestant Alliance went to Law. Newman was sued for libel. In the midst of all this he found time to return to Ireland and deliver what surely must be the charter of the perfect university, his lectures, published as *The Idea of a University*. The Achilli case was tried after this. Newman lost it, but won a moral victory because of the scandal it caused concerning the methods used by bigots and fanatics. Newman again went

back to Dublin, but, already named by Cullen as the first Rector of the university, he was discouraged by the muddling around and failure to get much done.

Eventually the scheme became a reality, at least partly a reality. Newman threw himself into the work. He reckoned he crossed the Irish Sea 56 times, being divided between the Oratory in Birmingham and the Dublin scheme. He built a university church, "a large barn . . . in the style of a basilica with Irish marbles and copies of standard pictures", but the scheme as a whole collapsed. Archbishop Cullen seemed to turn on Newman, criticizing him in Roman circles for spending too much, employing English professors, importing Oxford customs and allowing students the outrageous liberties of hunting and dancing! Cullen's enemies leapt into the scheme and helped bring it down. Mutual hostilities in Ireland and England worked against it. Borne down by the pettiness, sabotage and inconvenience, Newman resigned his rectorship. It was the end of the great dream. It was the triumph of narrow-minded and authoritarian ecclesiastics, in Ireland, England and Rome, who henceforth regarded Newman as a dangerous "liberal", and, most unforgivable of all, a living reproach to their stupidity.

### **Papal Infallibility**

In the late 1860's Newman experienced another disappointment. His old friend and fellow convert, Henry Edward Manning, had risen rapidly in the English Church. He became Archbishop of Westminster. He was an extreme Ultramontane. [Dictionary definition: 'Favourable to the ABSOLUTE authority of the Pope in matters of faith AND discipline.'] Personally, he had nothing against Newman, whom he could never have seen as a rival for power. Newman was not interested in power. But Newman put forward two attempts to bring Catholicism back into Oxford, right into the University itself. He wanted Catholics to be allowed to study in Oxford and to take degrees. He wanted the Oratory to found a mission there, to minister to undergraduates, to seek converts. Manning blocked both these schemes, supported by the Ultramontane layman, W. G. Ward. Catholics would be "polluted" by contact with Protestant or secular education. It was not until after Manning's death that the Church lifted the short-sighted ban on Catholic undergraduates.

Manning and Newman also stood in differing positions concerning the great theological question which brewed in the late 1860's as the First Vatican Council drew near. This was Papal Infallibility. We know of Newman's private belief in the doctrine. He himself was a moderate Ultramontane, and was quite capable in several sermons of the most fervent bursts of loyalty and enthusiasm for Pius IX. Yet Manning suspected Newman of disloyalty to Rome, not grave disloyalty, but of an unsound liberalism. How strange, "Liberalism" was the word Newman hated most of all. Indeed, he would disown many of his "liberal" followers today, if he were still with us. His loyalty to Catholicism was beyond question. Cullen in Dublin, and Bishop Ullathorne of Birmingham firmly defended Newman's reputation, especially after the *Rambler* crisis reached Rome. In the 1860's Newman defended his own integrity and that of all converts in his autobiographical, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*.

Gently but firmly he had met the Anglo-Catholic challenge in Pusey's *Eirenicon*, a criticism of Catholicism which yet hoped for unity. He had published his sharp analysis, *The Difficulties of Anglicans*. Yet all these obvious signs of total loyalty could not remove the rumour and suspicion. Newman was not on the list of those eligible, outside the episcopate, to be present at Vatican I. Perhaps this was good, insofar as his own academic work was concerned. In the same year as the Council he published *A Grammar of Assent*, a brilliant work of English Christian philosophy. After his *Development of Doctrine*, this surely ranks as his second great contribution to theology. When it is properly rediscovered, a theologian of our own time may use it to do what still has to be done, to unite Catholic theology with the modern linguistic and logical schools of British philosophy. The work was not scholastic. It was ahead of its time.

The inopportunist tried to drag Newman into their party. He had declared, "You are going too fast at Rome . . . We do not move at railroad pace in theological matters even in the Nineteenth Century". Yet, his very language, reflecting his own theory of gradual development, reminds us that it was largely the process of development which effected the definition of infallibility. After the definition, in spite of letters

urging him to stand out, Newman accepted the dogma. In 1874 Gladstone, bitter over Irish politics, let fly with his noisy expostulation against the Vatican decrees, claiming they gave the Pope political power.

Newman replied with his *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, based on advice he had given converts who were distressed over infallibility. It was a moderate and scholarly work, which won praise even from Manning and his circle. Gladstone failed to understand it, but he must have appreciated the famous remark Newman made, "Certainly if I am obliged to bring religion into after-dinner toasts I shall drink - to the Pope, if you please - still to conscience first, and to the Pope afterwards". We may remember hearing this quoted loud and long during the recent birth control debate. Those who shouted it should have checked what Newman wrote *before* he made his comment. His *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk* is an excellent defence of the authority, primacy and infallibility of the Pope. Significantly, it was published later as an appendix to his *Difficulties of Anglicans*.

## The Last Years

Manning became a cardinal through the gratitude of Pius IX in 1875. Newman was pleased at the honour, and it seems that the two old men lost that antipathy towards one another which, on inspection, has been exaggerated a great deal by hearsay and bad history. But Newman had to wait until Pius IX died in February of 1878 before his work was honoured. Early in 1879, after false reports that he had refused the honour, Newman was made a cardinal by the new Pope, Leo XIII. "The cloud is lifted from me for ever," he remarked to his brethren. In triumph, the old man made the journey to Rome to receive his red hat. His cardinal's motto was "Cor ad Cor Loquitur," "Heart Speaks to Heart." ['The Heart of Jesus to the Heart of man Speaks'] On the day he received his red hat he delivered a stirring speech against liberalism in theology.

He lived on for another eleven years, lonely years, for one by one his close friends died. Memories linger around the Oratory in Birmingham of these last years, of the aged cardinal climbing up to the library, holding onto a rope attached to the stairs, of the cardinal saying Mass in his own oratory, set in a corner of his crowded study, a Mass where the intentions for the dead were always present in the faded photographs which lined the walls, the faces of the Oxford Movement.

When he grew old, and after he died, some claimed he regretted becoming a Catholic. There is no truth in this, rather it rests on a fictional poem composed by an imaginative high church Anglican. The poem described the old man returning to the village of Littlemore, and weeping over his memories, "exchanging Oxford's mirage for the gleam of Rome". Conversion did cost him real suffering, primarily in terms of friends and pastoral relationships. In 1862 he himself entered print on allegations of his disillusionment with a violent letter to the "*Globe*" newspaper. "I have not had one moment's wavering of trust in the Catholic Church ever since I was received into her fold . . ." He later went on in a more hostile tone, ". . . I do hereby profess *ex animo* [from the soul] with an absolute internal assent and consent, that Protestantism is the dreariest of possible religions; . . . return to the Church of England! No! 'The net is broken and we are delivered'. [Newman was quoting Psalm 124:7 (Psalm 123 in the Vulgate) ] I should be a consummate fool (to use a mild term) if in my old age I left the [Newman quotes Exodus 3:8] 'land flowing with milk and honey' for the city of confusion and the house of bondage." We must remember that this was the pre-ecumenical age.

At conversion he had learnt the hard lessons he set out at the end of his essay on development. He continued to learn these lessons within the Church. ". . . wrap not yourself round in the associations of years past, nor determine that to be truth which you wish to be so, nor make an idol of cherished anticipations . . ." The anticipations so often came to nothing. The cardinal's hat was perhaps after all an earthly consolation prize. But the greatest English Catholic of his century was schooled in the school of Christ. His interior life was the firm basis for all his actions, his strivings, his success and failure. He loved his Mass. He visited the Blessed Sacrament with devotion. He had a warm and natural devotion to Our Lady, characteristic of his time in that it centred on that sublime mystery, her Immaculate Conception. His *Meditations and Devotions* are still there for our benefit, and they have freshness, a modern honesty, a noble prose style which lifts them into our own time, well above the mountains of sugary Victorian piety

which face the paper shredder each year.

Cardinal Newman died late in the evening of August 11th, 1890. He was buried, with tributes from the whole of England, in a simple grave together with the graves of other Oratorian clergy, at their retreat house, Rednal, near Birmingham. It is simply a mound of earth, and grass, with a wooden Cross, just like all the others near it. For his memorial tablet at the Oratory, Newman left us just one phrase. It sums up his life, his yearnings, his thinking, his anguish, his conversion, his disappointments, his achievement - all in one phrase, "Ex umbris et imaginibus in Veritatem". - "Out of shadows and appearances into Truth."

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