CHAPTER 5

The Guidance of Conscience

Every careful reader of Newman must have already noticed that conscience is pivotal in his writings; all the elements of his doctrine we have touched upon converge in the notion of conscience. This follows from what has already been written here, because the notion of conscience is present throughout this text. Real assent, real words, certitude, belief—all of these terms converge like different rivers and are guided by a well-informed conscience. Newman's views of conscience penetrate and inspire the other areas of his activity. The way he understands the role of conscience in individual life was of key importance for his decisions. Conscience is referred to in his numerous papers. He treats it as a safeguard on the way to the truth. In his *University Sermons* he writes:

> Nay, so alert is the instinctive power of an educated conscience, that by some secret faculty, and without any intelligible reasoning process [...], it seems to detect moral truth wherever it lies hid, and feels a conviction of its own accuracy which bystanders cannot account for; and this especially in the case of Revealed Religion, which is one comprehensive moral fact.[1]

Let us observe that conscience in this passage is "some secret faculty" and it leads us "without any intelligible reasoning process." An educated conscience, i.e. well-informed, helps "to detect moral truth." Such a conscience is like an instrument of high definition. In this sense, it is coequal to natural inference and the Illative Sense. Conscience has rights because it has (transcendent) duties—as Newman put it—hence the judgments of a well-informed conscience are not mere private views.

How about those who commit some glaring crimes? Are they deprived of their consciences, or, rather, are their consciences mute although they are understood as faculties which speak? Newman explains the problem as follows:

> Their conscience still speaks, but having been trifled with, it does not tell truly; it equivocates, or is irregular. Whereas in him who is faithful to his own divinely implanted nature, the faint light of Truth dawns continually

1 *US*, 80.

> brighter; the shadows which at first troubled it, the unreal shapes created by its own twilight-state, vanish; what was as uncertain as mere feeling, and could not be distinguished from a fancy except by the commanding urgency of its voice, becomes fixed and definite, and strengthening into principle, it at the same time develops into habit.[2]

In order to portray the situation of a man who has trifled with his conscience, let us use a literary example. The classics are always helpful. The most impressive degeneration of conscience, the result of numerous rationalizations, we find in Shakespeare's *Tragedy of King Richard III*. What philosophers seek to describe in long theoretical passages, the writer's genius can put in a few words. We are in Richard III's tent. The bloody king has just woken up from his dream, in fact a nightmare, in which he was harassed by the ghost of his former ally, Buckingham. King Richard begins this penetrating soliloquy with himself:

> O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me! [...]
> Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
> What! do I fear myself? there's none else by:
> Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.
> Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am:
> Then fly: what! from myself? Great reason why:
> Lest I revenge. What! myself upon myself?
> Alack! I love myself. Wherefore? for any good
> That I myself have done unto myself?
> O! no: alas! I rather hate myself
> For hateful deeds committed by myself.
> I am a villain. Yet I lie; I am not.
> Fool, of thyself speak well: fool, do not flatter.
> My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
> And every tongue brings in a several tale,
> And every tale condemns me for a villain.
> Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree:
> Murder, stern murder, in the dir'st degree;
> All several sins, all us'd in each degree,
> Throng to the bar, crying all, 'Guilty! guilty!'
> I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;
> And if I die, no soul will pity me:

2 *Ibid.*, 95.

> Nay, wherefore should they, since that I myself
> Find in myself no pity to myself?[3]

Indeed, few lines in world literature can compare to the above powerful description; it is like Newman's functional disarrangement in its starkest form. Psychology would call this description cognitive dissonance, a term we have already mentioned here. King Richard's rationalized conscience speaks "several thousand tongues," and each tongue brings a different story. Thus, we obtain an excellent picture of a disordered personality. The king loves himself and hates himself; he knows he is a liar, and denies being a liar. A person who has thus rationalized his conscience contradicts himself: praising himself for the same thing for which he is rebuking himself. When the two murderers from the play talk to each other about the murder with which they have been commissioned, one of them says: "Some certain dregs of conscience are yet within me."[4] And if we go back, we find in Act I, Scene II, yet another fascinating example of Shakespeare's genius of penetrating observation. Lady Anne has just learned that Gloucester (King Richard III) killed her husband, nevertheless, when she is offered a ring by the murderer, she accepts it, saying: "To take is not to give." What an excellent portrayal of conscience's rationalization in its practical application!

Richard III experiences cognitive dissonance, so he is trying to assuage this discrepancy between what he really thinks and feels, and what he is actually saying by an attempt at rationalization. Such may be human concrete dilemmas which can wreak havoc on one's personality. This is what Newman meant by the well-known phrase *shadows and images*. To use the Kantian idiom we could say that the transcendental 'I' is incapable of guiding the empirical "I," so that we could accede to Kantian formalism. Newman was interested in the empirical and concrete 'I', and that 'I' is capable of distancing himself from what is useful and expedient. For him, such a distance can be found in conscience understood as the voice of God. Therefore only on condition that it is well-informed and free from rationalized hypocrisy. Shakespeare brilliantly painted a picture of rationalized conscience in his tragedy. Richard is in despair because he cannot bear his empirical 'I', and at the same time he finds no respite in his conscience because he has worked hard to hush its voice. Paraphrasing Eliot's *Waste Land* (cited before), we might say: "between conscience and I falls the Shadow." That is why Richard ascribes his grievous and justified remorse to

3 W. Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of King Richard*, London: Henry Pordes, 1984, Act V, Scene III.
4 *Ibid*., Act I, Scene IV.

cowardice, which makes his case hopeless, for such a conscience ceases to be his guide. Of course, the most important thing here is the precondition that conscience must be obeyed from the start, not from the moment when various processes of self-delusion have already been set to work. And when we understand, as Newman did, that it is God Himself who thus speaks to man through his conscience, its voice is a personal invocation. This surrender is not Kantian subordination to the dictates of practical reason, for Christian God is not a postulate of practical reason, but a Person who demands obedience.

The issue of rationalization is extremely important; rationalization is destructive for conscience, and it renders the human being unreal. Bishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895–1979), in his book *Peace of Soul*, paints a beautiful and persuasive picture of what we are talking about here, where we read: "We often justify ourselves by saying that we *are* following our consciences, when we are only following our desires. […] We try to keep religion on a speculative basis in order to avoid moral reproaches on our conduct. We sit at the piano of life and insist that every note we strike is right—because we struck it."[5] This example shows clearly the distinction between subjectivity and subjectivism; Newman naturally focused on subjectivity when he wrote that we have to use ourselves, and he rejected subjectivism when he warned his readers against having their own way. Now, coming back to Sheen's illustration, striking the note is subjectivity, but claiming that it is the right note is subjectivism. What germinates in my individual action is all that matters—this is subjectivism; we are the authors of our own actions—this is subjectivity inherent in the reality of our persons.[6] Newman's "egotism is true modesty" equals with subjectivity, not with subjectivism.

Newman's focus on the person had nothing to do with individualism or subjectivism. Rather, it was his clear vision that freedom is not only given to us, but that we are called to fulfil it. This was also the personalistic position of John Paul II. As Newman beautifully put it in one of his parochial sermons, that the feelings of believers should "retire deep into their hearts and there live."[7] They should be living principles of their lives, not merely topics for enlightened discussions.

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5 F. J. Sheen, *Peace of Soul*, New York: Permabooks, 1954, 101.

6 See more on this in K. Wojtyła (John Paul II), *The Acting Person*, trans. by A. Potocki, Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979, 56–59.

7 *PPS*, 1232.

The most devastating blow that Newman inflicted on the usurpations of modernity under the guise of liberalism was his response to Peel's address on the occasion of the opening of the Tamworth Reading Room. This event became an opportunity for the promotion of scientific progress, a reason that, in itself, might sound innocent, but the intention of its proponents was to show this progress as something that could replace moral development, that could in itself become moral. In 1841, Newman published his radical refutation of the modern claims formulated by Lord Henry Brougham (1778–1868)[8] and Sir Robert Peel[9] (1788–1850). The general tone of their revelations and, to say the least, raptures boil down to offering enlightenment via the natural sciences. The physical science was supposed to be instrumental not only in broadening our knowledge about the world, which would be understandable, but also in improving our moral nature. As a consequence, mere intellectual knowledge and the accumulation of facts meant to be of a moral nature as well. Newman pitted his linguistic capacities against such claims in bursts of fine rhetoric. His pamphlet (which he submitted to the *Times*)is also an excellent encapsulation of his views in general. Let us look at some passages. First of all, Newman, paradoxically, calls Peel's message "so dark an oracle." This is paradoxical because Peel's address was supposed to be a very optimistic and enlightening address. At the same time, it expressed the dominant spirit of the nineteenth century, namely that material progress would bring about moral progress, which Newman thought to be a very naive expectation.

Newman puts it clearly that he is not afraid of the facts that may come from the world of science. He says it would "ill become" him if he were "afraid of truth of any kind, to blame those who pursue secular facts, by means of the reason which God has given them, to their logical conclusions: or to be angry with science, because religion is bound in duty to take cognizance in its teaching."[10] He is well aware of these various ways by which Christianity is being attacked. And he knows that many people are perplexed on account of that, but he does not criticize them, for he can also see that the picture of the opponent is hazy. Therefore, he states that "at the moment it is so difficult to say precisely what it is that is to be encountered and overthrown."[11] The opponent,

8 British statesman and Lord High Chancellor who played a prominent role in passing the 1832 Reform Act and 1833 Slavery Abolition Act.

9 British prime minister in the years 1834–1835 and 1841–1846; he was well-educated, the first Oxford man to take First Class Honours in both Classics and Mathematics; and the Dean of Christ Church, associated with the ruling class.

10 *Apo*., 176.

11 *Ibid.*

because of his varied nature, has not been defined. Newman knows the differences of minds and the various results they obtain in their investigations, some of which are not in accordance with the teaching of the Church. And, in his time, there were many of them that might have aroused uneasiness, for example the theory of evolution. He also shows a good command of the nature of science which develops by fits and starts. Hypotheses appear, some of which are mindboggling, but then they are refuted or accepted and translated into a theory. Meanwhile, some people might become unnecessarily upset, while hypotheses have remained hypotheses and have never become theories. We must remember, that Christianity, especially Catholicism, firmly believed in a harmony between faith and reason (*fides et ratio*). This means that we can *understand* the claims of *faith*; the two faculties supplement each other. The fact that Newman devoted so much time to historical studies is excellent evidence that he did not disregard reason.

Newman does not feel like standing up to the dangers from the field of science because it might look like a quixotic fight against phantoms. If an alleged theory is still at the stage of being a mere hypothesis, no one knows whether it will be transformed into a theory at all. The Catholic should rather be patient than alarmed or upset. His conduct shows clearly how collected and reasonable a person he was. And Newman surrenders to the authority of the Church in her principle of reserve, so that she should not act too rashly. Her position saved him, as he ascertains, from being a controversialist.

Let us go back to Peel and Brougham. In accordance with Aristotle, Newman points to the discrepancy between theory and practice, emphasizing that in the case of virtue it is practice that matters most; knowing duty is not the same as doing it. Newman opens his address to the *Times* (under the penname "Catholicus") with a brief characterization of Peel's message (which he doubts to be genuine):

> Education is the cultivation of the intellect and heart, and Useful Knowledge is the great instrument of education. It is the parent of virtue, the nurse of religion; it exalts man to his highest perfection, and is the sufficient scope of his most earnest exertions.[12]

And he continues further in his pamphlet:

12 *DA*, 215.

> To know is one thing, to do is another; the two things are altogether distinct. A man knows he should get up in the morning,—he lies a-bed; he knows he should not lose his temper, yet he cannot keep it [...], the consciousness of a duty is not all one with the performance of it. There are, then, large families of instances, to say the least, in which men may become wiser, without becoming better.
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> Mr. Bentham would answer, that the knowledge which carries virtue along with it, is the knowledge how to take care of number one—a clear appreciation of what is pleasurable, what painful, and what promotes the one and prevents the other. An uneducated man is ever mistaking his own interest, and standing in the way of his own true enjoyments. Useful Knowledge is that which tends to make us useful to ourselves.

Then Newman proceeds to describe the human mind:

> Now, without using exact theological language, we may surely take it for granted, from the experience of facts, that the human mind is at best in a very unformed or disordered state; passions and conscience, likings and reason, conflicting,—might rising against right, with the prospect of things getting worse. [...] Not a victory of the mind over itself—not the supremacy of the law—not the reduction of the rebels—not the unity of our complex nature—not an harmonizing of the chaos—but the mere lulling of the passions to rest by turning the course of thought; not a change of character, but a mere removal of temptation.

Such being the case with the human mind, it is futile to employ it in serious matters which should be preceded by respective preparation. It is like, to use a sporting metaphor, encouraging an unprepared man to take part in a marathon. Therefore Newman says that Sir Robert Peel "makes no pretence of subduing the giant nature, in which we were born, of smiting the loins of the domestic enemies of our peace, of overthrowing passion and fortifying reason; he does but offer to bribe the foe for the nonce with gifts which will avail for that purpose just so long as they *will* avail, and no longer. [...] They will countenance, with his high authority, what in one form or other is a chief error of the day, in very distinct schools of opinion,—that our true excellence comes not from within, but from without; not wrought out through personal struggles and sufferings, but following upon a passive exposure to influences over which we have no control.

Now, independent of all other considerations, the great difference, in a practical light, between the object of Christianity and of heathen belief, is

this—that glory, science, knowledge, and whatever other fine names we use, never healed a wounded heart, nor changed a sinful one; but the Divine Word is with power. […] Knowledge is not 'power' […]. You must go to a higher source for renovation of the heart and of the will. […] Christianity, and nothing short of it, must be made the element and principle of all education. […] But if in education we begin with nature before grace, with evidences before faith, with science before conscience, with poetry before practice, we shall be doing much the same as if we were to indulge the appetites and passions, and turn a deaf ear to the reason."

Theoretical knowledge is an insufficient and even inadequate tool in making human beings better, we need to practice a life of faith. There is no clear and simple transition from what you *know* to what you *ought* to do. Virtue, as has often been stressed here, is not primarily about a theory of principles, but seeks to make us practice these principles. Newman continues his critical remarks:

> The ascendancy of Faith may be impracticable, but the reign of Knowledge is incomprehensible. […] Science gives us the grounds or premises from which religious truths are to be inferred; but it does not set about inferring them, much less does it reach the inference;—that is not its province. It brings before us phenomena, and it leaves us, if we will, to call them works of design, wisdom, or benevolence; and further still, if we will, to proceed to confess an Intelligent Creator. We have to take its facts, and to give them a meaning, and to draw our own conclusions from them. First comes Knowledge, then a view, then reasoning, and then belief. This is why Science has so little of a religious tendency; deductions have no power of persuasion. The heart is commonly reached, not through the reason, but through the imagination, by means of direct impressions, by the testimony of facts and events, by history, by description. Persons influence us, voices melt us, looks subdue us, deeds inflame us. Many a man will live and die upon a dogma; no man will be a martyr for a conclusion. A conclusion is but an opinion; it is not a thing which *is*, but which *we are 'certain about'*. […] I have no confidence, then, in philosophers who cannot help being religious, and are Christians by implication. They sit at home, and reach forward to distances which astonish us; but they hit without grasping, and are sometimes as confident about shadows as about realities. […] Logicians are more set upon concluding rightly, than on right conclusions. […] To most men argument makes the point in hand only more doubtful, and considerably less impressive. After

> all, man is *not* a reasoning animal; he is a seeing, feeling, contemplating, acting animal. He is influenced by what is direct and precise.

Newman finishes with his emphasis on action whose origin is faith:

> Life is not long enough for a religion of inferences; we shall never have done beginning, if we determine to begin with proof. We shall ever be laying our foundations; we shall turn theology into evidences, and divines into textuaries. We shall never get at our first principles. Resolve to believe nothing, and you must prove your proofs and analyze your elements, sinking further and further [...] Life is for action. If we insist on proofs for everything, we shall never come to action: to act you must assume, and that assumption is faith.[13]

This passage is a precise exposition of Newman's views, which he will later develop in his *Grammar of Assent*. I called it an encapsulation of his position, indeed, a résumé of the most important points of his personalism; we could even say that the above words compose the heart of Newman's doctrine, that they are his trademark. Let us focus on selected elements to bring home to mind their significance. His stylistic capacities are indeed at their best. To begin with, Newman is against ethical intellectualism—the untenable view we know from the school of Socrates—for he states that knowledge is not virtue. The Greek philosopher maintained that human vice resulted from human ignorance. Newman follows Horatio and St. Paul[14] in pointing out the discrepancy between moral knowledge and moral behaviour, i.e. man "*knows* he should not lose his temper, yet he *cannot* keep it." He emphasises the importance of imagination (images) and examples as worthy incentives for personal conduct. Virtue does not arise where there are no temptations, but where temptations are overcome; we can put this even more bluntly, following Aristotle's argumentation: the more temptations, the better, for virtue takes shape through adversity; besides, training the intellect is not the same as training the will. Brougham and Peel, therefore, propose a stoic rather than Christian agenda with a strong positivist and scientific background. Unruly nature, so argues Newman, should be trammelled and placed under control, not soothed by

13 *Ibid.*, 262–295. The pamphlet was then published in a volume of collected texts entitled *Discussions and Arguments*.

14 I am referring to the famous quote from his Letter to the Romans: "What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate. [...] For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want." (Rom 7:15, 19).

diversions. The remedy they propose leads to naturalism and the indulgence of all kinds of inclinations in the naive hope that they express freedom, while they truly manifest only purposeless licence. Of course, the spirit of Rousseau can be deduced from the authors of the Tamworth address, yet it runs counter to the spirit of the Gospel, for the French philosopher held that the good man should rather reform society than himself; the message of the Gospel goes in the opposite direction, it is man who should first focus on his own repentance and conversion. Rousseau's aim was to create ideal conditions, then the good man will arise like a phoenix from the ashes.

It is interesting to note that at that time Newman was against Peel because Peel was in favour of Catholic emancipation; the latter became part of the liberal programme. The prime minister regarded it as a matter of expediency; as Zeno noted, "he preferred emancipation to an Irish civil war."[15] Politicians, for pragmatic reasons, often prefer political motives to moral ones, and mere political motives are usually supposed to gratify some calculated purpose. Newman in general was very critical about motives resulting from expediency. Moreover, as we have said, he "considered Catholic emancipation a fruit of Liberalism."[16] These two facts, paradoxically, emphasise Newman's value of the purity of motives. He abhorred double-dealing and political calculation. And, let us add, as he had not acquired the right grounds to accept it, he rejected the decision.

Newman criticises Bentham's utilitarianism with its dominant interpretation of human nature ruled by two masters: pleasure and pain. He describes the "disordered state" or, as we have already defined it here, the functional disarrangement of the human mind, hence a mere calculation of pros and cons will not suffice to arrive at the right conclusion. In other words, the human mind is not a ready-made mechanism for correct thinking in practical matters, such as religion and morality, e.g. man cannot arrive at the right conclusions in the matter of virtue if he does not seek to be virtuous. Therefore he will resort to inferior motives. Especially if we remember that which is useful is frequently not virtuous, at least these two objectives do not come together. The mind is *part and parcel* of the whole human being, and it should strive at making the human being an integral creature. As such, it cannot be disconnected or isolated from the rest, i.e. the intellect cannot be disconnected from morality. Horatio and St. Paul noticed this fundamental cleavage in human nature that introduces conflicts. Such is the human condition, the mind no

15 Zeno, *John Henry Newman and his Inner Life*, 53.
16 *Ibid.*

longer lends itself easily to argument. As useful as science may seem, the mere accumulation of scientific facts will not contribute to moral improvement. We should resort to a more diversified spectrum of influences, not only by means of words, but, above all, by images and examples in which "deeds inflame us."[17] We have already focused on this crucial aspect of Newman's personalism. The human being is so complex that a mere acquisition of scientific knowledge is inadequate to satisfy all aspects of personal existence.

We must begin from principles, not conclusions, and these principles should be accepted on faith. The sphere of religion and morality is not primarily an intellectual activity. Demanding evidence leads to an unending process of analyzing, going backward, and, ultimately, scepticism. We assume faith without waiting for proof. Newman's conclusion does not mean, as I have already noted, that he was an anti-intellectual, just as he was an anti-naturalist. He simply took man as a real creature, neither invented nor imagined, therefore he could not agree that theoretical knowledge is sufficient for his right conduct. Newman rightly observes that "deductions have no power of persuasion" that would lead to action.

Only a person can translate a formal truth into a living example. Man possesses an immediate apprehension of the unity and totality of his "I," whereas the sciences divide the human beings into various aspects and examine them from their separate points of view. But the person grasps his being as a whole. The person grasps the unity of this being in an internal experience; it is not a successive enumeration of the individual parts of one's being, but an intuitive grasp of the whole. Individual sciences can, and do, study numerous aspects of the person, but they cannot provide an overall system of the whole being. Sciences cannot, nor are they interested in, for instance, the explanation of the origin and ultimate end of human life, the definition of man's ultimate destiny or the profound sense of his life. This is a task for philosophy and religion. If the sciences seek to do so, they fall into contradictions.

17 The image of deeds which inflame to emulation evoke the atmosphere of the medieval inhabitants of the Anglo-Saxon world. We could say that Newman's *method of personation* was at work among those gathered in the halls around their lord. Then the bard would sing edifying stories about heroic deeds. It will suffice to mention the most classic example of the heroic Beowulf, who fought against the evil monster Grendel, a story which most probably the Anglo-Saxons borrowed from some Germanic legends. I am sure it was not only the mead they drank from their cups that inflamed them, but the examples of disinterested sacrifice, loyalty, and solidarity that made them wish to follow suit. Christian missionaries could easily translate such stories into religious exemplars of the eternal struggle against the devil. The listeners resonated with the trembling voice of the *scop*, their hearts melted and opened.

Newman criticizes the naturalistic approach, expressed by Brougham's and Peel's admiration for human accomplishments, which, supposedly, is to bring forth a religious attitude. And rightly so, he concludes, neither admiration for the wonders of nature nor human artefacts held in high esteem are capable of evoking religious feelings or leading to the expected moral conduct. Newman ridicules such naive naturalistic (and positivist) claims, writing that their authors' hope of evoking such feelings might just as well be compared to someone who would like to "stay [his] hunger with corn grown in Jupiter, and warm [himself] by the Moon." The belief in the religiously imbued veneration of science reminds us of the American Transcendentalists who, in their turn, had great reverence for the sanctuaries of the woods, and believed that intimacy with nature could cause moral improvement. In his comments on Newman's response to naturalists and proponents of scientism, Sheridan Gilley rightly observes that the wonders of nature may "confirm faith, not to create it."[18] Such an after-confirmation of faith may, for instance, strengthen one of Aquinas' ways of proving the existence of God, namely the way from design. I do not agree with Gilley that Newman underestimated the positive contribution of applied sciences to the sum of human happiness. It is true that they do contribute, but we should not forget their destructive effects as well; generally speaking, the total balance of pros and cons is never a simple matter. Newman had no doubts about their positive contribution to the facilitation of human life, but was simply criticising not so much the short-sighted view of devotees who saw in science not only more than it could give, but what it could never give.

Let us leave such considerations aside. The only thing that I would like to stress is Newman's realism. He did appreciate the positive fruits of scientific endeavours, but opposed an unqualified admiration for their advantageous effects in *all* spheres of human life. And he vehemently protested against replacing religion with science, and ridiculed the simplistic belief in the moral prowess of science. Newman's reaction then to Brougham's and Peel's statements was not his evaluation of the sciences as such (he himself was interested in their research, especially in mathematics), but rather a critique of the two gentlemen's idolizing attitude. And, last but not least, Newman, despite the climate of romanticism, would never accept flight from the present; the present, be it so unwelcome in its complexity, is always a task for the concrete human being.

18 S. Gilley, *Newman and his Age*, 197.

We find his realistic disavowal of revolutionary outbursts and subversive attempts, so typical of his age, in his *Sermons*:

> From considerations such as the foregoing, it appears that exercises of Reason are either external, or at least only ministrative, to religious inquiry and knowledge: accidental to them, not of their essence; useful in their place, but not necessary. But in order to obtain further illustrations, and a view of the importance of the doctrine which I would advocate, let us proceed to apply it to the circumstances of the present times. Here, first, in finding fault with the times, it is right to disclaim all intention of complaining of them. To murmur and rail at the state of things under which we find ourselves, and to prefer a former state, is not merely indecorous, it is absolutely unmeaning. We are ourselves necessary parts of the existing system, out of which we have individually grown into being, into our actual position in society. Depending, therefore, on the times as a condition of existence, in wishing for other times we are, in fact, wishing we had never been born. Moreover, it is ungrateful to a state of society, from which we daily enjoy so many benefits, to rail against it. Yet there is nothing unbecoming, unmeaning, or ungrateful in pointing its faults and wishing them away.[19]

Amid the utopian dreams of socialists and communists, so popular in the nineteenth century, Newman's voice sounded reasonable. Note, too, that in writing this he was coming to terms with his Anglican position, as if to say that this was his starting point, his subsequent development, so that it would be pointless and fruitless to complain about or reject it. He might as well renounce his life. An attitude such as this perfectly shows that, for Newman, his individual life was not so much a burden, but a task. It must be added that the present is not the last resort, but it unveils a more profound sense endowed on it by the Creator. In like manner, man, contrary to Hegel's view, looks to the otherworldliness from his present. Unfortunately, however, such statements may, at most, point to a "Divine Intelligence" or a "great architect of nature," in themselves descriptive terms in keeping with the deistic approach, but they will not refer us to the "Moral Governor," the belief vital for theism. And we need to remember one important thing: Newman never thought about religion as a political programme. Therefore, when he is writing about Anglicanism and its slide into secularist tendencies, he only wishes to restore its religious and dogmatic

19 *US*, 80–81.

strength, not its political position. As long as the High Church retained, or at least sought to retain, its place as a religious body, the situation was correct. But when it was attracted to a body of comprehensive views, i.e. the latitudinarian position, an openness to liberal modifications in theology, then the result was destructive for the Church as a spiritual body. I understand Newman's reserve toward some overall changes as his restraint and disbelief in social action; rather, he propounded a belief in the personal influence of a converted person. A person living in the unity of his whole being is like a living truth emanating with its healing fluids. And it is not only a matter of better knowledge, but a question of the right disposition of the heart on the one hand, and the constant infusion of the revealed word on the other. The revealed word, however, cannot bring forth its beneficial effects, for that would be deterministic and contrary to human efficiency, without a voluntary response (although not necessarily a conscious one) on the part of the receiver. By "conscious" I mean capable of explaining why he or she has chosen one way rather than another.

Let me explain what is meant here. By doing the right thing, I open myself to the influence of the religious Truth even without being aware of it. We should repeat here what has already been said, namely Newman's precaution against the intrusions of an unchecked intellect or the influence of "unconscious holiness." It is a consequence of the empiricist approach that the intellect seeks to have all of its ideas under control. Ultimately, it is open only to its own immanent logic or to the universal and closed to that which transcends its comprehension. Such are the personal underpinnings of the person's acceptance of truth. Such were Newman's attempts to debunk the theories of naturalism, utilitarianism, and scientism.

The only thing that worried him was that such views supported a nondenominational Christianity, i.e. they undermined the dogmatic, or, in other words, the doctrinal foundation of Christianity. Now, if Christianity is only a theory which hoards numerous private opinions, without any doctrine or system, it ceases to be a religion, but rather resembles a club to which anyone can have an access or leave at will; such a religion has no claims to universal truths about human nature, human life, or human destiny. It is true that Christianity may help support social order or attend to social cohesion. As positive as such a purpose may be, it is not Christianity's main goal, for that goal ultimately transcends all mundane and expedient prospects. Newman's tenacity at perceiving Christianity as a doctrine independent of a political body's aspirations holds good.