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The Significance of Newman's Career.¹

BY THE REV. ARTHUR W. HUTTON, M.A.

DR SAROLEA, whose name was unknown to the present writer before he saw it on the title-page of this volume, has produced a very notable though brief study of the most distinguished ecclesiastic of the last century. His point of view is new, and it deserves consideration before his work is dealt with. There is little enough to suggest a foreigner in the style of the book, beyond the fact that the author gratefully acknowledges the removal of some of his "more glaring gallicisms" by the friendly hand of Professor Pringle Pattison. But for this we should have thought the writer's native language was English. He is, however, we understand, a Belgian by birth; and that being so, it is wonderful how he has been able to appreciate the conditions of Church life in this country. There are some errors in detail to which we shall shortly call attention; but on the whole the author has caught the significance of "Oxford" and "Rome" with much insight. But Protestantism he does not seem to understand, and certainly he knows nothing of the solid basis of Evangelical religion. His position is, in fact, one of exceptional detachment. It is with Roman Catholicism that he is chiefly in sympathy, but not, it would seem, with that form of Christianity as it stands. Possibly he may have been looking for an intellectual reformation within the Roman Church on the lines of the modernist movement, and so have been disappointed. But it is clear that Newman's career has deeply interested him; and he has studied it carefully, with the result that in the book before us he has gone farther to disentangle the "mystery of Newman" than has any previous writer. But the volume contains inaccuracies that show a lack of careful attention to detail. Thus, he says (p. 57) that the year before

¹ "Cardinal Newman, and his Influence on Religious Life and Thought," by Charles Sarolea, D.Ph., D.Lit., University of Edinburgh. ("The World's Epoch-Makers.") Edinburgh : T. and T. Clark, 1908. Small 8vo., pp. 174. Price 3s.

Newman was promoted to the Cardinalate (which would be in 1878) "he had been elected an Honorary Fellow of Merton." Of course it was his old college, Trinity, that made him an Honorary Fellow, and the year was 1877. He says (p. 64) that, while Belgian Catholicism proscribes the reading of the Gospel, English Catholicism prescribes it. That is not so; at the utmost, private reading of the Bible by English Catholics is tolerated. He quotes two Latin phrases inaccurately. Tacitus does not say, *Silentium faciunt pacem appellant*, but, *Solitudinem faciunt* (this mistake occurs twice). The true form of the sentence from St. Ambrose, quoted on the title-page of the "Grammar of Assent," is, "Non in dialecticâ complacuit Deo salvum facere populum suum," and not as here quoted on p. 101. He says (p. 159) that Newman had thoroughly assimilated the "symbolism" of Moehler; and the context implies that this symbolism was a form of mysticism. But Moehler's "Symbolism" was an historical treatise on the Creeds. So again, on p. 37, we read: "After his conversion he never could get accustomed to certain Italian practices, and that was one of the reasons why he was always distrusted at Rome. At thirty years he had never left the English shores, and during his eventful Mediterranean voyage he felt so miserable and so homesick that he never had the courage to take another journey until his appointment as Cardinal." These lines are strewn with errors. Apart from his serious illness in Sicily, and the consequent weakness which induced him to return home as speedily as possible, he thoroughly enjoyed his foreign tour in 1833. He was a year and a half in Rome (1846-47), and later he had a tour in Switzerland with his dear friend Father Ambrose St. John. He was not mistrusted in Rome for any dislike on his part for "Italian practices." On the contrary, he brought with him to England the most "advanced" Italian practices. The two Churches of the Oratory, in Birmingham and in London, were notorious for them, when they were practically unknown elsewhere in England; and it was just on account of them that Newman and his followers were looked upon askance for some years by the old-

fashioned English Catholics. In this particular matter Newman seems to have taken very seriously Pascal's prescription that, in order to become a good Catholic, a man should make a fool of himself by taking an active part in the non-essential extravagances of Catholic worship. Dr. Sarolea has in these matters been misled by Newman's own language in the "Apologia," where, it is true, he speaks of himself as "an untravelled John Bull," and hints at some disparagement of Italian devotions. But this is addressed to English Protestants to win their sympathy, and it does not accurately represent the facts. For, apart from his unfamiliarity with any spoken language but English, Newman was, in his temperament and in his way of meeting inquiries, very little of an Englishman. His parentage would partly explain this, but it was doubtless accentuated by his environment as a Catholic during the last forty-five years of his life.

But while Dr. Sarolea's book is thus open to criticism in point of accuracy in details, it does not follow that it is a superficial study of little value. He himself describes his work as "not a controversial pamphlet, but a psychological study"; and thus regarded it may be read with much profit, even though the reader feels bound to dissent from the principle of determinism which lies at the base of the whole, and represents Newman's conversion to Roman Catholicism as inevitable on account of his idiosyncrasy. This view is developed in the chapter that deals with "Newman's Personality," but it also dominates the whole study. What some writers call the "personal equation," and what Newman himself called the "illative sense," sufficiently explains the whole course of Newman's career viewed subjectively. No doubt there is truth in this estimate. The present writer well remembers that Newman's "idiosyncrasy" was set before him by the late Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, as long ago as 1875, as a sufficient explanation of the former's perversion to Rome. But, as adduced by the Bishop, idiosyncrasy did not mean precisely what Dr. Sarolea means by it. Submission to Rome was not, in the view of the

Bishop, predetermined by Newman's peculiar cast of mind. Rather, it was deliberately chosen by him, as a harbour of refuge, after that his vanity had been wounded by the discovery that Oxford friends, who had followed him for some years, now no longer, after Tract XC., trusted him. No one can understand Newman who does not appreciate the intensity of his belief in himself, in the importance of his personality and of his career. And it was after that his leadership as a High Anglican had become impossible that he sought justification in Rome, and seemed to have found it there in 1879, thirty-four years after his submission. Dr. Sarolea, in this interesting psychological study of Newman, does not allow nearly enough for the effect on Newman of this powerful self-regarding instinct. Indeed, in one place (p. 45) he appears to deny it, stating that Newman made no account of his own personality. The passage where this is stated contains other errors of fact, and so is worth quoting in full, with a view to their correction :

"It was in the fitness of things that the greatest religious genius of his century, the man of whom even opponents like Gladstone only spoke in a whisper of awe and admiration, should live to the age of seventy-eight as a humble and solitary monk."

This clause had best be taken first. Newman lived nearly twelve years beyond the age of seventy-eight. Whether he was humble or not need not now be discussed, but he certainly was not "a solitary monk." The Oratorians are not monks, but secular priests ; and they are not solitary, for the whole essence of the institute of the Oratory lies in community life. There is no ascetic severity in the rule ; the Oratorians are exempt from the jurisdiction of the Bishop in whose diocese their house is situated ; they retain under their own control whatever private property they possess ; and they may leave the community at their will, the institute being not a regular order, but a voluntary association. And then, as to Gladstone's regard for Newman : no doubt it was profound and sincere ; he took pains to call on Newman at the Oratory, when he was Mr. Chamberlain's guest at Birmingham, in 1877. But it was not indiscriminating or

silenced into a "whisper of awe." Gladstone condemned severely Newman's bitter attacks on the Anglican Church after he had left it, and said that such behaviour would be accounted discreditable among politicians.

The second clause runs thus :

"He was a devoted friend, an affectionate son and brother, ready for every sacrifice, and for many years the Providence of his family. *Cor ad cor loquitur* was one of his favourite mottoes. He was always ready to give in when he alone was concerned. He was only firm and obstinate when he thought that the interests of religion were at stake."

Francis Newman gave a somewhat different view of the domestic relations between the various members of the Newman family ; but the value of his observations is somewhat discounted by his own pettiness and acerbity. As to the motto, there is no reason to suppose that it was a "favourite" one of Newman's, or that it was in his mind at all until 1879, when he had to provide an heraldic motto to go with the arms then assumed by him, "three hearts *gules*"; and it was then no more than an inaccurate remembrance of a phrase that he had quoted from St. Francis of Sales in 1855, in his discourse on "University Preaching": "Inflammata sint verba, non clamoribus gesticulationibus ve immodicis, sed interiore affectione. De corde plus quam de ore proficiscantur. Quantumvis ore dixerimus, sanè cor cordi loquitur, lingua non nisi aures pulsat" ("Idea of a University," p. 410; Pickering, 1873). But this is a minor detail ; it is the notion that Newman was "always ready to give in when he alone was concerned" which shows such a total misconception of his peculiar character. So far from this being the case, it would be truer to say that throughout his active life Newman was always fighting for his own hand, or else was patiently waiting an advantageous occasion for so doing. Like other great men, it was his own career and the significance of it that he contemplated with intense interest. It may be doubted whether Newman would have taken any notice of Achilli, or of his attacks on Romanism, had he not come to Birmingham and excited popular feeling against the Oratorians just at the time

that they were gaining notoriety by appearing in public in their ecclesiastical habits.¹ And it may be taken as certain that Newman would have taken no notice of Kingsley had his sentence in the review of Froude's "History" in *Macmillan's Magazine* stopped short at the words, "Truth for its own sake has never been a virtue with the Roman clergy." It was the subsequent sentence, "Father Newman informs us that it need not, and on the whole ought not to be," that roused him; and he saw instantly what an opportunity was here given him to vindicate his own career, since those precise words could not be anywhere quoted from his published works. So he worked up most dramatically an exhibition of indignation, which many read now with distress and reprobation, because it seems to them so profoundly unchristian in its tone; and so it would be, were it not for the fact, confessed by Newman himself many years later in a letter to Sir William Cope, that it was mainly affectation. It was the beating of the drum outside the booth to call in people to see the show; and, when attention had been aroused, he published what he had been preparing for publication at least two years previously—a vindication of himself exclusively. The calumny against the Roman clergy, that "truth for its own sake had never been one of their virtues," was left out of account, and was only half-heartedly repudiated in a subsequent note; while the book itself tells us, in wonderfully interesting detail, the story of Newman's own inner life—so much of it as he thought it wise to reveal; and its publication did undoubtedly effect its purpose: he was no longer forgotten or ignored by the people of England.

Other incidents bear witness to Newman's extreme touchiness where his own personality was concerned. The Oxford scheme, for example, in spite of its great promise for the higher education of Catholics, was instantly abandoned, at a considerable pecuniary loss, when it was officially approved with the reserva-

¹ In the Achilli judgment Mr. Justice Coleridge noted this point. The libel, he thought, had been published because Achilli had assailed Catholicism "in Birmingham, where it was extremely important that the defendant's authority should not be lessened."

tion that Newman himself was not to be the resident head of the institute ; and, if Mr. Wilfrid Ward's "Life of Newman" is ever published, it will doubtless afford other illustrations of the same idiosyncrasy. So well known is this fact to all that have had any personal knowledge of the great Cardinal that it is surprising to find in Dr. Sarolea's pages the sentence that has been here criticized.

Newman then had no "silent struggle with his new co-religionists" of the kind that Dr. Sarolea imagines. It is true that he valued beyond almost anything else the affectionate regard towards himself of men like Dean Church ; but for Anglicanism itself he showed, from 1845 onwards, the most profound contempt ; though certainly, in reply to this, it might be urged that this contempt was mainly a cloak under which was concealed a lurking affection for the Oxford Movement, of which he had once been the leader. But he had alienated Wiseman, as early as 1851, by differences over the Achilli business ; he had aroused the jealousy of the Irish Bishops when he was for a time head of an unsubstantial Catholic University in Dublin ; and it was not until 1859, after his return from Ireland, and not (as Dr. Sarolea implies on p. 53) as early as 1848, that Newman founded the Oratory School. This foundation, besides establishing a wholesome rivalry with Oscott and Stonyhurst, gave rise to some misgivings, because it was understood that, under the influence of Father Ambrose St. John, the methods of the historic English public schools were now for the first time to be applied to the education of Catholic boys of the upper class. But it cannot be said that Newman's reputation among Catholics suffered on account of this school ; on the contrary, the fact that the present Duke of Norfolk was entered as a pupil is a proof of confidence felt in high quarters, while the relationship thus established between Newman and the wealthiest and most influential English Catholic nobleman bore fruit in the shape of a Cardinal's hat in 1879. It was chiefly after that Newman had perceived, when the "Apologia" had been published in 1864, the position of general esteem which he held in the

country, and had shown some liberality of sentiment in regard to the Papal Syllabus of Errors and the Pope's temporal power, that he was mistrusted by the Ultramontane faction ; and from 1865 until the death of Pius IX. in 1878 his unpopularity in Rome itself was constantly accentuated by tongues determined to discredit his loyalty.

There can be no doubt whatever that Pius IX. would have regarded Newman's elevation to the Cardinalate as a gross blunder, almost as a crime against the integrity of the Church. And yet at the time it seemed wise and tactful, and certainly for some five-and-twenty years it did much to establish harmony among the Catholics of England. But while it is true enough to say that Newman was no modernist, and, indeed, had none of the learning that might have enabled him to see the strength of the modernist position—while he would, in fact, have shuddered at the conclusions arrived at by Loisy and others—there are here and there in his Catholic writings modernist germs, and his “Grammar of Assent” is not at all on the orthodox lines which both Leo XIII. and Pius X. have insisted upon as indispensable. So that, while it is necessary just at present, for the honour of Leo XIII. and for the conciliation of many Catholics, both in England and elsewhere, who regard Newman as their spiritual father and the justifier of their remaining within the fold, to maintain his substantial orthodoxy, there is reason to anticipate that some years hence what is now the mystery of Newman will have become the tragedy of Newman, and that (as was the case with Rosmini, thirty-three years after his death) propositions from Newman's works will be formally condemned at Rome, and the dream of his being proclaimed a Doctor of the Church, and so the inaugurator of a new era for Catholicism, will be at an end.

Newman is regarded as one of “the world's epoch-makers” by his inclusion in the series to which Dr. Sarolea's volume belongs, and the designation is a just one, subject to the reservation that it is not always easy to determine whether it is not the general prevalence of a new judgment in religion or in politics that makes an epoch, rather than any one man whom circum-

stances force to take a conspicuous position in the movement. But, however that may be, Newman's epoch would have had greater value for the Church at large if it had been marked by spiritual and intellectual enlightenment, and not, as it was, chiefly by obscurantism. Dr. Sarolea apologizes (p. 31) for the peculiar subtlety which Newman in his long controversial life acquired by saying : "He equivocated, he 'jesuitized,' he practised subtlety and 'economy,' not in order to join the Roman Church, but to be loyal to his [Anglican] Church and to be saved the final wrench. It was not Newman who was false and insincere ; it was the very position of Anglicanism that was equivocal." True ; but what Newman did in 1833-1843 to justify his Anglican position, he did throughout the rest of his life to justify his Roman position : for assuredly that position is no less "equivocal," requiring all manner of subtleties for its defence. And therein lies the tragedy of Newman's career, as it will probably be recognized fifty years hence. Surely he is a pathetic figure in the religious history of the nineteenth century—a victim of ecclesiasticism : first repudiating in his Tractarian days the simple evangelical Protestantism in which he had been born and bred ; next repudiating and laughing to scorn the Anglo-Catholicism of which he was himself largely the creator ; and finally, as seems not unlikely, himself hereafter repudiated as unsound by the Roman Catholicism to which he clung so tenaciously. On pp. 194 and 195 of the "Essay on Development" there is a passage in which he seems half unconsciously to predict his own ultimate fate. He shows how names that "once shone bright and clear in the ecclesiastical firmament" fall under the condemnation of later generations, because their ideas have failed to bear permanent fruit. He instances Origen, Diodorus of Tarsus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia, as suffering this fate. Certainly, fair-minded men will not think the worse of Newman if Rome ultimately condemns him as not having been complete and consistent in his reactionary teaching. But some will reflect with sorrow on "what might have been," if a man so peculiarly gifted, so keen intellectually, so attractive in his personality, and

so profoundly and effectively converted at the age of sixteen that he never doubted of the fact through seventy years of much controversy and much disillusioning—if such a man had resolutely turned his back on the temptation of sacerdotalism, and had worked with his splendid energy for the upbuilding of sane, Evangelical, Scriptural religion within the Church of his early years, the Church which seems to have before it, on account of its middle position, a future of the utmost importance in the healing of the divisions of Christendom. His own pen, endowed with almost magical power, has told us, not only of his early conversion, but also of the happiness of his Anglican ordination, and of his work as a young clergyman at St. Clement's, Oxford. This part of Newman's career is now almost forgotten; but in some ways it was his best as well as his happiest time, for he was free from sophistry then. What better evidence can there be of the terribly overmastering power of the sacerdotal idea than the fact that, when Newman came under its influence, these happy and useful years seemed to him as naught?

And here we may leave Dr. Sarolea's clever study with one final criticism, viz. this, that while to him all seems predetermined and inevitable, as a result of character, believers in grace, and in free-will that may use or abuse grace, are under no necessity to accept a judgment which would deprive this deeply interesting and pathetic career of all moral significance.



The Lambeth Conference of 1908.

By A MEMBER.

HERE are obvious rules of propriety and good faith that must guide the pen that would sketch, however imperfectly, a gathering of this character.

It has been no unusual thing this year to hear the words "Conference," "Congress," "Synod," applied with reckless