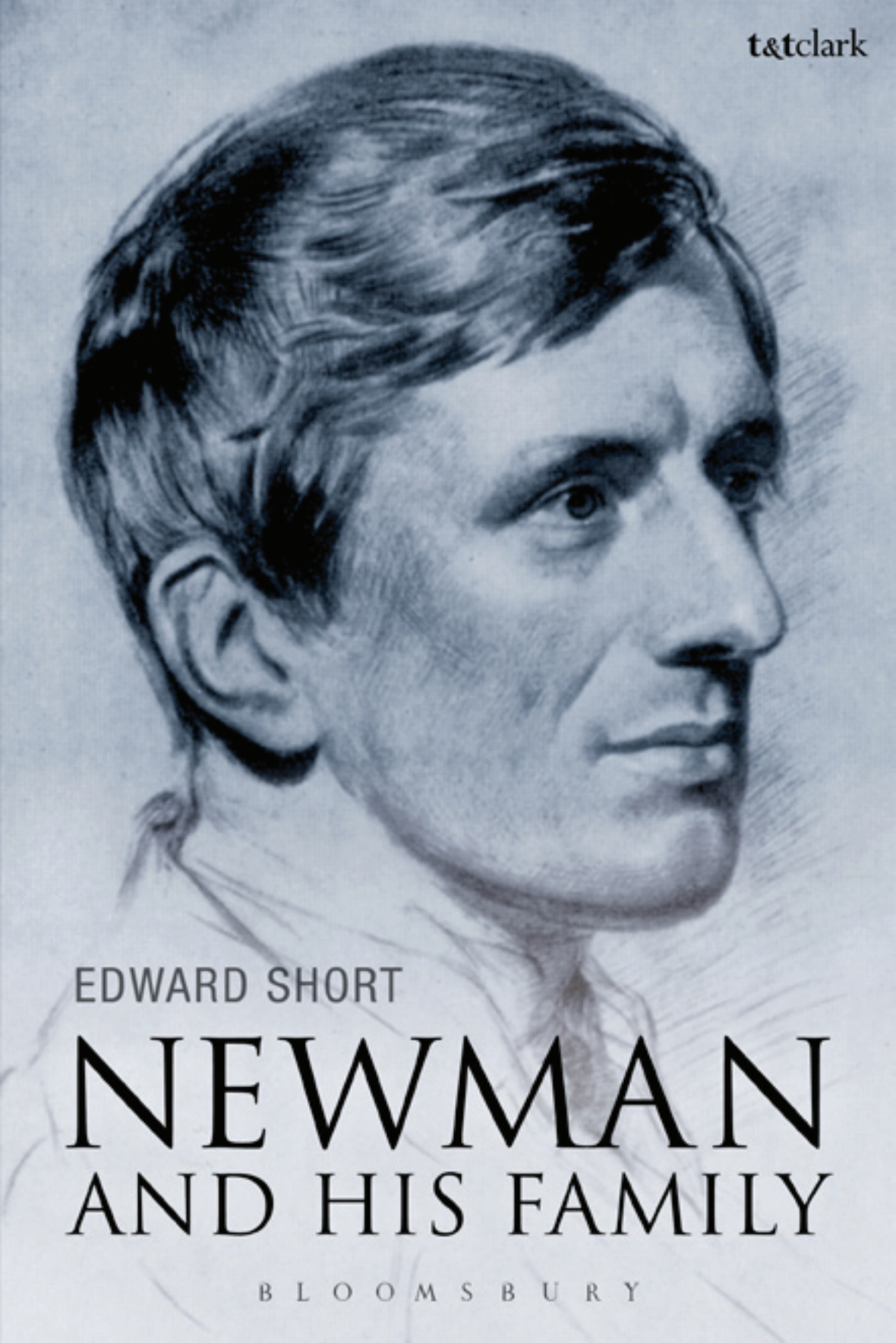


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EDWARD SHORT

NEWMAN AND HIS FAMILY

B L O O M S B U R Y

Newman and His Family



John Henry Newman by Maria Giberne circa 1840.

Newman and His Family

By
Edward Short

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For my darling Karina

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“ . . . England is the country of family life.”

—Queen Victoria to her daughter Victoria, Empress of Germany (1859)

“One happy point, as far as truth is concerned, is that it restores to Protestants and Anglicans the liberty of speaking their minds on the Church of Rome, without being ‘snubbed’ at. After due defences of transubstantiation, purgatory, etc. etc.

we shall have one for persecution. The Church of Rome has long wanted a Champion on all these points and for truth’s sake she could never have so safe a one as J.H.N . . . But it is hard for people to write with patience and propriety on such frightful stuff . . .”

—Harriett Mozley to Jemima Mozley (1849)

*“‘It’s a devil of a thing, gentlemen,’ said Mr. Swiveller,
‘when relations fall out and disagree.’”*

—Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841)

“Someone has said ingeniously of you and me, that we are the two roots of the same quadratic equation; and it is to me curious and amusing to find how much I am sure to agree with you in spite of an utterly different conclusion. I mean I often agree far more with you in numerous details of thought or sentiment, than with hosts of others, whose conclusion is the same as mine. We met Dean Francis Close last summer at Freshwater. . . . He was very friendly and asked a great deal about you; and was not a little diverted when I said I thought my differences from you almost always turned on matters of fact, when in appearance we agreed as to sentiment and even in principle.

*We seem to look out on different worlds. Of course we fall in with
totally different circles.”*

—Francis William Newman to John Henry Newman (1863)

“The common defence of the family is that, amid the stress and fickleness of life, it is peaceful, pleasant and at one. But there is another defence of the family, which is possible and to me evident: this defence is that the family is not peaceful and not pleasant and not at one.”

—G. K. Chesterton from *Heretics* (1905)

Preface

"It was with deep sorrow I read what you told me about your family matters," Newman wrote Viscount Feilding in November 1850. "Time, however, please God, will set all to rights, or at least indefinitely soften the acuteness of feeling which such steps as you tell me of express . . . For such a change you must pray unceasingly."

To what family matters was Newman referring? Father Stephen Dessain, the great Newman scholar noted dryly how "The Earl of Denbigh, Lord Feilding's father, who had been writing him voluminous letters on religion, had just decided that it was his duty to disinherit his heir."¹ After attending Eton and Cambridge, Rudolph William Basil Feilding (1823–92) converted with his wife, Louisa Pennant (1828–53), heiress of the Downing estate near Holywell in Flintshire in August, 1850 and it was to punish his son for betraying the family's Protestant heritage that the 7th Earl of Denbigh drew up a will disinheriting him. Lord Feilding's conversion had been prompted by seeing crumbs of the Anglican communion service being swept up by the sacristan at Whitford, a village near Pantasaph in North Wales. Lady Feilding began to doubt the legitimacy of the National Church after reading Newman's *Difficulties felt by Anglicans in submitting to the Catholic Church* (1850), which he had written, in part, to explain his own conversion to his family. Madeleine Beard, in her lively account of the vital role that England's convert aristocrats played in the restoration of the English Church in the latter part of the nineteenth century, recalled how Lord Feilding "bought books from a Catholic bookshop in Edinburgh to further his quest for the Truth. He enquired in the bookshop where a Catholic priest might be found . . . The bookseller suggested a Bishop Gillis at St. Margaret's Convent. Lord Feilding set out for the convent walking all the way and praying for God's guidance. He explained to the Bishop all that was on his mind. After two hours, his difficulties vanished. He saw 'the Church, his own life, everything, transfigured by his new vision.'"² When the Viscount was attacked for his secession from the Church of England by Joseph Askew, a former fellow of Queen's College, Oxford, Newman counselled against any indignant riposte.³ "As to Mr Askew's Letter, it is at once angry and pompous, and it would be very easy to demolish his whole structure—but I do not think it is worth while. There is no call on you to answer every one who chooses to make free with you . . ."⁴ Then, again, when the No

¹ LD, 14:129 JHN to Viscount Feilding (15 November 1850).

² Madeleine Beard, *Faith and Fortune* (Herefordshire, 1997), p. 66.

³ See "A Letter to Viscount Feilding, on the Grounds of his Secession to the Church of Rome" by Joseph Askew (London, 1850).

⁴ LD, 14:129 JHN to Viscount Feilding (15 November 1850).

Popery response to the restoration of the English hierarchy was at its hysterical height, Newman wrote Lord Feilding with unflappable good sense: "As to this hubbub, I was anxious just at first, when indeed you were here—but I do not see what can come of it, except indeed inconvenience to individuals, and black looks from friends and strangers. We must take it coolly, and leave the British Lion to find he cannot touch us. If he put some of us in prison, we should but gain by it—and I suspect his keepers are too sharp-sighted for that . . ."⁵ Later, Lord Feilding would go on to become treasurer of the Peter Pence Association, found the Capuchin Franciscan friary in Pantasaph, and co-found the Catholic magazine, *The Universe*. The advice that Newman gave to Lord Feilding when he wrote of his father's intention to disinherit him was the advice that he would give to all those who wrote to him of family distress: they must pray unceasingly. And since this was advice that he was obliged to take himself, when the sorrows of family arrived at his own doorstep, he could offer it to others with hard-earned humility. As it happened, in the case of Viscount Feilding, the advice bore welcome fruit. On 20 May 1859, when a son and heir was born to the Feildings, Lord Denbigh thought better of his petulant decision, tore up the will disinheriting his son, and ordered the bells to be rung at Newnham for his Catholic grandson.⁶

In choosing to write of Newman and his family, I have taken up a theme that explains a good deal about my subject and his work. Whether I have done the depth and richness of my theme the justice it deserves I shall have to leave to the judgement of my gentle readers. Certainly, in researching, writing, and rewriting the book, I was encouraged by the example of Newman himself, who never let difficulties prevent his essaying worthwhile projects. In pursuing my theme, I was surprised by how far-flung family history can be, taking in at once social, political, philosophical, artistic, and religious history. In this regard, especially in the case of Newman's nephew, John Rickards Mozley, I found myself writing not only about members of Newman's family but an entire intellectual epoch. At the same time, although the scope of *Newman and his Family* is far-ranging, I had no grand thesis in mind when I set about writing it. My only object was to share with my readers how Newman's relations with his family informed his understanding not only of himself and his contemporaries but of his faith in God. In my last book, *Newman and his Contemporaries*, I showed how friendship informed Newman's insights into faith and life. In this book, which can be read as a companion to that other book, I attempt to show how family, which is an infinitely more complicated thing, deepened and transformed those insights. And I try to show this by mining his correspondence, as well as his other writings, including his sermons.

Many of Newman's contemporaries left behind marvellously vivid accounts of how fascinating they found his sermons. William Lockhart's account is one of the best.

Newman's sermons had the most wonderful effect on us young men. It was to many of us as if God had spoken to us for the first time. I could never have believed beforehand, that it was possible that a few words, read very quietly from

⁵ LD, 14:130 JHN to Viscount Feilding (15 November 1850).

⁶ For an excellent account of the Feilding family, see Madeleine Beard, *Faith and Fortune* (Herefordshire, 1997), pp. 63–75.

a manuscript, without any rhetorical effort, could have so penetrated our souls. I do not see how this could have been, unless he who spoke was himself a *seer*, who saw God, and the things of God, and spoke that which he had seen, in the keen, bright, intuition of faith. We felt God speaking to us; turning our souls, as it were, “inside out,” cutting clean through the traditions of human society, which are able so completely to corrupt and distort the spiritual insight of the soul.⁷

What I have tried to do in the pages that follow is to show how Newman often used his sermons to address family issues *sub specie aeternitatis*.⁸ Although I draw on a number of his *Parochial and Plain Sermons* written when he was an Anglican, I also draw on his Catholic sermons, which Walter Bagehot (1826–77), a shrewd judge of literary merit, found “very keen and acute like all his writings” and yet “much more decisive and conclusive . . .”⁹ Apropos the author of *Lombard Street* (1873), the bookman Augustine Birrell observed how “Mr. Bagehot must have had the *Parochial Sermons* by heart. Two of the most famous, entitled ‘The Invisible World’ and ‘The Greatness and Littleness of Human Life’ [both of which I discuss at length in the pages that follow] seem to have become incorporate with Mr. Bagehot’s innermost nature. They are not obviously congruous with his pursuits. What have bankers to do with the invisible world?”¹⁰ In my chapter on Newman and his father, I endeavour to answer that question.

When I began reading about Newman and his family in preparation for this book, I had no idea that I would be met with so much kind assistance from so many generous people. It is a pleasure to express my gratitude to them. First of all, I should like to thank Francis J. McGrath, FMS, the editor of Newman’s uncollected Anglican sermons as well as the final volumes of his *Letters and Diaries*. I met with Brother McGrath at the Birmingham Oratory when I first began this project in 2004 and he could not have shown me more generous, critical, encouraging support. Another generous source of critical help was Father Dermot Fenlon of Newman’s Oratory, who looked over many of my chapters in typescript and made a number of characteristically incisive recommendations. Father Ian Ker kindly read my chapters on Charles and Frank Newman and gave me the benefit of his usefully excoriating criticism. I am profoundly grateful to Dr Tracey Rowland, Dean and Permanent Fellow of the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family (Melbourne) and author of *Ratzinger’s Faith* for her critical assistance. Richard Greene, Professor of English at the University of Toronto and biographer of Edith Sitwell and Graham Greene, was full of generous support, as was Douglas Lane Patey, Professor of English at Smith College and author of that superb critical biography of Evelyn Waugh for Blackwell. Then, again, Father Carleton Jones, OP gave me great help by making me see the self-knowledge that animates Newman’s care for souls. Paul Shrimpton of Magdalen School, Oxford, read my chapter on Charles Newman and made many helpful suggestions. Prof Mary Ann Glendon of Harvard Law School was another source of generous encouragement.

⁷ William Lockhart, *Cardinal Newman: Reminiscences of Fifty Years Since* (London, 1891), p. 24.

⁸ There is a paucity of good commentary on the sermons, though Ian Ker and Eric Griffiths have written perceptively about them. See Ker’s introduction to his anthology of select sermons and Griffiths’s essay in *Newman After a Hundred Years*, ed. Ker and Hill (Oxford, 1990).

⁹ *Collected Works of Walter Bagehot*, ed. Norman St. John-Stevens (London, 1986), XV, p. 249.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

Frank Bowles of the Manuscript Reading Room at Cambridge University Library provided me with invaluable assistance in my research on Jemima's second son, John Rickards Mozley, with whom Newman entered into a lively correspondence in 1875. Ruth Long, from the Cambridge Library's photographic department, gave me efficient help with the splendid photograph of Mozley that I include among my plates. Father Gregory Winterton, late of Newman's Oratory, kindly granted me permission to use photographs of Newman's family in the Oratory's archive of photographs, which I have reproduced from Meriol Trevor's volumes. Madeleine Beard, the author of *Faith and Fortune*, gave me her good counsel and good company. The crack historian and biographer Andrew Roberts, whose life of Lord Salisbury is such an indispensable guide to the political and diplomatic history of the later part of Victoria's reign, which Newman followed so closely, was exceedingly generous in his interest in my work. Conrad Black shared with me his great regard and deep knowledge of Newman. My good friend Robert Crotty, the Director of the Guild of Catholic Lawyers, gave me the benefit of his critical sympathy over several festive lunches in New York. My dear friends Jack and Nuala Scarisbrick introduced me to Cambridge and gave me the benefit of their prayers, good wishes, and Lucullan hospitality. Yet another friend, Father Anthony Schueller, Pastor of St. Jean Baptiste in New York also gave me vital help. A newer friend from faraway Kansas City, Sister Silvia Enriquez of the Servants of Mary, gave me her prayers when I needed them most. Another new friend, Jo Anne Sylva, the author of the indispensable *How Italy and Her People Shaped Cardinal Newman*, shared with me her insights into my many-sided subject. Angela Thirlwell, who has written so brilliantly about the Pre-Raphaelites, pulled herself away from Paris to read my MS for a very generous puff. Dwight Lindley, III, Professor of English at Hillside College, who is hard at work on what promises to be a very good book on George Eliot, also read the book for a puff and gave me much reassuring counsel when I was wracked with doubts. William and Michelle Law were also full of inspiring encouragement. Distinguished Professor Emerita, Nancy Siraisi of Hunter College, the author of several books on the history of medieval and Renaissance medicine, with whom I studied European history in my insouciant youth, was also very generous with her support, which I particularly prize, knowing her fondness for Victorian fiction. Timothy Leddy, Kaitlin Walter, and Caroline Van Horn gave me the support of their bright young brains. I should also like to thank Prof. Humfrey Butters of Warwick University, whose wit and learning and *caritas* would have greatly endeared him to the hero of my book. From Bloomsbury, I am grateful to my former editor in London, Thomas Kraft, whose initial support for this book was crucial. Anna Turton, Commissioning Religion Editor at Bloomsbury, sustained that support by kindly giving me an opportunity to pitch this book to her colleagues in Bedford Square. I am also grateful to Kara Zavada in Bloomsbury's New York office and to Katie Broomfield and Caitlin Flynn in the London office. No acknowledgments would be complete unless I expressed my immense thanks to Ken Bruce in London and Subitha Nair in India for their 'above and beyond' help with the production of the book. Then, again, I owe a very special debt to Distinguished Professor Emerita Naomi Miller of Hunter College whose learning and encouragement were a constant boon to me when I first began reading Newman's magnificent letters, at her suggestion, over 25 years ago.

What she will make of what I have made of that fascinating epistolarium I do not know, though I hope she approves. Another early influence on this book was that of my father, John Francis Short, who introduced me to Newman when I was a bookish boy on the Jersey shore. He had read the *Apologia* and the *Idea of a University* in the old Everyman editions when he was an undergraduate at Georgetown. Thirty years later, he put both books into my hands, assuring me that, for good sense and good style, they were incomparable. In all of the years that I have been reading the author whom the *Cork Examiner* called “the just man made perfect,” my admiration for him and his work has only deepened. My father was right: Newman is incomparable.

Finally, I should like to thank my wife Karina, whose love and forbearance and discriminating sympathy have made the road to this finish line not only possible but joyous. And I should like to welcome a new addition to our family, Sophia Thérèse Mariana, whose grave wondering eyes bear out Newman’s great insight that children are “a pledge of immortality” because, as he wrote, “in the infant soul” there is “a discernment of the unseen world in the things that are seen, a realization of what is Sovereign and Adorable, and an incredulity and ignorance about what is transient and changeable . . .”¹¹

Edward Short
Astoria-Woodside-Astoria
2004–2012

¹¹ *PS*, ii, 6, p. 64.

Abbreviations and References

References to Newman's works are usually to the uniform edition of 1868–81 (36 volumes), published by Longmans Green until the stock was destroyed during the World War II. Editions of posthumous works (e.g. *Autobiographical Writings*) are noted in the references. Readers without access to the physical uniform edition can find an electronic version at newmanreader.org. References to the *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, *The Idea of a University*, *A Grammar of Assent*, and *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford* are to the Oxford critical editions. Since my study draws on only a select number of Newman's works, this is not a complete list of his published or unpublished writings.

Apo.	<i>Apologia pro Vita Sua</i> . ed. Martin J. Svaglic (Oxford, 1967)
Ari.	<i>The Arians of the Fourth Century</i>
AW	<i>John Henry Newman: Autobiographical Writings</i> . ed. Henry Tristram (London and New York, 1956)
Bygones	G. J. Holyoake. <i>Bygones Worth Remembering</i> (London, 1905)
Call.	<i>Callista: A Tale of the Third Century</i>
Contr	Frank W. Newman. <i>Contributions Chiefly to the Early History of the Late Cardinal Newman</i> (1891)
DA.	<i>Discussions and Arguments on Various Subjects</i>
Dev.	<i>An Essay on Development of Christian Doctrine</i>
Diff. i, ii.	<i>Certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching</i> . 2 vols.
Ess, i, ii	<i>Essays Critical and Historical</i> . 2 vols.
Family	<i>Newman Family Letters</i> . ed. Dorothea Mozley (London, 1962)
GA	<i>An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent</i> . ed. I. T. Ker (Oxford, 1985)
HS, i, ii, iii	<i>Historical Sketches</i> . 3 vols
Idea	<i>The Idea of a University</i> . ed. I. T. Ker (Oxford, 1976)
Jfc.	<i>Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification</i>
LD	<i>The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman</i> . ed. Charles Stephen Dessain et al. vols i–vi (Oxford, 1978–84), xi–xxii (London, 1961–72), xxiii–xxxii (Oxford, 1973–2008)
LG	<i>Loss and Gain: The Story of a Convert</i>
MD	<i>Meditations and Devotions</i> (London, 1893)
Mix.	<i>Discourses Addressed to Mixed Congregations</i>
Moz., i, ii	<i>Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman during his Life in the English Church</i> . ed. Anne Mozley, 2 vols. (London, 1891)
NO	<i>Newman the Oratorian: His Unpublished Oratory Papers</i> . ed. Placid, Murray, OSB (Dublin, 1969)
OS	<i>Sermons preached on Various Occasions</i>

<i>Phases</i>	F. W. Newman. <i>Phases of Faith</i> . ed. U. C. Knoepfelmacher (Leicestershire, 1970),
<i>PS, i-viii</i>	<i>Parochial and Plain Sermons</i>
<i>Prepos.</i>	<i>Present Position of Catholics in England</i>
<i>Rem, i., ii</i>	Thomas Mozley. <i>Reminiscences of Oriel College & the Oxford Movement</i> (London, 1882)
<i>SD</i>	<i>Sermons bearing on Subjects of the Day</i>
<i>Sieveking</i>	I. G. Sieveking. <i>Memoir and Letters of Francis W. Newman</i> (London, 1907)
<i>SN</i>	<i>Sermon Notes of John Henry Newman: 1849–1878</i> . ed. Fathers of the Birmingham Oratory (London, 1913)
<i>US</i>	<i>Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford</i> . ed. Earnest and Tracey (Oxford, 2006)
<i>VM, i, ii</i>	<i>The Via Media</i> , 2 vols
<i>VV</i>	<i>Verses on Various Occasions</i>

Chronology of John Henry Newman and his Family

- 1801 Born in London: 21 February
- 1808 Enters Ealing School
- 1806 Converted to dogmatic Christianity by classical master, the Rev Walter Mayers
- 1817 Enters Trinity College, Oxford
- 1818 Wins college scholarship
- 1820 Obtains poor BA
- 1822 Elected fellow of Oriel College, Oxford
- 1824 Ordained deacon and curate of St Clement's, Oxford
Death of John Newman (1767–1824)
- 1825 Appointed Vice-Principal of Alban Hall and Ordained Priest
- 1826 Appointed tutor of Oriel
- 1828 Appointed Vicar of St Mary's. *Arians of the Fourth Century*. Sails for Mediterranean with Archdeacon and Hurrell Froude
Death of Mary Newman (1808–28)
- 1833 May: Succumbs to life-threatening fever in Sicily
July: Returns to England
July: Keble delivers Assize Sermon "On National Apostasy", which inaugurates Oxford Movement
- 1834 Publishes first volume of *Parochial and Plain Sermons*
- 1836 Death of Jemima (née Fourdrinier) Newman (1771–1836)
- 1837 *Lectures on the Prophetical Office of the Church*
- 1838 *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification*
- 1841 *The Tamworth Reading Room*. Tract 90
- 1842 Moves to Littlemore
- 1843 *Oxford University Sermons*
September: Resigns the living of St Mary's
Sermons on Subjects of the Day
- 1845 Resigns Oriel Fellowship: 3 October
Received into Roman Catholic Church: 9 October
Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine
- 1846 23 February: leaves Oxford for Marvvaile, near Birmingham
- 1847 30 May: ordained priest in Rome. *Loss and Gain*
- 1848 1 February: founds the Oratory of St Philip Neri at Birmingham
- 1849 *Discourses Addressed to Mixed Congregations*

- 1850 *Lectures on Certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans in submitting to the Catholic Church*
Restoration of Catholic hierarchy in England: period known as “papal aggression”
- 1851 *Lectures on Present Position of Catholics in England*
Appointed Rector of Catholic University of Ireland (resigns 1858)
- 1852 *Discourses on the Scope of University Education*
Death of Harriett (née Newman) Mozley (1803–52)
- 1856 *Callista: A Sketch of the Third Century*
- 1857 *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions*
- 1859 *Lectures and Essays on University Subjects*
“On Consulting the Faithful in Matters in Doctrine” published in *Rambler*
- 1864 *Apologia pro vita sua*
- 1865 *The Dream of Gerontius*
- 1866 *A Letter to the Rev E.B. Pusey*
- 1868 *Verses on Various Occasions*
- 1870 *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*
Papal infallibility defined by First Vatican Council
- 1873 *The Idea of a University*
- 1875 *A Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*
- 1877 *Via Media*
Elected honorary fellow of Trinity College, Oxford
- 1879 Created cardinal by Leo XIII
Death of Jemima (née Newman) Mozley (1808–79)
- 1884 Death of Charles Robert Newman (1802–84)
- 1890 Death of John Henry Cardinal Newman: 11 August
- 1897 Death of Francis William Newman (1805–97)
- 1931 Death of John Rickards Mozley (1840–1931)
- 1991 John Henry Cardinal Newman Declared Venerable
- 2010 Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman beatified by Pope Benedict XVI:
19 September

Introduction

On Sunday, the 15th of August, 1773, before their tour of the Hebrides, Johnson and Boswell were in Edinburgh dining with Dr William Robertson, the antiquary and historian of Greece, when the topic of Edmund Burke came up. “What I most envy Burke for,” Johnson observed, “is his being constantly the same. He is never hum-drum; never unwilling to begin to talk, nor in haste to leave off . . . Burke, sir, is such a man, that if you met him for the first time in a street where you were stopped by a drove of oxen, and you and he stepped aside to take shelter but for five minutes, he’d talk to you in such manner, that, when you parted, you would say, this is an extraordinary man.”¹ John Henry Newman, in contrast, for all of his many talents, lacked this sort of conspicuous distinction. One can see this in his photographs, even in his portraits, where he clearly refuses to play the great man. William Lockhart (1820–92), the first of his friends to convert, captured something of this aspect of the man when he recalled seeing Newman walking in the street. “I have a vivid remembrance of my first seeing John Henry Newman when I was quite a youth at Oxford. He was pointed out to me in the High-street. I should not have noticed him if his name had not been mentioned by my companion. I looked, and then, I saw him passing along in his characteristic way, walking fast, without any dignity of gait and earnest, like one who had a purpose; yet so humble and self-forgetting in every portion of his external appearance, that you would not have thought him, at first sight, a man remarkable for anything. It was only when you came to know him that you recognized or began to recognize what he was.”² One of the great paradoxes of Newman’s life is that it was his cultivation of the unremarkable, his disavowal of pomp and prestige, his delight in the ordinary that made him so very remarkable indeed. In this respect, he reminds one of Saint Francis de Sales, who knew how “humility resembles that tree of Tylos, which at night folds up and conceals its beautiful flowers . . . So humility enfolds and conceals all our virtues and human perfections, producing them only at the call of charity, which is not an earthly but a heavenly virtue, not a moral but a divine perfection, and the very sun of all the other virtues, over which she should always preside . . .”³ The remarkable thing about Newman that I highlight in this book is the deep love he had

¹ *Johnson’s Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland and Boswell’s Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford, 1933), pp. 179–80.

² William Lockhart. *Cardinal Newman: Reminiscences of Fifty Years Since* (London, 1891), p. 1.

³ St Francis De Sales. *An Introduction to the Devout Life* (Philadelphia, 1942), p. 127. It is fitting that this insight should come from Saint Francis de Sales because in Newman’s own chapel at the Birmingham Oratory the patron saint of authors has pride of place over the altar, to the right and left of which are portraits of Newman’s many friends.

for his family, despite their many difficulties and differences, which can be understood best as his own response to the “call of charity.” This is an aspect of his character that has not been given the attention it deserves. It is true that Meriol Trevor provided a good deal of information about the different family members in her indispensable two-volume biography, as did the lively storyteller Sean O’Faolain in his rather more impressionistic study, *Newman’s Way* (1952). Dorothea Mozley did a good job of bringing together a sampling of the family correspondence in *Newman Family Letters* (1962), on which I have drawn extensively. But I believe that mine is the first book to consider the ways in which Newman’s family helped him to respond to the “call of charity.” Readers can see this most vividly in the chapters that follow here on Charles, Frank, Harriett, and Jemima, where that call could not have been more demanding. Then, again, I don’t know that anyone else has endeavoured to show, as I have, how Newman’s family enabled him to understand the faith of the English generally, in all its redoubtable dissidence. It was, after all, Newman’s brothers and sisters who first acquainted him with the barriers that stood in the way of his sharing his dogmatic faith with a Protestant society that regarded the Roman Church as tyrannical, corrupt, backward, and traitorous. In the chapters that follow, I show how Newman’s family gave him a useful foretaste of what he could expect from the world beyond the family circle, especially after he grew disenchanted with Anglicanism in the late 1830s and moved closer and closer to Rome.

In one of his early uncollected sermons, written in 1824, the year of his ordination into the Anglican ministry, Newman spoke of how his very priesthood compounded these barriers, especially with loved ones. Referring to the “dispensers of the word of life,” he spoke of how “Their office is as arduous and tremendous as it is honourable. To have to answer for the souls of men is an awful consideration.

They are of the same fallen nature as their brethren; yet they must learn to be better than they, and not only purify themselves but others also. They have to wrestle not only with sin, but with the author of sin—and are in an especial way of objects of attack from the evil one, for he knows that in slaying them, he slays the leaders of the host. But the most difficult and painful circumstances is one which relates to their flock itself. They have to convert and admonish those, who (without God’s grace) oppose the very efforts that are made for their good. Thus in one sense they are at war with the very individuals they love. They have to wrestle with the pride and selfishness of the heart. They have to probe before they can cure. They are seemingly unkind. Thus they must be content with the affection of some, and meekly bear the opposition of many. They must not wonder if they are misunderstood and misrepresented.⁴

Considering the generosity and devotion with which Newman assumed his pastoral duties, it is not surprising that he should have warmed to Fra Cristoforo in Manzoni’s best-selling novel, *I Promessi Sposi* (“The Betrothed”), which provided Newman with one of his first glimpses into the Roman clergy, an otherwise exotic species

⁴ Sermon 1, No. 42, “On Attending the Ordinances of Grace,” preached 12 December 1824 in *John Henry Newman: Sermons 1824–1843* (Oxford, 2011), IV, p. 9.

in nineteenth-century England.⁵ “I have lately been reading a novel you spoke of, *I Promessi Sposi*,” he wrote his sister Jemima in 1837, and am quite delighted with it . . . It is most inspiring—it quite transported me in parts.”⁶ Two years later, he wrote his friend Frederic Rogers of how “The Capuchin in the ‘*Promessi Sposi*’ has stuck in my heart like a dart. I have never got over him. Only I think it would be, in sober seriousness, far too great an honour for such as me to have such a post, being little worthy or fit for it.”⁷ Later, after his conversion, in 1846, Newman would write Jemima of missing Manzoni in Milan. “I will not leave Milan, which I intend to do tomorrow, without sending you a line. We have *not* seen Manzoni—and I believe he is even more sorry for it than we are. Not that we are not sorry, but it is so great a thing to be in the city of St Ambrose. I never was in a city which has so enchanted me. To stand before the tombs of such great saints as St Ambrose and St Carlo—and to see the places where St Ambrose repelled the Arians, where St Monica kept watch through the night with the ‘*pia plebs*’ as St Augustine calls them, and where St Augustine himself was baptized. Our oldest Churches in England are nothing in antiquity to those here, and then the ashes of the Saints have been scattered to the four winds. It is so great a thing to be where the ‘*primordia*,’ the cradle, as it were, of Christianity is still existing.”⁸ In my chapter on Jemima, I show how such communications strained a relationship that was strained enough after he abandoned the English faith of the Tractarians for the foreign faith of St Ambrose and St Augustine. Still, it was nicely ironic that Jemima, who would never entirely reconcile herself to her brother’s conversion, should have introduced him to a priest in Fra Cristoforo that so splendidly personified his pastoral ideal.⁹

Had Newman been still alive when his brother Frank published his vituperative memoir, *Contributions Chiefly to the Early History of the Late Cardinal Newman* (1891), he might have been hurt but not surprised by it. In this respect, for Newman, his family became something of a microcosm of the larger English world beyond the family, a little England, in which he encountered many of the same prejudices that animated the larger world. If his sisters embodied many of the assumptions of those loyal to the National Church, his brothers embodied many of the assumptions of those disloyal to that Church, with the exception of those, of course, whose disloyalty led them to the Church of Rome. No two men were more disinclined to consider following Newman’s lead than his two brothers.

In the chapters that follow, I look at Newman’s relationships with his parents and with his siblings to show how each of them helped shape his understanding of his contemporaries but also of himself. In my chapter on Newman’s relationship with his father, I show how John Newman was similar to many fathers of families, intent on

⁵ Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873) was a Milanese poet and novelist for whom Verdi wrote his *Requiem*. After falling under Voltaire’s sway and drifting away from the Church in his youth, Manzoni became a staunch Catholic. For James Hope-Scott, Manzoni’s Ultramontanism was the result of his former unbelief, “And what more natural than for a stray sheep to be attracted by the voice of the shepherd?” See Note 3, LD, 30: 267 JHN to Robert Ornsby (22 October 1883).

⁶ LD, 6: 150 JHN to Mrs John Mozley (6 October 1837).

⁷ LD, 7: 151 JHN to Frederic Rogers (15 September 1839).

⁸ LD, 11: 264 JHN to Mrs John Mozley (22 October 1846).

⁹ See Jo Anne Cammarata Sylva’s *How Italy and her People Shaped Cardinal Newman: Italian Influences on an English Mind* (New Jersey, 2010) for an excellent account of Newman’s interest in Manzoni.

providing for his wife and children but perfunctory when it came to his Christian faith. Still, his father gave him, among many other things, insights into the religion of the nineteenth-century English, as well as into the world that set itself in opposition to the Church, which always reminded his son of how anathema religion was to the natural man. He was also the person to whom he first confided his failure in the BA examination at Trinity and his triumph when he won his Oriel fellowship in 1822. Nothing could have summed up his joy on that occasion better than this: "I am just made Fellow of Oriel. Thank God. Love to all," to which his mother responded with characteristic thankfulness and solicitude.

I am quite at a loss to express my surprise, pleasure and gratitude at your success. What a great blessing you should be spared the labours and anxiety of another year's probation. For that I feel most thankful, as my great dread has been lest your health should be injured by such close application. Your Father was quite affected at the intelligence. He desires his love, and concurs with me in all I have said.¹⁰

Then, again, in my chapter on Newman's eldest sister, Harriett, I show how her anti-Romanism mirrored his own, until he began to see that Rome was not accurately reflected in the defamatory caricatures of English Protestantism. On 6 October 1845, three days before he would convert, Newman published his famous "Retraction of Anti-Catholic Statements," averring:

It is now above eleven years since the writer of the following pages, in one of the early numbers of the Tracts for the Times, expressed himself thus:—"Considering the high gifts, and the strong claims of the Church of Rome and its dependencies on our admiration, reverence, love, and gratitude, how could we withstand it, as we do; how could we refrain from being melted into tenderness, and rushing into communion with it, but for the words of Truth itself, which bid us prefer it to the whole world? 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me.' How could we learn to be severe, and execute judgment, but for the warning of Moses against even a divinely-gifted teacher who should preach new gods, and the anathema of St. Paul even against Angels and Apostles who should bring in a new doctrine?" He little thought, when he so wrote, that the time would ever come, when he should feel the obstacle, which he spoke of as lying in the way of communion with the Church of Rome, to be destitute of solid foundation.¹¹

In his splendidly unwhiggish *A History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland* (1827), William Cobbett recalled how, "From our very infancy, on the knees of our mothers, we have been taught to believe, that to be a Catholic was to be a false, cruel, and bloody wretch; and 'popery and slavery' have been wrung in our ears, till, whether we looked on the Catholics in their private or their public capacity, we have inevitably come to the conclusion, that they were every thing that was vicious and

¹⁰ LD, I: 129.

¹¹ VM, II, p. 427.

vile.”¹² In my chapter on Harriett, I show how Newman spent most of his Anglican career coming to terms with this traditional bugbear. Once he recognized that the objections to Rome were indeed “destitute of solid foundation,” Newman would go on to write many responses to the sort of anti-Romanism that he encountered in Harriett, both in his letters and in his published works, but one of his most eloquent responses can be found in a piece he wrote on Pius IX for whose “independence in policy and vigour in action” he had such deep admiration.¹³ Speaking of the rabid opposition that greeted the reconstitution of the hierarchy in England in 1850, the period known as “Papal Aggression,” Newman wrote:

It may strike one at first with surprise, that, in the middle of the nineteenth century, in an age of professed light and liberality, so determined a spirit of persecution should have arisen, as we experience it, in these countries, against the professors of the ancient faith. Catholics have been startled, irritated, and depressed, at this unexpected occurrence; they have been frightened, and have wished to retrace their steps; but after all, far from suggesting matter for alarm or despondency, it is nothing more or less than a confession on the part of our adversaries, how strong we are, and how great our promise. It is the expression of their profound misgiving that the Religion which existed long before theirs, is destined to live after it. This is no mere deduction from their acts; it is their own avowal. They have seen that Protestantism was all but extinct abroad; they have confessed that its last refuge and fortress was in England; they have proclaimed aloud, that, if England was supine at this moment, Protestantism was gone.

In my chapter on Harriett, I show how she and her husband Tom Mozley did indeed see how “Protestantism was all but extinct abroad” when they visited Normandy in 1843. And in my chapter on Frank Newman I show how his opposition to Rome betrayed immense misgivings about the subjectivism that he cobbled together for his own faith. In fact, Frank’s opposition to Rome was so virulent that it even led him to imagine that his brother converted *without* believing in the authority of the Magisterium, something which Newman might certainly have had him in mind when he wrote these clarion sentences during the period known as “Papal Aggression”:

Twenty years ago England could afford, as much in contempt as in generosity, to grant to Catholics political emancipation. Forty or fifty years ago it was a common belief in her religious circles that the great Emperor, with whom she was at war,

¹² William Cobbett. *A History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland* (London, 1846), II, p. 4.

¹³ *HS*, iii, p. 148. Readers should contrast what Newman has to say here with what the historian Eamon Duffy says in *The New York Review of Books* (23 December 2010), where he claims that Newman “was scathingly critical of the authoritarian papacy of Pope Pius IX . . . and . . . opposed the definition of papal infallibility in 1870 as an unnecessary and inappropriate burden on consciences.” In fact, Newman was not critical of Pius IX or his papacy; he was critical of how the English Ultramontanes misrepresented Pius and his papacy. Moreover, Newman did not oppose the definition of infallibility; he regarded it as inopportune. When it was finally decreed, at the First Vatican Council, he welcomed it, not least because he saw it as a necessary rebuff to the extravagances of the English Ultramontanes.

was raised up to annihilate the Popedom. But from the very grave of Pius the Sixth, and from the prison of Pius the Seventh, from the very moment that they had an opportunity of showing to the world their familiarity with that ecclesiastical virtue of which I have said so much, the Catholic movement began. In proportion to the weakness of the Holy See at home, became its influence and its success in the world. The Apostles were told to be prudent as serpents, and simple as doves. It has been the simplicity of the Sovereign Pontiffs which has been their prudence. It is their fidelity to their commission, and their detachment from all secular objects, which has given them the possession of the earth.¹⁴

By rejecting the anti-Romanism of Harriett and Frank and embracing the faith that was so objectionable not only to his sisters and brothers but to his parents, Newman showed how fully he grasped the import of Christ's warning, which is at the very heart of the theme of this book: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me." By the same token, I show how Newman's mother and father (often unwittingly) helped him to live out his faith, especially when adversity and heartbreak came knocking at the family's door.

Indeed, it was adversity and heartbreak that enabled Newman to understand the true character of the Christian faith. In his sermon, "The Weapons of Saints" (1837), he drove home to his audience just how revolutionary Christianity was. Before one could understand sanctity, Newman contended, one had to understand the source of sanctity, and here he explicated those ringing words from St Matthew: "Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first."

These words are fulfilled under the Gospel in many ways. Our Saviour in one place applies them to the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles; but in the context, in which they stand as I have cited them, they seem to have a further meaning, and to embody a great principle, which we all indeed acknowledge, but are deficient in mastering. Under the dispensation of the Spirit all things were to become new and to be reversed. Strength, numbers, wealth, philosophy, eloquence, craft, experience of life, knowledge of human nature, these are the means by which worldly men have ever gained the world. But in that kingdom which Christ has set up, all is contrariwise. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." What was before in honour, has been dishonoured; what before was in dishonour, has come to honour; what before was successful, fails; what before failed, succeeds. What before was great, has become little; what before was little, has become great. Weakness has conquered strength, for the hidden strength of God "is made perfect in weakness." Death has conquered life, for in that death is a more glorious resurrection. Spirit has conquered flesh; for that spirit is an inspiration from above. A new kingdom has been established, not merely different from all kingdoms before it, but contrary to them; a paradox in the eyes of man,—the visible rule of the invisible Saviour.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Rise and Progress of Universities*, in *H.S.*, iii, pp. 145–6.

¹⁵ *PS*, VI, pp. 22, 313–14.

Having reaffirmed the Christian faith in these luminous terms, Newman could begin to encourage his auditors to see the personal appeal of sanctity. "Now let us apply this great truth to ourselves," he exhorted his listeners, "for be it ever recollected, *we* are the sons of God, *we* are the soldiers of Christ. The kingdom is within us, and among us, and around us. We are apt to speak of it as a matter of history; we speak of it as at a distance; but really we are a part of it, or ought to be; and, as we wish to be a living portion of it, which is our only hope of salvation, we must learn what its characters are in order to imitate them."¹⁶ Newman wrote this sermon in 1837 but it could describe his entire apostolate. And his family was instrumental in helping him not only to understand but to live it.

Then, again, in his *Meditations and Devotions*, Newman shows how family figures in the self-sacrifice necessary to receive what he calls "The Forty Days' Teaching."

O my Saviour, I adore Thee for Thy infinite wisdom, which sees what we do not see, and orderest all things in its own most perfect way. When Thou didst say to the Apostles that Thou wast going away, they cried out, as if Thou hadst, if it may be so said, broken faith with them. They seemed to say to Thee, "O Jesu, did we not leave all things for Thee? Did we not give up home and family, father and wife, friends and neighbours, our habits, our accustomed way of living, that we might join Thee? Did we not divorce ourselves from the world, or rather die to it, that we might be eternally united and live to Thee? And now Thou sayest that Thou art leaving us. Is this reasonable? is this just? is this faithfulness to Thy promise? Did we bargain for this? O Lord Jesus, we adore Thee, but we are confounded, and we know not what to say!"

Yet let God be true, and every man a liar. Let the Divine Word triumph in our minds over every argument and persuasion of sensible appearances. Let faith rule us and not sight. Thou art justified, O Lord, when Thou art arraigned, and dost gain the cause when Thou art judged. For Thou didst know that the true way of possessing Thee was to lose Thee. Thou didst know that what man stands most of all in need of, and in the first place, is not an outward guide, though that he needs too, but an inward, intimate, invisible aid. Thou didst intend to heal him thoroughly, not slightly; not merely to reform the surface, but to remove and destroy the heart and root of all his ills. Thou then didst purpose to visit his soul, and Thou didst depart in body, that Thou mightest come again to him in spirit. Thou didst not stay with Thy Apostles therefore, as in the days of Thy flesh, but Thou didst come to them and abide with them for ever, with a much more immediate and true communion in the power of the Paraclete.¹⁷

Another reason why Newman's family was so important to his development is that they introduced him to the extent to which the very idea of dogmatic religion revolted the English. "It is not at all easy (humanly speaking) to wind up an Englishman to a dogmatic level," Newman remarked in his *Apologia* with amusing understatement. A good example of the uncomprehending contempt with which most of his contemporaries

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 317–18.

¹⁷ MD, pp. 384–5.

regarded dogmatic religion and the prayer that sustains it can be found in Ruskin's autobiography, *Praeterita* (1889), in which the great art critic described encountering a monk who gave him a tour of his alpine monastery.

Having followed him for a time about the passages of the scattered building, in which there was nothing to show, —not a picture, not a statue, not a bit of old glass, or wellwrought vestment or jewellery, nor any architectural feature in the least ingenious or lovely, we came to a pause at last in what I suppose was a type of a modern Carthusian's cell, wherein, leaning on the window sill, I said something in the style of *Modern Painters*, about the effect of the scene outside upon religious minds. Whereupon, with a curl of his lip, "We do not come here," said the monk, "to look at the mountains." Under which rebuke I bent my head silently, thinking however all the same, "What then, by all that's stupid, do you come here for at all?"¹⁸

For his own part, from the time that he was a boy, Newman set great store by dogma. "From the age of fifteen," he wrote in his autobiography, "dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion. I know no other religion; I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion; religion as a mere sentiment, is to me a dream and a mockery. As well can there be filial love without the fact of a father, as devotion without the fact of a Supreme Being. What I held in 1816, I held in 1833, and I hold in 1862."¹⁹ Even Gladstone recognized the importance of the dogmatic principle, when, musing in 1851 on what he suspected would be the imminent demise of the pope's temporal power, he told Manning:

The temporal power of the Pope, that great, wonderful, and ancient creation, is *gone*; the problem has been worked out, the ground is mined, the train is laid, a foreign force, in its nature transitory, alone stays the hand of those who would complete the process by applying the match . . . When that event comes it will bring about a great shifting of parts . . . God grant it may be for good. I desire it because I see plainly that justice requires it, and God is the God of justice. Not out of malice to the Popedom: for I cannot at this moment dare to answer with a confident affirmative the question, a very solemn one: "Ten, twenty, fifty years hence, will there be any other body in Western Christendom witnessing for fixed dogmatic truth?" With all my soul, I wish it well . . .²⁰

Newman's grasp of the indispensability of the dogmatic principle was confirmed by his reading of the Fathers, whose hearts and minds were dedicated to defining dogma as a means of ascertaining the deposit of the faith. Indeed, the profound patristic cast of Newman's thinking was noticeable even to those who did not share his religious views. Sir James Knowles (1831–1908), who edited the *Contemporary Review* and the *Nineteenth Century*, designed the Grosvenor Hotel in Victoria, as well as St Stephen's,

¹⁸ John Ruskin. *Praeterita* (Oxford World Classics, 2012), p. 305.

¹⁹ *Apo.*, p. 54.

²⁰ Gladstone to Manning (26 January 1851) in *Correspondence on Church and Religion of W. E. Gladstone*. ed. D. C. Lathbury (London, 1910), I, p. 359.

St Philip's and St Saviour's in Clapham, and served as impresario of the Metaphysical Society from 1869 to 1881, was entirely latitudinarian in his own religious beliefs, and yet even he could see that Newman stood "in our century," as he said, "as if one of the early Fathers had strayed into it." In fact, with St Athanasius in mind, Knowles thought Newman "ought to have lived in Alexandria." He particularly recalled Newman telling him that "*It will be a very very long time before the English people listens to dogma again.*"²¹

Throughout his long life, Newman's English contemporaries would richly bear out this prediction. Augustine Birrell (1850–1933), the essayist and Liberal statesman, who was unfortunate enough to be caught unawares by the Easter Rebellion in Dublin in 1916 when he was chief secretary there, spoke for many nineteenth-century Englishmen when he recalled in 1884 how, "It was common talk at one time to express astonishment at the extending influence of the Church of Rome, and to wonder how people who went about unaccompanied by keepers could submit their reason to the Papacy, with her open rupture with science and her evil historical reputation. From astonishment to contempt is but a step. We first open wide our eyes and then our mouths."²² Even Richard Holt Hutton shared this distrust of dogma, writing in his brief biography of Newman, "Dogma is essential in order to display and safeguard the revelation; but dogma is not itself the revelation. And it is conceivable that in drawing out and safeguarding the revelation, the Church may not unfrequently have laid even too much stress on right conceptions, and too little on right attitudes of will and emotion."²³ But for Newman the person who exhibited the English contempt for dogma most distressingly was his brother Frank, who summed up his own view of the matter by exclaiming "Oh Dogma! Dogma! how dost thou trample under foot love, truth, conscience, justice! Was ever a Moloch worse than thou?"²⁴

At the same time, it is important to stress that Newman, for all of his insistence on the primacy of dogma, never sought to palliate the occasional enormities of the Roman Church in her strictly human aspects, which, he recognized, only reinforced the English aversion to Roman Catholicism. Writing to his good friend Lady Georgiana Fullerton, the convert peeress, whose novel *Ellen Middleton* (1844) created such a sensation by reacquainting the English with the power of the confessional, Newman observed of the Massacre of St Bartholomew's Day, which resulted in the murder of some 10,000 Huguenots in Paris and other French cities on the night of 23 August 1572: "It seems to me that we are not drawn to uphold the policy of Catherine de Medici, a woman whom no one thinks well of, merely because the Pope of the day [Gregory XIII], ill-informed perhaps and profoundly moved by the fierce and unprincipled conduct of the Huguenots, showed joy at the news of the massacre. Nor does the

²¹ Knowles quoted in Priscilla Metcalf, *James Knowles: Victorian Editor and Architect* (Oxford, 1980), p. 357. W. G. Ward paid Knowles a handsome compliment when he said of the charming, clubbable, talented man who managed to bring together so many different men of differing faiths: "In conversation he had the very happy art of finding the subject on which different members of the company could and would talk freely, and of himself putting in the right word, and, as it were, winding up the clock." See Ward quoted in Metcalf, p. 358.

²² "Via Media," in Augustine Birrell, *Obiter Dicta* (London, 1884), p. 184.

²³ R. H. Hutton, *Cardinal Newman* (London, 1890), p. 24.

²⁴ *Phases*, p. 37.

event reconcile us to it—for, I suppose, it is by such acts, deeply impressing the English mind, that Catholics in England suffer to this day. It has *not* turned out to the greater glory of God.”²⁵

Admitting one's mistakes meant a good deal to Newman, even though it was the admission of his own erroneous views of religion that led so many of his family and friends to turn against him. Still, this readiness to criticize himself was part and parcel of his intellectual honesty and it can be seen in nearly every aspect of the man and his work. Dean Church, the author of what remains the greatest history of the Oxford Movement, made a number of observations in his obituary of his close friend in the *Guardian* (an Anglican paper in the nineteenth century) which nicely corroborates this point. “It is common to speak of the naturalness and ease of Cardinal Newman's style in writing,” Church observed. “It is, of course, the first thing that attracts notice when we open one of his book,” though he also recognized that “there are people who think it bald and thin and dry. They look out for longer words, and grander phrases, and more involved constructions, and neater epigrams. They expect a great theme to be treated with more pomp and majesty, and they are disappointed. But the majority of English readers seem to be agreed in recognising the beauty and transparent flow of language, which matches the best French writing in rendering with sureness and without effort the thought of the writer.” It is amusing that Church should have singled out the French in this regard because it was the Frenchman Buffon (1707–88), who famously said that *Ces choses sont hors de l'homme, le style est l'homme*, an apothegm with which Newman would not have entirely agreed. For him, subject matter was *not* external to the man. Certainly, in all the subjects he essayed—whether education, philosophy, theology or literature—he took a profoundly personal interest. Still, for Church, “what is more interesting than even the formation of such a style—a work, we may be sure, not accomplished without much labour—is the man behind the style.”

For the man and the style are one in this perfect naturalness and ease. Any one who has watched at all carefully the Cardinal's career, whether in old days or later, must have been struck with this feature of his character, his naturalness, the freshness and freedom with which he addressed a friend or expressed an opinion, the absence of all mannerism and formality; and where he had to keep his dignity, both his loyal obedience to the authority which enjoined it and the half-amused, half-bored impatience that he should be the person round whom all these grand doings centred. It made the greatest difference in his friendships whether his friends met him on equal terms, or whether they brought with them too great conventional deference or solemnity of manner. He was by no means disposed to allow liberties to be taken or to put up with impertinence; for all that bordered on the unreal, for all that was pompous, conceited, affected he had little patience; but almost beyond all these was his disgust at being made the object of foolish admiration. He protested with whimsical fierceness against being made a hero or a sage; he was what he was, he said, and nothing more, and he was inclined

²⁵ LD, 32:262 JHN to Lady Georgiana Fullerton (21 October 1864).

to be rude when people tried to force him into an eminence which he refused. With his profound sense of the incomplete and the ridiculous in this world, and with a humour in which the grotesque and the pathetic sides of life were together recognised every moment, he never hesitated to admit his own mistakes.²⁶

These are the qualities that make the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864), Newman's great spiritual autobiography such a special book. Far from being an exercise in self-vindication, as some have claimed, it is full of self-deprecatory honesty. It is also as much an account of his disenchantment with the Church of England, as his conversion to Rome, which necessarily required him to "admit his own mistakes."

Few eminent Victorians can be understood without reference to their families. We need to know about Thackeray's relationship with his intensely Evangelical mother in order to understand not only his fascination with the vanity of the world but his longing for some antidote to that vanity.²⁷ We need to know about the coddling that Ruskin received from his parents to understand how it both sustained and stultified him.²⁸ We need to know about Dickens' attachment to his wayward father to understand his immense sympathy with the outcast, as well as his will to succeed where his father had failed. We need to know about the Brontë family in order to know how it helped to produce the extraordinary talents that gave us *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. Similarly, no one can understand Newman's warm affectionate playful gregarious generous nature unless he knows something of the love he received from and gave back to his family, even though his evolving religious convictions would, in many cases, alienate that love.

Considering the number of friends that Newman not only made but retained during his long life—the number is staggeringly large: there are hundreds and hundreds of people with whom he was friendly—one sometimes wonders if he did not possess some friend-inducing talisman. In *Travels in West Africa* (1897), Mary Kingsley (1862–1900), the niece of Newman's most famous critic, Charles Kingsley (1819–75), relates how she encountered a "friendship-compelling charm" when she was visiting tribesmen along the Ivory Coast. As she described it, this popular charm "... is obtained on the death of a person you know really cared for you—like your father or mother, for example—by cutting off the head and suspending it over a heap of chalk, as the white earth that you find in river beds is called here, then letting it drip as long as it will and using this saturated chalk to mix in among the food of any one you wish should think kindly of you . . ."²⁹ It is unlikely that Newman ever went to quite these lengths to make himself agreeable to the many people who thought kindly of him—he rarely dined outside college when he was at Oxford or outside the refectory when he was at the Birmingham Oratory—but it is still astonishing how many friends he had. And it is extraordinary

²⁶ LD, 32:602.

²⁷ John Aplin. *The Inheritance of Genius 1798–1875 and Memory and Legacy 1876–1919* (London, 2011) and *Thackeray Family Letters* (London, 2011).

²⁸ Something of the adulation Ruskin received at home can be gleaned from his father's exclaiming, "Oh! how dull and dreary is the best society I fall into compared with the circle of my own Fire Side with my Love sitting opposite irradiating all around her, and my most extraordinary boy." Ruskin quoted in Judith Flanders. *The Victorian House* (London, 2003), p. xxiv.

²⁹ Mary Kingsley. *Travels in West Africa* (Folio Society, 2007), p. 159.

how many entire families he befriended. One thinks of the Arnolds, the Badeleys, the Bowdens, the Bowles, the Froudes, the Hope-Scotts, the Howards, the Mozleys, the Puseys, the Ryders, the Simeons, and, of course, the Wilberforces. If there is such a thing as versatility in friendship, no one ever possessed it to the degree that Newman possessed it. He was a master, a *virtuoso* of friendship.

Indeed, when one thinks of all of the distinctly different personalities in these families—for example, in the Froude family, not only the scrupulously devout Hurrell and the blithely irreverent Anthony but the earnestly sceptical William and the High Church paterfamilias, Archdeacon Froude, with his positively Wildean addiction to paradox—one can begin to see that for any one individual to befriend all of them showed a very catholic appreciation for the good points in others.

Considering the legendary barbs that Newman directed at the quintessentially liberal Dr Arnold, it is extraordinary that he should have been befriended by both his sons: Matthew, the dutiful inspector of schools, poet and critic and Thomas, the modestly heroic convert and schoolmaster who, in following Newman *twice* into the arms of the papists, overcame not only his love of the quiet life but his formidable wife, Julia *née* Sorrell, who blamed Newman for the straitened finances her husband's conversions caused the family. (Her daughter, Mary, later Mrs Humphry Ward recalled seeing Newman walking along the streets of Edgbaston and "shrinking from him in dumb, childish resentment as from some one whom I understood to be the author of our family misfortunes.")³⁰ Tom Arnold recorded a vivid account of his last meeting with Newman following Newman's last note to him, which demonstrated that Newman's ability to appeal to widely varied families was part and parcel of his appeal to English Protestants as a whole, an appeal which he continues to exert. On 16 July 1879, Newman had written:

My Dear Arnold,

Don't suppose I was neglectful of your kind letter of April 18 because I have left it so long unanswered. But, when it was written, I was between Paris and Turin, and I have been so busy, so ill, and so oppressed with arrears of work since, that I left many friendly letters unanswered, and yours in the number.

It is a strange phenomenon which we heard at the Vatican, that the Pope had been deluged with letters from England by Protestants, stating their satisfaction at his having promoted me.

Ever yours affectly., John H. Card. Newman.³¹

Nine years later, Arnold found himself in Birmingham and, as he said, "called at the Oratory," where the "Cardinal's quarters were now on the ground floor. He received me with the greatest kindness, and we had a long conversation, chiefly on the Irish University question. I noticed then, and not for the first time, how much more distinguished his features had become, for regularity, dignity, and even beauty, since

³⁰ John Sutherland. *Mrs. Humphry Ward: Eminent Victorian, Preeminent Edwardian* (Oxford, 1990), p. 22.

³¹ LD, 29:155–6 JHN to Thomas Arnold (16 July 1879).

he had become a very old man. There was not the least sign in his talk of the infirmities of age. When I rose to go, I spoke of the pleasure it had given me to find him in such comparatively good health and strength. He replied with a smile, 'But you know, Arnold, I am so *very* old.'" Then, after his death, Arnold recalled how "In 1890 I was at the funeral service celebrated for him in the old Oratory church at Brompton. Bishop Clifford preached; a large number of Protestants were present."³²

"Soapy" Sam Wilberforce, the eventual Bishop of Oxford, whose Broad Church elasticity came to epitomize English Protestantism after Arnold's death, might have looked askance at Newman for what he considered his excessive intellectual rigor (Cardinal Manning, for different reasons, would do the same), but his brothers, Henry and Robert felt enormous respect and indeed love for Newman, even emulating his conversion, at considerable personal sacrifice. A few days before Newman's birthday in 1835, Henry wrote him, "I cannot help sending you a line today . . . to say how very often I think of you and with what earnest desires for your happiness and usefulness. I must send you these same wishes today, because I want them to reach you on the 21st." Although he had married the year earlier, he never lost his deep affection for Newman, always maintaining the candor that had characterized their friendship when Henry was Newman's pupil at Oriel. "I think the natural fault of my mind is that of thinking less than I ought of my absent friends," Henry admitted in his birthday greetings to his dear friend, "but I can truly say that you are an exception, for there has been, I think, hardly a day (indeed I think I might say not a day) since I saw you, in which I have not thought with grateful affection of your kindness to me, and the benefits which I hope I have received from it."³³

In 1873, when Newman received word from Henry's wife that her husband was dying, he wrote one of his characteristically moving letters of sympathy. The sorrows that he had suffered in his own family gave him the ability to enter into those of other families.

The Oratory April 21. 1873

My dear Mrs Wilberforce,

Your letter has just come – Thank you much for writing.

I have known Henry so long that I feel as if I were sinking and departing myself; for I am much older than he.

What must you feel! but God supports husbands and wives in such extreme trials, and He will not fail you.

I mean to say Mass daily for dear Henry till other news come to me – and then I shall say Mass for you and your children.

God is good in all He does

Yours most affectly John H Newman³⁴

Louis Bouyer (1913–2004), the French Oratorian, who wrote a good book on Newman in 1952, for which Monsignor H. Francis Davis, the Oratorian and first Postulator

³² Thomas Arnold. *Passages in a Wandering Life* (London, 1900), p. 205.

³³ LD, 5:29 Henry Wilberforce to JHN (19 February 1835).

³⁴ LD, 26: 295 JHN to Mrs Wilberforce (21 April 1873).

of Newman's cause, wrote a discriminating foreword, once aptly observed: "In our perplexities, in our hopes, in our unshakeable trust in the Church, no voice beyond the grave speaks to us as powerfully as Newman does; because there is no one who speaks more directly to the heart, as there is no one who speaks more directly from the heart."³⁵ His letters to the Wilberforce family exemplify this. When, days later, Newman received word that Henry had died, Newman wrote his son, Wilfrid how, "There never was a man more humble than your dear father – never one who so intimately realised what it was to die – and how little we know, and how much we have to know about it. Now he knows all: he knows all that we do not know. He has the reward of all his prayers; there is an end of all his fears. He has served God with a single aim all through his life, and he now understands how good it has been to have done so. I have known him most intimately for forty-seven years and he has always been the same. Of course I shall say Masses for his soul; but I wish and pray that each of us, when our time comes, may as little need them as I think he does. None of us are fit to enter God's Holy Presence, but he has been preparing himself for it all through his life."³⁶ Here, Newman showed how he reciprocated Henry's love and admiration. And yet in this and in so many other condolences that he wrote for the loved ones of departed friends, Newman always bore witness to the truth that the loss of his sister Mary had impressed upon him:

The earth that we see does not satisfy us; it is but a beginning; it is but a promise of something beyond it; even when it is gayest, with all its blossoms on, and shows most touchingly what lies hid in it, yet it is not enough. We know much more lies hid in it than we see. A world of Saints and Angels, a glorious world the palace of God, the mountain of the Lord of Hosts, the heavenly Jerusalem, the throne of God and Christ, all those wonders, everlasting, all-precious, mysterious, and incomprehensible, lie hid in what we see. What we see is the outward shell of an eternal kingdom; and on that kingdom we fix the eyes of our faith.³⁷

Another remarkable thing about Newman's friendships is how many of his friends became friends of his family. On the very day in July of 1833 that Newman returned from his Mediterranean tour with the Froudes, where he succumbed to a near fatal fever in Sicily, Henry wrote him from Bath, "I heard this morning, I need not say with how much thankfulness, that you have passed through London towards Oxford. Nor need I tell you now, how much I felt on hearing indirectly that you had been so dangerously ill in the heart of a nearly barbarous country; nor even the anxiety one could not but feel at your long absence. May God, who has thus preserved you through so much, keep you now for his own great and good purposes, and make you a blessing to our country, to His Church and the world. It would indeed give me the greatest delight to hear how you are and some particulars of your late deliverance. I have thought much of Mrs Newman of your sisters, and of the sufferings which they must have undergone. Pray be so good as to assure [them] of my most sincere sympathy in their fears and their

³⁵ Louis Bouyer. *Newman: His Life and Spirituality* (London, 1958), p. 423.

³⁶ LD, 26: 296 JHN to Wilfrid Wilberforce (23 April 1873).

³⁷ PS, iv, p. 210. For a strenuous denial of these rudimentary truths, see Keith Thomas. *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfillment in Early Modern England* (London, 2009).

joy.”³⁸ In 1880, Frederic Rogers, Lord Blachford (1811–89), Newman’s old pupil from Oriel, who became such a staunch Tractarian, but with whom he had so painful a falling out when he converted, before they were finally reconciled in 1865, wrote to Newman from Menton to reminiscence about the time he spent with Mrs Newman and her daughters at Iffley in 1831: “I often think of those old Iffley days in which she [Jemima] added so much to the pleasure of all about her, and certainly – I am going to say not least – to mine. What a long time back it is – and how pleasant to remember. Before Germany or Italy or a Reformed Parliament – and when so many other things were so little what they are, and Froude used to say ‘When will anything happen to disturb this stagnancy.’”³⁹ Isaac Williams (1802–65), the poet and Fellow of Trinity who wrote the controversial Tract 80, “On Reserve in communicating Religious Knowledge,” and to whom Newman dedicated his *Church of the Fathers* (1840), was another Tractarian friend who became very fond of Newman’s family, especially his mothers and sisters. For Williams, Newman, who “had so much poetry, love of scenery and associations of place and country, and domestic and filial affection. . . . never seemed . . . so saintlike and high in his character as when he was with his mother and sisters. The softness and repose of his character then came out, and so corrected that restless intellect to which he has been a prey.”⁴⁰ Newman did delight in the company of his mothers and sisters, though they inspired more than “softness and repose” in him. As the chapters that follow show, Newman never hesitated to speak his mind to his mothers and sisters, especially when this involved their religious differences, and this sometimes introduced a decided contrariety, which would no doubt have disconcerted Isaac Williams, who did not understand Newman’s true character or his evolving faith.

Family and friends meant so much to Newman because he recognized that they put us on the path to love of God, a theme which he nicely set out in one of his best sermons, “Love of Relations and Friends” (1831), in which he wrote:

St. John the Apostle and Evangelist is chiefly and most familiarly known to us as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” He was one of the three or four who always attended our Blessed Lord, and had the privilege of the most intimate intercourse with Him; and, more favoured than Peter, James, and Andrew, he was His bosom friend, as we commonly express ourselves. At the solemn supper before Christ suffered, he took his place next Him, and leaned on His breast. As the other three communicated between the multitude and Christ, so St. John communicated between Christ and them. At that Last Supper, Peter dared not ask Jesus a question himself, but bade John put it to Him,—who it was that should betray Him. Thus St. John was the private and intimate friend of Christ. Again, it was to St. John that our Lord committed His Mother, when He was dying on the cross; it was to St. John that He revealed in vision after His departure the fortunes of His Church.⁴¹

For Newman, the import of this special affection on Christ’s part is deeply revealing. We might assume that “as being All-holy,” God “would have loved all men more or less,

³⁸ LD, 4:6 Henry Wilberforce to JHN (13 July 1833).

³⁹ Lord Blachford quoted in LD, 29: 216.

⁴⁰ *Autobiography of Isaac Williams* (London, 1892), p. 17.

⁴¹ PS, ii, pp. 51–2.

in proportion to their holiness.” Yet this is not the case. Instead, “we find our Saviour had a private friend; and this shows us, first, how entirely He was a man, as much as any of us, in His wants and feelings; and next, that there is nothing contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, nothing inconsistent with the fulness of Christian love, in having our affections directed in an especial way towards certain objects, towards those whom the circumstances of our past life, or some peculiarities of character, have endeared to us.” Jonathan Swift, wishing to mock the false philanthropy of his own century, would famously say that he hated mankind but had a soft spot for Tom, Dick, and Harry. Newman, in his century, would be surrounded by legions of insufferable do-gooders who claimed to love mankind but had no time whatever for Tom, Dick, or Harry. Of the hollowness of such grandiose benignity he was in no doubt.

There have been men before now, who have supposed Christian love was so diffusive as not to admit of concentration upon individuals; so that we ought to love all men equally. And many there are, who, without bringing forward any theory, yet consider practically that the love of many is something superior to the love of one or two; and neglect the charities of private life, while busy in the schemes of an expansive benevolence, or of effecting a general union and conciliation among Christians. Now I shall here maintain, in opposition to such notions of Christian love, and with our Saviour’s pattern before me, that the best preparation for loving the world at large, and loving it duly and wisely, is to cultivate an intimate friendship and affection towards those who are immediately about us.⁴²

From the love of those closest to us, we can begin to appreciate the love that we owe to others beyond our circle of family and friends. And the fact that this is usually a very gradual process was, for Newman, providential, because he recognized how “the great difficulty in our religious duties is their extent. This frightens and perplexes men,—naturally; those especially, who have neglected religion for a while, and on whom its obligations disclose themselves all at once. This, for example, is the great misery of leaving repentance till a man is in weakness or sickness; he does not know how to set about it. Now God’s merciful Providence has in the natural course of things narrowed for us at first this large field of duty; He has given us a clue. We are to begin with loving our friends about us, and gradually to enlarge the circle of our affections, till it reaches all Christians, and then all men.” Yet Newman cautions his readers against imagining that the more extensive love he describes can be easily attained. On the contrary, “it is obviously impossible to love all men in any strict and true sense. What is meant by loving all men, is, to feel well-disposed to all men, to be ready to assist them, and to act towards those who come in our way, as if we loved them. We cannot love those

⁴² Cf. Aquinas, “Some spiritual writers have been persuaded that we should love all our neighbors equally, even our enemies. They were speaking of inward affection, not of outward effect, for where the giving of benefits is concerned the order of love puts the persons who are close to us before those who are distant. Their position, however, is quite unreasonable, for the affection of charity, following the predilection of grace, is no less unequally distributed than is natural love . . . The intensity of charity is measured with reference to the subject, the lover, and here the governing principle is this, the nearer the dearer . . .” *Summa Theologica*, 2a-2ae, xxvi, 6 and 7.

about whom we know nothing; except indeed we view them in Christ, as the objects of His Atonement, that is, rather in faith than in love.” And here, Newman’s wonderfully practical intelligence recognized that love cannot be simply a sentiment or emotion, however well-intended. It must be exercised, like any virtue, in real life with real people, for “love is a habit, and cannot be attained without actual *practice*, which on so large a scale is impossible.” It follows from this that it is absurd “when writers (as is the manner of some who slight the Gospel) talk magnificently about loving the whole human race with a comprehensive affection, of being the friends of all mankind, and the like. Such vaunting professions, what do they come to? that such men have certain benevolent *feelings* towards the world,—feelings and nothing more;—nothing more than unstable feelings, the mere offspring of an indulged imagination, which exist only when their minds are wrought upon, and are sure to fail them in the hour of need. This is not to love men, it is but to talk about love.—The real love of man *must* depend on practice, and therefore, must begin by exercising itself on our friends around us, otherwise it will have no existence.”⁴³

Readers should keep these distinctions in mind when they dip into my chapters on Frank and Charles because Newman had them in mind when he wrote this vital sermon, especially their profoundly misguided notions of ‘social justice,’ which bear an uncomfortably close resemblance to those of our own canting age. He also had in mind his own family’s difficulties, which were considerable. “By trying to love our relations and friends, by submitting to their wishes, though contrary to our own, by bearing with their infirmities, by overcoming their occasional waywardness by kindness, by dwelling on their excellences, and trying to copy them, thus it is that we form in our hearts that root of charity, which, though small at first, may, like the mustard seed, at last even overshadow the earth. The vain talkers about philanthropy . . . usually show the emptiness of their profession, by being morose and cruel in the private relations of life, which they seem to account as subjects beneath their notice.”⁴⁴

No one who delves into the history of the Enlightenment can doubt the accuracy of Newman’s point, for it is a history full of bossy visionaries whose love of reason left them indifferent or even hostile to those closest them. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78), the would-be benefactor of children, abandoned his own illegitimate children to foundling hospitals, while Augustus Comte (1798–1857), the founder of his own highly idiosyncratic humanitarian faith, could never stick his devoutly Catholic family, despite his mother’s cossetting. Indeed, he later blamed them for refusing to fund his various literary projects.⁴⁵ The wonderful ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* sums up Comte’s character nicely. Notwithstanding the subscription taken up for him by friends and well-wishers, which eventually gave him a competence of £200 per year, he still managed to annoy many of his benefactors, including John Stuart Mill, with his “high pontifical airs,” though Mill and others remained loyal to the haughty savant. “We are sorry not to be able to record any

⁴³ PS, ii, pp. 54–5.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 55.

⁴⁵ For a more sympathetic reading of Rousseau, see Mary Ann Glendon. *The Forum and the Tower: How Scholars and Politicians Have Imagined the World from Plato to Eleanor Roosevelt* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 113–30.

similar trait of magnanimity on Comte's part," the *Britannica* entry remarks. "His character, admirable as it is for firmness, for intensity, for inexorable will, for iron devotion to what he thought the service of mankind, yet offers few of those softening qualities that make us love good men and pity bad ones. He is of the type of Brutus or of Cato—a model of austere fixity of purpose, but ungracious, domineering, and not quite free from petty bitterness."⁴⁶

The appeal that St John had for Newman was of an altogether contrary order. "Far different indeed . . . utterly the reverse of this fictitious benevolence was his elevated and enlightened sympathy for all men. We know he is celebrated for his declarations about Christian love. 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.' Now did he begin with some vast effort at loving on a large scale? Nay, he had the unspeakable privilege of being the *friend of Christ*. Thus he was taught to love others; first his affection was concentrated, then it was expanded. Next he had the solemn and comfortable charge of tending our Lord's Mother, the Blessed Virgin, after His departure. Do we not here discern the secret sources of his especial love of the brethren? Could he, who first was favoured with his Saviour's affection, then trusted with a son's office towards His Mother, could he be other than a memorial and pattern (as far as man can be), of love, deep, contemplative, fervent, unruffled, unbounded?"⁴⁷ Certainly, this was precisely the sort of "especial love" that Newman sought to show his different family members.

As in *Newman and his Contemporaries*, my last book, which can be read as something of a companion volume to *Newman and his Family*, I have drawn extensively on Newman's vast correspondence, as well as the correspondence of his siblings. It is not possible to overstate the importance or indeed the richness of this epistolary record. Like most of their English contemporaries, Newman and his family delighted in the penny post, a system devised by Henry Cole (1808–82) and Sir Rowland Hill (1795–1879) and introduced into Britain in January of 1840. Cole, who mounted the Great Exhibition and served as the first director of the South Kensington Museum, was a great friend and admirer of Newman, singling him out for praise as the writer of "the finest specimens of our modern English language."⁴⁸ Hill and Cole revolutionized the way the English communicated with each other. As one historian of the English postal service noted:

The reform brought about a profound social change by making communication so easy. Harriet Martineau was glad that now the poor can at last write to one another, "as if they were all M.P.s." Richard Cobden found it a "terrible engine for upsetting monopoly and corruption," and believed the success of the Anti-Corn Law League in 1846 was assisted in no small degree by cheap postage. Disraeli in his novel *Endymion* looked back to the forties as to another world: "It is difficult for us who live in an age of railroads, telegraphs, penny posts,

⁴⁶ *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition (New York, 1890), VI, p. 230.

⁴⁷ PS, ii, pp. 55–6.

⁴⁸ LD, 28: 326, Note 1.

and penny newspapers, to realize how limited in thought and feeling, as well as incident, was the life of an English family of retired habits and limited means only years ago"⁴⁹

The Pre-Raphaelite painter and designer, Edward Burne-Jones (1833–98) took full advantage of the new frequency of the mails, corresponding with one of his mistresses, on average, five times a day. Indeed, he wrote her over 700 letters in just two years. In one of his more whimsical missives, he even confessed to how, as he said, “I wish I could post myself . . . I’m flat enough and stamped on enough I’m sure for post—and a penny is my full value,” though he recognized that it might be awkward for her to see him handed in on a tray with her other letters.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, not all Victorians saw the point of more frequent and more accelerated mail delivery. The great laureate signed off one of his letters, “Believe me, tho penny-post maddened, yours ever, A. Tennyson.” For the keenly private poet, whose letterbox was besieged by supplicants, the penny post became an absolute curse. To one old friend, after sending him £10, he wrote: “You should . . . pity us for our worse than Egyptian plague of letters, books, MSS etc not from England alone but from the colonies, U.S., even France, Germany—nay Liberia and the negroes: and the demands for churches, chapels, hospitals, schools—horseleeches all crying Give, give . . . When we are both dead of pennypost softening of the brain you will have to sprinkle a repentant tear over our ashes and believe in us as old.”⁵¹ Newman was similarly besieged and yet one of the signs of his sanctity was the generosity and indeed good-hearted care with which he answered his myriad correspondents, many of whom he did not know.

Tennyson’s complaints notwithstanding, most Victorians were grateful for the ability to share their thoughts through the post so easily and so cheaply.⁵² The Newman family was no different. One of the discoveries that I made in delving into the family letters is how marvellously expressive they are. Newman, of course, is one of the great English letter writers—his letters are so full of point and variety and charm and insight—but his siblings were also capable of epistolary élan.⁵³ Charles and Harriett were particularly good correspondents, as my chapters on them show.

Frank, on the other hand, was in a class all his own. Writing to a correspondent in March of 1850, he observed: “I am not easy (far from it) until we get out of this Chinese scrape. I have for years maintained that the more we fight against China the more we shall teach them the art of war; and unless we tear the empire in pieces by aiding insurrections, they must beat us at last, and become masters in the Indian seas. We

⁴⁹ Howard Robinson. *Britain’s Post Office: A History of Development from The Beginnings to the Present Day* (Oxford, 1953), p. 153.

⁵⁰ Burne-Jones to Helen Mary Gaskell in Fiona McCarthy, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite: Edward Burne-Jones and the Victorian Imagination* (Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 412.

⁵¹ *Collected Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson*. ed. Lange and Shannon (Cambridge, 1981), I, p. xxix.

⁵² Tennyson to W. C. Bennett (22 October 1864).

⁵³ Lytton Strachey’s reputation never recovered from the flippancy of *Eminent Victorians* (1916) but his essays are still full of good things. In *Characters and Commentaries* (London, 1933), for example, he has a brilliant piece on English letter writers where he observes how: “The most lasting utterances of a man are his studied writings; the least are his conversations. His letters hover midway between these two extremes; and the fate which is reserved for them is capable of infinite gradations, from instant annihilation up to immortality.” It is safe to say that none of Newman’s letters merit the former.

cannot contend against three hundred and eighty millions of ingenious, industrious, homogeneous men under a single monarch with compact country, splendid rivers and harbours, unsurpassed soil and climate . . . But I seem to be *insanus inter sobrios*, for nobody accepts this thought from me.”⁵⁴ When not considering foreign affairs, Frank took up local matters with the same opinionated zest. “I am becoming quite zealous for my daily swim,” he wrote to his good friend James Martineau, the Unitarian sage, when he was living in Ventnor, “even when (as to-day) the south-west gives us rather too much sea, to the chagrin of the bathing men. Perhaps you have seen various letters in *The Times*, etc., on the indecency of promiscuous bathing . . . I cannot understand why they all direct their attack to the wrong point, and insist on driving people into solitudes and separations very inconvenient, instead of demanding that, as on the Continent, both sexes be clad in the water. Last year I saw an article that expressed disgust at ladies bathing within reach of *telescopes*.”⁵⁵ These extracts show the ludicrous side of Frank’s viewiness; there was also a darker side, as my chapter on him reveals.

Considering how preeminently gregarious and practical Newman’s genius was, it is not surprising that he should have excelled at letter writing. Of all profound thinkers, Newman is the least ponderous. In whatever he writes, he is always a man speaking to other men, and, as such, he eschews what Wordsworth called the “gaudiness and inane phraseology” that mar the prose of so many writers of English.⁵⁶ He was also careful to avoid the turgidity and pedantry that often spoils the work of the learned. When Pusey published his first book, a scholarly treatise on the state of theology in Germany, Newman wrote his sister Harriett, “It is sadly deformed with Germanisms; he is wantonly obscure . . . he invents words.” Of course, Newman appreciated the warning Pusey’s book was written to give about a German theology going off the rails but he also recognized that it would be “sadly misunderstood . . . from his difficulty in expressing himself.”⁵⁷ Newman, in his own writing, was never unmindful of this difficulty. In a letter to Jemima, he speaks of it in a way that shows that his very awareness of it helped him to overcome it.

It is so great a gain to throw off Oxford for a few hours . . . The country, too, is beautiful; the fresh leaves, the scents, the varied landscape. Yet I never felt so intensely the transitory nature of this world as when most delighted with these country scenes . . . I wish it were possible for words to put down those indefinite, vague, and withal subtle feelings which quite pierce the soul and make it sick.⁵⁸

This wish to share with others his response to the great miracle of life is everywhere in Newman’s wonderful correspondence. In this, he reminds one of something T. S. Eliot

⁵⁴ *Sieveking*, pp. 144–5. The English went to war with China in 1839–42 and 1856–60 principally to secure the interests of free trade. As Prof Hoppen notes, it was Sir John Bowring who said that “Jesus Christ is Free Trade and Free Trade is Jesus Christ.” Where little wars became necessary to affirm this faith, then little wars were mounted in China and elsewhere. See K. Theodore Hoppen. *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846–1886* (Oxford, 1998), p. 156.

⁵⁵ *Sieveking*, pp. 89–90.

⁵⁶ Wordsworth and Coleridge. *Lyrical Ballads with some Other Poems* (London, 1798), p. ii.

⁵⁷ LD, 2:74 JHN to Harriett Newman (4 June 1828).

⁵⁸ LD, 2:69 JHN to Jemima Newman (10 May 1828).

once wrote in an unpreserved lecture that he gave to Yale in 1933: “The desire to write a letter, to put down what you don’t want anybody else to see but the person you are writing to, but which you do not want to be destroyed, but perhaps hope may be preserved for complete strangers to read, is ineradicable. We want to confess ourselves in writing to a few friends, and we do not always want to feel that no one but those friends will ever read what we have written.”⁵⁹ At the same time, Newman encouraged others to regard their correspondence to him in this deeply personal way. To Jemima, for example, he wrote how “it is not so much for the *matter* of letters that I like to read them as for their being written by those I love.”⁶⁰

It was Newman’s ability to put himself so wholeheartedly into whatever he wrote that many found so inspiring. When Edward Elgar finished his great oratorio *Gerontius* (1900), for example, which he based on Newman’s long poem of the same name, he considered it “far better than anything I have ever done” and quoted a line from Ruskin’s *Sesame and Lilies* to express how much it meant to him, “This is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved and hated, like another: my life was a vapour and is not; but *this* I saw and knew; this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory.”⁶¹ In giving of himself so thoroughly in this greatest of his compositions, Elgar was being distinctly Newmanian. In many of the chapters that follow, I show how Newman’s sisters also delighted in the wholeheartedness with which their brilliant brother gave of himself in all that he did, especially when he was still at Oxford. Far from suffering from self-absorption, as some have contended, Newman realized that one has to have a self to give in order to prosper the work of love, and not only a self but a personality, and this naturally demands interiority. On this often misunderstood score, Newman was always one with Jacques Maritain (1882–1973), who observed how, “Personality means interiority to oneself.”

But precisely because it is the spirit which—in a manner unknown to the plant and animal—makes man cross the threshold of independence, properly speaking, and of interiority to oneself, consequently the subjectivity of the person has nothing in common with the unity without doors and windows of the Leibnitzian monad; it demands the communication of intelligence and love. Because of the very fact I am a person and that I express myself to myself, I seek to communicate with *that which is other* and with *others*, in the order of knowledge and love. It is essential to personality to ask for a dialogue, and for a dialogue wherein I really give myself, and wherein I am really received. Is such a dialogue actually possible? That is why personality seems to be linked in man to the experience of suffering even more deeply than to that of creative conflict. The entire person is relative to the absolute, in which alone it can find its fulfillment. Its spiritual fatherland is the whole order of goods having an absolute value, and which serve as an introduction to the absolute Whole, which transcends the world. Finally, the human person not only bears to God the common resemblance born by other creatures; it resembles Him

⁵⁹ Valerie Eliot brilliantly chose this as the epigraph of her first volume of Eliot’s letters. See *The Letters of T. S. Eliot Volume I: 1898–1922*, ed. Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (New Haven, 2011), p. v.

⁶⁰ LD, 1:297 JHN to Jemima Newman (5 September 1826).

⁶¹ Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar* (Oxford, 1968), p. 138 and 113.

in a proper and peculiar fashion. It is the image of God. For God is spirit, and the person proceeds from Him, having as its principle of life a spiritual soul, a spirit capable of knowing and loving, and of being elevated by grace to participate in the very life of God, so as to finally love Him and know Him even as He knows and loves Himself.⁶²

One does not need to be entirely conversant with *Leibnitzian monads* to take Maritain's point. In the chapters that follow, I show how it was indeed suffering that acquainted Newman with his own interiority, though this never made for the sort of introspective shilly-shally that plagued Arthur Hugh Clough and his Cambridge admirer Henry Sidgwick. Newman's interest in that utterly fascinating creature, John Henry Newman calls to mind Rembrandt's fascination with Rembrandt: which was as much about the glory and mysteriousness of life as it was about the self's discovery of that which transcends the self. The art critic Kenneth Clark is good on this in his portrait of Rembrandt, where he speaks of the same immersed detachment in Rembrandt's contemplation of self that Newman also exhibited. "Vitality, an insatiable appetite for life," Clark pointed out, "that surely is the chief characteristic of all the greatest novels and of all the autobiographies we still care to read; and when we compare Rembrandt with some other portrait-painters—with his most famous contemporaries, Velasquez and Van Dyck—his total immersion in human life seems to give his portraits, particularly his self-portraits, a new dimension. But with this whole-hearted engagement went an equally great detachment, the two sides of his character mingling as imperceptibly as the two sides of a spinning disc. This is what makes his self-portraits unique. His appetite urged him to gobble up his own image, but his detachment freed him from all the evasions, excuses and self-pity which are the normal human reaction to that clamorous, irrepressible thing—the self."⁶³

Another reason why I mine Newman's correspondence is that it highlights the deep concern that he had for the rise of unbelief in nineteenth-century England, a concern which is expressed again and again in his letters to his family. Wilfrid Ward touched on this concern in his two-volume biography, which is still worth reading. "There is one further feature in the correspondence," he wrote, "which calls for special notice."

Newman's lifelong preoccupation with the prospect of an unprecedented movement towards unbelief in religion led him from an early date to give close attention to the question,—How can the reasonableness of religious belief be brought home to all the men of goodwill? The Oxford University Sermons (on "The Theory of Religious Belief"), which began as early as 1826, have this for their main object. The "Grammar of Assent" pursued it further. His own friendship with Blanco White, with Mark Pattison, with William Froude, the brother of Hurrell, brought closely home to him the fact that there were honest inquirers to whom the mode in which

⁶² Jacques Maritain. *Scholasticism and Politics* (Liberty Fund, 2011), p. 64.

⁶³ Kenneth Clark. *An Introduction to Rembrandt* (London, 1978), pp. 37–8. Apropos the veracity of Newman's self-awareness, one of Anthony Froude's biographers spoke for generations of Newman detractors when he observed how: "we need not impugn Newman's honesty. The fault lay in himself: he was honestly self-deluded." Waldo Hilary Dunn. *James Anthony Froude: A Biography 1857–1894* (Oxford, 1963), II, p. 600.

Christianity was presented to them had made its acceptance impossible. In early years he felt the deficiency to lie largely in the fact that the apologetic current in the Anglican Church did not take adequate account of the actual state of inquiring minds or of their special difficulties. And he regarded the result not only as a matter deeply serious in its bearing on the happiness and welfare of men who were dear to him, but as of overwhelming concern for the faith of the rising generation. He gradually came to see in the Catholic Church the one hope for withstanding a movement towards unbelief which threatened to be little less than a devastating flood. There are traces of this thought even before he joined her communion. The special power of Catholicism in this direction, as he came gradually to believe, was twofold. First, the Church was, as he expressed it, “the concrete representative of things invisible.” She upheld dogmatic truth with all the authority of immemorial tradition. Her insistence on the whole of revelation, and jealous refusal to mutilate it, was a part of this aspect of her strength. And she was, moreover, a living power specially adapted to resist the excesses of Rationalism—the errors to which the human reason is liable if left to itself.⁶⁴

This is true as far as it goes but what Ward omits to point out is how Newman first encountered the effects of these “excesses of Rationalism” in his brothers Charles and Frank, both of whom exchanged their Christian faith for the doctrinaire doubts of scepticism. In my chapters on Charles and Frank, I show how this exchange may have tried Newman’s fraternal patience but never entirely exhausted it, even though his brothers were not always prepared to reciprocate his love.

In the chapters that follow, another theme that figures prominently is that of home and how it affected Newman’s relationships not only with his parents and siblings but with his contemporaries. In a letter to his friend Mary Holmes, the convert governess, for example, Newman showed how much the very notion of home meant to him by urging his friend not to lose the home that the Old Catholic Blount family offered her as a part of her position at Mapledurham.

The Oratory Birmingham August 3/64

My dear Miss Holmes

I write you a line to congratulate you on your having got to Mapledurham. Now don’t leave it, please. Don’t be angry, if I say that you like strangers at first, but you tire of them, when they become acquaintances. No one, but yourself, can know the penances which you undergo in any family, be it ever so near perfection—much more in families which are not perfect—but you can’t tell how it distresses me when I see one like yourself, who deserve so much better things, tossing on the waves—and this distress both makes me pleased, as now, that you have come into port again, and desirous that in port you should continue.

I was saying Mass for you the other day, and am always

Yours affectionately John H Newman of the Oratory⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Wilfrid Ward, *The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman* (London, 1912), I, pp. 22–3.

⁶⁵ LD, 21:182 JHN to Miss Holmes (3 August 1864).

Most of the Victorians were very keen on their homes and this fondness reinforced their religious allegiances, especially those Anglican allegiances that Newman's sisters Jemima and Harriett were so unwilling to repudiate. In choosing to embrace Roman Catholicism, Newman left the cozy, well-appointed, familiar home of Englishry for what his family and friends and most of his contemporaries regarded as at once foreign and disreputable—indeed, the very antithesis of home. In contemplating leaving his Anglican friends, Newman himself wrote his good friend Keble, “No one could have a more unfavorable view than I have of the present state of the Roman Catholics—so much so that any who joined them would be like the Cistercians at Fountains, living under trees till their house was built . . .”⁶⁶ Anne Thackeray Ritchie, the great novelist's daughter, epitomized the view of many of her contemporaries when she wrote of Newman, “Did you see that kind but feeble letter of Newmans about my Fathers death—Hoping he had had some presentiment Vanitas Vanitatum &c. It's a beastly religion where you want a lot of little ceremonies to propitiate & my dear daddy doing his work & putting by for his family seems to me ever such a much better life than the celibate saint.”⁶⁷ The letter that had inspired Ritchie's outburst was a typically heartfelt letter from Newman to Mary Holmes, in which he spoke of “the piercing sorrow that I feel at Thackeray's death.” For Newman, “now the drama of his life is closed,” the novelist himself was “the greatest instance of the text, of which he was so full, Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas. . . . one should be very glad to know that he had presentiments of what was to come. What a world this is – how wretched they are, who take it for their portion. Poor Thackeray . . .”⁶⁸

At the same time, it is interesting to read Newman telling his fellow Oratorians in one of his Oratory papers, apropos the character of the Oratorian as opposed to the Jesuit: “The Jesuits do not know the word ‘home;’ they are emphatically strangers and pilgrims upon earth; whereas the very word ‘nido’”—the Latin word for *nest*—“is adapted to produce a soothing influence and to rouse a fraternal feeling in the heart of the Oratorian.”⁶⁹ In choosing to become an Oratorian, Newman showed how much the “soothing influence” of home meant to him, although it also measured the sacrifices he made when he left his Anglican for his new Catholic home. In a passage from his charming Oxford novel, *Loss and Gain* (1847), Newman gives very moving expression to the appeal of this Anglican home, saying of his hero, Charles Redding:

Charles was an affectionate son, and the Long Vacation passed very happily at home. He was up early, and read steadily till luncheon, and then he was at the service of his father, mother, and sisters for the rest of the day. He loved the calm,

⁶⁶ LD, 10:476 JHN to John Keble (29 December 1844).

⁶⁷ *Correspondence and Journals of the Thackeray Family* (London, 2011), IV, p. 257.

⁶⁸ LD, 20:566 JHN to Mary Holmes (27 December 1863).

⁶⁹ Newman's “Oratory Papers, No. 6” in *Newman the Oratorian: His Unpublished Oratory Papers*. ed. Placid Murray (London, 1980), p. 215. If Newman thought that the Oratorians were soothingly domestic, Balzac found the French Oratorians (no relation to those founded by St. Philip) otherwise. In fact, it was the French Oratorians who turned Balzac into an insatiable reader by denying him food when he was studying with them as a schoolboy in the Vendôme. Later, as an adult, he would compensate for this juvenile asceticism by gorging himself whenever he finished one of his novels. See Anka Muhlstein. *Balzac's Omelette* (New York, 2012), p. 9.

quiet country; he loved the monotonous flow of time, when each day is like the other; and, after the excitement of Oxford, the secluded parsonage was like a haven beyond the tossing of the waves. The whirl of opinions and perplexities which had encircled him at Oxford now were like the distant sound of the ocean—they reminded him of his present security. The undulating meadows, the green lanes, the open heath, the common with its wide-spreading dusky elms, the high timber which fringed the level path from village to village, ever and anon broken and thrown into groups, or losing itself in copses—even the gate, and the stile, and the turnpike road had the charm, not of novelty, but of long familiar use; they had the poetry of many recollections. Nor was the dilapidated, deformed church, with its outside staircases, its unsightly galleries, its wide intruded windows, its uncouth pews, its low nunting table, its forlorn vestry, and its damp earthy smell, without its pleasant associations to the inner man; for there it was that for many a year, Sunday after Sunday, he had heard his dear father read and preach; there were the old monuments, with Latin inscriptions and strange devices, the black boards with white letters, the Resurgams and grinning skulls, the fire-buckets, the faded militia-colours, and, almost as much a fixture, the old clerk, with a Welsh wig over his ears, shouting the responses out of place—which had arrested his imagination, and awed him when a child. And then there was his home itself; its well-known rooms, its pleasant routine, its order, and its comfort—an old and true friend, the dearer to him because he had made new ones. “Where I shall be in time to come I know not,” he said to himself; “I am but a boy; many things which I have not a dream of, which my imagination cannot compass, may come on me before I die—if I live; but here at least, and now, I am happy, and I will enjoy my happiness.”⁷⁰

Mark Girouard, the lively architectural historian, shows how religion influenced not only the moral life but the country houses of Victorian country gentlemen. “A portrait of Lord Armstrong, the millionaire arms dealer,” Girouard writes, “shows him reading the newspaper in his dining room inglenook at Cragside, over the fireplace of which is inscribed ‘East or West, Home is Best.’ An essential part of the new image cultivated by both new and old families was their domesticity; they were anxious to show that their houses, however grand, were also homes and sheltered a happy family life.” And as Girouard stresses, “This life often contained a strong element of religion. Accounts of going to church, visiting the poor, or reading religious books filled the diaries of upper-class girls, as well as, and sometimes instead of, descriptions of parties and clothes.

In Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park*, when Fanny visits the family chapel at Sotherton, she finds to her regret that daily prayers are no longer said there. But family prayers came back in force under the Victorians; family chapels began to be built again in considerable numbers, and in houses where there was no chapel the whole household assembled for prayers every morning in the hall or dining

⁷⁰ LG, p. 93.

room. On Sundays the household walked through the garden or across the park to the church—often newly built or restored at the pious expense of the owner of the house. The family walked too, so that grooms and coachmen could be free to observe their Sunday duties.⁷¹

On the impact that this domestic piety had on country houses, Girouard remarks: "Houses of the gothic style had the extra advantage that, as a result of Pugin, Ruskin and others, gothic was increasingly associated both with Christianity and truthfulness . . . Especially pious families could give their gothic houses an extra flavour of religion by an admixture of tracery and stained glass—or by building a chapel and tower grand enough to dominate the whole building, as was the case at Eaton Hall in Cheshire . . . Others contented themselves with having pious inscriptions carved or painted in appropriate places: 'Except the Lord buildeth the house they labour in vain that build it' was a special favourite."⁷²

G. K. Chesterton roundly rejected the notion that family prayers had somehow made the domestic life of the Victorians religious, claiming that the "sanctity of the home" to which the Victorian merchant was fond of referring was little more than a phrase and a misleading one at that. For Chesterton, this suppositious merchant "never really meant sanctity, he only meant security . . . When he went to China (which he did occasionally in search of money) he saw a Pagan civilization very like the old Greek and Roman civilization. There also the house was a temple. There the religion of the family flowered . . ." Yet Chesterton's merchant regarded such traditional "domestic festivity" as "ridiculous," "barbarous," and "alien." It might have been true that "he had something at home called Family prayers" but the "mere memory of them" had "murdered religion for two generations." For Chesterton, this was the "real Victorian hypocrisy": Victoria's contemporaries posed as the great defenders of hearth and home, when, in fact, they were the "great anti-traditionalists" and "destroyed a thousand traditions."⁷³

If there was hypocrisy, there was also a yearning for integrity in the group most responsible for this new domestic ideal, however elusive that integrity might prove. "Evangelicals," Judith Flanders notes in her insightful book, *The Victorian House*, "hoped to find a Christian path in all their actions, including the details of daily life; a true Christian must ensure that the family operated in a milieu that could promote good relations between family members and between the family members and their servants, and between the family and the outside world. The home was a microcosm of the ideal society, with love and charity replacing the commerce and capitalism of the outside world. This dichotomy allowed men to pursue business in a suitably capitalist—perhaps even ruthless—fashion, because they knew they could refresh the inner man by returning at the end of the day to an atmosphere of harmony, from which competition was banished. This idea was so useful that it was internalized by many who shared no religious beliefs with the Evangelicals, and it rapidly became a

⁷¹ Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (New Haven and London, 1978), pp. 270–1.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 273.

⁷³ G. K. Chesterton, "The True Victorian Hypocrisy" from *Sidelights* (1932) in *Collected Works* (San Francisco, 1990), XXI, pp. 512–13.

secular norm.”⁷⁴ Thackeray’s daughter Annie nicely exemplified this, embracing the Evangelical idealization of home without any of the underpinnings of Evangelical religiosity, which, in any case, she had found so off-putting in her grandmother. Yet it was in the very reactionary zeal of Evangelicalism that G. M. Young saw the seeds of its undoing.

Evangelicalism had imposed on society, even on classes, which were indifferent to its religious basis and unaffected by its economic appeal, its code of Sabbath observance, responsibility and philanthropy; of discipline in the home, regularity in affairs; it had created a most effective technique of agitation, of private persuasion and social persecution. On one of its sides, Victorian history is the story of the English mind employing the energy imparted by Evangelical conviction to rid itself of the restraints which Evangelicalism had laid on the senses and the intellect; on amusement, enjoyment, art; on curiosity, on criticism, on science. The Evangelical discipline, secularized as respectability, was the strongest binding force in a nation which without it might have broken up, as it had already broken loose.⁷⁵

Here, Young was echoing Queen Victoria, who confessed to her daughter Vicky, “You know I am not at all an admirer or approver of our very dull Sundays, for I think the absence of innocent amusement for the poor people a misfortune and an encouragement of vice . . .”⁷⁶

The tensions that the Evangelicals introduced into English society were noted not only by Chesterton, Young and Queen Victoria but by Thackeray, who nicely measured the strains the new religiosity placed on his countrymen. In a passage from his early burlesque, *The History of Samuel Titmarsh* (1841), the novelist observed how “Every morning on week-days, punctually at eight, Mr. Brough went through the same ceremony, and had his family to prayers, but though this man was a hypocrite, as I found afterwards, I’m not going to laugh at the family prayers, or say he was a hypocrite *because* he had them.

There are many bad and good men who don’t go through the ceremony at all; but I am sure the good men would be the better for it, and am not called upon to settle the question with respect to the bad ones; and therefore I have passed over a great deal of the religious part of Mr. Brough’s behaviour: suffice it, that religion was always on his lips; that he went to church thrice every Sunday, when he had not a party; and if he did not talk religion with us when we were alone, had a great deal to say upon the subject upon occasions, as I found one day when we had a Quaker and Dissenter party to dine, and when his talk was as grave as that of any minister present. Tidd was not there that day,—for nothing could make him forsake his Byron riband or refrain from wearing his collars turned down; so he sent Tidd

⁷⁴ Judith Flanders. *The Victorian House* (London, 2003), pp. xxi–ii.

⁷⁵ G. M. Young. *Portrait of an Age* (Oxford, 1934), pp. 4–5.

⁷⁶ Queen Victoria to Princess Victoria (27 April 1859) in *Letters to Vicky: The Correspondence between Queen Victoria and her Daughter Victoria, Empress of Germany, 1858–1901*. ed. Andrew Roberts (Folio, 2011), p. 52.

with the buggy to Astley's. "And hark ye, Titmarsh my boy," said he, "leave your diamond-pin upstairs: our friends to-day don't like such gewgaws; and though for my part I am no enemy to harmless ornaments, yet I would not shock the feeling of those who have sterner opinions. You will see that my wife and Miss Brough consult my wishes in this respect." And so they did,—for they both came down to dinner in black gowns and tippets; whereas Miss B. had commonly her dress half off her shoulders.⁷⁷

What makes the Evangelical ideal of domesticity interesting for our purposes is that it first flourished in the suburb of Edgbaston, where Newman established his Birmingham Oratory in 1848. "Our house is rising at Edgbaston," he wrote his dear friend Mrs Bowden in 1851, "we have been able to build all through the winter. It is quite frightful, the space of ground it covers."⁷⁸ It must certainly have amused Newman, with his fine sense of the comedy of class, that this spacious suburb, which had been planned by Lord Calthorpe to offer "genteel homes for the middle classes," was known as the "Belgravia of Birmingham." As Judith Flanders points out, "Its homes were for the families who owned and ran the industries on which the town thrived—but who did not want to live near them. The leases for houses in Edgbaston were clear: no retail premises were permitted, nor was professional work to be undertaken in these houses. Edgbaston was the first residential area that assumed that people wanted to live and work in different locations. Over the century this same transformation occurred across the country. In London the City became a place of work, the West End a place of residence; gradually, as the West End acquired a work character too, the suburbs became the residential areas of choice."⁷⁹

Newman, on whom so little of the passing scene was lost, for all his delight in devout retirement, was well aware of this new hankering for tranquillity on the part of the trade-bedraggled middle classes. In a wonderful sermon entitled "The Church a Home for the Lonely" (1837), he wrote of how "the outward world is found not to be enough for man, and he looks for some refuge near him, more intimate, more secret, more pure, more calm and stable.

This is a main reason and a praiseworthy one, why a great number of the better sort of persons look forward to marriage as the great object of life. They call it being settled, and so it is. The mind finds nothing to satisfy it in the employments and amusements of life, in its excitements, struggles, anxieties, efforts, aims, and victories. Supposing a man to make money, to get on in life, to rise in society, to gain power, whether in a higher or lower sphere, this does not suffice; he wants a home, he wants a centre on which to place his thoughts and affections, a secret dwelling-place which may soothe him after the troubles of the world, and which may be his hidden stay and support wherever he goes, and dwell in his heart, though it be not named upon his tongue.

⁷⁷ *The History of Samuel Titmarsh in The Works of William Makepeace Thackeray* (London, 1898), XII, p. 59.

⁷⁸ LD, 14:232 JHN to Mrs Bowden (10 March 1851).

⁷⁹ Flanders, p. xxiii.