

IV

Closing Scenes of the Movement: Its Character and Effects.

The histories of real life, like the plots of the drama, are apt to increase in fervour of action and multiplicity of incident as they draw near the term of their appointed course: their fifth act is generally busier than all the preceding put together. Events come thickly and almost jostle one another—partly from the natural effect of contact, partly through the operation of some hidden law of sympathy which produces a coincidence of results without any apparent concatenation of causes or community of motives.

It was thus with the history which I am engaged in illustrating. In the autumn of 1844 symptoms of what is familiarly called a “break-up” began to manifest themselves; and from that period till the corresponding season of 1845 there occurred a succession of circumstances bearing on the movement, some of greater and some of less public interest, but all contributing more or less to indicate the designs of Divine Providence in this remarkable and, in some respects, unprecedented dispensation.

Yet was the process of development hardly less mysterious than the work itself whose meaning had thus to be cleared up. There was a simultaneous failing of hearts without any adequate pressure, or ostensible influence, or mutual comparison of personal impressions. There were tokens of decay and prognostics of dissolution in several quasi-religious communities which had been formed with the view of Catholicising the English Establishment and keeping unsettled members within its pale. These proofs of weakness within the camp were accompanied by signs of more than ordinary vigilance and determination on the part of adversaries. The policy of conciliation and forbearance seemed to have run its course, and the time for vigorous action to be at hand. The ecclesiastical and academical authorities were evidently pressed on every side to take some decisive step; and it is probably to the difficulties which they found in resisting this pressure, rather than to any well-grounded

convictions of their own, that we are to attribute the measures which they now began to adopt for the suppression of Tractarian opinions. At Oxford, especially, there were persons who hunted down the leading Tractarians with implacable fury and unwavering pertinacity. They acted the part of jackals to the nobler beasts of prey. They had their emissaries in the suspected colleges, and their eyes were intent upon every action and even gesture, from which the purposes of those whom they regarded as the enemies of religion could be collected or conjectured. There is the best reason for believing that the opposition to Tract 90 was fostered, if not set on foot, by one of these active subordinates; and the partial success of that effort was such as to encourage the repetition of similar attempts as the occasion for them arose.

It will readily be understood that the appearance of Mr. Ward's *Ideal of a Christian Church*, towards the end of the year 1844, would be a signal for renewed hostilities. Though actually published in London, its author was then resident at Oxford, so that the brunt of the battle had to be sustained in the university. Had not the academical mind been at the time in a state of morbid excitability, the very bulk of this volume would surely have pleaded for an arrest of judgment. It was no impetuous flyleaf, no slashing pamphlet, no piquant article in a suspected review, but an obese octavo, extending to six hundred closely printed pages, the writer of which must have found time to mitigate the ardour of the most infuriated spirit in the process of its composition, and the reader to work himself clear of the most inveterate prejudice in the course of its perusal. The great probability, however, is that comparatively few of the numbers who voted for its condemnation were at the pains to read it throughout; so that its size, instead of securing it a patient reception, operated simply to its disadvantage.

The impression of careful study and calm deliberation which the very form of this remarkable volume was fitted to create would have been abundantly confirmed by an acquaintance, however superficial, with its actual contents. The titles of its chapters alone ought to have been enough to prove that in its general scope, at all events, it was directed to no other object than the amelioration of the National Church and the sanctification of individual souls. But the fact was that the body-politic of Anglicanism had reached the historian's climax of confusion, in which it was intolerant even to the remedies for its evils, and manifested that last and most fatal sign of an impenitent spirit in which no enemy is so obnoxious as he who reminds the offender of his faults. He therefore who sought to disengage the Anglican communion from a share in the miserable work of the Reformation, to relieve it of many soul-destroying traditions, and to strengthen its position by seeking out points of association and awakening hopes of reunion with the Catholic Church, was accounted not as a devoted son or as a valuable ally, but as an alien and a traducer. Accordingly, certain passages of the *Ideal*, in which the author expressed with

characteristic intensity his opinions against the Reformation and in favour of the Catholic Church, were selected, with conspicuous unfairness, from among the vast amount of qualifying matter in which they were embedded, and exhibited in a string of startling theses to the distorted vision of Protestant critics. Two separate bills of indictment were prepared for the occasion—the one against the work, the other against the author: the one declaring the theses selected to be inconsistent with “honest” subscription to the Articles, the other that the author was unworthy of the degree of Master of Arts, to which he had been admitted in consequence of such subscription, and ought therefore to be deprived of it.¹

If the arraignment of Mr. Ward was the occasion of eliciting a more than usual amount of prejudice and unfairness, it was also, on the other hand, the means of drawing forth more than one proof of sympathy, which must have been as gratifying to Mr. Ward himself as they were honourable to the quarters from which they proceeded. Among these a prominent place must be given to the pamphlets of Mr. Keble² and of Dr. Moberly³—the latter then, as at present, head-master of Winchester School. These pamphlets, though differing considerably in the amount of agreement with Mr. Ward’s opinion which they severally expressed, must be estimated in their respective relations to the known religious sentiments of their authors, and in this light are eminently deserving of the description just given of them. Both contain the strongest expressions of personal respect for Mr. Ward’s character and for the honesty of his intentions; but Mr. Keble, especially, evinces no small degree of interest in the line of argument and of acquiescence in the general principles of the *Ideal*. This fact will cause no surprise to those who remember how strongly Mr. Keble has committed himself, in the preface to Mr. Froude’s *Remains*, to an estimate of the English Reformation and Reformers not very different from that taken by Mr. Ward himself, and how honourably he is distinguished from the High Churchmen of his time in the tone which he adopts towards Catholic doctrine in parts of the *Christian Year*. But however these two writers may vary from one another in their precise appreciation of Mr. Ward’s argument, they are entirely agreed in condemning the intended proceedings against him as in the highest degree unjust, and fraught with mischief to the cause of religion.

But when the minds of a large body of men are occupied by a prejudice so deep as that which prevailed at the time in the University of Oxford, and still more among the country clergy who were members of the academical convocation, and possessed, therefore, the right of voting upon both of the questions affecting Mr. Ward, a temperate argument (like that of the pamphlets to which I refer) has seldom any other effect than that of serving as a protest on the part of certain individuals against the acts of the majority. The suit, accordingly, was vigorously pressed in spite of such occasional remonstrances; and for one pamphlet or flyleaf which advocated Mr. Ward’s cause, there were at least a score which took part against him. It should

be mentioned that, with the view of consulting that intolerance of large books from which Mr. Ward had materially suffered, it is a practice at Oxford on occasion of public excitement to put forth single sheets on either side of an academical controversy, in which the reasons *pro* and *con* are summarised with that pithy sententiousness and telling effect so easy of command to practiced intellects. Between the announcement of the intention to proceed against Mr. Ward and the actual day of battle it is historically certain, though I cannot vouch for the fact upon any producible evidence, that the common-room tables of Oxford were daily strewn with such ephemeral sallies of academical ingenuity in the form of "A Few Words to Members of Convocation," "Ten Reasons against Mr. Ward," "The Arguments of the *Ideal* briefly Considered," "Queries on the Proposed Vote of Convocation," while, buried under the accumulated mass, there perhaps would be found "A Plea for Mr. Ward."

The day fixed for the great trial of strength was the 13th of February 1845; the place was the Sheldonian Theatre. For the sake of those who do not know Oxford, I may mention that the Sheldonian Theatre is not, as its name might seem to import, a place for dramatic representations: although, on the occasion in question, it presented a scene in which the features of tragedy and comedy were singularly united. It is a large semicircular hall, devoted, by ancient usage, to the most solemn and august purposes of academical state. It is here that the heads of the university assemble annually, in dignified consistory, to confer honorary degrees upon distinguished men of the day. It is here that, on the same occasion, the verse and prose compositions to which the university prizes have been adjudged are recited by their several authors. And although, by a custom more honoured perhaps in the breach than the observance, the junior members of the university, who fill the galleries of the theatre on these occasions, are permitted to give vent to their opinions on men and things in general with a freedom which borders on license, yet this accompaniment of the ceremonial is so evidently of the nature of a mere accident, entirely under the command of the authorities, that it has the effect rather of diversifying a solemnity of more than ordinary tediousness and dulness than of marring its attractiveness or compromising its dignity.

How different a scene from that of this annual festival did the theatre of Oxford present on that memorable 13th of February! Instead of an imposing semicircle of placid dignitaries in rich academical costume, there appeared a forbidding phalanx of time-worn faces, flushed with excitement or wrinkled with discontent. No beves of elegantly dressed visitors, the friends of happy undergraduates, gave to the graceful acclivities behind the resemblance of a bank of pinks and geraniums. Crowds of Masters of Arts did, indeed, occupy the area; but their faces also bore the unbecoming marks of sectarian bitterness or controversial anxiety, rather than the glow of festive joy and the augury of an approaching long vacation. Undergraduates, too, dotted rather than choked the galleries; but the looks of the

dignitaries and the strangeness of the occasion acted as a check on their wonted enthusiasm, though it manifestly inclined towards the side of the party arraigned. The weather was raw, the building was cold, and the whole appearance of the affair in the highest degree ungenial. But of all the innovations upon a time-honoured tradition, the most extraordinary was that which met the eye in the rostrum, or pulpit, which projects from the side of the building. From this, and from the desk opposite, there had been wont from time immemorial to proceed orations of the most measured character and the most unimpeachable orthodoxy; an annual commemoration in Latin of "founders and benefactors," from which no man living ever gained any definite idea of their peculiar merits; poems in Latin and English, classical, elegant, and melodious, but eminently uncontroversial; and essays, the general purport of which was to say in the most unexceptionable language that which upon a subject of the least possible public interest had the least tendency to excite difference of opinion. But now, on the contrary, the same spot was occupied by the champion of a most unpopular cause, unused to flatter and unskilled in compromise, who, in the presence of his judges and of his jury, and before a tribunal which comprised a large proportion of the prejudice as well as of the intelligence of Protestant England, was to defend himself from the charge of disloyalty to the Church Established, not by denying but by maintaining the positions which formed the grounds of that charge. As a special privilege, granted by the authorities in what they must afterwards have regarded as an evil hour, Mr. Ward pronounced his defence in the vernacular. The greater part of it he delivered in a speech without book. There was, of course, no reply. The votes of the Convocation were taken, first upon the question of condemning the book, and then upon that of the author's degradation. The book was condemned by a large majority; the sentence of degradation was passed by a considerably smaller one. A third proposal, for extending the condemnation of Mr. Ward's claim to the argument of Tract 90, was defeated by the veto of the two proctors. Many a downcast look and many a despairing word denoted the impression which the day's work had produced upon the friends of the Tractarian Movement, even those of them who by no means sympathised to the full extent with Mr. Ward's opinions. Much as they might regret that the crisis had been provoked, they could not but feel its gravity and anticipate its inevitable consequences. They beheld in it the beginning of a new era in the history of the Established Church, and one which they rightly regarded as most disastrous to her supposed interests.

It is time for us to return to Mr. Newman, who had long since withdrawn from the university. One of his last ministerial acts, in his office as Vicar of St. Mary's, was to preach a course of Advent Sermons, in which, waiving for the moment the claim of Divine authority on behalf of the Anglican Church, he grounded the duty of adherence to its communion principally upon the note of personal experiences.

Taking as the text of his discourses the words, "The kingdom of God is within you," he appealed to those impressions of the truth of the Anglican system which might be derived from special warnings or consolations of which it had been the medium to individual minds and consciences. But I have now arrived at that point in my history at which the reader must be introduced to the last scene of Mr. Newman's exile, and one which, as he passed immediately from it to his home in the Church of God, must ever possess a peculiar interest in the eyes of Catholics.

About two miles from Oxford, a little off the London Road, is situated the Hamlet of Littlemore, then an ecclesiastical dependency of the Vicarage of St. Mary the Virgin, and consequently a part of Mr. Newman's spiritual charge as incumbent of that church. Thither he had been in the habit of retiring from the bustle and excitement of the University, more particularly since he had become, so much against his will, the object of its notice and the topic of its conversation. For several years, I believe, he had spent in its grateful seclusion the penitential seasons of the Church, and probably had long looked to it as one day to be the scene of a still more complete retirement and a still more ascetical mode of life. Rumour soon became busy as to the probability of his carrying some such plan into effect: and the dons, who at this time were more than usually apt to take their afternoon stroll in the direction of Littlemore, remarked, in significant phrase, that what used to be a mere cluster of cottages was assuming, under the hands of carpenters and masons, a somewhat monastic appearance. It was not long before these suspicions were fully confirmed. Mr. Newman's visits to Littlemore became less frequent only because they were more continuous; and somewhere, I think, about the end of the year 1842 he took up his abode, with several young men who had attached themselves to his person and to his fortunes, in the building which was not long in vindicating to itself the name of the Littlemore Monastery. Up to the summer of 1843 Mr. Newman continued to officiate in the church which had been erected in the forementioned village under his skillful eye. But, somewhere about that period, as well as I can remember, he took his final leave of the Protestant pulpit in a sermon⁴ of singular beauty and memorable interest to all his friends, who wept audibly, as they felt only too convinced that the voice so familiar to them was about to be hushed. From that period Mr. Newman took no prominent part in the church services, although, till within a few days of his conversion, he and his little band of faithful friends were constant attendants upon them. These friends, with the exception of one who had the start of the rest in reaching the goal of their common destiny, remained in the Establishment till about the time when Mr. Newman left it, and entered the Catholic Church simultaneously with him. It is needless to add, because the fact is generally known, that the life at Littlemore was founded upon the rule of the strictest religious orders. Over and above Mr. Newman's object in choosing for himself and his companions so austere a mode of preparing for any change which might await them, he may perhaps have

intended to try a kind of crucial experiment upon the powers of the system of which he was resolved to hope even against hope. "If" (we may fancy him saying) "our lot be still cast in a portion of the True Church, the fact will best be proved by our finding ourselves able to live securely the life which from the earliest ages has been distinctive of that Church; whereas if God have any other will in our regard, it is by a life like this that we shall most certainly learn His purpose, and may most confidently depend upon His illuminating grace."

It may possibly have been with somewhat of the same intention that Mr. Newman authorised, about the same time, the publication of a series of biographies of English saints, though he did not take any personal part in the work, or make himself responsible for the opinions of individual writers. I well recollect the disappointment he expressed when the final experiment proved a failure, and the *Lives of the English Saints* had to be dropped in deference to the threatened opposition of authority long before their subject had been exhausted.

I have now once more brought up my history to the year 1845, in the summer of which a blow was struck at Margaret Chapel, and its disorganisation added to the other events by which the progress of Tractarianism was discouraged. The minister, who had for some time committed himself to Mr. Ward's view of subscription to the Articles, and who felt that in the recent vote of the Oxford Convocation a wound had been inflicted upon himself which rendered his position extremely difficult in conscience, resolved upon bringing matters to an issue by drawing attention to his own published statements, and offering to abide by the consequences.⁵ His challenge was taken up, not where he had given it, at Oxford, but where he did not think it would be noticed, in London. Had he left matters to rest as they were, no prosecution could probably have been sustained against him, because the words complained of were published out of the limits of the London diocese. But his good angel prompted him to write a defence of his challenge, and to publish it in London, which at once gave his vigilant diocesan a handle against him. A suit was accordingly instituted, on behalf of the bishop, in the Court of Arches. Fearful of being a party to the profane discussion of doctrines which he had already begun to regard with somewhat of Catholic reverence, and weary of a strife which he looked upon as unbecoming in itself and hopeless in its result, he voluntarily tendered the resignation of his license. The bishop, however, was not to be propitiated, and refused to accept his resignation. The suit was actively followed up, and, as the defendant absolutely declined to put in any plea on his own behalf, judgment went by default. The judge, however, unwilling to lose so good an opportunity of entering the protest of the highest ecclesiastical court against what were called "Romanising opinions," pronounced a condemnation of Catholic doctrines *seriatim*. The court gave sentence to the effect that the minister should be perpetually suspended, except in the event of his retracting the alleged errors in terms satisfactory to the bishop.⁶ It is a

very significant fact that, while an interpretation of the Anglican formularies on the Catholic side was punished by perpetual inhibition from clerical duty, the construction of them which favours the doctrines of *Essays and Reviews* has been recently visited by a far milder penalty—that of suspension for a single year. In the latter case, too, the sentence does not give any opportunity for withdrawing the obnoxious doctrines; and the reason assigned is curious. It is founded on the relative positions of the two defendants, the unbeneficed minister being supposed to be without those inducements to hypocritical retraction by which the wealthy rector is thought likely to be influenced.⁷ The conclusion is inevitable. A clergyman who publicly denies the truth of parts of the Scripture history, the miraculous character of the Christian dispensation, and the eternity of future punishments, is allowed to resume his ministry, without retraction, after a twelvemonth; while one who claims to “hold, but not to teach,” Roman doctrine is perpetually suspended. I am far from quarreling with either decision, least of all with the anti-Roman one; but the contrast is alarmingly significant of the real character of the Anglican Church.⁸

Mr. Newman’s conversion, though incomparably the most momentous, was not the first in point of time of those by which the year 1845 was signalised. Mr. Ward preceded him by several weeks—Mr. Grant, Mr. Tickell, and Mr. Bridges (all now Fathers of the Society of Jesus) by a considerably longer interval. Till the very day of Mr. Newman’s reception into the Church, hopes were entertained by his Anglican friends that he might still repent of his intention, nor was the fact of his conversion believed even after it had occurred. This was owing in part to the obscurity which hung over it, and of which the circumstances attending it will furnish a sufficient explanation.

It was a memorable day that 9th of October 1845. The rain came down in torrents, bringing with it the first heavy instalment of autumn’s “sere and yellow” leaves. The wind, like a spent giant, howled forth the expiring notes of its equinoctial fury. The superstitious might have said that the very elements were on the side of Anglicanism—so copiously did they weep, so piteously bemoan, the approaching departure of its great representative. The bell which swung visibly in the turret of the little gothic church at Littlemore gave that day the usual notice of morning and afternoon prayers; but it came to the ear in that buoyant bouncing tone which is usual in a high wind, and sounded like a knell rather than a summons. The “monastery” was more than usually sombre and still. Egress and ingress there were none that day; for it had been given out, among friends accustomed to visit there, that Mr. Newman “wished to remain quiet.” One of these friends, who resided in the neighbourhood, had been used to attend the evening office in the oratory of the house, but he was forbidden to come “for two or three days, for reasons which would be explained later.” The 9th of the month passed off without producing any satisfaction to the general curiosity. All that transpired was that a remarkable-looking man, evidently

a foreigner, and shabbily dressed in black, had asked his way to Mr. Newman's on the day but one before; and the rumour was that he was a Catholic priest. In the course of a day or two the friend before mentioned was readmitted to the evening office, and found that a change had come over it. The Latin was pronounced for the first time in the Roman way, and the antiphons of Our Lady, which up to that day had been always omitted, came out in their proper place. The friend in question would have asked the reason of these changes, but it was forbidden to speak to any of the community after night-prayers. Very soon the mystery was cleared up by Mr. Newman and his companions appearing at mass in the public chapel at Oxford. He had been received into the Church on the 9th by Father Dominic, of the Congregation of the Passion. Thus noiselessly and unobtrusively did the event come to pass which, whether we consider its importance as an insulated fact or its undoubted influence upon the succeeding conversions, must be pronounced to have been, if not the providential end of the Tractarian Movement, at any rate the symbol and measure of its true significance. Three weeks after Mr. Newman's conversion he and his companions, with another clergyman who had been received into the Church in the interval, were kneeling before the altar of St. Mary's, Oscott, to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost in the Sacrament of Confirmation. This was on the Feast of All Saints, Saturday, November 1st, 1845. The Sacrament was administered by the Right Rev. Dr. Wiseman, who had long watched the movement at Oxford with the deepest interest, and saw in the event of that day, the fulfilment of many anxious hopes and fervent prayers.

Having now brought this historical sketch to its natural termination, all that remains is to give a brief analysis of the character of the religious movement which I have undertaken to describe, and a summary of its principal effects. For a reason which will afterwards appear, it will be convenient to give the precedence to the last of these subjects of inquiry. What then have been the effects of Tractarianism?—and, first, upon the religious system out of which it sprang?

This inquiry is more or less difficult. Some may think it to be even presumptuous in the hands of a Catholic, who must necessarily take his point of view from an external position, and who will be considered a partial if not a prejudiced witness in the cause. Yet, on the other hand, there are certain public facts bearing upon the argument, which it requires no ingenuity to interpret, and involves no departure from my proper province to criticise. These facts lead to the conclusion that, whatever the Established Church may have gained by the Tractarian Movement in freedom of action, it has lost that which no gain can compensate where the claim of a Church is the matter in dispute—sensitiveness to doctrinal truth. I do not speak merely of those legal decisions whereby, first, the Sacrament of Baptism and, eventually, the Inspiration of Holy Scripture and the Eternity of Future Punishments are pronounced to be questions upon which Christians are at liberty to differ, but of

other phenomena of the Established Church tending, if possible, even more significantly in the same direction of latitudinarian indifference. Where is now the zeal in behalf of dogmatic theology in which such works as Mr. Newman's "St. Athanasius" had their origin? Where are those who were once the leaders of protests against the latitudinarianism of the Church and the Erastianism of the State? Their voice, it would seem, is all but hushed, while Rationalism is vigorous and Infidelity on its march. Quiescence appears to be the order of the day in what a quarter of a century ago was the great party of action; and anti-Christian opinions are taking advantage of the supineness which is fostered by the dread of conversions to that Church which is, and has ever been, the only consistent witness to dogmatic truth.⁹ So long as there be any grounds for these apprehensions, the spirit of Tractarianism has vanished, and its object in aiming at the elevation of the National Church as a teacher has been entirely and conspicuously defeated. Nor is it of any avail to answer that Anglican clergymen can do with impunity what years ago was found to be impracticable—that they can burn candles by daylight, wear chasubles, start confraternities, order processions, and the like. For surely such practices, where they do not express a generally received doctrine, or harmonise naturally with the system in which they are found, are more likely to bring disrespect upon religion than to serve its best interests. They are parts of a great whole, and when torn from their place in it, become at best but the tokens of eccentricity, and very probably also the occasions of a serious delusion.

One feature there is of actual Anglicanism which deserves a more respectful treatment at the hands of a Catholic: I mean the quasi-religious sisterhoods which have been undoubtedly multiplied during the last few years, and which appear to have assumed the rank of something like an institution of the National Establishment.¹⁰ Rumours reach us, apparently on good authority, concerning these communities, which, if true, would seem to betoken a very insufficient notion of the obligations of the Religious State. But I have no predisposition to believe anything but what is good of such establishments. The more highly, however, we rate them—the more fully we are satisfied that they imply the true spirit of sacrifice and self-denial, the more surely may we reckon upon their fulfilling their destination as training-schools for the Catholic Church. So far, therefore, as they are fruits of the Tractarian Movement, they bear out the view which has here been taken of its appointed end.

On the other hand, it is certain that the conversions to the Church which have directly followed upon the movement have served to bring out a portion of the mass left behind in an unsatisfactory point of view. Few, comparatively, of those partisans of the movement who have not become Catholics have continued altogether upon their ancient level. Those who have not advanced have receded: and it is sad to think that more than one who took a part in the more extreme developments of the work

has since been conspicuous on the rationalistic side of more recent controversies. Others who once almost touched the threshold of the Church have since settled down in contented or, at any rate, acquiescent Protestantism.¹¹

The demeanour, again, adopted towards converts by those who have not seen it right to follow them has been often unamiable, ungenerous, and inconsistent with former professions. I do not deny that there have been cases in which this behaviour has been provoked by the bearing of converts themselves, who, to a cordial detestation of the heresy they have renounced, are surely bound to add a large amount of forbearance and sympathy towards those with whom they were so recently associated in their errors. But the pages of the *Christian Remembrancer* and the columns of the *Guardian* have often betrayed tokens of signal unfairness towards those among the converts who have been even distinguished for their generosity and tenderness in their judgment of their former co-religionists.¹²

The separation which actually, and to a great extent necessarily, exists between the Catholic converts and their former friends renders it extremely difficult for either party to know exactly what is passing in the minds of each with respect to one another: and this thought should induce forbearance on the other side as well as on our own. For my part, I deeply regret that the language even of apparent unkindness should ever have been used on our own side in speaking of those with whom we were once connected, and with whose difficulties we ought to sympathise from experience. Still I think that the language of converts has often been subjected to unfair and unkindly criticism; that much has been set to the account of harshness or contempt, which has been really consistent with the highest kind of charity, or rather the result of it, though expressed, it may be, in a way liable to misunderstanding. On the other hand, it is well for some of our former friends to know that we also, on our side, feel a too frequent absence of the sympathy to which we consider that their intimate knowledge of us gives us some right in point of feeling, and our essential community in many religious aims even a claim in principle. Instead of a disposition to appreciate the sacrifices which many converts have made, at any rate in the cause of conscience if they will not admit it to be the cause of truth, we have often met with an inclination to attribute to some unworthy motive—such as personal pique, intellectual conceit, love of religious externals, and the like—an act which has, at any rate, stood the test of time, and ought, as that time has proceeded, to have cleared itself, in the judgment of equity, from the suspicion of shallowness and inconsiderateness. We are also surprised that they who are avowedly occupied in disengaging their religious communion from the stain of heresy and the imminent danger of infidelity should often exhibit more sympathy with those whom, upon their own principles, they are bound to consider in deadly error than with the members of that Church which is now, and in every age has been, the sole authoritative and consistent witness to those great truths in whose ascendancy they profess so laudable an interest.

The effect of the Tractarian Movement upon the Catholic Church is a subject upon which we can speak with much greater confidence and certainty. Its merely numerical additions to the ranks of our little army are by no means inconsiderable, and far outstrip the calculations of our Protestant fellow-countrymen. They have been measured, very naturally, by the names of those more distinguished converts who happen to have figured in the public journals and otherwise. But these records take no account of the multitudes of the middle and poorer classes who are flowing into the Church in an uninterrupted stream. In London alone, if we are to judge by the statistics of our churches and chapels, the number of converts must annually amount to several hundreds; and to this number we have to add the converts made, in due proportion, in the large provincial towns.¹³ Doubtless there are drawbacks upon this computation: occasional relapses among converts, and losses, especially in the younger part of our population, through the effects of a proselytism as unscrupulous in its means as it is indefatigable in its exertions. Yet the fact remains, with whatever deductions, that during the last twenty years several hundreds of the Established clergy (many of them learned and highly educated) and many more thousands of the laity have entered the fold of the Church—a number far greater than that of all the converts united whom the Church gained in the century and a half preceding.

But it is not by the mere numerical addition to our ranks that the real weight of these conversions is to be estimated. Each single convert, and eminently each clerical convert, represents an accession of influence to the Church greatly beyond the fact of his individual adhesion. Over and above the souls which he brings directly along with him, there is the weight of his example, the testimony of his consistency, and in many cases, as we may hope, the illustration which his conduct gives to the principles which he has embraced, often at much sacrifice, with the consequent diminution of prejudice and removal of misunderstanding in quarters to which the Church had before no access. It is to this cause among others that we are to attribute the manifest impression which Catholicity has produced upon the public mind during the last few years, as intimated no less by the hostility than by the sympathy of the Press. Even in England the Church is too great, too powerful, too mysterious to be any longer ignored. A barrier, as I have found occasion in a former part of this sketch to observe, was heretofore placed between English Catholics and their fellow-countrymen, which, by cutting off all communication, helped to augment the natural opposition which must ever subsist between heresy and truth. This opposition is so strong as to require no addition from personal misconceptions. Now the converts have acted as a link of union between the two extremes, which without, it is to be hoped, a compromise of essential and vital truth, has subserved the interests of peace by aiding those of charity and justice.

These conversions, once more, have acted as a new evidence of the Divine character of the Church. A writer in the *Dublin Review*, as far back as the year 1846, ventured to anticipate that such would be one of their manifold effects, and so it has proved. It may safely be said that no religious body of merely human origin could have sustained, as the Church has done, this remarkable crisis. With some exceptions, of which it is not necessary to investigate the causes, the converts, as a body, have settled down into the Church with a facility, a quietness, a completeness which, if it be some proof on their side of a spirit of obedience and accommodation which the graces of the Church could alone have guaranteed, is no less a proof on hers of an elasticity and expansiveness which are singularly *not* the attributes of human, especially of human religious societies. Here are some thousands of persons of indefinitely various antecedents—many of them men of great experience and of cultivated intellect—taken up, as it were, at once into solution by the Church, as easily and as naturally as if they had been in some sort her own, the sharers of a congenial element, the natives of an homogeneous soil. Why there is no religious body in the world, I will make bold to assert, but that whose capacities of good are indefinite and whose powers of adjustments are inexhaustible, which would not have split up into ten thousand fragments upon the introduction of an agent so powerful and so explosive.

A brief examination, in the last place, of the character of the movement itself will tend still further to exhibit it in the light of a marvelous attestation to the Divine authority of Catholic truth, and in some respects an attestation of a new and original character. Never was there a religious work which bore more evidently on its surface the marks of conscientiousness, disinterestedness, and unworldliness. Those in whose conversion it has resulted, speaking generally, had nothing which is of this world to gain, but everything to lose, by becoming Catholics. Their sympathies, prepossessions, interests, prospects—the fond memories of early years, the anxious anticipations of years to come—all were enlisted on the side of the religious system in which they had been reared. Every step which they took in their progress towards their present convictions was thwarted by natural impediments and haunted by dispiriting visions. If young, the longer was the train of bright hopes and attractive prospects which they must quit; if of mature age, the deeper were the roots which they had struck into their ancient soil, the greater the difficulty of becoming acclimated to their new country. Hardly one of them was so wholly isolated as to act independently of such embarrassing trammels or such fascinating attractions, while most of them found themselves actually entangled in meshes successively woven at an earlier period of their lives, when nothing was less present to their thoughts than the probability of grave religious difficulties intervening to complicate and damage such associations.

The Tractarian Movement, whether as regards those it has propelled forward, or those it has left behind, was, on the whole, a serious, painstaking, deliberate, and eminently religious work, undertaken with entire singleness of aim, and conducted with a remarkable absence of passion and prejudice. The spirit of Mr. Newman, its great chieftain, was diffused more or less through its whole range; and no one who associated with him during its progress can ever forget the cautious wisdom with which he proceeded in every step: repressing indiscreet zeal, sustaining the weak-minded, steadying the irresolute, softening the over-severe, and ever interposing the sage counsel and the charitable construction in aid of the erring judgment or in arrest of the hasty censure.

Once more—the movement took its rise from the very centre of intelligence and education, and has thus helped to set for ever at rest the theory of an essential opposition between Catholic truth and processes of intellectual inquiry conducted in the spirit of Christian simplicity and reliance on Divine aid. Here were men, who had everything which this world holds valuable to keep them within their original boundaries, entering upon a course of theological study with no other object than that of confirming themselves in their actual belief; yet in no long time we find them impelled by it, in spite of themselves, in an unlooked-for direction. What is remarkable of all is that this effect is produced not by the study of especially Roman divines but of the earlier Fathers, whose writings were read by Dr. Newman, as he somewhere tells us, over and over again, and each time with an ever-increasing bias towards the same point. Other courses of study, meanwhile, followed up by other persons according to the bent of their tastes or the requirements of their particular occupation, converged by different paths to the same centre.

This brings me, in conclusion, to the last note of the Tractarian Movement of which I am to speak in connection with the result in which that movement has issued; I mean its essentially independent and external character as a witness to Catholic truth. I do not forget the impulse for good which it received from within the Catholic Church through the unwavering interests and learned efforts of one eminent person. For this advantage, indeed, I have made allowance in a former Paper; but this aid was certainly no less exceptional that it was valuable. It is no discredit to the generality of Catholics both at home and abroad, though it is all the more to the honour of the individual in question, that, as a general rule, the movement was very long before it excited any sufficient interest among them, and even when at length it did excite that interest was but partially understood and imperfectly appreciated. Moreover, the remarkable fact is, not that it should have attracted the attention of one and been furthered by his aid, but that it should have proceeded as far as it had when it first received that notice by the mere force of an intrinsic and self-acting power, and have attained, at any rate, a capacity of being affected with such marvelous results by that external agency. I am not aware, though I speak under correction, that there is any

precedent in the history of the Church for so mighty an effect being produced upon her state and destiny, in a purely spiritual point of view, by influences which in their origin, early history, and general character were so extrinsic to her system and so independent of her teaching. I am here speaking of the movement antecedently to Mr. Newman's conversion, for since that time the case has been far otherwise. Many of those who have more recently come over to us have owed their convictions, under God, to the direct influence of Catholic teaching far oftener sought out by them than pressed upon them. But up to the year 1845, which was a critical epoch in the history of Tractarianism, it was not so. Mr. Newman, as I have heard, had only the barest acquaintance with one or two Catholic priests, and was supposed rather to avoid than to court their society. I ought however to say, once for all, that whenever in these Papers I have ventured to speak of Mr. Newman—or of others who were connected with this movement, but in departments of it which were more or less foreign to my own—I have done so by an historical license only, according to the best means of information at my command, but under correction of those with whose names I have taken this liberty. With regard, however, to myself (so far as what relates to me individually can have any claim to public interest), as well as to others of whom I can speak with the same confidence as of myself, I can state positively that many of us had no personal knowledge of any Catholic priest till within a short time of our conversion; that I myself was never in a Catholic church in these islands but once, when I made a speedy retreat out of it under a panic of conscience; and that I was, moreover, all but entirely ignorant of the structure and ceremonies of the Mass before I became a Catholic, as was almost ludicrously evidenced when I did so.

On the whole, the more accurately we examine the character of this great movement in connection with its results, both actual and probable, the more we are thrown back from the uncertainty of our own conjectures upon the mystery of the Divine operations. *A Domino factum est istud, et est mirabile in oculis nostris.*¹⁴ Twice before in these latter centuries has the Catholic Church seemed in the way to regain her hold upon the English nation—in the reign of the First Mary and that of the Second James. But the cup of promise was dashed away from her lips before it had neared them, and the hope which for the moment had been awakened had its reaction in periods of a still deeper depression. May it have been that her Lord reserved for her some better destiny; that He would have the work of restoration to begin not from above but from below—its instruments to be not the princes and nobles of this world but the missionaries of the poor; that He would lay its foundations deep in the spirit of obedience, conscientiousness, and self-sacrifice, instead of suffering it to be hurried into a premature and evanescent luxuriance, under the baneful action of influences which might have accelerated its growth without insuring its stability?

Notes

1. V. Ch. 2, n. 18. *Ed.*
2. *Heads of Consideration on the Case of Mr. Ward*. Oxford: 1845.
3. *The Proposed Degradation and Declaration considered in a Letter to the Rev. the Master of Balliol College, Oxford*. 1845.
4. Included in the *Sermons on the Subjects of the Day*.
5. I was much, and in part rightly, blamed for this act, but it was not, as it might have appeared, an attempt to extricate myself from my position in the Established Church, in which I was never really unsettled till the Bishop of London entered the suit against me in the Arches' Court. Shortly before Mr. Ward's condemnation, I had published my difficulties about joining Rome in the *English Churchman*. The object I had in view in drawing the attention of the University to my own case was, to reopen the question of the incompatibility of an academical degree with opinions held in common by Mr. Ward and myself, in the hope of practically reversing a sentence passed, as I believed, under excitement. I had the cause, not myself, in view; but the act was precipitate and impulsive, nor can I wonder, or complain, that it was misunderstood.
6. Oakeley "claimed the right to *hold*, as distinct from *teaching*, all the peculiar doctrines of the Church of Rome, while remaining a clergyman of the Church of England. Bishop Blomfield felt it his duty not to pass over this extraordinary claim. He might have summarily revoked the license of Mr. Oakeley; but he thought it better, with the advice of his archdeacons, to give him the same benefits which he would have enjoyed as an incumbent. Accordingly, he instituted a prosecution in the Court of Arches, and Mr. Oakeley was condemned by the judgment of Sir Herbert Jenner Fust" (Alfred Blomfield, ed. *A Memoir of Charles James Blomfield, D.D., Bishop of London*, 2 vols. [London: John Murray, 1863], 2: 72-3). The sentence that deprived Oakeley of his ministerial duties was passed on 30 June 1845. *Ed.*
7. "There was a distinction to be drawn between the case of Mr. Oakeley, referred to by the Queen's Advocate, and the present one. In the former case the defendant (who professed to hold all Roman doctrine) held only a curacy; the sentence was that his license was to be suspended until he had retracted the erroneous doctrines he had avowed. That was the only case he was aware of where such a punishment had been inflicted. His lordship thought it would be wrong to suspend the defendant until he had retracted, *as that judgment might cause a retraction which did not come from the heart.*"—Judgment of Dr. Lushington. See *Times* of Dec. 16, 1862.

8. Since the above was written the contrast between the two results has been made infinitely stronger by the reversal of the sentence of the Arches' Court, on appeal to the Privy Council.

9. This was written more than a year ago. Since that time I have seen with real pleasure that Dr. Pusey and Mr. Keble are at length heading a movement in the right direction, and they have my cordial wishes for its success. They are doing good Catholic work in trying to stem the tide of rationalism and infidelity, whencesoever and wheresoever flowing. Meanwhile, Dr. Pusey more especially is entitled to the thanks of all Catholics for the eminent services he is rendering to the cause of Biblical literature.

10. The Community of St. Mary the Virgin at Wantage was founded in 1855 by the Rev. A. D. Wagner, "and both he and the Sisters incurred considerable obloquy in those prejudiced days." Rev. Dr. John Mason Neale founded the Community of St. Margaret at East Grinstead in 1856. Rev. George Herbert founded the Mission Sisters of the Holy Name in South London in 1865 (Marcus Donovan, *After the Tractarians* [Oxford: Philip Allan, 1933], 31-2, 43). *Ed.*

11. Anglicans who have remained such are apt to observe, as a set-off against these unquestionable facts, that some of their body who have become Catholics have, as they are pleased to say, "deteriorated." If so it be, I am heartily grieved for the result, and am quite sure that the Church, at any rate, is not responsible for it. But, again, where those who have been clergymen before have taken to professions incongruous with their former one, may not this prove that they had "mistaken their vocation" before, rather than that they are acting inconsistently with it now? And what more probable, considering the absence of any sufficient preparation for the ecclesiastical calling in the Established Church, and of any clear line of separation between it and the world? Another explanation of the difference sometimes observed in the same converts before and after conversion, is that the peace of mind and freedom from official responsibility which follow upon conversion are apt to produce a certain joyousness or, as it would be called, "jauntiness" of manner very likely to be mistaken for levity or heartlessness.

12. A prominent instance of this unfairness occurs in the conduct of the *Christian Remembrancer* towards Mr. Ward, and is noticed by that gentleman in "Three Letters to the Editor of the *Guardian*," published in 1852. The *Christian Remembrancer* had stated that Dr. Newman's account of "the origin of the existing dogmatic theology" is "substantially identical" with that of Mr. Ierson, who considers our Lord to have been a "mere preacher of natural religion." Mr. Ward proved, by an extract from the work of Dr. Newman thus referred to, that his statement, so far from being "identical" with that of Mr. Ierson, was in direct opposition to it. Mr. Ward drew the attention of the editor of the *Christian Remembrancer* once and again to the unfounded nature of his imputation upon Dr.

Newman in the full belief that upon the universally acknowledged principles of literary justice, to say nothing of generosity, he would have retracted his assertion. Will it be believed that from that hour to this no notice whatever, either private or public, has been taken of Mr. Ward's communication?

13. The register of my own church exhibits a regular influx of once convert a fortnight for the last four years. These converts are exclusively from the middle and poorer classes. In churches at the west-end of London the average is higher.

14. *A Domino factum est istud hoc est mirabile in oculis nostris*: "This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes" (Psa. 117.23). *Ed.*