

John Henry Newman's University Concept and Religious Education

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ABSTRACT:- The purpose of this study is to discuss John Henry Newman's (1801-1890) views on religious education and how they connect to his concept of university. He advocated integrating faith and reason in higher education. Newman's seminal work, *"The Idea of a University,"* described a holistic institution that nurtures students' intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth. Newman opposed the idea of a university as a vocational training centre and advocated for an education that develops wisdom, character, and virtue. Newman's university notion is based on the idea that religious faith and reason are complementary sources of knowledge. He believed a true university should balance faith and reason, enabling students to think critically and explore their religious beliefs. Newman thought that religious education should permeate all fields of knowledge and shape students' moral and intellectual development. Newman believed a liberal education was essential to developing the whole person. He believed that a broad-based education in multiple subjects could help students develop critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, and a well-rounded worldview. Newman believed that religious education should be integrated into liberal education to help students grapple with final meaning, purpose, and morality. John Henry Newman's university concept and approach to religious education stress the integration of faith and reason, a comprehensive liberal education, and community. His ideas inspire modern educational institutions and educators to create holistic learning settings encouraging thoughtful engagement with faith, reason, and the world.

Keywords: John Henry Newman, The Idea of a University, Religious Education, Liberal Education,

I. INTRODUCTION

On October 1st 1851, John Henry Newman landed in Ireland for the first time. He was officially named *"President of the Catholic University of Ireland"* by the Committee for the University, which was formed specifically for this reason, on November 12th. Newman was drawn to the project because of its religious nature, Pope Pius IX's approval, and the possibility of bringing Oxford's prestigious *Alma Mater* to Ireland. However, he would have to wait three years for classes to commence. On May 12th, 1852, he gave his first sermon in Ireland at the behest of Archbishop Paul Cullen (1803-1878).

Two key arguments support Cullen's appeal to Newman. After his Lectures on Anglican Difficulties (1850), in which he affirmed the Church's independence from the State and pointed the way to Catholicism, Newman struck him as a potent and controversialist figure. Cullen anticipated that Newman's persuasiveness would aid him in promoting the idea that Catholic Irishmen should pursue a wholly Catholic education. Second, Cullen foresaw that Newman's human and intellectual impact would give the University a distinctive character that could endure the vicissitudes of time (Colin 69). Newman had a thorough grasp of the historical and cultural origins of colleges, university life, and the tutorial system at Oxford (Fergal 115).

Newman accepted Cullen's offer while remembering his time as an Anglican student at Oxford, where he fought against religious Liberalism, Latitudinarianism, and Indifferentism—three of the greatest threats the Church of England faced in the "new era" more so than the Church of Rome. The "form of incredulity" of his time, based on the rationalism of the Enlightenment, sought to liberate man from superstition and dogma while fostering freedom of thought and progress; this was what Newman meant by "Liberalism," not the theory and form of State that the British political institutions were then assuming and consolidating. "In all things, we must go by reason, in nothing by faith [...] faith is a mistake in two ways," was one of the central tenets of this new philosophical perspective. First, it replaces reason, and second, it is dogmatically absolute in its adherence to ideology. (John Henry 123-124).

In a lengthy preface to the second edition of *Apologia pro vita sua* (1865), Newman criticizes Liberal claims that conscience should be given the authority to teach and preach “what is false and wrong in matters, religious, social, and moral.”

According to him, the attribution of human morality and happiness to the “arts of life” is also a product of Liberalism (John Henry 260-261). When it comes to matters of faith and morals, Newman claims the liberal reason is “usurping” its power and acting inappropriately. Because of this, man is elevated to the status of a deity, and his will assumes an absolute position apart from the will, guidance, or power of anything else. The accumulation of wealth becomes the only thing that matters, the yardstick by which everything is judged, the purpose of life itself, and the final destination for all its material products; the only principles that can inform law are those of efficiency and utility; the only form of knowledge is the cultivation and enjoyment of this existence. Liberals believe the world is ruled by marketable skills like those needed in business and technology. However, faith, which does not acknowledge them, is private. It does not matter if you are Catholic or Anglican; if you do not want to change the world, you can be whatever you want. Human nature has developed along a secular trajectory as science has advanced, but religion distorts and makes human nature unfit, displacing it with another form of nature. After Newman was elevated to Cardinal in 1879, he penned, “Liberalism in religion is the doctrine that there is no positive truth, but that one creed is as good as another [...]” As revealed, religion is neither a reality nor a miracle; instead, it is a feeling and a flavour (Wilfrid 460).

Newman is aware of the trends developing in higher education in his nation for the past several decades. Henry Peter Brougham (1778-1868), a Utilitarian and one of Liberalism’s patriots, helped found London University on a North American model in 1827. The university was open to students of all faiths, did not require students to live on campus, and did not have mandatory tutorials. It ignored the theological education that Newman considered the bedrock of all else in favour of elevating the importance of knowledge transmission over mental cultivation. London University’s decision to stop providing religious instruction ushered in a period of “godless institutions,” Only secular knowledge was taught, and students were expected to figure out their spiritual lives. Recognizing the “Act of Supremacy” (1534), subscribing to the “Thirty-Nine Articles,” and using the “Book of Common Prayer” were all mandated by the Statutes of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and understanding the revolutionary implications of that new academic institution requires recalling those documents. This suggested that the universities were founded on a religious, Anglican tenet and were under the full control of the Church of England. Thus, the absence of religion and theology from London University was catastrophic for English higher education and society (Michele 83-87).

The conflicts between the Anglican minority and the Catholic bulk of the nation exacerbated the status of higher education in Ireland. It is important to note that between 1770 and 1850, the number of Catholics in England multiplied tenfold.

Two competing ideologies, one looking to London and the other to Irish Catholicism, clashed in the middle of the nineteenth century over the shape of the academic experience in Ireland. The first was the “godless colleges” also known as the “Queen’s Colleges” of Galway, Cork, and Belfast, founded in 1845 by the British Parliament. From a religious perspective, they were agnostic and welcoming of students of all faiths because they had done away with confessional symbols, evidence of religious affiliation, and the teaching of religious matters. As a counterpoint to this explicitly secular decision, Ireland’s only preexisting university, the “Holy and Undivided Trinity College” in Dublin, was founded by Queen Elizabeth I and incorporated the older *Studium generale* of St. Patrick’s Cathedral. (founded in 1312). This Anglican school cared about more than just academics; it also worked to instil moral and religious values in its students and discouraged Irish citizens from attending colleges abroad or falling into Papism’s clutches (Fergal 3).

It seemed impossible to reconcile the country’s two perpetually opposing creeds, and the conflict between the new secular and older religious organizations was irreparable. Many Irish Catholics had attended Trinity College, Dublin, for centuries because it was the only university on the island. At the time, it was believed that common ground could be found in the emerging secular tendencies of higher education and between the claims of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches. This followed the “mixed education” principle, which had served as the cornerstone of the non-denominational, state-funded “Irish System of National Education” for elementary school students. When presented with this plan, the Irish bishops reaffirmed that they could not forsake religious instruction because it was integral to a well-rounded education. However, several changes to the legislation that initially established that institution and the extension of its principle to higher education shifted its governance from the Anglican Church to the State. The outcome was the support of “mixed education” by some Catholic bishops. Others, however, saw it as a danger to the Irish Catholic Church or even the secularization of the entire country. When Propaganda Fide issued its decision in October 1847, advising the bishops not to side with the “godless colleges,” the dispute was finally put to rest. It was a good omen for the possibility of a Catholic university in Ireland on par with Louvain (John Henry 73-74).

The lack of religion in the classroom and the anti-Catholic prejudice that emerged in the United Kingdom in tandem with liberalism’s beliefs contribute to the tense atmosphere on Irish college campuses. It

looked like Protestants and Catholics were working together to counter the influence of Liberal political ideology, which had led to the rise of confessional, secularized, anti-theological universities that privileged the findings of the new scientific knowledge. However, the Protestants in England opposed the Catholic position that young people in Ireland had a right to religious instruction by the teachings of their Church.

Newman's Idea of a University

Newman's vision for the kind of university he wanted to head was inspired by history and facts. The former was built upon intangible concepts like education, information, and culture, as well as "a certain great principle" (John Henry 24). The latter brings together Newman's life story, the evolution of higher education from the Platonic Academy to Oxford, and each institution's impressions on his mind. As described by Newman, the "bare and necessary idea" of a university is "an abstract, general, ahistorical, even static notion of what a university is in its essence, nature, or notion." In contrast, the "image of a university" is "the concrete, historical, the living embodiment of that idea as it was anticipated, realized, or instantiated, however imperfectly concerning the ideal type," in a specific time and place (Mary Katherine 28).

The System of Universal Knowledge and the Principle of Truth

The concept of the encyclopedia as a "circle of universal science" is fundamental to the idea of the university because it emphasizes the need for a unified body of knowledge and the interconnectedness of its various subfields (John Henry 63). Second, it is characterized by a "philosophical habit of mind," which is "a comprehensive view of truth in all its branches, of the relations of science to science, of their mutual bearings and respective values" (John Henry 96-97).

Therefore, a notion of "universal knowledge" has arisen according to which only specific scientific disciplines, informed by the philosophical "spirit of universality" of the academic institution, are taught (Arthur Dwight 180). Scholars and students from many disciplines work together to achieve this goal, portraying the university as a community where people from different backgrounds come together to share their knowledge and learn from one another in an environment ruled by "law" and devoted to the pursuit of knowledge.

The university is not a "caravanserai" of knowledge despite its "professes to teach whatever has to be taught in any whatsoever department of human knowledge" (John Henry 369, 428); instead, it is a "system." Each branch of science accomplishes its goals by adhering to its own set of epistemic norms, including delineating its boundaries and connections to other branches of science, avoiding usurpation from other branches, and seeking higher harmony. These connections across disciplines are very similar to those between disciplines in hard facts. Everything, from the mysteries of the divine essence to the experiences of human beings, from the most solemn decrees of God to the most random accidents of existence, all come together to form what we call the "complex fact" of existence. Each component of this system is merely the focus of a variety of "partial visions" that are collectively referred to as "sciences" (John Henry 52-53). Therefore, the truth seems "multiform," built on enduring but taxing, conflicting, and contradictory avenues of investigation and experimentation. Truth cannot contradict itself; hence an error might be "the way to truth and the only way" in some cases. According to this premise, there is no inherent tension between scientific knowledge and divine revelation.

The Function of Philosophy

According to these concepts, the structure of the university is based on connections between and among the various scientific disciplines. In order to make sense of them, we need "a sort of science distinct from all of them, and in some sense, a science of sciences" (John Henry 57): Philosophy, or a "philosophical temper," is what Newman means when he talks about this concept; philosophy "is Reason exercised upon Knowledge [...] the power of referring everything to its true place in the universal system [...] it discerns the whole in each part, the end in each beginning, the worth of each interruption, the measure of each delay" (John Henry 290-292). All sciences exhibit this philosophical practice when they "arrange and classify facts; reduce separate phenomena under a common law; trace effects to a cause" (John Henry 53). As Heidegger put it, "philosophy gathers up a succession of notes into the expression of a whole, and calls it a melody" (John Henry 75). As the pinnacle of learning, it is what all schools should strive to instill in their students. It is the culmination of intellect and a true extension of the mind, leading to the development of its intrinsic aptitudes; without this philosophical habit, the concept of a unified body of knowledge and the ideal of the university crumble. As the Utilitarian hoped, universities should be based on "an idea, a view, an indivisible object, [...] an intellectual principle" (John Henry 423).

The Truly Liberal Education and its Contribution to Religious Education

The point of an excellent liberal education is to help you become a mental emperor. Instead of turning a young man into a "gentleman" or filling his head with facts and figures, its purpose is to guide the brain to

perfection as a moral imperative. In contrast to the new utilitarian knowledge systems, which prioritize professional Knowledge and specialized learning at an exact market price at the expense of the individual, a proper liberal education cannot be achieved through such means. Education at a university is “the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and at refining the intercourse in private life” (John Henry 154). Knowledge is “the instrument of good” therefore even while “the useful is not always good” the good is always beneficial, in Newman’s view, because it underpins the value of the truly useful. Therefore, “if a liberal education is excellent, it must be useful as well” because it is “reproductive of good” or “prolific” (John Henry 143-144). To open the mind, to correct and refine it, to enable it to know and digest and master and rule and use its Knowledge, to give power over its faculties, application, flexibility, method, critical exactness, sagacity, resource, address, eloquent expression, is an object as intelligible [...] as the cultivation of virtue, while, at the same time, it is distinct from it; this is the moral value of a genuinely liberal education (John Henry 111-112).

The relationship between secular education and religious education and the contrast between the intellectual and moral aims of education are significant in light of the polarity between Humanism and Catholicism, secular education, and religious education. Newman asserts that the “Religion of Reason” or “Religion of Civilization”—which he refers to as—is intimately related to higher education in the field of religion—is a religion that emphasizes moral and practical values over intellectual ones. He compares the “Religion of Reason” to the “Religion of Reason” in this way, seeing Catholicism “chiefly as a system of pastoral education and moral duty,” whose doctrines serve as moral standards. This perspective asserts that mental education results in a religion “independent of Catholicism, partly cooperating with it, partly thwarting it.” In order to continue influencing the world even if it converted to Catholicism, the “Religion of Reason” follows a path completely independent of grace.

In the same way that grace belongs to the supernatural, it is a part of human nature, which John Henry 157 refers to as an “operative principle,” but neither is meant to take the place of the other (John Henry 79). “Now across, now divergent, now counter” describes how the first and second courses are parallel (John Henry 158). Natural reason results in “Religion of Reason,” but “right reason” results in “assent of the mind to Catholicism,” which does not claim territories that are not its own and refrains from reasoning “on assumptions foreign and injurious to religion and morals” (John Henry 59). It educates the intellect to behave following its guidance, taking Catholicism “as a whole” and refusing to accept compromise or modification. This is the “right reason,” as it is appropriately employed in Roman Catholicism. Even so, intellectualism, which the “Religion of Reason” represents as a threat, can undermine it unless the Church safeguards it from tampering.

As a result, liberal education does not produce Christians or Catholics but rather “gentlemen,” a morally valuable contribution to the Church. Freeing someone from their senses means sending them “halfway to Heaven” (John Henry 160). Let us pretend a man is all that separates us from the heavens. If that is the case, then even transcending heaven “for the occasion” will not be enough to keep him from succumbing to the natural gravitation of his nature, i.e. the temptations of his senses. Newman argues that this is a time when turning to nature itself for help is necessary, providing “a sort of homoeopathic medicine for the disease.” From a moral perspective, this is intellectual education’s most significant contribution: it “harms it to subjects which are worth a rational being” by playing on rational human nature, “expelling the excitements of sense by the introduction of those of the intellect,” and “exciting debate on matters of little practical importance.” Thus, revulsion at the unmanly extremes; liberal thoughts benefit the intellect when they keep it busy and shield it from vices and narcissism; these are all dangers linked with social progress (John Henry 161-163).

This “Religion of Reason” is characterized by Newman as being shallow because “to seem becomes to be; what looks fair will be good, what offends will be evil; virtue will be what pleases, vice what pains” (John Henry 173). This “embellishment of the exterior” (John Henry 175) also includes philosophical morality, transforming Christian humility into modesty and its opposite, pride, into self-respect. As a result, according to Newman, some moral principles are distinct from religious principles. He summarizes these principles in the idea of the “gentleman” as someone who makes an effort to avoid igniting conflicts and is endowed with wisdom, patience, tolerance, and a willingness to die. The characteristics of the Church and the world “partly assist and partly distort the development of the Catholic” (John Henry 181); “Basil and Julian were fellow students at the schools of Athens; one became the Saint and Doctor of the Church, the other her scoffing and relentless foe” (Angelo 143-161).

Faith, Reason, Person

At the heart of this moral conflict between Humanism and Catholicism is the link between religion and reason, which entails the person’s subjectivity. These are the only issues relating to religious instruction and confessional perspectives that have continued to be topical in modern Western constitutional and democratic

republics. The Liberal tradition, which developed during Newman's lifetime, views religion, faith, and the statements communicating them as irrational ideas. Due to their inconsistency with the norms of legal and procedural reason in a modern constitutional and democratic society, these arguments do not hold up in public debate and cannot be defended on any rational basis.

The Enlargement of the Idea of Reason

When reason is interpreted more broadly than in Liberalism, as Newman does, faith is shown to be a logical action rather than an irrational one. A person advances based on antecedents he considers to be true; without explaining their logical order on implicit fundamentals, he cannot make explicit. Faith may appear to be at odds with logic, but it is only at odds with the logic practiced through scientific study and formalized intellectual frameworks. So, rationality is not limited to hypothetical fear. However, it compares itself to the real world, the "living mind," the experience we have had, which "contains abundant evidence that in practical matters, when their minds are roused, men commonly" are not only reasoners but "not bad reasoners" (John Henry 211). This broader understanding of reason is predicated on the idea of the person as a distinct and material entity. Every person controls their own portion of the "common measure" (reason) that all humans share.

The egotistical principle is fundamental to Newman's philosophy, according to which "I am what I am, or I am nothing" (John Henry 224) and "such as I am, it is my all" (Mechele 83-118). As a result, education affects the entire person, not just the portion that can be referred to as the notional intellect: "It is the concrete being that reasons; past several years, and I discover my mind in a different place; how? The entire person is in motion; paper logic is merely a record of it" (John Henry 158).

The Presumed Irrationality of Religious Belief

With these thoughts in mind, Newman rejects the "new era" view that religion is based "not at all on reason" but instead on "feelings, emotions, and affections" (John Henry 40). He explains ironically that "it is as unreasonable [...] to demand Religion a chair in a University, as to demand one for fine feeling, honour, patriotism, gratitude, maternal affection, or good companionship" in places where religion is dominant (John Henry 41). Education of "sentiment," which includes moral and religious instruction as well as poetry and music, is distinguished from education in the signs (reading and writing), facts (geography and astronomy), relationships (sociology and law), and laws (mathematics) (in the British Government's education council committee's 1848-1850 report). Lacking factual content and instead focusing on satisfying an inchoate yearning for the ethereal, religious instruction wastes time (John Henry 42-43).

The mindset of the period is also moving away from religion and toward naturalizing religious ideas, seeing God and his attributes as unquestionable truths. God is viewed as a "function" of the cosmos, and divine truth is described as "Nature with a heavenly glow on it" rather than as something distinct from it (John Henry 48). When theology turns into physical theology, the meaning of the word "God," as Revelation defines it, is lost.

Therefore, the "world" considerably affects the human mind, primarily via a scientific understanding of the world. According to Newman, one is well-versed in the scientific worldview because they have been exposed to a wealth of information about the cosmos, the human body, chemicals, and physics, among other topics, for many years. The teachings of Revelation will seem distant and implausible to him. This skeptical strategy of our day draws on the allure of scientific advancements to prime the imagination for the revealed truth (John Henry 327).

As Newman views it, a "secular" kind of reason is emerging, and it is being extended too broadly to areas like religion and morality. To achieve this goal, one must reject the idea of an ultimate, transcendent value and accept human finitude as the ultimate litmus test for the veracity of human life. The *lebensproblem*, leading to Weber's polytheism of values, is more appropriately understood as the province of conscience than science or reason. In 1852, Newman said, "Man is to be as if he were not, in the general course of Education; the moral and mental sciences are to have no professorial chairs, and the treatment of them is to be simply left as a matter of private judgment, which each individual may carry out as he will." This statement was a foreshadowing of the next century (John Henry 59-60).

In this day and age, atheists and skeptics are taking a more nuanced approach to combat religion and theology. They do not meddle for the sake of contention but rather because they offer studies that are more interesting, useful, and fruitful than theology does, using the latter's utilitarian ideas as their guiding light. Last but not least, religion and theology's ineffectiveness contributed to their marginalization from the realms of reason and science, which prized skepticism and disbelief based on a purportedly unrestricted right to think and believe as one pleases.

The Inclusion of Theology in the University Education System

As a result, Newman advocates for preserving theological study in higher education and for religious studies more generally. First and foremost, the idea of the university as a “system” of knowledge provides a rationale for including theology in the scientific method. This disproves the idea that there is any confessional value to university-level theology instruction. In fact, it is connected to the “idea” of an “imperial intellect” that permeates universities and is founded on a philosophical habit that works inside each subject and identifies structural links between and among all sciences in order to form a “circle” or a system. The desire to include theology in higher education stems less from a desire to make the university more Christian and more from a more fundamental philosophical goal consistent with its core assumption. Integrating theology into the scientific method rests on the foundations of human reason and wisdom.

Since theology is a legitimate scientific discipline, it is not immune to the biases of its instructors any more than any other subject. It “takes a colour from the whole system to which it belongs,” as the saying goes. They claim that “the drift, or at least the practical effect, of a teacher’s teaching, varies as he is under the influence, or in the service, of his system or that” (John Henry 427). This is a problem for theologians and teachers of logic, poetry, mathematics, physics, and the like. The fact that Newman considers theology “one branch of knowledge” is obvious. Other fields include the secular sciences. Knowledge is not like the soul, which relates to the body; the other disciplines are not its appendices or instruments. Because of “the internal sympathy which exists between all branches of knowledge whatever,” it “does not interfere with the real freedom of any secular science in its particular department,” even though it investigates the most significant and diverse subject matter (John Henry 427-428).

Object and Method of Theology

Interactions between disciplines in the university setting assume that fields of study have a shared understanding of their goals and methods, making them resistant to appropriation. Theology is not the study of physics, nor is it concerned with establishing a universal religion applicable to everyone, nor is it limited to a study of the Bible alone. Just as there is astronomy and geology for studying the heavens and the earth, respectively, theology is “the Science of God” (John Henry 65). It is one of many scientific disciplines, but its focus makes it stand out. In fact, the most authentic theological understandings of the word “God” hold that the infinite being it describes is the ultimate principle of all that is good, true, and lovely. If they fail, religion will be reduced to physical theology, where God is seen as the cause of the laws of nature. However, if the theologians’ God remained its focus despite theology’s exclusion from the system of sciences, other disciplines would invade a domain that does not recognize them.

The goal of both the separation principle and the integration of all disciplines into the academy’s body of knowledge—including theological studies—is to prevent the mutual usurpation, distrust, or worse, disdain that has been previously discussed. Since we cannot extrapolate information about the supernatural from the natural world, this seems to imply that religious and secular knowledge is incomparable. This division is helpful for both fields because it prevents the theologians from trying to find geological, astronomical, or ethnological confirmation of the Holy Scripture to make it consistent with the latest findings of scientific inquiry and the physicists from trying to turn theology into an experimental science. That assumes religion is not “the queen of sciences” or somehow inherently superior to the other natural disciplines (Arthur Dwight 258).

Theology and Truth

Anyone who upholds the principle of truth pursues it by remaining impartial and steadfast in the values that his science and the system to which it belongs are based; he need not worry about being accused of irresponsibility or scandal, but he must give the subject of his inquiry his undivided attention, free from the diversion. The fundamental religious and moral principles, as well as the so-called dogmas, which are both vital to the legitimacy of theology in the system and acceptance of religious instruction at universities, are not what Newman means when he uses the word “obstacle.” Indeed, for a Catholic, these are not mental traps; they are “second nature,” just as scientific rules are for physiological organs, and they limit his movements as little as “the laws of physics impede his bodily movements” (John Henry 380).

If “the object of all sciences is truth,” and if man exercises reason in every field of study, then “no matter what man he is, Hindoo, Mahometan, or infidel, his conclusions within his science, according to the laws of that science, are unquestionable, and not to be suspected by Catholics, unless Catholics may legitimately be jealous of fact and truth, of divine principles, and divine creations” (John Henry 249). Therefore, reading any Catholic science, literature, or the works of Euclid or Newton is unnecessary. The latter necessarily depicts man as he is, complete with his passions, heroism, crimes, loves, and hates; it depicts man as a sinner. So, if truth sovereignty is acknowledged, there is no reason for the sciences or the humanities to object to including theology in higher education.

Theology and the Idea of Christianity

Considering Newman's definition of theology as "one idea unfolded in just proportions, carried upon an intelligible method, and issuing necessary and immutable results," it is reasonable to make these observations regarding theology and its relationships with other sciences (John Henry 69). Revelation contains this idea, which has been described as "an authoritative teaching, which bears witness to itself [...] and speaks to all men, as being ever and everywhere the same, and claiming to be received intelligently, by all whom it addresses, as one doctrine, discipline, and devotion directly given from above" (John Henry 250). In particular, Newman rejects the proposal of giving an a-confessional moral and religious education, as urged by proponents of "mixed education" and "common religiosity," on the grounds that one cannot believe merely some of the contents, picking and selecting them as one sees fit. However, the *depositum fidei* must be taken at face value. Since a university education aims to better prepare men for the world, incorporating religious teachings into the curriculum does not prohibit the pursuit of secular knowledge. College "is not a Convent, it is not a Seminary," as the saying goes (John Henry 197). That is why Newman backs up the idea that secular and religious education are two separate spheres, both morally and intellectually. This lends credence to his argument that courses in religion, especially theology, belong in academic institutions.

Intellectual Excellence, Moral Excellence and "Christian Humanism"

A liberal education can help one achieve intellectual perfection, but it cannot help one achieve moral excellence without a religious education that uses holiness as its model. As a result, thanks to the Catholic Faith, we have access to higher knowledge from an intellectual perspective but not necessarily from a moral perspective. The two stages can neither be confused nor be incompatible or continuous; instead, they must presume a non-mandatory transition between them, supported by grace, obedience, love, or "right faith." A "right faith" is "a reasoning upon holy, devout, and enlightened presumptions" if Faith is an intellectual act and a supposition. "Right faith ventures and hazards deliberately, seriously, soberly, piously, and humbly," as the saying goes. (John Henry 239). This is "a presumption," but it is the presumption of a serious, sober, thinking, pure, affectionate, and devoted mind. It is necessary for the perfection of Faith. It takes action because it is based on Faith but is guided, strengthened, and honed by love (John Henry 250). A central idea underlying these descriptions of Faith is the individual's right to agree or disagree with such descriptions. That which is certain is not a passive impression exercised on the mind from without, but rather "an active recognition of propositions as true" (John Henry 223); as it is "active," it is a sort of perception that is not constrained. Therefore, one can argue that Humanism, a core tenet of true Liberal Education, is a form of "Naturalism" that, as such, offers no instrument capable of transcending the limitations of the natural man. Man has the same freedom to embrace or reject the vocation God has given him as he does to develop the intellectual talent bestowed upon him by nature. To put it another way, a man who is not philosophically trained (the "natural man") but who aspires to intellectual greatness must shape himself through a Liberal education; likewise, a man who has been shaped through a Liberal education (the "gentleman") but who seeks moral greatness must train himself following faith and holiness. Even though a Liberal Arts education and holiness are the pinnacle stages of mental and moral development, the natural man and the "gentleman" would remain stuck in their current states because neither stage is subordinate to the other; rather, the natural man and the "gentleman's" development depends on their freedom of choice. Humanistic and religious approaches to education may seem opposed, but they are necessary for the forward motion because, when combined, they allow a person to stop hesitating and start walking. According to a form of "Christian humanism," they allow a man to develop to the fullest expression of his nature so that he might then offer that nature to God (Arthur Dwight 241-242).

Religious Education and Catholic University

Now we must comprehend the "Catholic" feature, which confers additional relevance on religious education.

We must first make a distinction between the university's "essence" and its "integrity" because the former characterizes the institution while the latter is "a gift superadded to its nature, without which that nature is indeed complete, and can act, and fulfill its end, but does not find itself [...] in easy circumstances" (John Henry 180). It is comparable to the relationship between a person's essential nature and the necessities for survival: while a man can exist without air and water and still be considered such, he would not live very long. Although his essential nature does not include the air he breathes or the water he drinks, these two elements are still essential to his existence and fullness as a human being (John Henry 74).

A university, even if it calls itself "Catholic," exists independently of the Church and seeks to further knowledge and the human mind rather than convert students to a particular religion. Men can be secretly religious; they need not attend college to be Catholic. Catholic universities proclaim their faith for the same reason any other university would: because they are Catholic. Also, unlike the "colleges" of Newman's time, she does not need to become a university to maintain her morals, and the Church does not need universities to

impart moral teachings. The mission of a Catholic university is “the education of faith,” as stated in the definition.

The idea of a university and a Catholic university are intertwined because of the close relationship between secular and religious knowledge, reason, and faith. Although the university does not have any pastoral responsibilities, it does provide a liberal education, and it must also teach theology and religious understanding if it is to be a legitimate storehouse of global knowledge. Since theology would be taught the same way as any other science, this would not be enough to label the school as Catholic or convince pupils to choose the faith. Suppose a university cultivates morals and the Catholic faith while under the protection of the Church; then it can claim to be Catholic by professing the Catholic creed. A Roman Catholic university is subject to the Church, but “just as one of the Queen’s judges is an officer of the Queen, and yet determines certain legal processes between the Queen and her people,” so too is a Roman Catholic university president an officer of the Church (John Henry 370).

Therefore, the role of the Church in a Catholic university is to be “the undaunted and the only defender” of spiritual truth (Newman, 1976, p. 414). “The Catholic Creed is one whole, and Philosophy again is one whole; each may be compared to an individual, to which nothing can be added, and nothing can be subtracted.” They may be proclaimed or not professed, but neither one is in a neutral position. So-called universities that fail to confess the Catholic Creed are inherently opposed to the Catholic Church and Philosophy (John Henry 434).

II. CONCLUSION

When considering Newman’s stance on religion in the classroom, it is important to look back at the earliest stages of secularization in Western civilization. His situation in England and Ireland represents how religion has evolved into a matter of individual conscience in the modern world. The idea of conscience in the modern world implies a change from acceptance to doubt, from taking the universe, society, life, and one’s identity as givens to questioning them. What Newman is observing, then, is the preeminence of a new secular education over an older religious education and a clear separation between the two. This is because individuals are called upon to choose their beliefs in religion, which may also imply that they do not choose them at all, preferring to turn to non-religious solutions to address the problem of the meaning of their lives (Peter Ludwig 1979).

The problem, in his view, is how to demonstrate God’s dominance in a time when God is kept far away from the earth, if not entirely exiled, due to man’s primacy. The issue becomes even more complicated when we consider that affirming God’s primacy also entails affirming the primacy of Truth. This is particularly challenging in today’s culture of conceptual relativism, which holds that there is not a single (universally accepted) explanation for how things are. How people define things and approach them conceptually determines what is true (Mechele 15-34).

The “buffered self,” of which Charles Taylor writes (300), describes the modern man asserting his dominance; this is someone who “has closed the porous boundaries between the inside (thought) and the outside (nature, the physical)” because “living in a disenchanted world is partly a matter of adjusting to a world in which magic no longer works.” To top it all off, the buffered self, since it is no longer vulnerable to the influence of spirits and external powers and the worries, anxieties, and terrors associated with them, is the invulnerable creator of the self, who does not need to commit to God (Mechele 2011).

Newman probably would label Taylor’s “buffered self” as the rationality abuser. This is evidenced by the widespread use of skepticism in scientific inquiry, which has relegated ethics and religion to sentiment and emotion, and by the assertion that reason has the right to rule over faith and moral values, demonstrating their absoluteness through logical demonstration. The result today is twofold: on the one hand, radical relativism based on the idea that anyone can do anything, and everyone should, and on the other, the attainment of planetary absolutes that, by an absolutist concept of human reason, relativize God to the point where He is erased from history. We discover the confirmation of the primacy of “this world,” considered as the measure of everything, and a form of reason that Newman called “secular” in both circumstances.

Newman does not take a stand against the growing relativistic theological and moral plurality of the present world by opposing a castling or closed apologetics of Christianity. Despite his firm conviction that God must be given first place, he favours debate between opposing perspectives. He offers what Taylor terms a “third way” as an antidote to the “malaise of immanence” (309). Taylor claims that Romantic poets and writers were the first to recognize this malaise of immanence and seek answers in a “third way” in contrast to the traditional way of orthodoxy and the modern way of invulnerable rationality, thus ushering in the “new era” and its defining characteristic: the loss of meaning in life.

God’s centrality must be redeemed in society and politics, and this can only happen when the implicit component of every citizen’s life is acknowledged. Atheists who advocate for man’s absolute primacy based on procedural rationality will no longer have an institutional advantage over believers, and believers will no longer be marginalized in public discourse or required to translate their language into that of non-believers unless they

choose to work with non-believers. While both parties acknowledge the possibility of disagreement, skeptics accept the premise that believers' comments can yield meaningful contributions to the conversation.

Thus, in Newman's view, Christian instruction is acceptable in the modern, secular world. In terms of theology, it implies a type of knowledge comparable to others; in terms of faith, it implies a particular type of concrete and practical rationality that is legitimated in the same way as others; and, finally, it implies a sense of life that is a crucial component of the foundations upon which social communities are built.

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