THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

John Henry Newman’s Areopagus: The Tamworth Reading Room
As an Apology for the “Christian Difference”

A DISSERTATION

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John Henry Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room presents a unique distillation of his Anglican thought on education, faith and reason, and the Church. This work of theology and literature challenged his contemporaries and continues to challenge its readers today.

Newman crafted seven letters to the editor of The Times of London in February 1841 in response to an address given by a leading British politician, Sir Robert Peel. The letters, witty and woven with theological and philosophical arguments, contrasted with Peel’s view of secular knowledge and institutions as means to human fulfillment. Although the letters were pithy and written for a general audience, they were provocative and insightful. Together they anticipated Newman’s later works as a Roman Catholic including the Idea of the University and An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent.

Themes, ideas, and the context of the letters have been treated by a variety of scholars with varying degrees of accuracy and ability. This study seeks to clarify the history and interpretations of the Tamworth Reading Room. More importantly, the dissertation tries to connect the letters to Newman’s deeper theological concerns. In order to achieve these goals, the aspects of nineteenth century England as well as
biographical portraits of Peel and Newman are narrated. Peel’s address is then detailed followed by summary interpretations of Newman’s letters. The legacy of the letters is traced to the end of Newman’s career.

This study does not follow along the lines of particular scholarly interpretations of the *Tamworth Reading Room*, e.g., as literature, education, or religious epistemology. Rather, the dissertation complements these prior efforts, but concludes that the Church figures as the original idea undergirding the letters. For Newman, the Church and the faith she proclaimed created a “Christian Difference” to Peel’s vision. The faith of the Church was flexible and inclusive enough to elevate the truths found in modern institutions and innovations in knowledge, yet remained distinct in its origin and *telos* as the means for human salvation.
This dissertation by David P. Delio fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Systematic and Historical Theology approved by John T. Ford, C.S.C., S.T.D., as Director, and by Chad C. Pecknold, Ph.D. and Christopher J. Ruddy Ph.D., as Readers.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Ella. Her love and support for this project extend back to when we first met. Her devotion to God, our marriage and family (along with her gentle, yet persistent, “reminders” to “get it done!”) were at times the only beacon to keep me focused and to finish. I love you Ella—you are God’s special blessing for me, Naomi, and so many others.
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Introduction

Faith, viewed in its history through past ages, presents us with the fulfilment of one great idea in particular—that, namely, of an aristocracy of exalted spirits, drawn together out of all countries, ranks, and ages, raised above the condition of humanity, specimens of the capabilities of our race, incentives to rivalry and patterns for imitation (John Henry Newman, *The Tamworth Reading Room*).¹

On 19 January 1841, Sir Robert Peel delivered a speech on “Establishment of a Library and Reading Room at Tamworth.”² As Member of Parliament for Tamworth and leader of the Tory (Conservative) party, Peel had a vested interest in this project. The working public in nineteenth century England generally did not have access to libraries. Peel believed that inaugurating such an institution would broaden his party’s base and contribute to the betterment of Tamworth’s inhabitants and to English society in general. The library would provide the people of Tamworth access to the latest trends in science and technology, thereby enabling them to become more productive citizens. Peel also believed that scientific and technological knowledge, as well as literature, would inspire persons to improve their lives intellectually, morally and religiously. In turn, this knowledge would help mitigate class conflict and propel England into the modern age.

Peel’s speech provoked a flurry of debate in newspapers and periodicals. *The Times* of London contacted John Henry Newman, an Anglican priest involved in the

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¹ Catholicus, Letters to the Editor, *The Times*, 20 February 1841.

² Tamworth, in Staffordshire, 100 miles northwest of London, derives its name from the River Tame.
Oxford Movement, to provide a critique. Initially Newman balked at the offer. Yet, he had opposed Peel and his ideas before. Newman accepted the invitation, sensing that Peel’s speech indicated a broader crisis regarding the purpose and meaning of the Church and of Christian faith in England.

Newman responded to Peel’s speech with a series of seven letters to the editor of *The Times*—six under the pseudonym Catholicus. The central argument of his letters concerned the role of the Church and the relationship of faith to knowledge in the formation of persons and society. Newman contended that a person could not truly develop either as a human being or as a citizen, merely by the acquisition of scientific or literary knowledge. Such knowledge could not provide the basis for true religious belief. For example, if human achievement was placed before divine grace, personal sin could not be vanquished. Newman embraced scientific learning and literature, although subsequent to the first principles of divine faith and the dictates of a Christian conscience nurtured in the Church. He envisioned these principles and this place as essential in assimilating the mass of knowledge and technology generated by the burgeoning modern world.

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5 Catholicus, Letters to the Editor, *The Times*, 5 February, 9 February, 10 February, 12 February, 20 February, 22 February, 27 February, 1841. Peel’s address and the letters as they appeared in *The Times* can be found in Appendix I. Additionally, all seven letters were revised and republished in Newman’s, *Discussions and Arguments* (1872), 270; available at: http://www.newmanreader.org/works/arguments/index.html; hereafter cited: *DA*. 

Newman’s *Catholicus* letters, which later would be collectively published as *The Tamworth Reading Room* (1841; 1872), were analogous to St. Paul’s speech at the Areopagus (*Acts* 17:16-34).\(^6\) Newman’s letters reflected the Pauline desire to correlate the Gospel message and contemporary learning. Just as St. Paul publically preached “strange notions” about the Christian God to incredulous pagans on the Hill of Ares in Athens, Newman was able to use the pages of a prominent newspaper to represent an “apology” for the Church and Christian faith in English life.

In effect, Newman’s apology was an articulation of what may be termed the “Christian Difference”; although not Newman’s phrase, the “Christian Difference” denotes the central argument of his Letters—the visible Church, provides a distinction between Christian faith and knowledge acquired from the world.\(^7\) Peel sought to efface the conflicts that emerge from religious differences by heralding politically expedient

\(^6\) Biblical references throughout this dissertation will be from the King James Version as this was the bible read by both Peel and Newman.

\(^7\) Theologians and philosophers have used the phrase “the Christian Difference” in various ways, e.g., Stanley Hauerwas, “The Christian Difference: Surviving Postmodernism,” *Cultural Values* 3:2 (1999): 66-167; 174. Hauerwas discerned the need for the Church to both absorb and recapitulate certain currents of the postmodern narrative. Monsignor Robert Sokolowski (*The God of Faith and Reason* [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995]) has argued for a “Christian Distinction” that contrasted Christian belief to pagan religious and philosophical ideas. The distinction that Sokolowski identified is the Christian understanding of God as existing independent of God’s creation; making creation a gratuitous act, and not a necessity, in contrast to the pagan view of the Divine and the world (23). He noted that this distinction arose out of the lived Church tradition and achieved theoretical formulation in the course of theological development (24). Both Hauerwas’s and Sokolowski’s works share some similarities to Newman’s *Tamworth Reading Room* regarding, e.g., the Church and faith and reason, although any correlation would appear to be coincidental.
tolerance and the fruits of human knowledge. In response, Newman argued for Christianity—identified with the Church—as the “Christian Difference”:  

Christianity is faith, faith implies a doctrine, a doctrine propositions, propositions yes or no, yes or no differences. Differences, then, are the natural attendants on Christianity, and you cannot have Christianity, and not have differences.  

The arguments advanced in the Catholicus letters generated much speculation and comment in the press; they were denounced by Peel and other Tories. The controversy reverberated across political and religious factions throughout British society. For some readers, Newman’s ideas were considered significant—a part of the Oxford Movement’s call for a return to the teachings of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. The majority, however, viewed the letters either as a partisan assault on an important political leader who had embraced tenets of modern education or an unenlightened return to religious tyranny. These reactions—for and against the letters—flowed from the “social imaginary” of churchmen, politicians, and literati. They were indicative of the partisan battles in the Church, in the State and between Church and State that were being waged in early Victorian England.

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8 Italics will be omitted for this title this and in ensuing chapters.

9 Catholicus, Letters to the editor, The Times, 20 February 1841, DA, 284.

Some scholarly accounts of the *Tamworth Reading Room* in recent years have framed Peel’s speech and Newman’s letters as a controversy between these two men.\(^\text{11}\) This would have been impossible in 1841, as Newman’s identity was anonymous; a decade would pass before *Catholicus*’ identity was made public. Although it is true that this controversy would have never happened had Peel not given the address and had Newman not accepted the *Times*’ commission, it would be a mistake to reduce the speech and the letters to simply a contest between Peel and Newman. For Peel, the Tamworth library and Reading Room represented a microcosm of the political and economic future of the nation. For Newman, the policies undergirding Peel’s Tamworth speech advocated a rationalistic religion and thus disordered the relationships between the State and the Church, as well as the relationship between reason and faith. The Church and faith had to be priorities for the future.

Both Peel and Newman were renowned figures in the nineteenth century in Britain. They also represented many of the ideas that were a part of their age, and yet they exceeded it. Peel’s ideas imaged a triumphant humanism that extended back to the narrative of Babel—“Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name” (*Genesis* 11:4). Newman’s symbolized the divine transcendence, reminding his readers that “And the LORD went before them by day in a

\(^{11}\)For example, Wendell V. Harris, “Newman, Peel, Tamworth, and the Concurrence of Historical Forces,” *Victorian Studies* 32 (1989): 206. While Harris adequately detailed the historical context of the *Tamworth Reading Room*, his primary hermeneutic placed Newman and Peel in opposition; Harris’ treatment of the broader, philosophical and theological realities was inadequate, as will be noted in later chapters.
pillar of a cloud to lead them the way” (Exodus 13:21). Their confrontation over which transcendence should prevail was at the heart of the Tamworth Reading Room.

**Purpose of this Dissertation**

Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room has received relatively brief but honorable mention in many biographies and studies about him. Some commentators have focused on aspects of the letters as original ideas—or anticipations for his later works—regarding education, politics, science, faith and reason, or his satirical prowess. There is only one scholarly study of the letters—that by Nina Fay Burgis, who analyzed some of


the historical background of the Tamworth Reading Room as well as offered a remarkable account of the initial reception of the letters in the British press. Her thesis, however, concentrated upon Newman’s literary style, his methodological approaches, and textual variants and annotations between the several editions of the letters. Apart from her work, scholars from various disciplines—Victorian studies, political histories of the Oxford Movement, etc., have canvassed the Tamworth Reading Room with varying degrees of accuracy and insight. Last but not least, it is important to note that no biography of Sir Robert Peel has treated the Tamworth event at length and only a few studies of Peel give any indication that he was involved in this event.

This dissertation takes into account many studies of the Tamworth Reading Room, but focuses on the theological idea(s) undergirding the letters. Newman did not endeavor merely to critique secular knowledge and institutions but to manifest and apologize for the Church as the Christian Difference.

London (Birkbeck College), 1964. Permission to use Ms. Fay’s thesis has graciously been granted by her executor.


22 For example, Donald Read, Peel and the Victorians (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).
Methodological Considerations

This dissertation basically follows an historical and narrative methodology. The historical narrative provides the structure of the dissertation; within this narrative are annotated analyses of both Peel’s speech and Newman’s letters. The concluding chapter combines an historical approach with a thematic theological argument.

The first chapter examines the historical context of the Tamworth Reading Room and includes brief biographies of both Peel and Newman. A fairly detailed historical background is important in order to understand the respective viewpoints of Peel and Newman, as well as various contemporary allusions and ideas found in Peel’s address and Newman’s letters. The sources used to describe nineteenth century England and Peel’s career are for the most part secondary; for Newman there is a mixture of primary and secondary sources.

The second chapter briefly details the history of adult education in England in order to frame Peel’s inaugural address. The intent and content of Peel’s speech are explored in the light of published and unpublished primary sources, along with a summary and annotated analysis of the address published in The Times.

The third chapter summarizes each of the Catholicus letters in light of Newman’s activities, correspondences, and his other theological works that were contemporary with the letters. In order to situate and analyze these letters, this chapter uses several secondary sources as well as many primary sources, many of which have not been used in other studies.
The fourth chapter provides an explanation of the reception of the letters in Victorian society and the way that Newman continued to employed them as a Roman Catholic. The first part of the chapter relies upon primary sources and Burgis’s thesis. The second part relies in part upon primary sources from Peel, *The Times* and *The Rambler*, but mainly on Newman’s letters and diaries and his later works.

The fifth and final chapter situates *The Tamworth Reading Room* within the broader context of Newman’s developing ecclesiology. Newman had recently been convinced of a “fundamental faith” shared by the whole Church—Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox. Although a member of the Church of England, by 1841 he had gravitated toward this view of faith and an idealized Apostolic and Catholic Church. This idea guided the *Tamworth Reading Room*, providing the difference between secular institutions and knowledge and Christian faith. The Church, in whom faith was given and nurtured, was the true origin and oracle of the Christian Difference.
Chapter 1 – Newman and Peel in Nineteenth Century Britain

In order to understand the Peel’s address and Newman’s Catholicus letters, this chapter will interlace their biographies within the wider historical and cultural milieu of early nineteenth century Britain. The chapter will alternate between periods in each man’s life portraying their similarities and differences. The goal of this chapter is to sketch each man’s intellectual, moral, and spiritual development to the threshold of 1841. To achieve this goal, several important themes in each of their lives are highlighted: for Peel competence, expediency, and his evolution regarding the relationships of Church, State, and education will be accented; for Newman personal religious experience, Church and State relations, as well as his quest for the Apostolic and Catholic Church will be emphasized. The chapter will conclude by countenancing each man’s capacity for idealism and reform.

John Henry Newman and Sir Robert Peel

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Sir Robert Peel and John Henry Newman had become outstanding public figures in Britain. Peel had twice been Prime Minister and had staged an important revival of the Tory party in the 1830s and 1840s. He was a model of effective government and economic liberty that in turn shaped the politics of the Victorian era; however, in spite of his shrewd abilities, Peel’s inability to grasp certain political constituencies ultimately shattered the party’s core by 1846. He retired from politics and died tragically in 1850.
At the time of the *Catholicus* letters, Newman was a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, as well as an Anglican priest and a leading voice of the controversial Oxford Movement. In 1845 he had left Oxford and the Church of England for the Roman Catholic Church. He reemerged as a prominent and influential leader—serving Britain and Ireland as an Oratorian priest and eventually a Cardinal until his death in 1890.

Although both Newman and Peel were influential and controversial in their respective vocations, neither man actually encountered the other. Peel took notice of Newman on only one occasion—his departure from the Anglican Church. However, Peel was quite aware of the Oxford Movement and at times referred to the “Puseyites,” as adherents of the Movement were disparagingly known. Conversely, Newman was much more aware of Peel, whom he first observed at Oxford in 1817. Newman later contested Peel over his vote for Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and referenced Peel in his letters and writings until their fateful exchange in 1841.

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2 *The Private Letters of Sir Robert Peel*, edited by George Peel (London: John Murray, 1920), 475. John R. Griffin (*The Oxford Movement: A Revision* [Edinburgh: Pentland Press, 1984], 56) has stated, “The name of Dr. Pusey is so closely associated with the Oxford Movement that even the greatest of scholars have forgotten the lateness of his entry into the movement.” Griffin, commenting on Owen Chadwick’s *The Victorian Church* (Volume 1 [London: A & C Black, 1964], 168), pointed out that although the movement’s opponents concocted the label “Puseyites,” Newman was its real leader and thus “... the name Puseyite was quite misleading.”

3 *LD*, 1:37.

Revolution, Recovery, and the Young Robert Peel

The world into which Peel and Newman were born and thrived was influenced by the events of the late eighteenth century. Eric Evan has noted that, “Britain’s commercial activity and industrial production, the prime agents of its nineteenth-century supremacy,” substantially quickened in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. These “prime agents,” as well as the wars with colonial America and France, had far ranging impacts on Britain’s political, religious, and social life in the following century.

In 1783, Britain ceded sovereignty to the American colonists who had led “the first successful rebellion in modern history.” Britain recovered unevenly after this war. George III dismissed the government that presided over the war and promoted twenty-four year old William Pitt the Younger to head a new government. Apart from the shame that followed the American Revolution, there were urgent problems that had to be addressed—a swollen national debt and governmental inefficiencies and corruption. Beyond expectations, Pitt governed smartly and with aplomb—he implemented intelligent, efficient fiscal and governmental reforms which in time took effect. He was aided by a robust and recovering economy produced by commercial expansion and


6 Evans, Modern Britain, 85.

7 According to Evans (Modern Britain, 95) Pitt had a clear path to political leadership. He was the son of a former Prime Minister, William Pitt the Elder (1708-1788); however, Robert Pitt’s appointment at such a young age depended more upon George III’s desire to increase his own influence than Pitt’s abilities.
The key to Pitt’s success was that he was not indebted to party interests but rather envisioned himself as servant to Church, King, and country.\textsuperscript{8}

Peel was born in 1788, during the Pitt recovery. His family had “considerable wealth,” but was not landed or titled,\textsuperscript{9} rather the family was a direct beneficiary of Britain’s commercial and industrial revolutions. Peel’s father, Robert senior, had inherited a textile business and prospered in the post war era:

The business flourished as the industrial revolution ‘took off’ in Lancashire in the 1780’s and Peel senior expanded his operations into Bolton. By the time of his eldest son’s birth in 1788, he was employing more than 7,000 workers and the firm’s profits were exceeding £70,000 (nearly £6m at current values) in good years.\textsuperscript{10}

The elder Peel translated the family’s fortune into a political career, becoming Member of Parliament for Tamworth in 1790. His political tenure was marked by a concern to improve the lives of factory workers and education in society.\textsuperscript{11} He was made a baronet on William Pitt’s recommendation in 1800, the result of staunch loyalty to the government during the French wars . . . . It was that title – the lowest titled

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 3; 99; 104.
  \item \textsuperscript{9} Ibid., 99-106. Pitt’s executive style of governance established a template for Sir Robert Peel. According to Evans \textit{(Peel, 3)} Peel “had grown up during the turbulent period of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars when the Younger Pitt . . . had fashioned a coalition across party lines . . . . He believed, like Pitt, in good order and efficient governance by ministers whose primary duty was to offer loyal service to the monarch in the wider interests of the nation.”
  \item \textsuperscript{10} Evans, \textit{Peel}, 5.
  \item \textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 5.
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 6.
\end{itemize}
hereditary rank but a substantial achievement nevertheless for an industrial family – which Peel the future prime minister inherited . . . 13

Young Peel grew up during the wars that sprung from the chaos of revolutionary France. 14 From 1793 to 1801, Britain was intermittently engaged in war with the bourgeoning Republic. Although Pitt had been effective in helping Britain to heal after the American Revolution, he was not a strong wartime leader. 15 Moreover, the decade of martial conflict had adversely affected the British people. Much of what had been gained in his first decade in office was suspended; fiscal, governmental, legal, and religious reforms were subordinated to the war efforts. 16

During this turbulent period, Peel entered the world of the aristocracy. His entrée was facilitated by his father’s money and political prestige. As part of the upper tier in the commercial middle class, Peel’s family, like others in his rank, “put a premium upon the acquisition of education.” 17 By 1800, the Peel family had become a part of the aristocracy yet had not abandoned certain middle class attitudes. As Peter Borsay has

13 Ibid.

14 L. E. Elliott-Binns (Religion in the Victorian Era [London: Lutterworth Press, 1946], 11) aptly described the British view of the Revolution:
The French Revolution had begun as a movement to free all peoples from the power of oppressive rulers and to proclaim the doctrine of equality. It ended in an internal despotism within France, all ideals lost in the lust for glory and power, as the oppressor of her neighbors. The course of events had justified the warnings of Burke rather than the raptures of Coleridge and Wordsworth.

15 Evans, Modern Britain, 126.

16 Evans, Peel, 12-13; 40.

17 Evans, Modern Britain, 36.
remarked, for the emerging middle class, “education was both a ‘socially selective process’ and ‘a fundamental tool of improvement.’” Peel attended the elite, preparatory Harrow School from 1800-1804. This school served as the bridge between elementary and university education and was reserved for sons from affluent families.

The Newman Family and the Napoleonic Wars

John Henry Newman was born in London in 1801—the year that Pitt’s long serving government collapsed because of his mishandling of the conflicts with France. Pitt also had lost George III’s favor because he had advocated for Catholic Emancipation during the negotiations for the Act of Union with Ireland in 1800. A new government was formed; fighting between England and France subsided with the Peace of Amiens in 1802. However, domestic instability—debt, inflation, a shrinking middle class, and a people weary of war—remained.

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20 G. I. T. Machin (Politics and the Churches in Great Britain: 1832-1868 [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977], 12), has noted that Catholic Emancipation, including “the right [for Catholics] to sit in Parliament” became a major issue during the French Revolution; the denial of political equality led to an Irish rebellion in 1798, and eventually to the Act of Union (1800) which unfortunately codified Catholic inequality.

21 Evans, Modern Britain, 126; 95. Britain feared that France’s revolutionary ideas might spread to Ireland and provoke rebellion there.

22 Ibid., 123-125.
During this period, the Newman family achieved some success. The family belonged to the professional middle class, which “depended, to a greater or lesser extent, on education, training, literacy and the acquisition of specialist skills.” John Henry was the first child of John and Jemima Newman. John Newman, his father, rose from humble beginnings and worked his way into the professional class as a banker. His mother, Jemima, who came from a family with “a slightly higher social standing” than his father, was a woman of faith who “encouraged her son to read” the Bible. The Newman’s seemed to have cultivated a happy home, despite living with the threat of war due to Bonaparte’s imperial ambitions in 1803. One of Newman’s earliest memories came from this period; he recalled “seeing lighted candles in the windows of his and other houses to celebrate victory in the battle of Trafalgar.”

23 Ibid., 32. Newman’s background differed from that of Peel who had risen from the commercial middle classes into the aristocracy.

24 Ibid.

25 Newman had five siblings—Charles (1802-1884), Harriet (1803-1852) Francis (1805-1897), Jemima (1808-1879) and Mary (1809-1828); Francis became a rival, while Mary was a close favorite.


27 Martin, Newman, 11. As Evans (Modern Britain, 130) has pointed out, this battle, in which Horatio Nelson defeated Bonaparte’s “Franco-Spanish fleet off Cape Trafalgar” in 1805, was an important turning point in the Napoleonic wars.
Peel, Newman and the Reaction to Revolution

After leaving Harrow, Peel matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford in 1804-1805. Peel, an excellent student, graduated in 1808 with a double first in Classics and Mathematics, “the first person known to have achieved this intellectual feat.”28 Soon after graduating, Peel followed his father into politics. Through the influence of his father and Arthur Wellesley—later the Duke of Wellington—Peel was elected MP of a “rotten borough;”29 Cashel City in Ireland.30 As Evans observed:

There was nothing unusual about well-connected men getting into the Parliament in their early twenties. Nor was it surprising that Peel should have been a Tory. Quite apart from this father’s convictions, the overwhelming majority of men of property had been thoroughly alarmed by the democratic implications of the French Revolution and saw support for a firm party of order, such as had been fashioned by Pitt the Younger in the years after 1794, as the best guarantee that the contagion of the Revolution would not spread to Britain. Peel was easily persuaded of the justice of the Tory cause. Its anti-reformist ideology and the reputation of order and administrative efficiency built up by Pitt [who was a Whig] suited both Peel’s talents and his temperament.31 Peel’s choice of political party revealed the tenor of the times. Movement between political parties—Tory and Whig—had been fluid in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The Whigs were ascendant, at least nominally, for most of that period. During the Napoleonic Wars, however, partisan lines began to be drawn. Not only did war reshape the political landscape, but British political radicalism, inspired by

28 Ibid.

29 Evans (Peel, 100) defined “rotten borough” as a “term used often quite vaguely, to denote Parliamentary constituencies with few voters and usually controlled (‘managed’) by a large land owner or the Crown.”

30 Ibid., 6.

31 Evans, Peel, 6-7.
Thomas Paine, Revolutionary France, and economic unrest, alarmed both parties.\textsuperscript{32} Both parties were populated by the wealthy and the landed. Both were concerned about the protests, speeches, and events triggered by international and domestic strife. However, one faction of the Whigs had been consistently sympathetic to the ideals of the Revolution and remained so to an extent. Other Whigs, e.g., votaries of Burke and of Pitt, who did not share this sympathy, migrated to and aided in the resurgence of the Tory party. The Tories\textsuperscript{33} gradually emerged as the reactionary party that responded to revolutionary challenges of the day.\textsuperscript{34}

By fortune and by political skill—in debate and in administration—Peel, a Tory backbencher, advanced ranks quickly. In 1810, he was Under-Secretary of War and the Colonies and by 1812, he was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland in the Liverpool Administration (1812-1827). This was an important post for such a young man: “Peel remained Chief Secretary for six years, the longest tenure of the post in the nineteenth century, during which time his resilience and his political skills were fully tested.”\textsuperscript{35}

Peel worked tirelessly to consolidate the differences between the recently unified nations. One approach to bridging differences concerned Irish education. The Liverpool Administration pushed the imposition of a nationally administered “mixed”—Catholic

\textsuperscript{32} Evans, \textit{Modern Britain}, 153.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid. Because “Tory” connoted a variety of meanings, some positive, some negative, it was “not regularly used as a descriptor of political attitudes until the late 1820’s.”

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 108-109; 153-155; 165-169.

\textsuperscript{35} Evans, \textit{Peel}, 7.
and Protestant—education system. This endeavor was supported by Peel, who in a speech concerning the Irish Budget in 1815, expressed his views on education:

No man can be more sensible than I am of the advantages that would result to Ireland from the general diffusion of education . . . . I am confident that it is the only measure to which parliament can look for the introduction of habits of industry and morality among the lower orders in Ireland. . . . I am convinced . . . that the only rational plan of education in Ireland, is one which should be extended impartially to children of all religious persuasions . . . one which, while it imparts general religious instruction, leaves those who are its objects to obtain their particular religious discipline elsewhere . . . Conclusive proofs have been afforded that the manner, character, and habits of a people are improved precisely in proportion to the diffusion of knowledge amongst them by a rational education . . . . I can conceive no more certain mode of effecting this most important object, than by adopting a judicious plan of general education.36

Peel’s argument for national education did not become policy—the British government was not ready to organize a social project on such a large scale. A “mixed” system in Ireland—which effaced religious differences between Catholics and Protestants—did not become reality until the 1830s. However, Peel’s speech showed his early attempt at a politically expedient solution to an apparently intractable problem.37

**Newman’s Religious Conversion**

While Peel was making a name for himself in the Liverpool administration, Newman was coming of age. From 1808-1816 he attended Dr. Nicholas’s school at

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37 Expediency became a Peelian hallmark and, in addition to his evolving views on education, was foundational to his Tamworth speech twenty-six years later.
Ealing. He was very bright boy, given to reading, writing, acting, and playing music.\(^{38}\) At school, Newman read Locke, Hume, and Thomas Paine, and briefly flirted with skepticism and radical ideas.\(^{39}\) However, he also fell under the influence of an Evangelical Anglican minister, Walter Mayers, whom he would later recall as “the human means of this beginning of divine faith in me.”\(^{40}\) He also attributed his religious growth to the writings of Thomas Scott, whose practical spirituality impressed upon him the importance of holiness.\(^{41}\)

Newman was summoned home from Ealing in 1816, a year that altered the course of his life. Britain—after defeating Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815—was experiencing post-war economic and social turmoil.\(^{42}\) Newman’s family was adversely affected in the post-war period. As Louis Bouyer explained, “One aftereffect of the economic and financial upheaval which followed the termination of the Napoleonic wars was to compel the Bank House of Messrs Ramsbottom, Newman & Co. to stop payment.”\(^{43}\) Although the bank eventually paid its creditors, Mr. Newman decided to leave the business. The


\(^{39}\) Newman, \textit{Apologia}, 15-16.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., 16.


\(^{42}\) Evans, \textit{Modern Britain}, 163-165.

Newman family was forced to liquidate property and send the younger children to live with relatives for a time.\textsuperscript{44} This experience deeply affected Newman, who temporarily felt the sting of poverty and uncertainty.

Newman returned to Ealing for the summer, where he experienced a profound religious conversion. He described it a half-century later in his \textit{Apologia Pro Vita Sua}:

When I was fifteen, (in the autumn of 1816), a great change of thought took place in me. I fell under the influences of a definite Creed, and received into my intellect impressions of dogma, which, through God's mercy, have never been effaced or obscured . . . . I received it [the doctrine of final perseverance]\textsuperscript{45} at once, and believed that the inward conversion of which I was conscious, (and of which I still am more certain than that I have hands and feet,) would last into the next life, and that I was elected to eternal glory. I have no consciousness that this belief had any tendency whatever to lead me to be careless about pleasing God. I retained it till the age of twenty-one, when it gradually faded away; but I believe that it had some influence on my opinions, in the direction of those childish imaginations which I have already mentioned, viz. in isolating me from the objects which surrounded me, in confirming me in my mistrust of the reality of material phenomena, and making me rest in the thought of two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator;—for while I considered myself predestined to salvation, my mind did not dwell upon others, as fancying them simply passed over, not predestined to eternal death. I only thought of the mercy to myself.\textsuperscript{46}

The family crisis as well as Mayers’s influence may have influenced Newman’s openness to God at this time. His conversion, however, was not \textit{sui generis}. According to Bouyer, as a child Newman had been aware of God’s presence as well as of certain

\textsuperscript{44} Dwight Culler, \textit{The Imperial Intellect} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 4.

\textsuperscript{45} Bouyer (\textit{Life and Spirituality}, 20) characterized this doctrine: “conversion being regarded as a sudden consciousness, on the part of the convert, of his predestined salvation.”

\textsuperscript{46} Newman, \textit{Apologia}, 16.
Christian doctrines derived from scripture; yet, his adolescent intellectual travails had eclipsed his awareness of God’s Presence:

The sense of God’s immediate and sovereign presence had been obliterated by the consciousness of his own growing intellectual powers. But now, behold! into a mind rendered mysteriously receptive by the solicitations of divine grace, there comes, to resuscitate that conviction, a wholly different doctrine operating in a manner that none but Newman could perceive. It would not only reawaken; it would transform, what in the child, was merely a passive impression, into a reasoned belief that was destined to remain an enduring factor in the life of the man.

Newman’s conversion led him to recognize a disordered form of “reason,” a type of skepticism that had recently taken hold of him in which self-reliance amounts to pride, and which refuses, on principle, to rely on any power external to itself. It was reason in this sense of the word, and reason very much alive in the boy John Henry, that lead him to turn away from Christ, not indeed in order to live a life of sensual indulgence, but rather to entrench himself in a virtuous independence that refuses to bow to anything or anybody.

Newman’s encounter with the divine produced a new awareness and abolished his vain “reason”:

“Myself and my Creator” imply no more than the recognition that the soul only escapes from what is harmful to it, from what has been vainly endeavoring to enslave it, by discovering that it belongs wholly to God, and that it is truly itself only in the light of God’s presence, God being its master, and the soul His and his alone.

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48 Ibid., 21-22.

49 Ibid., 19.

50 Bouyer, *Life and Spirituality*, 27
This was not simply a reawakening to God’s presence; Newman distinctly recognized that faith must have a doctrinal component:

First . . . from the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion: I know no other religion; I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion; religion, as a mere sentiment, is to me a dream and a mockery. As well can there be filial love without the fact of a father, as devotion without the fact of a Supreme Being. What I held in 1816, I held in 1833, and I hold in 1864. Please God, I shall hold it to the end.

Secondly, I was confident in the truth of a certain definite religious teaching, based upon this foundation of dogma; viz. that there was a visible Church, with sacraments and rites which are the channels of invisible grace. I thought that this was the doctrine of Scripture, of the early Church, and of the Anglican Church. Here again, I have not changed in opinion; I am as certain now on this point as I was in 1833, and have never ceased to be certain.51

This distinction between a hubristic reason and a faith utterly dependent on God through the Church’s creed formed the basic argument he leveled against rationalistic forms of religion for the rest of his life.52

Following his conversion experience, and in spite of his family’s economic situation, Newman’s father was able to find work as a brew master and the means to enroll his son at Trinity College, Oxford, in December 1816. However, Newman did not enter college until the summer of 1817, when rooms became available. Soon after arriving at Oxford, Newman sent word home to his father about his new life at Oxford; he assured his parents that he was in good stead. A week after he had settled in, Newman sent his father an update that contained several amusing observations plus a comment about Robert Peel:

51 Newman, Apologia, 49-52.

52 Twenty-five years later, this conversion event and this distinction were fundamental to Newman’s Catholicus letters.
Almost all the—boys I was going to say, have left or are leaving College. Next week I suppose it will be quite a rare sight for a Collegian to be seen in the streets. Among the rest Thresher goes tomorrow. I suppose I shall leave next Monday week.

Tell Mama, that having had for these last two or three days a cold, I have not immerged myself, that the said ‘Commoner’s’ name is Bowden, and that he went this morning, and lastly that H. [Hans Henry Hamilton] has squeezed through his examination. I was in a very good place in the theatre yesterday. Tell Charles he would have liked to have seen the noblemen’s dresses, as also the I-do-not-know-what-they-were, very fat men, I suppose DDs, in red robes, or scarlet, and the Proctors with sheepsskins. Mr Peel was made a Doctor of Laws by the Vice Chancellor.\footnote{LD, 1:37.}

\textbf{Peel, Member of Parliament for Oxford}

Newman, who had watched Peel receive his honorary degree from the balcony of Oxford’s Sheldonian theater, did not elaborate on the significance of this conferral. Peel was granted the degree two weeks after being selected MP for Oxford—a coveted political position. He had been invited to represent Oxford, in part, because of his recent stand against Catholic Emancipation.

Peel’s difficult tenure in Ireland soon ended. He attempted to reform some of the economic and fiscal problems endemic to the country. However, the British oppression of Catholics remained the most significant issue which he confronted.\footnote{Evans, \textit{Peel}, 10.} Peel continued to support the Act of Union (1800) which had codified religious discrimination and thus could not accept Irish Catholics’ desire for greater political equality. In May 1817, Peel responded on the floor of Parliament to a new call by the Whigs for Catholic Emancipation. He offered a devastating critique against extending political liberty to
Ireland; he argued that if Irish Catholics achieved parity they would disrupt the delicate political balance of Church and State in Britain; indeed, they would usurp the Church of England’s favored status:

    Do you think that when they [Irish Catholics] constitute, as they must do . . . by far the most powerful body in Ireland—the body most controlling and directing the government of it—do you think, I say, that they will view with satisfaction of your Church of their own?55

Peel’s speech, and overall leadership in Ireland, thrust him into the political limelight—and Oxford noticed. According to Norman Gash, Peel’s reputation as a defender of Anglican orthodoxy was not the only reason for his election by Oxford—rather it was the University’s dissatisfaction with the other candidates. Nevertheless, his apparently strong Protestant stance gave him an edge and in effect won him the seat.56

According to Evans, however, this was a pyrrhic victory:

    His policies on law and order in Ireland and against Catholic emancipation… conveyed the impression that he was a natural leader for the more extreme anti-Catholic Tories in Westminster. In reality, Peel was too ambitious and too shrewd to hitch himself irredeemably to a cause which might well be a political dead-end. Ultimately, however, he was to pay a heavy price for his reputation as an unswerving Protestant.57

Although Newman did not recognize Peel’s significance that day, during the coming years he would come to accept Peel’s reputation as a dogged champion of the Church of England. This impression, however, would vanish as a result of Peel’s support

55 This portion of Peel’s debate on the floor of Parliament was cited by Norman Gash, Mr. Secretary Peel: the Life of Sir Robert Peel to 1830 (Longmans, Green & Co., 1961), 208; hereafter cited, Secretary.

56 Gash, Secretary, 214-216.

57 Evans, Peel, 11.
of Catholic Emancipation in 1829. This was the first major political defeat for Peel, and Newman would play a minor role in Peel’s demise.

However, in the 1820s, Peel enjoyed tremendous political success. Soon after he became MP for Oxford, he resigned from his secretariat and transformed his career by becoming an expert in fiscal policy and legal reform. Peel supported *laissez-faire* economics and adopted Adam Smith’s and David Ricardo’s notions of free markets and worked in concert with William Huskingsson.\(^{58}\) Peel also led a committee that reformed banking practice that put the country back onto a gold standard. His work marked “What was to become the dominant financial wisdom of the Victorian age—a sound, metal-based currency, buttressed by cheap government, balanced books and eventually low rates of direct and indirect taxation . . .”.\(^{59}\)

In 1820 Peel married Julia Floyd. By 1822, he had risen to a cabinet post, becoming Liverpool’s Home Secretary. His ascension in concert with other like-minded men, initiated what became known as Liberal Toryism—“broadly reformist policies adopted both in domestic and foreign affairs.”\(^{60}\) Although this Toryism was forward looking, it was also a return to Pitt’s policies, which had been interrupted due to the events of 1789. According to Evans, these two generations were connected:

“The French Revolution had a . . . profound, polarizing effect on the generations of Liverpool and Peel. Wealthy politicians born between about 1770 and 1800

\(^{58}\) Ibid., 12-13. Biographical entries for Ricardo and Huskingsson as well as for most other prominent individuals in this dissertation can be located in Appendix II.


\(^{60}\) Ibid., 14.
sincerely believed that they were engaged in a desperate struggle to uphold the old order, hereditary privilege and civilized values against what that quintessentially anti-French Revolutionary warrior Edmund Burke called the ‘rash and speculative’ opinion threatening to destroy the world they knew. Liberal Toryism in the 1820’s might more appropriately be seen as the first, cautious recognition that old world had not been destroyed and that, after Napoleon’s defeat . . . governments could safely adapt to change rather than manning what some were beginning to see as anachronistic barricades.61

Following Pitt’s line, Peel sought throughout the decade effective ways to reduce legal redundancies that had accumulated during the wars, streamline jury selection, reform prisons, and establish a police force in London.62 In order to accomplish these reforms, Peel came to depend on some radical thinkers. Although he detested the political radicalism engendered by the Revolution, he was not so ideologically rigid as to reject reform ideas which he believed were rational and effective. For Peel, rationality and efficiency trumped ideology and party. This was especially true when Peel became acquainted with work of Jeremy Bentham—the radical reformer and architect of secular Utilitarian thought. Peel eschewed Bentham’s politics, yet he was interested in Bentham’s proposals for a rational approach to law and government. The two men corresponded throughout the 1820’s, forging a personal relationship before Bentham’s death in 1832.63

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61 Evans, 15-16.

62 Ibid., 16-19.

63 Gash, Secretary, 332-334. Perhaps the exchanges with Bentham had influenced Peel’s thinking. In any case, in his Catholicus letters, Newman detected elements of Bentham’s thought in Peel’s speech.
Newman at Oxford

Newman was affected, at least indirectly, by this political climate. Because of his parents’ social standing and his father’s profession, he seemed to have assimilated a basic British conservatism—respect for “Church and King.” For much of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, this conservatism was shared by both Whigs and Tories, the upper and the middle classes. The politics of “Church and King” comprised the political aspect of his social imaginary. His experiences at Oxford in the post war years expanded this conservatism. He also imbibed the post-war Liberal Toryism—an attitude favorable towards modest reform but reactionary towards radicalism—espoused and practiced at Oxford, especially by its new MP, Robert Peel. Yet, as the 1820’s unfolded, Newman found that there were limits to how far liberal Toryism could extend.

In the wake of his conversion, Newman was intent on developing his religious life and focusing on his studies. He did not become involved with the politics of the day. He competed for and won a scholarship at Trinity College. As a student, he was known for eschewing the usual carousing of Oxford’s elites and committing himself to serious study under his tutor, Thomas Short.64 During his final examinations for the baccalaureate, however, he imploded under the weight of his own self-imposed, arduous habits of study and expectations:

When the result list came out, Newman’s name did not appear on the Mathematical side at all, and in Classics it was in the lower division of the second class, known contemptuously as being ‘under-the-line.’65

64 Martin, Newman, 20-22.

65 Ibid., 23.
After eking out a degree at Oxford, Newman reconsidered his father’s wish that he should embark on a career in law—he had already entered Lincoln’s Inn in 1819; however, “Newman’s failure in the examination schools and his increasing religious convictions enabled him to persuade his father to sanction the prospect of Newman taking Orders.”\(^{66}\) In 1821, Newman audited classes and privately tutored pupils; the same year, his father declared bankruptcy and again the Newman family was singed with straightened circumstances. Despite these hardships, or because of them, Newman devised a bold move to stand for a Fellowship at Oriel College. To everyone’s amazement, considering his debacle on his baccalaureate examinations, he succeeded. In 1822, Newman was elected a Fellow at Oxford’s most prestigious college—which ensured his own financial stability and enabled him to help his family.\(^{67}\)

While an Oriel Fellow, Newman began to migrate away from the evangelical doctrines that had so impressed him under the influence of Mayers. In 1824, he was ordained a deacon and obtained a curacy at St. Clement’s parish, Oxford. Working with the poor and sick, Newman soon abandoned the Calvinist notion that divided “humanity into the saved and reprobate.”\(^{68}\) Rather, he discovered the parishioners of St. Clement’s

\(^{66}\) Martin, Newman, 25.

\(^{67}\) Ibid., 25-27.

were “more or less converted to God.”⁶⁹ He also fell under influence of the prominent Oriel “Noetics,” Richard Whately and Edward Hawkins.⁷⁰ Whately befriended the new Fellow, while also teaching him the language and method of empiricist epistemology and Aristotelian logic.⁷¹ Hawkins challenged Newman theologically to see the important role of history and tradition as well as apostolic teaching and the visible Church.⁷² Newman later recounted that it was Hawkins who “routed out evangelical doctrines” from his creed.⁷³ On 29 May 1825, Newman was ordained a priest of the Church of England.

The following year Newman was appointed a tutor at Oriel College. This position afforded him financial stability and allowed him to continue his pastoral work. Newman pursued his new role with vigor. His exuberance and personalist pedagogy, however, were not appealing to all of the students at Oriel. Nor did Oriel’s newly elected Provost

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> We find that Newman entered parochial ministry with a strong evangelical predisposition, but through the personal experiences of his parishioners’ conversions, combined with the intellectual effects of his interpersonal relationships with his Oxford friends . . . he was moved to question major tenets of evangelical doctrine, finally rejecting them.


and his former mentor, Edward Hawkins, agree with Newman’s handling of the tutorship.\footnote{74} Newman was eventually relieved of his tutorial duties. Before this happened, however, Newman was installed by the Bishop of Oxford as Vicar of St. Mary’s Church in 1828.

**Catholic Emancipation**

As Newman attained greater prominence at Oxford, Peel’s fortunes shifted. In 1827, after Liverpool suffered a stroke, George IV appointed George Canning to head a government. Canning advocated Catholic Emancipation and Peel resigned in protest. However, Canning’s government was short lived and George IV summoned the hero of Waterloo, Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington to form a new government. Peel had long been an ally of Wellington and returned to the cabinet as Home Secretary.\footnote{75}

Wellington was a military man and did not adapt well to a position that required tact and delicacy. His Whig opponents knew this and immediately challenged him. The issue upon which they made their stand was political equality for Dissenters or Nonconformists—people who were not members of the Church of England. The Whigs proposed to repeal the long standing Test and Corporation Acts, which had long prohibited those who did not explicitly adhere to the doctrines of the Church of England.


\footnote{75}{Evans, *Modern Britain*, 205-206.}
from holding political office.\textsuperscript{76} In calling for change, the Whigs exploited the main weakness of the Liberal Tories. While they had made modest economic and legal reforms, the Tories left untouched the powder keg of religious and political equality. According to Evans,

\begin{quote}
\ldots it was becoming difficult to avoid the eruption of important political divisions within the Tory party over religious policy. From 1827, they shattered increasingly glassy party unity and, in doing so, set Peel’s career on a course at once more prominent and yet more contentious.\textsuperscript{77}
\end{quote}

Peel and Wellington let the repeal pass. Soon after, they were caught unawares for, as Machin has noted, “Whig politicians . . . wished to bring about the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in order to form a breach in the constitution so that Catholics might more fully enter in.”\textsuperscript{78} However, the Whigs did not have to initiate proceedings for emancipation. Rather, they allowed Wellington’s impetuousness to do it for them.

In 1829, Wellington’s cabinet splintered. There had been a standing rivalry between Wellington and Husskinson, and the latter lost out. Several other Liberal Tories departed in protest. As Evans has pointed out:

\begin{quote}
At a stroke Wellington had lost the balance which Peel considered vital for the ministry’s survival . . . . The law of unintended consequences links the departure of the Huskinssonites with Catholic Emancipation. Peel suggested that Wellington replace [one of them] with Vesey Fitzgerald . . . . By the convention of the times, MPs accepting ministerial office had to submit themselves to their constituents for re-election.\textsuperscript{79}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 108.

\textsuperscript{77} Evans, \textit{Peel}, 20.

\textsuperscript{78} Machin, \textit{Politics and the Churches}, 20.

\textsuperscript{79} Evans, \textit{Modern Britain}, 208.
Fitzgerald, whose seat was in Ireland, was challenged by the Catholic nationalist and Peel adversary, Daniel O’Connell. O’Connell won in landslide; however, he could not join Parliament because of his religion. A crisis ensued. Wellington and Peel had inflicted this wound upon themselves.

Ireland became inflamed and the granting of Catholic Emancipation was soon inevitable.

The Emancipation Act of 1829 satisfied neither side. ‘Protestants’ screamed ‘betrayal’, mostly at Peel, whom the Ultras never fully trusted again . . . . Tory unity was shattered. The Catholics believed that what Emancipation had granted with one hand had been taken away with the other [because they were still denied key positions and lacked certain rights].

Peel’s constituents at Oxford “screamed betrayal”; one of those who protested Peel’s volte-face was Newman. He had seen Peel inaugurated as a champion of the University and of the Church while an impressionable boy of sixteen.

Peel’s “betrayal” shocked Newman, who relished the part he played in ousting Peel—now seen by him as a “Rat”—from Oxford. Indeed, it was Newman’s entry into political activism; as he recounted to his mother:

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80 “Ultra-Tories” were reactionary Tories, who did not want or accept social or political change, especially in the Church-State alliance.

81 Evans, Modern Britain, 208.

82 On the actual policy of emancipation itself, Newman (LD, 2:118) was ambivalent. He saw it primarily as a political issue which did not yield a simple solution. At that time, Newman stressed that he was resolutely anti-Catholic and only supported emancipation to avoid rebellion; however, he also thought that with emancipation the contrasts between the Church of England and Rome would be clearer: “I may take my stand against the foes of the Church on better ground, instead of fighting at a disadvantage” (LD, 2:132).
We have achieved a glorious Victory. It is the first public event I have been concerned in, and I thank God from my heart both for my cause and its success. We have proved the independence of the Church and of Oxford. So rarely is either of the two in opposition to Government, that not once in fifty years can independent principle be shown; yet in these times, when its existence has been generally doubted, the moral power we shall gain by it cannot be overestimated. . . . No wonder that such as I, who have not, and others who have, definite opinions in favour of Catholic Emancipation, should feel we have a much nearer and holier interest than the pacification of Ireland, and should with all our might resist the attempt to put us under the feet of the Duke and Mr Brougham. 84

Well, the poor defenceless Church has borne the brunt of it—and I see in it the strength and unity of Churchmen—An hostile account in one of the Papers says, ‘High and Low Church have joined, being set on ejecting Mr Peel.’ 85

Following Peel’s defeat, Newman again wrote his mother about his concerns over state intervention in the Church. He made an insightful connection between the politics of Catholic Emancipation and universal education; if radical reformers like Henry Brougham supported emancipation, it meant that other radical policies—like expanded suffrage, nationalized education, and Church reform—were close behind. Writing to his mother on 13 March 1829, Newman stated:

. . . My mind is so full of ideas [[in consequence of this important event]] . . .

83 Ibid.

84 This was Newman’s first mention in his letters and diaries of Henry Brougham (1778-1868), a leading Whig politician with radical leanings. That Newman connected the reform of Peel and Wellington to Henry Brougham was significant. Brougham had tirelessly pushed reform on several fronts—education, politics, religious equality, etc. He had been hostile to the preserve of Oxford and the Church of England and Newman was aware of this. In his Catholicus letters, Newman satirically tied Peel to Brougham.

85 JHN to Mrs. Newman (1 March 1829), LD, 2:125-126. For the entire text of this and other significant letters from this period see Appendix III.
We live in a novel era—one in which there is an advance towards universal education. Men have hitherto depended on others, and especially on the Clergy, for religious truth; now each man attempts to judge for himself. Now, without meaning of course that Christianity is in itself opposed to free inquiry, still I think it in fact at the present time opposed to the particular form which that liberty of thought has now assumed. Christianity is of faith, modesty, lowliness, subordination; but the spirit at work against it is one of latitudinarianism, indifferentism, republicanism, and schism, a spirit which tends to overthrow doctrine . . . . All parties seem to acknowledge that the stream of opinion is setting against the Church. I do believe it will ultimately be separated from the State, and at this prospect I look with apprehension . . . . Yet I do still think there is a promise of preservation to the Church, and, in its sacraments preceding and attending religious education, there are such means of heavenly grace, that I do not doubt it will live on in the most irreligious and atheistical times.

And now I come to another phenomenon; the talent of the day is against the Church. The Church party, (visibly at least, for there may be latent talent, and great times give birth to great men,) is poor in mental endowments. It has not activity, shrewdness, dexterity, eloquence, practical powers. On what then does it depend? on prejudice and bigotry. This is hardly an exaggeration; yet I have good meaning and one honorable to the Church.

Newman’s concerns were not about the benefits of education like those he had obtained. Rather, he what he detected in “universal education” was a means to promote the rationalism which he rejected but about which had become acutely alarmed. For him, true education guided by right reasoning received vitality from faith. Thus, there was an ecclesial dimension to his conviction, insofar as faith flowed from God through the Church and its traditions. “Universal education,” separated from faith and the Church, would be a disaster for society.

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86 Newman had been concerned with the rise of secular “universal education” since his days at Oxford; see Arthur and Nichols (John Henry Newman, 20-22).

87 LD, 2:129-130.
The outcome of Catholic Emancipation reverberated down to 1841. Peel had never fully accepted the mantle as the defender of orthodoxy because he did not possess strong religious convictions. He tolerated the Ultras and the High Church for the sake of building political coalition but privately he loathed their unbending beliefs. This attitude allowed him to reverse on Emancipation despite Tory protest. As Evans has noted:

Peel suffered for discounting their arguments. Peel was extremely able, but he was also proud, could be arrogant and found empathy with those of contrary view extremely difficult. A fatal flaw in his character was that, once convinced himself of the validity of an argument, he tended to regard it as proven and those who were not convinced as either mischievous or intellectually inferior.  

Peel had long since assented to a rationalist religion—the kind which Newman had made his life’s work to overcome. Indeed, Peel’s Tamworth speech of 1841 was one of the only public declarations of his religious views which were consistent with what he had held as a young man. Norman Gash has summarized his views:

Because religion to him meant in effect duty and conduct, Peel also had faith in the progress of society and the spread of education and scientific knowledge. With so little dogmatic content to his own mind, he apprehended no danger to religion from the growth of secular knowledge. Indeed he welcomed it as a means of curing some of the evils and bringing some of the divisions of his troubled contemporary society. In his speech when opening the Tamworth Reading Room in 1841 he asserted that there was nothing in knowledge which should harm religious belief. Only unwise men and fools formed unworthy conclusions of Divine nature and the Divine universe; and he expressed his conviction of the harmony of the Christian dispensation with all that reason assisted by revelation told them of the course and constitution of Nature. In religion as in politics Peel was essentially robust, optimistic, unmetaphysical and practical.  

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The Reform Act and the Oxford Movement

Newman’s fears in 1829 about the relationship of Church and State materialized in the 1830’s. As Peter Nockles has observed:

Oxford’s repudiation of Peel in 1829... marks more accurately the true origin of the Oxford Movement than Keble’s 1833 Assize Sermon... For it was the campaign against Peel that first brought together the future Tractarian constellation on the basis of political discontent underpinned by moral principle.90

Although the Tractarians were concerned about ecclesiastical reform on the basis of principles drawn from the Apostolic Church, they were increasingly uneasy about the relationship that was developing between the Church and State. Education and Church governance became the arena in which they confronted the state.

In 1832, the Whigs sponsored a Reform Act, which, by granting broader political rights to the middle classes and consolidating “rotten boroughs,” overturned the political landscape. Although the Act was widely heralded—and feared by many in the Aristocracy—it only brought about modest changes. What was more important was what the Act signified and initiated: an age of social reform. The previous decade had been characterized by a return to fiscal stability, governmental reform, and a reaction to radicalism. The Reform Act brought with it calls for the transformation of many aspects of society.91

90 Peter Nockles, “‘Church and King’: Tractarian Politics Reappraised” in From Oxford to the People, edited by Paul Vaiss (Leominster, England: Fowler Wright Books, 1996), 96-97. Proponents of the Oxford Movement were also called “Tractarians” after the Tracts for the Times (1833-1841) which were written by different authors about the theology and aims of the movement; Newman wrote thirty of the ninety Tracts.

91 Evans, Modern Britain, 214-219.
Although the Oxford Movement had its roots in the battles of 1829, it began to blossom in 1833. In the wake of the Reform Act, members of the Movement, distinguishing themselves from the Ultras and High Churchmen, increasingly believed that an Erastian\(^{92}\) state could no longer be a trusted ally for the Church. Their position was fraught with irony. The Oxford Movement arose and grew in reaction to what its participants saw as radical social reforms which increased the State’s power. Yet the Movement’s response was not reactionary; rather it conformed to the age by advocating reform—not, however, of the state but of the Church.

In December 1832, six months after the Reform Act passed, Newman began a Mediterranean voyage with his colleague, Hurrell Froude and Froude’s father. This was his first journey outside England.\(^{93}\) On returning from his travels in the Mediterranean, Newman recognized the beginning of a protest movement at Oxford:

> The following Sunday, July 14th, Mr. Keble preached the Assize Sermon in the University Pulpit. It was published under the title of ‘National Apostasy.’\(^{94}\) I have ever considered and kept the day, as the start of the religious movement of 1833.\(^{95}\)


\(^{94}\) Newman, \textit{Apologia}, 41, n. 1. Keble believed that the state usurped the rights of the Church, and reacted to the government’s decision to suppress several Irish Bishoprics.
Newman soon joined the Oxford Movement and, as Ian Ker has observed, began “revealing himself as the master strategist.” The ecclesiastical reforms which Newman and his allies proposed consisted in a return to the Fathers, a foray into “red-hot Tractarianism” and the construction of the *Via Media.*

In tandem with these intense efforts, Newman continued his pastoral ministry, preaching weekly at St. Mary’s Church in Oxford. Indeed, his sermons complemented the *Tracts,* addressing the practical and spiritual dimension of the Oxford Movement. As James Tolhurst has insisted:

Newman . . . [demonstrated] a very rare capability of combining academic work with pastoral concern, and allowing each to influence the other. Without this interaction, the idea of the Church as a living community would have remained largely idealistic. Newman regarded his ministry . . . as the working out of his study and meditation so as to form a real and personal community . . . . Newman in his approach, sought to widen the ambit of priestly work. The whole range of activities, literary, homilectic, pastoral, and administrative were seen as part of the ministry.

Finally, because of his interest in the early Church and because of his efforts in the Movement, Newman felt compelled to reconsider his views about the Church. He eventually developed an ecclesiology that would occupy his attention throughout the

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96 Ker, *Biography,* 81

97 Ibid., 90.

1830’s—the Via Media. Newman’s Via Media sought to present the Anglican Church as the “middle course” between Protestant Christianity and Roman Catholicism. Yet, as Tolhurst has pointed out:

[The] concept of the via Media was not simply a new middle course between Romanism and Protestantism, but something far more original. Newman, in fact, sought for a new synthesis which could unite that spiritual communion of saints, with the revivified organic system of the Church which he saw in the writings of the Fathers.

Peel and the Conservative Ascendancy

Peel’s father died in 1830 and his baronetcy passed to his son. Now Sir Robert, he also succeeded his father as the MP for Tamworth, which had been his family home

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Fundamental to Anglo-Catholicism were the tenets that the Church of Christ must exist visibly in the world today, and that it must be both Catholic and apostolic. To defend these tenets against the objections coming respectively from the Protestant and Roman sides, Newman and his colleagues maintained that the Catholic Church had three branches: Orthodox, Roman, and Anglican, all of them stemming for the undivided Church of the first centuries. In relation to Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, Anglicanism represented a middle path, a via media, avoiding the errors of the two extremes. Protestants, with their biblicalism, fell short of recognizing the full content of faith as formulated in the creeds and dogmas of the early councils. Roman Catholics, by contrast, had overlaid the pure doctrine of the ancient Church with accretions that had no basis in Scripture or early tradition. Thus the Anglican communion, while not lacking Catholicity, could regard itself as the one in which the mark of apostolicity was most perfectly verified.

for decades. While Newman was involved in the Oxford Movement, Peel had gradually begun to rehabilitate his political standing following Catholic Emancipation.¹⁰¹

Peel, along with his party, had resisted the Reform Act. He knew that he could not be seen as a Tory apostate again. However, after the passage of the Reform Act, he saw an opening as a conservative reformer.¹⁰² Evans has summarized Peel’s strategy:

Peel’s political objectives in the 1830’s were threefold: first, to strengthen government and put ‘public opinion’ in its place; second to ensure so far was possible since he was out of office, that necessary changes strengthened, rather than weakened both the Constitution and Britain’s governing elite; third to dispel the image of the Tory party as one of narrow reaction supported only by a small, unrepresentative proportion of the population.¹⁰³

This third objective was crucial. Peel, the son of manufacturer, had never been part of the landed aristocracy and to some degree, he resented their parochial habits—in religion and in politics. Although he never got his hands dirty at the factory, he knew that change was essential to industrialization. Indeed, his rearing must have had a lasting effect on how he thought and governed—grudging acceptance of the landed, promoting forward looking policies, and adapting to what seemed the most rational course of action.

¹⁰¹ Evans, Peel, 28-29.

¹⁰² According to Evans (Peel, 42), Peel began a “Conservative” faction within the Tory party in the early 1830’s. The terms “Tory” and “Conservative,” although distinct, were often used interchangeably. James J. Sack, (“The Quarterly Review and the Baptism of the ‘Conservative Party’—a Conundrum Resolved,” Victorian Periodicals Review, 24/4 [Winter, 1991]: 170-172), has traced how this label gained political currency.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 33.
In 1834, a series of reforms, e.g., the Poor Law, were initiated in order to address the “rapid changes being brought about by the industrial revolution.” Peel was asked by William IV to serve as First Lord of the Treasury. After a brief “Hundred Days” ministry, Peel resigned because he did not believe that he had the support in the Commons to govern effectively. His only lasting accomplishment during his tenure was the establishment of an Ecclesiastical Commission. The commission was to enact what Peel and other politicians saw as much needed church reform. For Newman and his Oxford conspirators this was but another insidious instance of Erastianism.

Peel also exploited his time in office to advance conservative solutions for reform. His “Tamworth Manifesto” in 1834 was “the logical out working of the message of 1832”; although addressed his local constituency, the speech was intended for the national stage. The Manifesto’s, appeal was to property owners and its message was that moderate reform was not a safe policy to pursue, but a necessary one if the essentials of Church and State

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104 According to Evans (Modern Britain, 288-289), the Poor Law Amendment Act “was designed to deal with two main problems”: the first was to address high unemployment among rural males; the second was to address the inefficient system of relief. The law had mixed results—it did not go far enough or address root problems

105 Evans, Peel, 31-32.

106 According to Evans (Peel, 34), the First Lord of the Treasury, was “until the mid-twentieth century… the senior official title of the prime minister.”

107 Ibid., 41.

108 LD, 5:24; 38.

109 Evans, Peel, 40.
were to be safeguarded . . . In this spirit, Peel committed his party to accepting Parliamentary reform, while continuing to reject democracy . . . entirely.

The Manifesto was addressed to those without firm party loyalties . . . . This bid for middle class votes was also a means of broadening the Tory appeal. [It] also aimed to appeal to all but the most bigoted Ultras.\textsuperscript{110}

By 1837, Peel had offered his outline of conservative political reforms and had begun to consolidate the party. For example, Peel actively cultivated a relationship with farming communities for political gains. As Gash has commented: “The movement for more scientific farming . . . resulted in the 1830s in the formation of innumerable local agricultural societies and farmers clubs.” These groups in turn formed political lobbies—generally in support of both parties; nonetheless, the agricultural sector increasingly drifted to the Conservative party:

By 1841 the consolidation of the agricultural interest within the Conservative party was almost complete. . . . In 1841 they provided a fundamental element in the party to whose victory at the polls he [Peel] owed his position as prime minister.\textsuperscript{111}

Peel also began to see that education was to become a battleground upon which Tories, Whigs, Radicals and the Church would meet. In November 1837, he wrote to his close friend John Wilson Crocker and reiterated his concern that direct state intervention in education would bring an end to religion. Peel expressed his belief that it was incumbent upon the Church to establish national education:

Education is the great question to which the public attention should be called . . . .

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 41.

\textsuperscript{111} Norman Gash, \textit{Aristocracy and the People: Britain 1815-1865} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 179-180.
Two material points. First, if there is to be a national system of education, excluding the direct intervention of the National Church (at least only tolerating its intervention), there is an end of the Church, and probably an end of any religious feeling at all ultimately.

But secondly, there is no ground on which the members of the Church, if united (lay and clerical) can so confidently and successfully defy agitation. They have it in their power to act independently of Sovereigns, Ministers, and Parliaments; to institute a system of education, based on instruction in the doctrines of the Church, which, if worked out with moderation and discretion, shall command much more of public confidence than any Government system founded on a different principle.

It won't suffice to abuse the Government plan.

There must be a cordial concert between the clergy and the laity, and a determination to undertake a duty which probably can only be well performed by voluntary exertions, unaided by Government. 112

These opinions seemed in line with Peel’s development of an expansive conservatism that began in 1834. In a speech at Merchant Taylor’s Hall in 1838, Peel provided a further refinement of his vision for reform conservatism:

We feel deeply and intimately that in the union of the conservative party in the country is one of the best guarantees for internal tranquillity and the maintenance of our ancient institutions . . . . By that union we shall best be enabled to maintain the mild predominance of the Protestant faith in this country and in every part of the United Kingdom. By that union we shall be enabled and by that alone to promote what we call conservative principles. If you ask me what I mean by conservative principles . . . I will, in conclusion, briefly state what I mean . . . .

By conservative principles I mean, that co-existent with equality of civil rights and privileges, there shall be an established religion and imperishable faith, and that that established religion shall maintain the doctrines of the Protestant Church. By conservative principles I mean, a steady resistance to every project which would divert church property from strictly spiritual uses. By conservative principles I mean, a maintenance of the settled institutions of church and state, and I mean also the maintenance, defence, and continuation of those laws, those

institutions, that society, and those habits and manners which have contributed to mould and form the character of Englishmen . . . . and the enjoyment of a national and pure form of religion, which is at once the consolation of the virtuous man, and is also the best guarantee which human institutions can afford for civil and religious liberty.\textsuperscript{113}

Although Peel had begun to gradually build consensus around his reform-minded ideas of conservatism, his achievements were beset by difficulties, notably in his dealings with Viscount Melbourne’s administration and the ascension of Melbourne’s political protégé Queen Victoria. Indeed, through the maneuverings of Melbourne, the young queen involved Peel in a politically embarrassing situation. John Prest has explained what has since become regarded as the “Bedchamber Crisis”:

In 1839, when the Whig majority fell to five . . . and the ministry resigned, Peel was unable to take Melbourne's place because the queen would not grant him the expression of confidence for which he asked—the dismissal of some (the queen thought he demanded all) of the Whig ladies of the bedchamber. Peel could have forced the issue, but given his respect for royalty he preferred to yield and allow Melbourne to carry on.\textsuperscript{114}

That same year Peel’s opinions on the state, religion and education appeared subtly to change. His convictions again became tempered by political expedience. This shift can be detected in his views on education. In 1839, the Established Church and ultra-Tories rallied to defeat a bill passed by Melbourne’s government which would have


laid the foundation for nationalized education. Peel did not side with the Ultras or the Church. He developed a nuanced position, which subtly shifted away from his prior pronouncements. As Richard Aldrich has observed: “Peel, on this occasion, did not oppose government intervention in education as such, nor did he engage in impassioned rhetoric about the virtues of the Church.”\textsuperscript{115} Peel opposed the Whig’s Committee of Council for education as essentially unconstitutional, but he felt that this did not exclude other ways in which a national policy might be implemented. Further, he sought only a modest concession for the Church to be involved in any future plan for education:\textsuperscript{116}

\begin{quote}
I disclaim, therefore, any intention to demand for the Church Establishment the right to interfere with the religion or the other institutions of those who are dissenters from its doctrines. This, however, I claim for the establishment, that no system of national education shall be founded, which studiously excludes from the superintendence and control of education, given to the children of the establishment, the dignitaries of the Established Church.\textsuperscript{117}
\end{quote}

Save for 1829, Peel believed that he had been a consistent proponent of conservative principles throughout his career. He altered course only where reason and prudence necessitated change. In spite of his repeated pledges to uphold the delicate balance of Church and State, over the course of the 1830s, an explicit shift emerged in Peel’s thinking. His intolerance for the Ultras and for religious zealotry became more pronounced. Accordingly, from the Ecclesiastical Commission to educational policy, the


\textsuperscript{116} According to Haly (\textit{Opinions}, 210-213), Peel clearly had shifted his position on education with respect to Dissenters and other sectarian groups.

\textsuperscript{117} \textit{The Speeches of the late Right Honorable Sir Robert Peel, Bart.} (London: George Rutledge and Co., 1853), 3:645.
Church would be increasingly subordinated to the aims of the secular ministrations of the state. Peel saw no other way.\textsuperscript{118} His desire was to transform the party and expand its base—and bigotry could not be a plank in the party platform. In many ways he was successful in achieving his goal, although with successes there came casualties.

These attitudes provided the background to Peel’s Tamworth address in 1841. His speech would reveal his wish for religion tempered and mediated by reason while appealing to educational and economic improvements designed to reach a wide audience. For Peel, the contents of the Tamworth address seemed fitting and uncontroversial. Many, however, did not share Peel’s sanguine views.

**Newman’s “Great Revolution of Mind”**

Newman’s work in the 1830’s resulted in personal and religious change. Similar to Peel’s, Newman’s transformation was gradual and in many ways implicit. Also like Peel, incidents and crises would make these changes explicit. Between 1839 and 1841, Newman faced increasingly critical questions about his role in the Oxford Movement.\textsuperscript{119} As well, suspicions that he was drifting from his native communion towards the Roman

\textsuperscript{118}Boyd Hilton (“Peel: A Reappraisal,” *The Historical Journal* 22/3 [September, 1979]: 585-614) claimed that once Peel became possessed of a conclusion he tended to be inflexible; Hilton’s primary focus was on Peel’s economic ideology, however, an analogue for his views about education and religion can be made.

\textsuperscript{119}For example, Newman wrote J. W. Bowden on 17 January 1840 that *The Record* had written something that was “most bitter (that's the only word) against Keble, and me [Newman], and the new volumes of Froude. They are past anger; they say we are far worse than the unspiritual High Church of the last century, as sinning more against light—\textit{i.e.} there was no ‘Record’ then” (*LD*, 7:216).
Catholic Church appeared in various letters and journals.\textsuperscript{120} Such criticism weighed heavily upon Newman, who at times seemed not to know what or whom to believe.\textsuperscript{121}

Newman continued to edit and write theological tracts that attempted to reassure the adherents of the Oxford Movement, while simultaneously provoking the wrath of his critics.\textsuperscript{122} Newman relished this role as a “controversialist” mediating between the goals and aspirations of the Oxford Movement and those who would question his loyalty to the Anglican tradition. Indeed, Newman had reached his apogee of influence within the Movement; as he later reminisced in his \textit{Apologia Pro Vita Sua}:

\begin{quote}
In the spring of 1839 my position in the Anglican Church was at its height. I had supreme confidence in my controversial status, and I had a great and still growing success, in recommending it to others.\textsuperscript{123}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{122} For example, Newman wrote to Mr. J.W. Bowden (\textit{LD}, 7:5), “by the by have you observed that most grotesque of pieces of news in the \textit{Christian Observer} of this month about me? One step alone is wanted – to say that I am the Pope \textit{ipsissimus} in disguise.” Gerard Tracey (Ibid), noted that apparently a “correspondent” had speculated about a connection between Newman and Wiseman, who was the Rector of the English College in Rome as well as a Professor of Oriental Languages; Wiseman’s article on the Donatists in the \textit{Dublin Review} in July 1839 made a great impression on Newman: “In January, if I recollect aright, in order to meet the popular clamour against myself and others, and to satisfy the Bishop, I had collected into one all the strong things which they, and especially I, had said against the Church of Rome, in order to their insertion among the advertisements appended to our publications” (\textit{Apologia}, 81).

\textsuperscript{123} Newman, \textit{Apologia}, 81.
However, Newman’s exalted “controversial status” was tenuous. Twenty-five years later, he interpreted this period in his life as a “great revolution of mind”—a period characterized by this poignant question: “For who can know himself, and the multitude of subtle influences which act upon him?”

This question seemingly permeated his mind and work during this time, thus underscoring what he could not have known then:

What will best describe my state of mind at the early part of 1839, is an Article in the British Critic for that April. I have looked over it now, for the first time since it was published; and have been struck by it for this reason:—it contains the last words which I ever spoke as an Anglican to Anglicans. It may now be read as my parting address and valediction, made to my friends. I little knew it at the time. It reviews the actual state of things, and it ends by looking towards the future.

**A Patristic Vacation**

Newman retreated for the “Long Vacation”: he decided to spend the summer in solitary study—reading Patristic Authors as well as the history of the Monophysite controversy of the fifth century. He was particularly, “absorbed in the doctrinal issue” raised by this crisis in the early Church. His interest in Christian antiquity was linked to his continued interest in the *Via Media*. However, unlike his past research which tended to reinforce his *Via Media* ecclesiology, towards the close of this “Long Vacation,” Newman’s studies evoked an “alarming” surge of “doubt” about “the tenableness of Anglicanism”:

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124 Ibid.

125 Ibid., 82.

126 Ibid., 96.

127 Ibid., 64-65.
My stronghold was Antiquity; now here, in the middle of the fifth century, I found, as it seemed to me, Christendom of the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries reflected. I saw my face in that mirror, and I was a Monophysite. The Church of the Via Media was in the position of the Oriental communion, Rome was, where she now is; and the Protestants were the Eutychians. Of all passages of history, since history has been, who would have thought of going to the sayings and doings of old Eutyches, that delirus senex, as (I think) Petavius calls him, and to the enormities of the unprincipled Dioscorus, in order to be converted to Rome!  

The doctrinal issue in the Monophysite controversy that alarmed Newman centered upon the varying interpretations of Christ’s natures. Newman discovered that both Eutyches and Dioscorus, radical successors of Cyril of Alexandria, had initiated a theological controversy at the council of Ephesus in 449. Newman recognized the Christological excesses of “the position of the Oriental communion”—most likely a reference to the Nestorians. To his astonishment, these two extreme positions fell to either side of the arguments given by the catholic “Fathers of Chalcedon”: Pope Leo’s “Tome” and certain of Cyril’s Christological formulations. In contrast to the “heretical positions,” Leo and Cyril presented Christ as having two natures that together form one nature after union” [monophysis]; hereafter cited: Early Church.

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128 Ibid., 96; delirus senex may be translated: “a senseless or wily old man.” Dionysius Petavius, the Latinized name of Denis Pétau, S.J. (1583-1652).


130 Chadwick, Early Church, 203.

131 Newman, Apologia, 97.
person. Newman’s discovery found expression in an incredible analogy, which he expressed in striking clarity:

It was difficult to make out how the Eutychians or Monophysites were heretics, unless Protestants and Anglicans were heretics also . . . . The drama of religion, and the combat of truth and error, were ever one and the same. The principles and proceedings of the Church now, were those of the Church then; the principles and proceedings of heretics then, were those of Protestants now. I found it so,—almost fearfully; there was an awful similitude, more awful, because so silent and unimpassioned, between the dead records of the past and the feverish chronicle of the present.133

Following this disquieting conclusion Newman experienced yet another occasion of doubt. In September, one of his friends, “an anxiously religious man,” pointed out some “palmary words of St. Augustine” embedded within an article published in the *Dublin Review* by a prominent Roman Catholic clergyman, Nicholas Wiseman.134 In this article, Wiseman drew a comparison between the Donatist controversy of Augustine’s day and the current divide between Roman Catholics and Anglicans. At first, Newman “did not see much in” the article, until his friend stressed Augustine’s words, *securus judicat orbis terrarum* (the whole world judges with assurance).135 With these words “ringing in [his] ears”136 Newman again perceived a profound analogy: the Roman Catholic Church—spread throughout the whole world—could make judgments about

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132 Chadwick, *Early Church*, 204.


134 Ibid., 98.


136 Ibid.
doctrinal matters with assurance in contrast to other churches, where—he increasingly perceived—heresy abounded. In dramatic fashion, Newman re-lived this threshold moment in his *Apologia*:

For a mere sentence, the words of St. Augustine, struck me with a power which I never had felt from any words before. To take a familiar instance, they were like the “Turn again Whittington” of the chime; or, to take a more serious one, they were like the ‘Tolle, lege,—Tolle, lege,’ of the child, which converted St. Augustine himself. ‘Securus judicat orbis terrarum!’ By those great words of the ancient Father, interpreting and summing up the long and varied course of ecclesiastical history, the theory of the *Via Media* was absolutely pulverized.  

These two occasions, or “sudden visitations”\(^\text{137}\) of doubt, effectively began to transform his Anglican identity, although the transformation was gradual.\(^\text{139}\) As he later recalled:

After a while, I got calm, and at length the vivid impression upon my imagination faded away . . . . The heavens had opened and closed again. The thought for the moment had been, ‘The Church of Rome will be found right after all;’ and then it had vanished. My old convictions remained as before.\(^\text{140}\)

Even with the reassurance of his “old convictions,” Newman would experience moments of doubt over the next few months, for example, finding himself in prayer for ecclesiastical unity with Rome\(^\text{141}\) and publishing a provocative exposition in January of

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\(^\text{138}\) Ibid., 98.


\(^\text{141}\) Ibid., 103.
1840, “On the Catholicity of the English Church.” Yet, his correspondence and other writings during this tumultuous period revealed that he was still seeking to maintain some form of Anglican identity that would distance himself from what he thought were the excesses of the Roman Catholic Church. As Ian Ker has remarked:

[Newman] wrote at greater length to [his sister] Jemima about his mood of despondency, which extended beyond Tractarian problems to the larger religious crisis of the time, of which he was so acutely aware in the midst of all his preoccupations with the progress of the Movement.  

This “religious crisis” precipitated two significant events. First, Newman “made arrangements for giving up [his editorship of] the British Critic, in the following July.” Second, during the interval between winter and spring 1840, Newman began to consider leaving his residence at Oriel College in Oxford and retiring to Littlemore—“between two and three miles distant from Oxford”—where he had built a small church. However, as Ker has observed, “He had no intention of severing his connections with Oxford. He could still take the Sunday afternoon service at St. Mary’s.” During these early spring months, Newman recognized that he would somehow have to justify his place in the Anglican Communion:

This was in March, 1840, when I went up to Littlemore. As it was a matter of life and death with us [the Movement], all risks must be run to show it. When the

142 Ibid., 107.
143 Ker, Biography, 193.
144 Newman, Apologia, 113.
145 Ibid., 109.
146 Ker, Biography, 195.
attempt was actually made, I had got reconciled to the prospect of it, and had no apprehensions as to the experiment; but in 1840, while my purpose was honest, and my grounds of reason satisfactory, I did nevertheless recognize that I was engaged in an *experimentum crucis*. I have no doubt that then I acknowledged to myself that it would be a trial of the Anglican Church, which it had never undergone before . . . .

Amidst the swirl of his bold experiment, Littlemore provided a refuge where he could discern the interior dilemma that had become evident to himself and to others.

Newman again considered resigning his post at St. Mary’s Church and retiring permanently to Littlemore in order to establish a monastic-like Anglican community. In October 1840, he sought the advice of his friend and mentor, John Keble, about this and other personal dilemmas. Listing reasons why he was inclined towards resignation, he explained that among other things he believed that he had lost his standing among his parishioners. More importantly, the Oxford establishment had “shown a

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148 According to Ker (*Biography*, 197-200), Newman, in his correspondence during this period and for the next seven months, revealed his crisis to others—in particular his exchange with Keble in the fall of 1840. As for Littlemore, it seems that Newman’s dreams of a monastic community were slow to materialize since he had acquired a mere “hovel such as St. Martin lived in or St. Basil” (Ibid., 197).

149 Ibid., 416. In his *Apologia* (109), Newman noted that he had been contemplating a departure from St. Mary’s since 1839. As vicar of St. Mary’s (1828-1843), Newman had pastoral responsibility for Littlemore, a village about three miles south of Oxford, where he supervised the construction of a church that was consecrated on 22 September 1836; the building, now enlarged, is still used as an Anglican church.

150 *LD*, 7:416-418.

151 Ibid., 7:417. Newman believed that he still held considerable sway over his Oxford students, although he felt that such influence was a distortion of his office as pastor of St. Mary’s and feared that his position would soon turn into a pseudo-university
dislike of [his] preaching” and some had begun to preach against his views—even from his own pulpit! In spite of harassments and despite his own doubts, Newman averred:

I cannot disguise from myself that my preaching is not calculated to defend that system of religion which has been received for 300 years, and of which the Heads of Houses are the legitimate maintainers in this place. They exclude me, as far as may be, from the University Pulpit; and, though I never have preached strong doctrine in it, they do so rightly, so far as this, that they understand that my sermons are calculated to undermine things established. I cannot disguise from myself that they are. No one will deny that most of my sermons are on moral subjects, not doctrinal; still I am leading my hearers to the Primitive Church, if you will, but not to the Church of England.152

Newman also explained to Keble that he believed certain topics in his tracts, articles, and sermons, as well as his activities in general, were disposing some Anglicans toward Rome.153 Newman had received several letters which confirmed this conviction.154

Keble responded over a week later. While taking into account Newman’s apprehensions, he advised him to remain at St. Mary’s. Keble did not believe that Newman had actually lost touch with his parish or had incited any conversions to Rome.


152 Ibid.

153 There is no mention of the apostolic origins of the Orthodox Church in the letter; however, Newman believed that the Orthodox had a place in true apostolic succession; see Ker, Biography, 61-62; 353-354.

154 Newman corresponded with those who were intrigued by his writings on the Roman Church; for example, on 19 October 1840 (LD, 7:407-408), he replied to several letters from Mary Holmes: “As to your questions about the Church of Rome, they are most pertinent; there is nothing unfair or extravagant in them, and you have a right to an answer.” Holmes had Newman as a spiritual director, “until her conversion to the Catholic Church in 1844”—the year prior to Newman’s own conversion (LD, 7:524).
Although the talk at Oxford had been rather sharp about Newman, Keble believed that a precipitous break from St. Mary’s would create more uproar than if Newman remained.\(^{155}\) Newman agreed—for the time being—nevertheless, he resolved to minimize his role at St. Mary’s, as well as to relinquish his editorship of the *British Critic*.\(^ {156}\) Four months after sharing his concerns with Keble, Newman became entangled in the controversy with Peel over their competing ideas and commitments about the relationship between Church and State, religious belief and knowledge.

**Newman and Peel: Idealists and Reformers**

In the decades leading up to the Tamworth controversy both men were shaped by the opportunities and circumstances of their age, although they were more than the sum of the accidents of history. At their core both were idealists: Peel was driven by the idea of service to the Crown and country by means of expedient governance; Newman by the fundamental relationship between God and persons and the Church as an oracle of God’s truth. They did not waver from these ideals. Each man was also a reformer advocating change: Peel sought economic and social reforms from a spectrum of principles and schools; Newman desired a return to apostolic principles: holiness, faith, and the Church. Their core convictions and their quests for change transformed them and the effects of these transformations can be found in their oblique encounter of 1841.

\(^{155}\) *LD*, 7:432.

In the years following their indirect encounter, Peel’s determination for efficient conservatism ended in a disastrous splintering of the Tory party and his departure from political leadership. Newman’s ideals—and his doubts about the *Via Media*—led him to the Roman Catholic Church. His conversion initiated a tumultuous yet successful vocation as an Oratorian priest.

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Chapter 2 – Adult Education and Peel’s Tamworth Address

Having briefly explored the lives of Sir Robert Peel and John Henry Newman, this chapter concentrates upon the adult education movement that undergird the establishment of the Tamworth institute, the events immediately surrounding Peel’s address, as well an interpretive summary of the address itself. The goal of this chapter is to provide context and also insight into Peel’s publically expressed views. Scholars have typically interpreted Peel’s views through the prism of his revised as a pamphlet or through the prism of Newman’s letters. This chapter will show how Peel framed his arguments and ideas in contrast to Newman’s eventual response in *The Times*.

**Sir Robert Peel in 1841**

The year 1841 was pivotal for Sir Robert Peel. Having weathered the Whig administrations throughout the 1830’s, he was poised to lead the Tories to victory in the coming months.¹ By the end of August 1841, Peel was swept into office as First Lord of the Treasury. In January of that year, however, he was still the leader of the opposition in the House of Commons. Along with his national political role, he was a Member of Parliament for Tamworth. In 1840-1841, Peel decided to contribute money, time, and his stature to his community.² Whether his decision was politically motivated—for Peel

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¹ According to Evans (*Peel*, 46-52), by 1841 Peel had consolidated power and the Tory party really had no choice other than to follow him.

² Norman Gash (*Aristocracy and the People*, 182) described Tamworth’s influence on Peel:
sensed that the Tories would eventually come to power—or a genuine expression of patronage, or some combination thereof, cannot be determined. However, by January 1841, Peel had made a substantial financial donation and a commitment to serve as President of Tamworth’s newly established library and reading room.

**The Adult Education Movement**

Institutions dedicated to reading, lectures, and research and open to all classes were not common in Peel’s England.\(^3\) For example, the Royal Society was the preserve of the landed or up-and-coming mercantile class.\(^4\) Libraries were not government-sponsored nor did they command broad public support; they were not considered a public good and were ignored or regarded by the landed and the learned as futile or even dangerous the working classes. The occasional funding of libraries depended upon either private individuals or private societies which promoted education or knowledge, such as Henry Brougham’s Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (S.D.U.K.).\(^5\)

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\(^4\) Ibid., 113.

\(^5\) Ibid., 165.
The Tamworth Library and Reading Room was initiated and erected through private benefaction. Although the institution was designed and paid for by benefactors, its foundation was not arbitrary or isolated; rather, it participated in the emerging adult education movement which had developed steadily in England since the 18th century.

Two sources sparked this movement. First, in spite of Burke’s protestations and Canning’s fears of Jacobinism, Enlightenment ideals had spread from the Continent to England. These ideals, inspired in part by French political theory, the philosophes’ encyclopedias, and the application of scientific discovery to manufacturing eventually “led to a demand by the working classes for wider educational opportunities.”

The second source flowed from Scotland, which had developed a robust, independent, and coherent education system superior to that in England. The Scottish system included tradesmen as well as the landed. A religious, rational, and discursive approach to education was promoted, which in turn spread to all classes in society.

The influence of the Continental and Scottish Enlightenments upon England soon became apparent. Outlets for lively conversation, lectures, and various print media circulated through coffee houses, Christian knowledge organizations, “working men’s libraries, book clubs, and mutual improvement societies . . . .” However, the core of the

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8 Kelly, History, 64-98; 117.
adult education movement took place in what were called mechanics’ institutes. Their principal architect was George Birkbeck, a physician and professor of Natural Philosophy at the Anderson Institute in Glasgow, Scotland. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Birkbeck decided to offer lecture courses and designed experiments for “mechanics.” The title “mechanic” generally extended to the British working class and the men with whom Birkbeck worked were not simply machine operators, but skilled craftsmen.\(^9\)

According to Thomas Kelly, Birkbeck’s decision to offer opportunities for these men had important consequences:

Just as these institutes may be regarded as a downward extension of middle-class literary and philosophical societies, so also they may be regarded as an upward extension of the movement of the elementary education of children, which drew widespread support . . . . From yet another point of view they may be looked on as an educational reflection of the new political and economic aspirations of the working classes—aspirations which were repressed during the French wars but found an outlet once more, in the post-war years, in trade unionism, in the socialist and co-operative movements, and in demands for parliamentary reform . . . .\(^10\)

Mechanics institutes were aided by Brougham’s tireless advocacy of utilitarian education, his S.D.U.K., as well as “penny” literature—cheap, digestible tracts on various scientific, political, and economic topics—to spread knowledge. The institutes, however, met with mixed success. Their initial and almost exclusive emphasis upon science, and affiliations with philosophic radicalism, almost scuttled the movement for two reasons: first, mechanics and workers did not have the time to pursue extensive scientific research and study; nor did they want such a restrictive program; second, “The Tories and the

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\(^9\) Ibid., 119; 117.

Church either stood aside or were openly hostile” to the movement. Despite these difficulties, mechanics’ institutes began to expand their mission in the 1830’s to include literature, politics, and in some cases music and other diversions. As a result they grew rapidly in popularity. By 1841, there were over 300 institutes in England alone. Of all the varieties of adult education in England, the Tamworth Library and Reading Room resembled the latest incarnation of mechanics’ institutes.

**Background to Peel’s Address**

Peel seems to have been a latecomer to the adult education movement. His father had worked with Robert Owen (1771-1858) to improve conditions for factory workers, and this included education. In contrast, the younger Peel had resisted Brougham’s push for adult education; however, his position evolved as he deliberately addressed himself not only to the aristocracy but to the professional mercantile and industrial middle classes. One of his great achievements had been to persuade large sections of those monied and respectable men that their true interest lay in maintaining the fundamental institutions of the aristocratic state and in the peaceful evolution of the mixed constitution left by the Reform Act. This was the more subtle and indirect aspect of Peel’s work; in the long run perhaps the most significant. The importance he attached to it was evident less in the main themes of Conservative propaganda than in the language of his speeches, in the direction of his arguments, in his choice and place and audience, and in his personal interests and inclinations. It was evident, for example . . . in his Tamworth Reading Room speech of 1841, which brought down on him the attacks of Tories and High Anglicans for its secular and utilitarian outlook.

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11 Ibid., 123.
12 Ibid., 125; 128.
13 Armytage, *Four Hundred Years of English Education*, 79.
By late 1840-1841, Peel’s political design to extend ideas and power into various classes and groups necessitated an expansion of his ideas. This was especially the case with education, which made some in his party uneasy. As Nina Burgis observed:

The existence within Peel's party of an older Toryism and a new progressive Conservatism, divided on many issues among which education loomed very large, was of course a commonplace of the time . . . .15 For representatives of this older Toryism, including many of the clergy and the country gentlemen, the diffusion of knowledge was associated with the suspect name of Brougham, with a philosophy of ‘improvement’ involving secularism and laissez-faire economics. Their fear of a secularized education is reflected in the widespread opposition to a state aided national system, and the slowly dwindling distrust of mechanics’ institutions.16

Peel’s correspondence from January 1841 showed that he had been planning the main theme of his address. He had committed to the idea,17 prevalent in mechanics’ institute literature, that one becomes better morally and materially through useful or technical knowledge.18 The ideas contained in his address reflected Peel’s thoughts about politics, education, and the human condition.19 Letters between Peel and his close friend,  

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16 Ibid., 80.

17 According to Evans (Peel, 27), one of Peel’s “personal flaws” was that once he had been convinced of an idea, he would defend it doggedly without due consideration of opposing views.

18 Contemporary newspapers which opposed Peel noted that several of his ideas about knowledge and education either contradicted his earlier positions or were simply imprudent for a man of his stature (Burgis, “An Edition of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 8).

19 Sheridan Gilley (Newman and His Age [Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics, 1990], 195) noted that:
William Buckland, who had become a notable figure in the nascent science of geology, provide a window into his views. A letter from 5 January 1841 disclosed that Peel and Buckland had been discussing ideas that might be included in the address. Peel seemed keen to demonstrate that through the acquisition of knowledge, a person could raise his station in life both socially and economically. He believed with almost a religious faith that economics driven by technological progress would be society’s great elixir.

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On opening a Reading Room at Tamworth, a sort of Mechanics’ Institute open to the professors of all creeds and none, Sir Robert Peel uttered—and then published—some unguarded expressions indicating the death of the old Tory philosophy of the Anglican confessional state. pace Gilley, Peel’s remarks were not unguarded, but expressed his positive ideas about education, religion and human nature that had developed during the 1830’s.

Buckland was also professor at Christ Church College, Oxford. Newman attended his lectures starting in 1819 (LD, 2:65). On 8 June 1821, Newman (LD, 2:109) wrote to his sister Jemima:

Buckland’s lectures [on geology] I had intended to have taken down, as I did last term, but several things prevented me—the time it takes, and the very desultory way in which he imparts his information: for, to tell the truth, the science is so in its infancy that no regular system is formed. Hence the lectures are rather an enumeration of facts from which probabilities are deduced, than a consistent and luminous theory of certainties, illustrated by occasional examples. It is, however, most entertaining, and opens an amazing field to imagination and to poetry.

Peel’s desire that persons might rise through education was a common trope in the mechanics’ institutes’ literature; see Kelly, History, 123-124.

Gash, Sir Robert Peel, 186-187. According to Evans (Peel, 59), “Peel’s unequivocal belief was that the government’s main concern with the ‘social question’ should be in helping to provide the economic conditions which would stimulate economic growth, create new jobs and enable ordinary folk to consume more.” Evans (Peel, 74) also stressed that after Peel’s election as prime minister several months later, his “objective was to provide conditions which would stimulate economic growth and prosperity sufficient to increase living standards for the population as a whole.”
Buckland provided Peel with several examples of men who started from humble situations and rose through learning to some measure of fame:

I forgot to mention yesterday [January 4], that Mr. Grainger, the great architect . . . began his career as a poor mason’s boy, carrying a hod . . . . The late Mr. Harvey . . . three years ago a Professor at Woolwich, who published an excellent treatise on Meteorology in the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*, had worked for many years as a carpenter at the Dockyard at Plymouth, where he afterwards became a Teacher of Mathematics, and whence removed to the Professorship above mentioned. I will send you his treatise as I am sure it will interest you; and as there is in the first page a private letter from the author; which if to your purpose you are welcome to quote.23

On the back of the note, Peel jotted three points that he wished to include from Buckland’s letter: 1. Grainger, the architect, 2. Harvey on Meteorology, 3. “Quote the letter.” Peel included all three in his speech, making them the centerpiece of his lecture to the working classes. Buckland subsequently wrote to Peel on 9 January expressing his excitement about the library and his wish to contribute lectures and volumes to the new “Institution at Tamworth”.24

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23 Buckland to Peel, 5 January 1841, Peel Papers, 40429:2, British Library, London.

Sir Robert Peel’s Tamworth Address

On 19 January 1841, Peel gave the inaugural address for the new institution before a substantial crowd of Tamworth’s citizens. He did not seem to expect that his speech would go much farther than his immediate audience. The Staffordshire Advertiser, a small newspaper for the Midlands, had a reporter present for the address. Whether Peel knew of the reporter’s presence and had consented to the publication of his address cannot be determined. Nonetheless, this speech apparently was not intended to be a major policy statement designed to attract attention. The Staffordshire Advertiser printed Peel’s address on 23 January. The address also appeared the same day in the

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25 The Staffordshire Advertiser of 23 January 1841 indicated a sizable crowd, with people from various classes of society, was on hand to listen. In his research of the Tamworth library, Harris (“Historical Forces,” 201) could not find any records in the Peel collection or in Tamworth that indicated when the institution actually opened.

26 Burgis, “An Edition of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 13; 19. The Spectator of 30 January 1841 implied that Peel had sought to reach a wider audience with his views. However, this speech was not like his 1834 “Tamworth Manifesto.” Although addressed to his immediate community, Peel’s Manifesto was intended for the national stage and brought him a high degree of visibility (Evans, Peel, 40-41). This later Tamworth address did not have the same intentions. See below Chapter 4, “Sir Robert Peel’s Address and Catholicus,” The Times, 10 March 1841, for a corroborating view that Peel did not think his address would be widely read.

27 A reporter for the Staffordshire Advertiser provided some initial remarks and a glimpse of the scene at the Tamworth town hall and also summarized some of Peel’s extemporaneous remarks when he deviated from his written address.

28 This address has not been included in several of the anthologies of Peel’s public speeches nor has it received sufficient attention by his biographers, e.g., Norman Gash, Sir Robert Peel, 236. Yet, the address contained affinities with Peel’s installation speech as rector of the University of Glasgow in 1837; see Haly, Opinions, 218-227. Indeed, Peel’s Glasgow speech in many ways was a preamble to the notions and ideas laid down at Tamworth; see Gash, Sir Robert Peel, 151-155.
Morning Post which provided a short summary and favorable view of his address. On the 25th, the conservative Standard printed the Staffordshire Advertiser version verbatim. The address eventually reached The Times—the country’s largest circulating newspaper. Peel’s ideas were now guaranteed to gain national attention.

On Tuesday, 26 January 1841, The Times published the address under the heading: SIR ROBERT PEEL’S ADDRESS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIBRARY AND READING-ROOM AT TAMWORTH.29 A brief paragraph, originally inserted by the Staffordshire Advertiser, prefaced the address. Peel had “come forward to liberally assist in the establishment of the library and reading-room for Tamworth and its neighborhood.” He had given £100 for its establishment and offered to serve as its first president. The institution was founded on “a comprehensive basis without reference to rank or to political and religious distinctions.”30 Peel opened his address by acknowledging institutions similar to the Tamworth Library—likely mechanics’ institutes. He noted that his duty as president was to explain the goals and advantages of such an establishment “in very simple and very perspicuous language” (525).

29 Multiple versions of the address exist. The most prominent was the revised pamphlet which Peel published later that month. The edition of the address used in this dissertation is from the Staffordshire Advertiser/The Times, which Newman mainly relied upon for his letters. The version which appeared in The Times has been reprinted in Newman’s Letters and Diaries (LD, 8:525-533); these pages will be used in the text.

30 This statement reflected not simply the intention of Peel and the reading room committee, but was a typical statement of early Mechanics’ Institutes, to which the Tamworth Reading Room bore close affinity; see Kelly, History, 121-124. According to Kelly (History, 124), “The institutes suffered . . . from their exclusive pre-occupation with scientific education. A great many people were not really interested in science: they were interested in literature, or in politics and economics, which were almost universally barred as controversial.”
Because Peel was addressing a popular audience, he struck a sentimental, rather than formal, tone.³¹ He “felt” that regarding the “extension of knowledge and intellectual improvement” it would be vain to employ “novelty of argument or expression.” He wanted to avoid a “parade of learning” but simply to express the benefits of scientific knowledge. There would be nothing controversial in the address; he was simply expounding truths “very obvious and trite, so obvious as to not exercise a practical influence upon the conduct of men” (525).³²

Peel offered a “general summary” of the institute’s by-laws which had been posted for the town. The reading room would be for the townspeople and would be open each day for members except “holydays” and Sundays. Members would be able to borrow books, using them for their personal amusement or for their families. Peel repeated that library would be open to “all persons of all descriptions, without reference to political opinions or religious creed” over fourteen years of age (526).

³¹ This contrasted with the sober and smooth tone of some prior speeches and the ensuing pamphlet. In particular, Peel’s use of the first person singular coupled with the word “feel” tended to dominate the address. Harris (“Historical Forces,” 197) claimed that Peel delivered a “rather straightforward, low-keyed address”; this judgment is inaccurate, because Harris (and others) have focused on Peel’s revised pamphlet and not the original version, whose tone especially concerned Newman (LD, 8:537).

³² For a man who was poised to represent the Tory/Conservative tradition, his ideas about the utilitarian and recreational benefits of scientific knowledge were far from “trite and obvious truths.” Peel had co-opted tenets from the Whig and radical philosophical traditions whose ideas had become “obvious” only since the middle of the 1820’s. E.g., Kelly (History, 120) has noted that in 1825 notable figures such as Henry Brougham, James Mill and Jeremy Bentham “gave not only to the London Mechanics’ Institute but to the whole mechanics’ institute movement, a reputation for radicalism which took more than a quarter century to live down.”
Peel further stipulated that men and women could become members: it would be a great injustice to the “well-educated and virtuous women if we suppose them to be less capable of their husbands,” etc. Women should also be allowed “rational recreation and intellectual improvement.” Peel believed that men and women should have equal power and influence in managing the reading room. As long as women maintained their virtue “in whatever is sound and profitable in respect to knowledge” and manifest exemplary conduct they could hold office. Finally, Peel suggested that the committee extend the privileges beyond those who are “not contemplated on paper” (526).  

Straying a bit from his “general summary,” Peel declared that the reading room would lay a “foundation of great treasury of knowledge.” He felt that the library should have displays of minerals and works on mineralogy, because those were important industries developing in the Midlands. Moreover, if funds permitted there would be “plain and popular lectures,” which would be “comprehensible by all.” They would include scientific subjects, industry, and agriculture which affected the borough of Tamworth: “These are not, I trust, over sanguine expectations.”  

Peel then introduced a central idea of the address: the acquisition of knowledge enlarges the mind. Persons should follow this “delightful path.” It would “open to you

33 That the reading room would be open to men and women was an advance beyond the usual Mechanics’ Institutes. Yet, Peel’s notion of including women from the upper echelon seemed incomplete: would working-class women be included? Was this what Peel meant by those not “contemplated on paper”? His remarks about parity between the sexes contrasted with the list of the officers included in the speech, which did not include one woman.

34 The emotive language which Peel used was constant. The term “sanguine” was used three times in this passage to express his feelings.
gradual charms and temptations which will induce you to persevere” (526). He returned to the “immediate object” of presenting rules and regulations. Peel began to read directly from the committee’s regulations about those who would “constitute the society” of the library. They were not in his prepared remarks, for a third party (most likely the reporter) summarized what he stated. The committee would have clergy, aldermen, mechanics “without distinction of party, political opinion, or religious profession.” Some persons would be excluded because of a limited amount of space, but nevertheless there would be a fair group assembled (526-527).

Peel next tackled the community’s “objections” about clergymen serving on the library’s book committee. He took the objection “head on”—shouts of “Hear” and applause redounded when Peel declared that he didn’t “feel the objection.” The clergy were included because they were educated, conversant with literary works and “endowed by the state for the performance of the certain duties,” chiefly the “moral condition and improvement of the inhabitants” at Tamworth.

Peel confidently claimed the importance of clergymen for the committee—the reporter’s notes described the crowd as truly in favor of an ecclesial presence on the committee (527). However, Peel further noted that some were “jealous” of the clergy’s influence. He felt that it was “right to be jealous of all power held by [them]” and that he

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35 This seemed a stock phrase for Peel (e.g., Haly, *Opinions*, 210).

36 See Evans, *Peel*, 41; 43-44. As indicated in Chapter 1, Peel increasingly viewed the Church of England not only as a bearer of social morality, but also as a functionary of the State.
was perfectly willing to have a tempered conversation with those who had reservations. He assured members that there were to be checks on the clergy’s power.

Peel repeated that he would calmly mediate any objections; he acknowledged that clerical power is “liable to be abused,” and emphasized there would be checks or “restrictions” on the clergy: they must “accept their appointments and perform their duties [on the book committee] subject to this preliminary and fundamental rule that no works of controversial divinity shall enter into the library.” Further, “everything calculated to excite religious or political animosity shall be excluded.” The crowd approved Peel’s temerity and continued to applaud him. The clergy also had to accept another rule: “that no discussions on matters connected with religion, politics, and local party difference be permitted to take place” (527).

Peel continued to expound on the role for the clergy, declaring a third time that it was good for the “objectors” to be “jealous” of their power. He added that their power would be mitigated by the institution’s regulations. The clergy would also be checked by

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37 Perhaps because of his aversion to fractious political parties and strong religious movements, especially the Ultras and the Tractarians, Peel felt the committee and the reading room should be above the factions vigorously vying for influence.

38 That Peel conceived himself to be above controversy—accompanied by what some perceive as intellectual arrogance—was considered by some contemporaries and some revisionist historians to be a serious character flaw. See for example, Hilton, “Peel: A Reappraisal,” 585-589.

39 This statement captured the essence of Peel’s thought—partisan politics and religion were biased and caused dissension; science and reason did not. However, stressing scientific knowledge to the exclusion of topics and ideas about which people cared deeply—politics and religion—had sapped the vitality of previous institutes; when such subjects were reinstated, the institutes thrived (Kelly, History, 125; 128).
the management of the institution which would be composed of lay persons. He also appealed to members who “by giving notice” could alter the regulations. Peel deemed that these checks were sufficient to prevent any abuse of power by the clergy. Thus, “when this subject is calmly considered,” he insisted that “we avow that in giving knowledge we wish to take every security against that knowledge being perverted to evil or immoral purposes” (527-528).  

He continued:

We avow that as our great object; and that being so can any Dissenter from the establishment say that this is any interference with freedom of opinion, or . . . that his religious scruples can be invaded or individually interfered with?” (528).

Peel wanted to “conciliate support” for the institution—by mitigating division and bringing people from across the spectrum—noting that it was for “rational amusement, recreation, and intellectual improvement” and believed himself able to “moderate” extreme opinions (528). The library, conforming to the mechanics’ movement, did not

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40 This passage was excised from the pamphlet edition.

41 This passage was also excised from the pamphlet, in favor of the following: “In advancing this Institution to its present state of maturity, I have had objections to contend with from opposite quarters, and of an opposite character.”

42 Harris (“Historical Forces”, 204) has remarked: “The widest possible support was needed to keep a subscription library going, especially in a small borough.” Yet, as one who sought consensus and prided himself on bringing disparate political groups together—as he had done throughout the 1830’s—Peel’s broad consensus was not simply a function of revenue, but also of personal ideology.

43 In accenting knowledge as recreation, Peel opted for a prevalent notion that in mechanics’ institutes “there must be relaxation… [and] entertainment” along with scientific education (Thomas Kelly, George Birkbeck: Pioneer of Adult Education [Liverpool: University Press, 1957], 236). Benjamin Heywood, President of the Manchester Mechanics’ Institute, summarized this goal in 1837: “The great point, I am convinced is to combine more of what will be felt as relaxation and amusement without
simply inculcate abstract science but also practical knowledge. Peel instanced agriculture as one form of practical knowledge. He attempted make the case that scientific agriculture should not be forced upon the experienced farmer—for he may know more in practical matters than an academic. However, he added, theoretical knowledge should be available to the working class. While affirming the experience and intelligence of the work-a-day farmer, who might distrust experimental science, he nevertheless stressed that most farmers were ignorant and that scientific knowledge would be useful. For Peel, a reasonable man would want such information (528-529).

Peel then admonished the laboring class in attendance—they would be at fault in not taking full advantage of scientific literature:

You will not be able to say ‘chill penury’ has ‘frozen the genial current’ of your aspirations for knowledge and distinction. We tell you that here is access for you to that information which may at the same time facilitate your advance in your worldly occupations and lay the foundations of your mental improvement.

The reporter summarized Peel’s aside on the value of science for farmers.

Peel waxed poetic to make his point that with the resources available through the Tamworth library, the laboring poor could no longer blame their station from want of knowledge. He lifted the lines from “An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” by Thomas Gray (1716-1771): “But knowledge to their eyes her ample page/ Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll/ Chill Penury repressed their noble rage/ And froze the genial current of the soul” (An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard [New York: Appleton and Co., 1854], 12).

The fact that Peel regarded intellectual improvement for the laboring and working classes as desirable was problematic for the Ultras and for some of his political
He cautioned farmers and all working adults—who were for the most part uneducated—not to be distracted by those who scoff at the acquisition of knowledge. To an outburst of laughter and applause, Peel wittily chided working people to make time for rational recreation. Industrious men work hard but must also work to acquire knowledge, which could improve their “worldly pursuits.” Knowledge was power: “Every steamboat, every railroad, all the facilities of intercourse, are operating as premiums upon skill and intelligence.” If the working classes did not improve their minds they would be left behind in the march of economic progress (529).

Allies. E.g., Charles Greville (Greville Memoirs: A Journal of the Reign of Queen Victoria 1837-1852 [London: Longmans, Green, 1885], 35) noted the disdain many Tories had for Peel’s “liberal” positions.

Peel (Haly, Opinions, 223) made a strikingly similar claim in his Glasgow address. The difference was the audience—Glasgow embodied the best and brightest students in Scotland—in contrast to Tamworth, where Peel was addressing the entire community.

Peel’s exhortations to the working poor to improve their lot were nevertheless genuine (Evans, Peel, 59). Harris (“Historical Forces,” 207) observed: “Peel believed that the good in human nature required only to be nurtured. The improvement of material and intellectual circumstance would necessarily engender a higher spiritual life.” However, what Peel actually knew about the condition of the poor is another matter; for example, the anonymous author of “Ure’s Philosophy of Manufactures,” Mechanics’ Magazine IX/1 (January 1836): 4-5, noted:

In the recent discussions concerning our factories, no circumstance is so deserving of remark, as the gross ignorance evinced by our leading legislators and economists . . . relative to the nature of those stupendous manufactures which have so long provided the rulers of the kingdom with the resources of war, and a great body of the people with comfortable subsistence . . . . [Even the eminent statesman lately selected by his Sovereign to wield the destinies of this commercial empire—Sir Robert Peel, who derives his family consequence from the cotton trade, seems to be but little conversant with its nature and condition]. Till this ignorance be dispelled, no sound legislation need be expected on manufacturing subjects . . .
Peel cajoled his audience not to be afraid of scientific pursuits because of their lowly station, and paraded a list of accomplished scientists—Sir Humphry Davy, Michael Faraday, and others—who came from humble origins. He read excerpts of letters from persons who had risen above their station through knowledge and hard work. He lamented that if only these men had had access to the library, they could achieve more materially and scientifically. The good people of Tamworth should turn away from “vulgar amusements”, thus “enabling [them] to walk in early life a path that leads to virtuous fame!” He pointed to numerous examples of people in the surrounding area who had risen above their station through knowledge (529-530).

After lecturing the poor and working classes to garner more knowledge and to advance themselves, he turned to the wealthy. He solicited their financial contributions, but also their “society” in the institution. He tried to allay their concerns that the library would injure “the moral or religious character of the people.” On the contrary, knowledge—the great object of the library—united persons. Peel believed that the

The blessings which physico-mechanical science has bestowed on society, and the means it has still in store for ameliorating the lot of mankind, have been too little dwelt upon; while, on the other hand, it has been accused of lending itself to the rich capitalists as an instrument for harassing the poor, and of exacting from the operative an accelerated rate of work. . . . Dr. Carbutt of Manchester says, “With regard to Sir Robert Peel's assertion a few evenings ago, that the hand-loom weavers are mostly small farmers, nothing can be a greater mistake; they live, or rather they just keep life together, in the most miserable manner, in the cellars and garrets of the town, working sixteen or eighteen hours for the merest pittance.

49 Peel’s examples of various persons resemble the type of literature made popular, e.g., by George Lille Craik’s *The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties* (London: Charles Knight, 1830). Newman used this work in his critique of Peel.
information, lectures, etc., will provide a “social connexion” between the landed and the virtuous mechanic and artificer, “harmonizing the gradations of society, and binding them together.” Progress through merit would be a fundamental tenet of this institution. Peel offered the example of one of the members who though from humble origins was on the management committee (530-531).

Literature would also be included at the library. Peel did not think it would pose any “risk to religious impressions and religious belief.” In support of this contention, he referred to the much admired inaugural address of the Bishop of London at Kings College. The Bishop had maintained that God allowed people to inquire freely in any

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50 Such acquired knowledge must be tied to financial improvement, as Evans (Peel, 56) observed: “[Peel] believed that the only route to social harmony was via economic progress, and he believed that the only route to economic progress was by treading the path of financial probity and rectitude.”

51 The earliest mechanics’ institutes in England pursued the ideal of teaching value-neutral physical science—an ideal which Peel seemed intent on establishing at Tamworth. As previously noted, the almost exclusive focus upon physical science, had contributed to the near demise of the institutions in the 1820’s (Kelly, Birkbeck, 233-234). By 1841, this ideal been modified and libraries, including Tamworth, acquired a broad range of materials such as music, history, and travel. Peel and the committee seemed to allow for this later trend at the institute; however, Peel’s correspondence with Buckland and the thrust of his address clearly show that he was intent on a program of partisan-free science.

52 In his original address, Peel averred: “I cannot believe that there is any risk to religious impressions and religious belief by opening the avenues to literary acquirements” (531); this line was not included in the pamphlet, where Peel referred to the library and reading room as a “Literary and Scientific Institution.” While favoring the sciences, Peel seemed also to approve of literary knowledge.

53 Gerard Tracey (LD, 8:531), drew from A Memoir of Charles James Blomfield, edited by A. Blomfield (London: John Murray, 1863), 1:150-153, to explain the significance of King’s College: “The party who had been pressing forward the cause of
branch of knowledge and that “the very constitution of man” is one of “indefinite inquiry” and thus afforded sufficient reason that God intended people to be curious. Peel bolstered this idea with a comparison: an elephant’s “sagacity” is constant in nature and does not develop whereas man’s intelligence is “sharpened and strengthened by exercise. . . enlarged, and . . . made the ground of future improvement.” He added that by philosophy or scientific research: “Such studies removed the veil which to the ignorant or careless observer obscured the traces of God’s glory in the works of his hands” (531).

Peel reviewed theological arguments from design to bolster his position: once one has learned scientific observation from the “meanest weed . . . to the magnificent structure of the heavens,” one cannot fail to see “proofs of a Divine intelligence.” When accustomed to such “contemplations,” he felt that a person obtains “greater reverence for the name of the Almighty Creator of the Universe:”

We believe . . . that the man accustomed to such contemplations will feel the moral dignity of his own nature exalted; and . . . will yield more ready and hearty assent—yes assent of the heart and not of the understanding—to the pious exclamation, “Oh, Lord how glorious are Thy works . . . .” It is the unwise man,

Roman Catholic emancipation, had also been active in promoting secular, or, as it is called, non-sectarian education. With this object the London University had been founded, in 1827 by Mr. Brougham, Lord Landsdowne, and others of the same party. The exclusion of religion from this institution incited friends of the Church to make some corresponding effort on their own side.’ One of the leaders of this group was C. J. Blomfield: ‘A large meeting to further the object thus described was held in London, in June, 1828, with the Duke of Wellington in the chair; smaller meetings . . . were held at the Bishop’s own house; and with Joshua Watson, Bishop Lloyd, Dr. D’Oyley (who had written a pamphlet on the subject, under the name “Catholicus”), and . . . he took a leading part in giving shape and consistency to the plan. The result was the foundation of King’s College, which however, was not opened till 1831. . . .”

54 This odd comparison was eliminated from Peel’s revised pamphlet.

Peel provided lengthy quotations from Sir Isaac Newton and Sir Humphrey Davy as examples of those who have made “the greatest (however imperfect) advances towards the understanding of it [the Divine Nature].” He admired Davy, for on his deathbed he derived “some pleasure and some consolation, when most other sources of consolation and pleasure were closed to him.” Davy believed that the scientific enquirer,

should always be awake to devotional feeling; and in contemplating the variety and beauty of the external world, and developing his scientific wonder, he will always refer to the Infinite Wisdom . . . . In becoming wiser he will become better; he will rise at once on the scale of intellectual and moral existence; his increased sagacity will become subservient to his exalted faith . . . (531).  

For Peel, an,

increased sagacity will administer to an exalted fame—that it will make men not merely believe in the cold doctrines of natural religion, but that it will so prepare and temper the spirit and understanding that they will be better qualified to comprehend the great scheme of human redemption.”  

Those who cultivated this “superior sagacity” will reject the current objections to revealed religion, and rather see the great harmony between reason and revelation (532).

He concluded by noting his “views and hopes . . . in the progress of knowledge” which had induced him to help establish the library. Before departing and “engaging in the scene of warfare on the great arena of political contention,” he hoped that he had,


56 Peel’s last few remarks yielded loud applause.
laid the foundation stone of an edifice in which men of all political opinions and of all religious feelings may unite in the furtherance of knowledge without the asperities of party feeling—if . . . there will be the means afforded of useful occupation and rational recreation—that men will prefer the pleasures of knowledge above the indulgence of sensual appetite—that there is a prospect of contributing to the intellectual and moral improvement of this town . . . then I shall be repaid . . . for any time I have spent [in] the formation of this institution (532).

He then sat down to enthusiastic applause and was praised by one of the committee members “for the kindness, good feeling and friendship, but above all, by that deeply religious feeling which he had instilled into all their hearts and minds . . .” (532-533).

**Press Reaction to the Address**

Because of Peel’s role as leader of the opposition party and because he had been on the public stage for well over twenty-five years, news of the speech filtered out into the British press. Eventually, his speech was published in several newspapers, receiving both scathing critique and favorable comment.\(^5^7\) In contrast to his “Tamworth Manifesto,” evidence from Peel’s letters and from newspaper accounts suggested that Peel had not designed his address to be covered beyond the local media or to spark a national debate. He envisioned himself expounding personal views about intellectual improvement that were “very obvious and trite, so obvious as to not exercise a practical influence upon the conduct of men” (525).

On 23 January, in concert with *The Staffordshire Advertiser*, the Tory-aligned *Morning Post* published a summary of the speech. The *Post* had received only an “outline” of the address, “Owing to peculiar causes we were not apprised of the

\(^{57}\) Relevant dates and a sample of newspapers are listed in Appendix IV.
meeting until too late to despatch one of our reporters . . .”

This admission confirmed that Peel had not expected much publicity for the speech. However, as Burgis remarked:

If he [Peel] did not see that the Address could be made the subject of controversy then it was, as R.L. Hill has said, a striking example of Peel’s lack of tact that when the Tories were protesting that “Brougham’s” Mechanics’ Institutes represented an ideal in education to which Tories were strangers and which Tories literally loathed, Peel must needs blunder into the Tamworth Reading Room to make a speech upon the glorious fruits of Useful Knowledge.59

The Morning Post praised Peel’s “inaugural address for the comprehensiveness of its views, and the noble spirit of liberality (rightly defined) which pervades it, surpasses anything of the kind which has previously appeared.” A short summary followed, which highlighted the check on the clergy and the emphasis on useful knowledge for farmers. Also included was Peel’s notion that knowledge adapts persons “for the more adequate appreciation and comprehension of those blessings which Almighty Providence has thrown their way.”60 Burgis summarized the modest media attention given the address:

The Ministerial Globe, which had not reported the Address, copied out the paragraph from the Post, adding the headline ‘Sir Peel at Tamworth—First Appearance in a New Character’.61 During the next week the Address was praised, but not reprinted in the Conservative Morning Herald, and gave rise to a certain amount of editorial comment in the Ministerial and Radical Press. The Statesman of 31 January reprinted the gibe of the Staffordshire Examiner that the diffusion of knowledge would be a death-blow to Peel and his party, and the Sun

58 “Sir Peel at Tamworth—Important Meeting,” The Morning Post, 23 January 1841.


60 The Morning Post, 23 January 1841.

61 The Preston Chronicle did the same on 30 January—copying the piece from the Post while employing the Globe’s headline.
which reprinted the Address from the Staffordshire Advertiser on 29 January, hailed him as a late convert to liberal ideas.\(^62\)

The most important critique of the speech appeared on 30 January in the independent/radical leaning Spectator.\(^63\) Under the sarcastic title—“Sir Robert Peel’s Debut as a Popular Lecturer”—the anonymous author seemed intent on showing Peel’s advocacy for radical positions while simultaneously debasing him:\(^64\)

> Not contented with rivaling the Whigs and Radicals in Parliamentary eloquence, he is determined to start against them in their own especial field—the Education of the People.

Peel, deemed a lecturer for the masses, was associated with Lord Henry Brougham\(^65\) and was accused of being, a sedulous reader of the publications of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge; and what is more, that he has profited by their perusal—that his retentive memory has been abundantly stored from those repositories.

The author inferred that Peel was “guarded in his expression,”\(^66\) lest he provoke Ultras. However, Peel had remarkably delivered a cascade of radical/liberal positions:


\(^64\) This article adumbrated several themes that emerged in the Catholicus letters. There is no record that Newman saw the Spectator prior to composing his letters for The Times although the satire and other resemblances are striking. Had Newman seen The Spectator, perhaps he would have declined the offer to reply or taken his initial letters in a different direction. Newman’s letters, however, were not strictly political, as so much of the newspaper coverage was, nor were they solely aimed at Peel.

\(^65\) The article also mentioned a Mr. Buckingham; most likely the reference is to James Silk Buckingham (1786-1855), a popular lecturer and social reformer.
Sir Robert Peel repudiated the notion that intellectual pursuits are incompatible with business . . . . He refuted with equal success the notion that increase of knowledge is unfavourable to morality and religion. Now let the reader dispassionately review the principles avowed and defended in these extracts. The condition of society rendering it impossible for any man to keep his ground who does not study; the importance of knowledge towards the formation of the moral man and the successful man of business . . . ; the vindication of the admission of the working classes, and even of females, to a share in the management; the pointing out the way to get quit of the clergymen when their countenance should no longer be wanted,—if all these things do not go up a rank Radical lecture, we do not know what does.

“In short,” Peel had done “everything in his power to sap and undermine the glorious structure of ‘Church and State’.” The author concluded on a cynical note, one that had plagued Peel since Catholic Emancipation. Peel was an opportunist, always ready to adopt a Whig/liberal policy once it had become politically mainstream:

He is playing the same game now: the Whigs have been talking for years about elevating the working-classes; Sir Robert sees the time has come for admitting them to the fully rights of citizenship, and is preparing to secure for himself the credit of performing that act of justice.

From Public Address to Pamphlet

The picture that emerged from this and other reviews fell along party lines. Conservative/Tory papers offered qualified praise; Whig/Radical papers either welcomed Peel to their camp or cast him as opportunistic. Beyond the initial reactions, Peel’s address received scant notice; Britain’s most important newspaper, The Times, merely reproduced the speech. However, while the press had been ridiculeing or praising Peel’s efforts, Henry Hooper of Pall Mall published an unauthorized pamphlet directly from the

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66 Gilley (Newman and His Age, 195) averred the opposite, interpreting Peel as delivering rather “unguarded expressions.” Meriol Trevor (Newman: the Pillar of the Cloud [New York: Double Day, 1962], 239) had the same interpretation. The instincts of The Spectator, however, seemed to be more accurate in regard to Peel’s intentions.
text of the *Staffordshire Advertiser*. Another pamphlet was published by James Bain of Haymarket. Shortly after his January speech, Peel had planned to revise the address and issue a limited number of pamphlets. According to Burgis, “Bain’s [pamphlet contained] several differences [from the address] . . . [and] was the one authorised by Peel who clearly attached some importance to the differences” in the revised version.

On 31 January, Lady Julia Peel wrote to their second son, Frederick, praising the speech and admonishing him to ignore Hooper’s pamphlet and to wait for Bain’s:

You shall certainly have your Papa's pamphlet of his beautiful speech, an address at Tamworth, as soon as it comes out. The one which you have seen advertised is not the true one.

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67 According to Burgis (“An Edition of Newman’s *Tamworth Reading Room*,” 13), the pamphlet “was published in conjunction with J. Thompson, bookseller, of Tamworth, and Bain brought out a second ‘corrected’ edition in March 1841—the revisions [for the second edition] are few and unimportant.”

68 An Inaugural Address Delivered by the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart. M.P., President of the Tamworth Library and Reading Room on Tuesday, 19th January, 1841, (London: James Bain, 1841).

69 Burgis, “An Edition of Newman’s *Tamworth Reading Room*,” 13. Several authors who have studied the *Tamworth Reading Room* have referred to the Bain pamphlet. For example, Harris (“Historical Forces”, 190) justified his use of the pamphlet noting that Newman had referred “to the differences between the speech as reported in *The Times* and its somewhat smoothed and tightened form in the pamphlet, but the differences are not major and Newman had both before him as he replied to *The Times* version.” As indicated above, there were some substantial differences between the two versions and not simply in terms of style. Harris’ comment also is inaccurate: Newman only received the pamphlet after he had finished his first letter; in addition, in the letters, Newman opted to quote from Peel’s public address, rather than from the pamphlet; evidence does not indicate that Newman continued to consult both versions.

70 This correspondence suggested that the Bain pamphlet was released after 31 January but before 2 February when Peel received Buckland’s letter of appreciation.

Two days later, Peel received a note of gratitude “for the address” from Buckland—implying that he had received the Bain pamphlet.\footnote{Buckland to Peel, 2 February 1841, Peel Papers, 40429:54, British Library, London. On 29 January 1841, Peel received a note from Buckland, who did not mention the Tamworth speech. The letter from 2 February did not mention the pamphlet either; it is likely that the “address” received was in pamphlet form. A few months later the Duke of Rutland wrote to Peel to thank him for the pamphlet (Rutland to Peel, 9 April 1841, Peel Papers, 40429:191, British Library, London).}

**The Advent of Catholicus**

Had the pamphlet quietly filtered out—attracting, perhaps, another flurry of newspaper comment—the ideals set forth in Peel’s Tamworth address might have been quickly forgotten by the public as simply another political address. In many ways the literate and privileged agreed with a core conviction found in Peel’s address—religion was about morality and social order. In spite of its perfunctory nod to the working classes, which gave many Tories pause, this conviction would have been deemed uncontroversial. Although refracted along partisan lines, many Liberal Tories, Whigs, and Radicals considered a religion mediated by reason as a matter of social morality or civic duty. Peel was among them. He had never trusted the Ultras and what he deemed their reactionary religion, nor could he abide the Oxford Movement. For him, religion was equated to the moral order; combining religion with orderly, scientific knowledge would have seemed only logical.

The notion of religion as reducible to morality and knowledge was clear throughout Peel’s speech. Underlying this inductive notion was a belief in an impersonal
Creator/Providence upholding this moral order. Charles Taylor has observed that this widespread belief derived from Christian apologetics which arose and developed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Personal religion was desiccated and increasingly constricted to morality. No longer was Christian faith about the “saving action of Christ” or prayer and worship, but that of a rationalized morality:\textsuperscript{73}

\begin{quote}
[A]pologetics, and indeed, much preaching, [was] less and less concerned with sin as a condition we need to be rescued from through some transformation of our being, and more and more with sin as wrong behavior which we can be persuaded, trained or disciplined to turn our backs on . . . . Religion was narrowed to moralism . . . . This morality in turn was cast in terms of the modern notion of order, one in which our purposes mesh to our mutual benefit. Self-love and social [sic] were ultimately at one.\textsuperscript{74}
\end{quote}

In March, Peel took the floor of Parliament to reiterate the views expressed in the address and to defend its underlying principles. What had seemed so clear and unobtrusive had in the course of a month become fodder for controversy. Why? In early February a letter appeared in \textit{The Times} which critiqued the ideas which Peel believed to be commonplace. This letter and six others that followed did not merely make political jabs or seek to impugn his character like so many had. Rather, Peel’s first principles, which mirrored prevalent views that scientific knowledge was coequal to or in some ways superior to Christian faith, were exposed by the stinging letters of \textit{Catholicus}.

\textsuperscript{73} Charles Taylor, \textit{A Secular Age}, 225.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 225-226.
Chapter 3 – The *Catholicus* Letters: Interpretation and Context

Peel’s address at Tamworth address seemed to have eluded Newman as he was immersed in several projects. However, *The Times*’ offered him the occasion to respond, which he seemed reluctantly to accept. This chapter details the contours of his response and will include a chronological narration of Newman’s projects, correspondences, and events that preceded and surrounded the letters. Interpretive summaries of the letters, with annotations, will comprise the greater part of this narrative. The goal of this chapter is to unfold the genesis and direction of the letters, so that their historical contingency and their coherence can be appreciated. Newman clearly had a theological idea—the Church as the Christian Difference—which he sought to communicate through the letters to *The Times*. This chapter hopes to show the development of this idea in Newman’s letters through the contradictory and difficult circumstances that shaped their composition.

**Section 1: The Offer to Respond and Letter 1**

Peel had been thinking explicitly of the ideas and principles expressed in his Tamworth address for at least three years. In contrast, Newman had had no explicit preparation for his response to Peel, although he was well poised to accept the offer from *The Times*. He had been developing arguments and views contrary to Peel’s for the past fifteen years.¹ Some of these views, e.g., against utilitarian education, that emerged in

¹ Newman’s first explicit treatment of the themes later found in Peel’s address are found in “The Philosophical Temper, first Enjoined by the Gospel” (2 July 1826) in *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the Oxford University Between A.D. 1826 and 1843*, edited by James David Earnest and Gerard Tracey (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
Newman’s letters can be found in initiatives proximate to the *Catholicus* letters. For example, between the summer of 1840 and early 1841 Newman served as the editor and a contributor to *The British Critic*. Newman also was working on a theological treatise, *Tract 90*. This section attempts to show how these projects and his correspondences influenced Newman’s thinking regarding the imagery and arguments that he decided to employ in his first and subsequent letters to *The Times*. This section also includes an interpretive summary of the first letter which concentrated on three themes: human nature and its need for completion, knowledge in relation to human nature and to religion, and the assumption that secular knowledge produced societal unity.

**The Walters’s Offer**

The invitation for a response to Peel’s address originated with Newman’s former student, John Walter III, a graduate of Oriel College, Oxford in 1840, who had become

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2 Newman’s *Remarks on Certain Passages in the Thirty-Nine Articles*, better known as *Tract 90* (1841) was the last and most controversial of the *Tracts for the Times* that were published by Newman and other leaders of the Oxford Movement.

3 These themes roughly corresponded to Newman’s title in 1872: “Secular Knowledge in contrast with Religion” (*DA*, 254). The title seemed to indicate a clear contrast between “secular knowledge” and “religion”. However, such contrast did not emerge. The term “religion” was given brief and reference at the beginning and end of the letter, and its meaning implied. Perhaps Newman assumed his audience had a working knowledge of what “religion” entailed. One can only surmise why he thought that this later title aided and clarified the letter—it would have been superfluous in the letter’s initial appearance.
an adherent to Tractarian ideals. Had Newman and others in the Oxford Movement not successfully proselytized the young and enthusiastic Walter, the offer to countermand Peel may never have emerged. In 1841, Walter III, while working on his MA at Oxford and acting as a surrogate for *The Times*, learned about Peel’s speech, the tepid reaction in the press, and the subsequent pamphlet. His Tractarian views presumably alerted him to Peel’s equation of religion to morality and knowledge as a means to religion—positions were diametrically opposed to the spirit of the Oxford Movement.

Walter III, however, did not officially work for *The Times*; his father, John Walter II, was the paper’s proprietor. Walter II knew Peel personally and *The Times* had accorded him favorable coverage, especially of his opposition to the recent Melbourne Administration. However, through his son, Walter II had become sympathetic to Tractarian positions and thus critical of certain aspects of Peelite conservatism. The unadorned publication of Peel’s Tamworth address on 26 January signaled a note of

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5 *LD*, 8:26. John Walter III (*The History of the Times: “The Thunderer” in the Making, 1785-1841* [Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus-Thompson, 1971], 446; hereafter, *The Thunderer*) may have also been influenced by Roundell Palmer, who had recently written for Newman in the January *British Critic*, and who had been on the staff of *The Times* since the September 1840.

6 Porter, “Walter III,” noted: “The Puseyite sympathies which he [Walter III] had acquired at Oxford led to a disagreement with his father [Walter II] over the editorial line pursued by *The Times* on church issues. This rift was sufficiently serious to prompt his temporary withdrawal from managerial duties, but appears to have been short-lived. After he returned *The Times* adopted a more open attitude to the Tractarians . . . .”

7 *The Thunderer*, 351-357; 375.
disapproval from *The Times*. Walter II likely was concerned with the radical educational ideas raised in the address and thus amenable to his son’s petition to have Newman compose a series of controversial letters to the editor.\(^8\)

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**The British Critic**

Although Newman had not written much for the popular press, he did have extensive experience in ecclesial print media. He may have been inclined by the Walters offer to expand his theology into this often wild frontier. Newman had become the editor of *The British Critic* in January 1838.\(^9\) Under his direction, the quarterly produced Tractarian-themed articles.\(^{10}\) In the summer and fall of 1840 and in January 1841, several articles appeared that prefigured certain themes in the *Catholicus* letters; for example, Utilitarianism, Christian charity, poverty among the working class, and education.\(^{11}\)

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\(^8\) Ibid., 405.


\(^10\) For a recent and complete account of Newman as editor of the *British Critic*, see Simon Skinner, *Tractarians and the ‘Condition of England’: The Social and Political Thought of the Oxford Movement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 31; 36-58; hereafter cited: *Tractarians*. Unfortunately, Skinner’s revisionist work used unnecessarily caustic language; e.g., Newman was described as “Machiavellian” in his “abduction” of the *British Critic* (*Tractarians*, 14; 36); in spite of such defects, Skinner has provided a usable description of Newman’s editorship of the *British Critic*.

\(^11\) Newman had been sensitive to these issues for a long time; see, for example, *LD*, 7:244-245, and especially his *Oxford University Sermons*. For a succinct although snarky review of some of these themes in the *British Critic*, see Simon Skinner, “Liberalism and Mammon: Tractarian Reaction in the Age of Reform,” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 4/2 (Autumn, 1999): 197-227.
During Newman’s tenure as editor\textsuperscript{12} such themes received frequent and prominent attention. Newman not only was aware of these issues, but he actively \textit{cultivated} them, especially among up-and-coming Tractarians.\textsuperscript{13} In July, Frederick Rogers penned “Utilitarian Moral Philosophy”—a critique of Jeremy Bentham’s recently published collected works.\textsuperscript{14} Samuel Bosanquet published “Pauperism and Almsgiving,” a scabrous review of the state’s involvement with the working poor.\textsuperscript{15} In October, Tom Mozley wrote “Religion of the Manufacturing Poor,” which detailed the relationship between poverty and religion in the swelling laboring classes.\textsuperscript{16} Bosanquet contributed

\textsuperscript{12} Skinner (\textit{Tractarians}, 52; 54) characterized Newman as an “aggressively dogmatic and prescriptive . . . editor” who envisioned a rigid Tractarian theology for the \textit{Critic}; he was, however, “patently disposed to sobriety in his editorial judgments.” Meriol Trevor (\textit{The Pillar of the Cloud}, 212) provided a different view: “Newman was a good editor, he allowed his contributors plenty of latitude, often publishing things he did not quite approve himself, rather than suppress anyone else’s opinions.”

\textsuperscript{13} Anne Mozley commented on Newman’s editorship (\textit{The Letters of Rev. J. B. Mozley, DD}, ed. Anne Mozley [London: Rivingtons, 1885], 71), “One incidental use of the review was to furnish a field—a sort of practice-ground—for the younger members of the party.”

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{The British Critic} 28 (July 1840): 93-125.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 195-257. He believed that Christian charity offered through the churches in contrast to the state established under the New Poor Law of 1834 was the most humane way encounter and hopefully to help the working poor.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{The British Critic} 28 (October 1840): 334-371. See Newman’s comment to Mozley about his recent contributions (29 September 1840, \textit{LD}, 7:399): “Your articles are capital—that on the Manufacturing Poor most miserably impressive.” In the spring of 1841, Newman made plans to hand his editorship to Tom Mozley (\textit{LD}, 7:411; 424; 430; 473; and 474).

Mozley also had a keen interest in religion education, a prominent theme in the \textit{Catholicus} letters. Simon Skinner (“Mozley, Thomas” [1806–1893], \textit{DNB} [accessed 2 August 2010]) has written, “Mozley’s first publication of note was a pseudonymous
another essay regarding poverty, politics, and Christian charity in “Private Alms and Poor-Law Relief.” 17

The January 1841 issue of the *British Critic* also contained several articles which had some bearing on the *Catholicus* letters—the most important being Newman’s review of Henry Hart Milman’s *History of Christianity*. 18 A decade earlier Newman had read Milman’s *The History of the Jews* 19 and accepted many of Milman’s historical findings but rejected his rationalist presuppositions. Newman felt that Milman’s latest work had attempted to be “philosophical and above the world . . . to show that a Clergyman could take and enlarged view of things, and yet be a firm believer.” 20 For Newman, reason and pamphlet of November 1838, *A Dissection of the Queries on the Amount of Religious Instruction and Education*, which was addressed to Sir Robert Inglis, MP for Oxford University, and signed ‘By a Clergyman of South Wilts’. It denounced the intrusion of the poor law commissioners into the church's management of education, and their survey’s susceptibility to exaggerated claims of nonconformist support. The polemical brio of the pamphlet alerted Newman to Mozley’s potential as a reviewer for the *British Critic*, a high-church literary and theological quarterly for whose editorial control Newman had successfully maneuvered earlier that year.” 17 Ibid., 441-470.


20 *LD*, 2:299. Ker (*Biography*, 204) has noted that Newman’s assessment “was a very early example of the carefully balanced approach to the problems for religious belief that were raised by scholarly and scientific research . . . in sharp contradistinction to the polarized reactions of so many of his contemporaries.”
faith worked together; however, rationalism destroy faith. Newman, writing to Keble on 3 November 1840, recalled Milman’s views:

Rationalism is the great evil of the day. May not I consider my post at St. Mary’s as a place of protest against it? I am more certain that the Protestant [spirit], which I oppose, leads to infidelity, than that which I recommend, leads to Rome. Who knows what the state of the University may be, as regards Divinity Professors in a few years hence? Any how, a great battle may be coming on, of which Milman's book is a sort of earnest. The whole of our day may be a battle with this spirit. May we not leave to another age its own evil,—to settle the question of Romanism? 21

Newman’s critique of rationalism, which was a central concern in his Catholicus letters, underpinned his 1841 article on Milman. His analysis and argument found that Milman’s work derived in part from the first wave of German historical criticism and comparative religion. 22 As in his former work on the Jewish tradition, Milman concentrated on history only in its human aspect. He admitted that there could be a divine element in either the Jewish or Christian tradition but that was not a part of his narrative. Newman lamented this decision:

The Christian history is “an outward visible sign of an inward spiritual grace:” whether the sign can be satisfactorily treated separate from the thing signified is another matter; but it seems to be Mr. Milman's intention so to treat it, and he must be judged by that intention . . . . Christianity has an external aspect and an internal; it is human without, divine within. To attempt to touch the human element without handling also the divine, we may fairly deem unreal, extravagant, and sophistical; we may feel the two to be one integral whole, differing merely in aspect, not in fact . . . . 23

21 JHN to John Keble (Oriel, 6 November), LD, 7:433-434. Newman reflected on the contents of this letter in his Apologia (111-112) noting that “Such was about my state of mind, on the publication of Tract 90 in February 1841.”


23 Ibid., 72. Cf. Lumen gentium, § 8.
He also criticized Milman’s detached, omniscient viewpoint as unreal:\textsuperscript{24}

It is quite undeniable, and quite as astonishing, that he [Milman] thinks there is something high and admirable in the state of mind which can thus look down upon a Divine Dispensation. He imagines that it argues a large, liberal, enlightened understanding, to be able to generalize religions, and, without denying the divinity of Christianity, to resolve it into its family likeness to all others.\textsuperscript{25}

Milman’s work deftly down-played the particular claims of Christian revelation. This omission, Newman believed, would lead many astray from seeing the divine element of the Church. Milman did not sufficiently account for the doctrines of the Christian faith:

He is, as he truly says, “an historian rather than a religious instructor.” But still, when he is engaged in specifying expressly what the revealed doctrine consists in, and what the object of Christ’s coming was, we consider it to be a very unhappy view of historical composition, which precludes him from mentioning what all members of the Church hold to be fundamental in that doctrine, and primary in that object.\textsuperscript{26}

Newman observed that Milman’s pursuit of the historical and comparative reduction of Christianity to human culture would lead readers to a false conclusion: that Christian faith was merely one among many attempts by humans to posit and project the divine. Ultimately, there was no real distinction between having Christian faith or not:

What tenet of Christianity will escape proscription, if the principle is once admitted, that a sufficient account is given of an opinion, and a sufficient ground


\textsuperscript{25} Newman, “Milman’s \textit{History of Christianity},” 86.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 85.
for making light of it, as soon as it is historically referred to some human origin? What will be our Christianity? What shall we have to believe? What will be left to us? Will more remain than a caput mortuum, with no claim on our profession or devotion? Will the Gospel be a substance? Will Revelation have done more than introduce a quality into our moral life world, not anything that can be contemplated by itself, obeyed and perpetuated? This we do verily believe to be the end of the speculations, of which Mr. Milman's volumes at least serve as an illustration. If we indulge them, Christianity will melt away in our hands like snow; we shall be unbelievers before we at all suspect where we are. . . . We shall look on Christianity, not as a religion, but as a past event which exerted a great influence on the course of the world, when it happened, and gave a tone and direction to religion, government, philosophy, literature, manners; an idea which developed itself in various directions strongly, which was indeed from the first materialized into a system or a church, and is still upheld as such by numbers, but by an error; a great boon to the world, bestowed by the Giver of all good, as the discovery of printing may be, or the steam-engine, but as incapable of continuity, except in its effects, as the shock of an earthquake, or the impulsive force which commenced the motions of the planets.  

Newman concluded with a pithy account of how method and theory relate. He was concerned that Milman’s theory did not sufficiently account for accounts. For Milman, the Christianity was but one religion among many. For Newman, the Christian tradition united and fulfilled the religious doctrines and practices that would otherwise be scattered throughout human history and culture:

A theory does not prove itself; it makes itself probable so far as it falls in with our preconceived notions, as it accounts for the phenomena it treats of, as it is internally consistent, and as it excels or excludes rival theories. We should leave Mr. Milman’s [theory] undisturbed . . . except that it might seem to be allowing to that theory, as it were, possession of the field, when, in truth, there is another far more Catholic philosophy. . . . Now, the phenomenon, admitted on all hands, is this:—that great portion of what is generally received as Christian truth, is in its rudiments or in its separate parts to be found in heathen philosophies and religions. For instance, the doctrine of a Trinity is found both in the East and in the West; so is the ceremony of washing; so is the rite of sacrifice. The doctrine of the Divine Word is Platonic; the doctrine of the Incarnation is Indian; of a divine kingdom is Judaic; of Angels and demons is Magian; the connexion of sin

with the body is Gnostic; celibacy is known to Bonze and Talapoin; a sacerdotal order is Egyptian; the idea of a new birth is Chinese and Eleusinian; belief in sacramental virtue is Pythagorean; and honours to the dead are a polytheism. Such is the general nature of the fact before us; Mr. Milman argues from it,—

“These things are in heathenism, therefore they are not Christian;” we, on the contrary, prefer to say, “these things are in Christianity, therefore they are not heathen.” That is . . . we think that Scripture bears us out in saying, that from the beginning the Moral Governor of the world has scattered the seeds of truth far and wide over its extent; that these have variously taken root, and grown up as in the wilderness . . . and hence . . . the philosophies and religions of men have their life in certain true ideas, though they are not divine.  

Two other articles in the January issue may have also influenced Newman’s thought. Frederick Rogers provided a brief appraisal of William Sewell’s text on moral theology and reprised his critique of Bentham and “Utilitarian Moral Philosophy”; Rogers, contra Bentham, accented Sewell’s argument that ethics, education, and Christian religion are intimately bound together. In addition, Roundell Palmer detailed the ongoing debate about public education and underscored the current fervor for a utilitarian education that would conform men to the developing industrial society:

Consistently with such conceptions of the useful and the good, the whole effect of a given system of intellectual training is estimated at the sum of its producible results; in other words, by the total amount of skill to do things, and knowledge of facts and opinions, with which it sends a man furnished into the world. And the marketable value of this skill and knowledge, is the criterion by which the merit of the system is assayed.

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28 Ibid., 101.


31 Ibid., 153.
However, Palmer insisted that a strictly utilitarian end could not furnish the same ends found in the long tradition of Christian education:

We know how she [the Church] deems of the little ones, for whom her instruction is provided. Not as of future lawyers, or merchants, or members of parliament, but as of future men; heirs of immortality, the redeemed servants and sons of God. We know what she considers to be the uses of the intellect, regarding it as an instrument, first for apprehending the nature and ends of our being, our relations to the visible and invisible world, and to the Author of both; and, secondly, for improving our opportunities of intercourse with other men, to the service and honour of the same Heavenly Master. Assuredly it will be the design of the Church so to educate the intellect, as to make it fit for these, its highest and only real uses. She will not disregard the fact, that different men are intended to fill different stations in life; but she will attend to that fact rather for the purpose of estimating the extent to which the intellect will be concerned in executing the work of the man, and the proportional development which it may therefore require, than in order minutely to distinguish its ultimate functions.32

Newman’s review of Milman’s work, as well as other essays in the British Critic, anticipated several of the arguments which he made a month later in the Catholicus letters. He addressed topics that related to poverty, education, and Utilitarianism; moreover, he criticized those like Milman who heralded scientific historiography (or Peel’s praise of science) as the foundation for understanding Christian faith. For him, their views inadvertently stripped the Church’s tradition of its particularity and power.

During the winter of 1840-1841, Newman feverishly worked on a commentary that treated the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England according to Catholic principles: *Tracts for the Times, No. 90: Remarks on certain Passages of the Thirty-nine Articles.* Newman hoped that *Tract 90*, an interpretative analysis capable of generating scholarly debate, would allay those who had started clamoring for defection to Rome, and would bolster the Tractarian position on catholicity:

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33 On January 22, Newman (*LD*, 8:21) recorded this humorous note in his diary (with a later emendation): “went over to a large dinner party at Wilson’s Woodperry. (At this time I was hard at Number 90, and went over to him forgetting to shave.)”


The set of doctrinal formulas finally accepted by the [Church of England]. The first text was issued by Convocation in 1563; they received their final form in 1571. They are not a statement of Christian doctrine in the form of a creed; rather they are short summaries of dogmatic tenets, each dealing with some point raised in contemporary controversy. Various interpretations have been put on some of them, and probably this licence was intended by their framers. Until 1865 the clergy were required to accept each and every one of them, but then a more general assent was substituted, and since 1975 the Articles have only to be accepted as one of the historic formularies of the C of E which bear witness to the faith revealed in Scripture and set forth in the catholic creed.

35 “Catholic” here denoted Tractarian usage for the universal Church. Newman’s interpretations, however, included reference to certain doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, especially those promulgated at the Council of Trent (1545-1563).

36 Newman (*Apologia*, 78) did not anticipate that *Tract 90* would create the “sudden storm of indignation” that it did; however, he did anticipate that his interpretations might provoke controversy: e.g., in the conclusion of *Tract 90* (in *The Via Media of the Anglican Church* [London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1908], 345), he defended his Catholic interpretation: “the Articles are evidently framed on the principle of leaving open large questions, on which the controversy hinges.” After 1839, Newman
It is often urged, and sometimes felt and granted, that there are in the Articles propositions or terms inconsistent with the Catholic faith . . . they are perplexed how best to reply to it, or how most simply to explain the passages on which it is made to rest. The following Tract is drawn up with the view of showing how groundless the objection is, and further of approximating towards the argumentative answer to it, of which most men have an implicit apprehension, though they may have nothing more. That there are real difficulties to a Catholic Christian in the Ecclesiastical position of our Church at this day, no one can deny; but the statements of the Articles are not in the number; and it may be right at the present moment to insist upon this.\textsuperscript{37}

Since the late 1820s, Newman had contemplated a commentary on the Thirty-nine Articles but other concerns, such as writing about the Fathers of the Church and for the Oxford Movement, had commandeered his attention.\textsuperscript{38} In 1838, with \textit{Tract 85},\textsuperscript{39} his concerns about ecclesiastical confessions, and especially the Roman Church, shifted his focus from the Oxford Movement’s recovery of the Ancient Church to current questions had wanted to remain peaceful concerning “subjects of the day;” \textit{Tract 90} and the letters of \textit{Catholicus} were the two exceptions.

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\textsuperscript{37} Newman, \textit{Via Media}, 269.
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\textsuperscript{38} Newman, \textit{Apologia}, 71.
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\textsuperscript{39} Newman, \textit{DA}, 127. In \textit{Tract 85}, which considered the Protestant doctrine of \textit{sola scriptura} compared to Apostolic tradition, Newman concluded: \textit{Either} Christianity contains no definite message, creed, revelation, system, or whatever other name we give it, nothing which can be made the subject of belief at all; \textit{or}, secondly, though there really is a true creed or system in Scripture, still it is not on the surface of Scripture, but is found latent and implicit within it, and to be maintained only by indirect arguments, by comparison of texts, by inferences from what is said plainly, and by overcoming or resigning oneself to difficulties;—or again, though there is a true creed or system revealed, it is not revealed in Scripture, but must be learned collaterally from other sources. Ker (\textit{Biography}, 60) observed that for Newman, “The second possibility is the Anglican, while the first and third positions are the Latitudarian and Roman Catholic points of view.”
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of catholicity. He came to believe that a commentary on the Articles would be important because of, “[T]he restlessness, actual and prospective, of those who neither liked the Via Media, nor my strong judgment against Rome . . .”

The main thesis then of my Essay was this:—the Articles do not oppose Catholic teaching; they but partially oppose Roman dogma; they for the most part oppose the dominant errors of Rome. And the problem was . . . to draw the line as to what they allowed and what they condemned.

In order to achieve this end, Newman decided to accentuate the “catholic” principles disseminated in the Articles:

Such being the object which I had in view, what were my prospects of widening and of defining their meaning? The prospect was encouraging; there was no doubt at all of the elasticity of the Articles . . . . I wanted to ascertain what was the limit of that elasticity in the direction of Roman dogma. But next, I had a way of inquiry of my own . . . my method of inquiry was to leap in medias res. I wished to institute an inquiry how far, in critical fairness, the text could, be opened; I was aiming far more at ascertaining what a man who subscribed it might hold than what he must . . . . It was but a first essay. And I made it with the full recognition and consciousness . . . that I was making only “a first approximation to the required solution;”—“a series of illustrations supplying hints for the removal” of a difficulty, and with full acknowledgment “that in minor points, whether in question of fact or of judgment, there was room for difference.

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41 Newman, Apologia, 64-65.

42 Ibid., 71.

43 Ibid., 72.

44 Joseph H. McKenna (“Honesty in Theology?,” Heythrop Journal 62 [2001]: 50) has contended that Newman’s Tract 90 represents the first important modern attempt at “revisionist theology”; McKenna’s selection of Newman as “modernity’s” first “dishonest” theologian was an “ironic choice because Newman was a man unfriendly to the modernization of belief.”
or error of opinion,” and that I “should not be ashamed to own a mistake, if it were proved against me, nor reluctant to bear the just blame of it.”

Newman’s “catholic” reading of the Thirty-Nine Articles revealed his desire for ecclesial communion between Churches, for Newman believed both communities shared a underlying, fundamental faith.

In purpose and method, Tract 90 contrasted with his Catholicus letters. The tract was also methodical, theological, in line with aims of the Oxford Movement and intended, in part, to assure Anglicans tending towards Rome to remain in their native church. He also thought that Tract 90’s tentative method and inferred conclusions would generate vigorous discussions among scholars and clergy. The Catholicus letters differed in most of these respects, although Newman was concerned about Christian unity and his belief in a shared fundamental faith in both works. Incidentally, Tract 90 may have helped spur Newman to write the letters. As Charles Harrold observed:

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45 Newman, Apologia, 72-73.

46 Rune Imberg (In Quest for Authority [Sweden: Lund University Press, 1987], 130) described the method that Newman employed throughout the tract: “he worked with a series of distinctions, stating what the Articles settled, and what they did not.” While Newman used lengthy quotations to support his arguments, his zeal for discovering a Catholic sense in the Articles led at times to some rather contorted interpretations.

47 Newman (Apologia, 83) had not intended the tract to be the final word on this subject:

Whether it was prudent or not, whether it was sensible or not, any how I attempted only a first essay of a necessary work, an essay which, as I was quite prepared to find, would require revision and modification by means of the lights which I should gain from the criticism of others. I should have gladly withdrawn any statement, which could be proved to me to be erroneous; I considered my work to be faulty and open to objection in the same sense in which I now consider my Anglican interpretations of Scripture to be erroneous; but in no other sense.
Tract XC and the Tamworth letters appeared in the very same month of 1841, in February. It is interesting to imagine Newman turning momentarily from the almost lawyer-like precisions and theological and ecclesiastical distinctions of his last and most fateful Tract, to those easy, idiomatic, epigrammatic letters to The Times.48

Elizabeth Jay has also surmised: “The Times’s invitation to polemical journalism must have come as welcome relief from the writing of Tract No. XC where the onus of proof lay so heavily upon Newman.”49

Avoiding Controversy

Newman had prepared Tract 90 knowing that his interpretation of the Thirty-nine articles might unsettle some people. Indeed in his Apologia, he recounted that “there had been a smouldering, stern, energetic animosity, not at all unnatural, partly rational [feeling] against its author” for quite some time.50 Newman was not fully aware of these sentiments at the dawn of 1841; yet he was reticent to agitate for the Tractarian cause beyond Tract 90. This attitude can be perceived in his gentle chiding of Frederick Rogers on 10 January about his views on Roman Catholic rituals: “I declare I think it as rare a thing, candour in controversy, as to be a Saint.”51 Two weeks later, he penned a


50 Newman, Apologia, 85.

51 LD, 8:10-11.
remarkable and prescient response to a Robert Belaney on a similar theme and noted that, among other things, controversy may actually impede the ability for one to perceive truth:

I have great confidence in the maxim, Magna est veritas et praevalebit [Truth is great and will prevail], where the incipient flame is not blown out at once. The one thing I feared and deprecated years ago, when we began the Tracts for the Times, was the utter neglect of us on the part of the Church. I was not afraid of being misrepresented, censured or illtreated—and certainly hitherto it has done no harm. Every attack hitherto has turned to good, or at least is dying a natural death. But Controversy does but delay the sure victory of truth by making people angry. When they find out they are wrong of themselves, a generous feeling rises in their minds towards the persons and things they have abused and resisted. Much of this reaction has already taken place. Controversy too is a waste of time—one has other things to do. Truth can fight its own battle. It has a reality in it, which shivers to pieces swords of earth. As far as we are not on the side of truth, we shall shiver to bits, and I am willing it should be so. The only cause of the prevalence of fallacies for the last 300 years has been the strong arm of the civil power countenancing them. This can hardly continue now. I see too that in the rising generation the most influential and stirring men in Church and State have in them a root of Catholic principles. All this is hopeful, that (whether any thing is to come of it or not) I do not think it can be made more hopeful by controversy. It is very painful certainly to find individual instances in which fallacious arguments have told with effect—but I doubt whether they can well be met for the benefit of such persons except by those who are acquainted with them and know how best to influence and persuade them.

This note provided a window into Newman’s state of mind in early 1841 as he was writing the Catholicus letters: he detailed the Tractarian movement, his role in it, the problem of the established church, and his hope that [Catholic] truth would prevail.

52 Because of its controversial interpretations, Tract 90 turned out to be the last of the Tracts for the Times.

Newman Encounters the Walters

Newman’s desire to avoid controversy, outside of *Tract 90*, proved ephemeral. John Walter III had written to Newman on 11 January and received a reply one week later. This correspondence preceded Peel’s address. There was no indication in the exchange that Walter III asked Newman to write for *The Times*, although Newman may have had a standing offer. However, on 30 January, Newman recorded in his diary, “Walter came down to Oxford and called.” Newman later amended the entry with a parenthetical note: *(about letters of Catholicus in The Times)*, thereby indicating that Walter III served as the initial liaison between him and *The Times*.

On 2 February, after their face-to-face meeting, Walter III wrote Newman to thank him for their meeting him and to clarify what *The Times* expected. Walter also informed Newman that he would receive the Bain pamphlet of Peel’s address:

8. Charing Cross Tuesday—Feb 2. [1841]

My dear Sir,

I write to thank you most sincerely on my own behalf and on my Father’s for having so kindly undertaken the subject on which we were speaking the other day. I think the letters should be about a column and a half in length each, and with regard to the number of them, your own judgment will be your best guide.

My Father will send you down the Pamphlet this evening—and will be glad of the MS. as soon as you can conveniently prepare them.

Believe me sincerely Yr obliged friend J. Walter

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54 Newman may have had such an offer from Walter III, who wanted to recruit Tractarians to write for *The Times* (*LD*, 7:448).

55 *LD*, 8:25.
Walter III seemed buoyant about the “subject on which [they] were speaking the other day.” The letter also confirmed that it was Walter III and not his father who met with Newman at Oxford. 57 His note set the initial parameters for how Newman’s response would unfold—their approximate length and the number of letters to be written. That the number of letters was left up to Newman would soon become a sticking point. 58 Finally, Walter II later sent Peel’s pamphlet to Newman, who had already had three or four days to study the newspaper version of the address. 59 The discrepancy between the language and meaning in Peel’s initial address and the later pamphlet concerned Newman—a concern that became evident in his Catholicus letters.

Sometime between the meeting on 30 January and 4 February, Newman finished the first letter. Burgis offered a plausible explanation as to its timing:

[T]he manuscript was in the printers’ hands in time for it to be inserted on Friday, 5 February so that it must have been sent off almost as soon as Walter's [3

56 John Walter III to JHN (8 Charing Cross, 2 February 1841), LD, 8:25.

57 Several studies of the “Tamworth Reading Room,” have interpreted Newman’s 1850 recollection (LD, 14:52) that “Old Walter called on me at Oriel” as referring to John Walter II: Ker, Biography, 206; Gilley, Newman and His Age, 195; the editors of Letters and Diaries (8:25) and (14:52) also surmised “Old Walter” or John Walter II met Newman initially. However, the letter of 2 February, along with Burgis’ research (“An Edition of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 24; 63), have corroborated that it was John Walter III who first called on Newman. Walter II may have also attended the meeting, although in his diary Newman only indicated that “Walter” called on him. However, Walter II did meet with Newman at some point (LD, 8:31). This visit appeared to be corroborated in Newman’s correspondence with Henry Wilberforce on 22 February (LD, 8:40), in which Walter II presumably was mentioned as visiting Newman.

58 LD, 8:30-31.

59 Most likely Newman received the pamphlet on 3 February, along with Walter’s letter, as noted in his diary (LD, 8:25).
February] letter arrived. Possibly he had begun writing before he heard from Walter; from the first paragraph in the surviving MS it seems that when he began he had not seen the pamphlet which Walter said his father would send down ‘this evening’, presumably the text of the Address published by Bain with its differences from the version given in The Times.  

The First Letter: An Anonymous Venture

Newman’s first letter to the Editor of The Times, which appeared on Friday, 5 February 1841, presumed that readers were familiar with Peel’s address. He opened his letter with the conventional “Sir.” He observed that because Peel was a political figure, his “words and deeds” were “public property.” Many who had read his address published some two weeks earlier in The Times, must have found that it contained “startling language.” Newman cast Peel—“this most excellent and distinguished man”—in sympathetic irony. He chided Peel’s choice to revise and circulate his address as a pamphlet because it was “not published in the fulness in which it was spoken.” Peel’s status had compelled Newman, 

to animadvert upon [the address] as it has appeared in your columns, since in that shape it will have the widest circulation. A public man must not claim to harangue


Burgis (Ibid., 65) has noted that the first letter “was unsigned; the lack of signature may have been an error, there is no indication in the manuscript, where the word ‘Catholicus’ appears only on the wrapper.” Accordingly, for the first letter Newman will be referred to as author; for the subsequent letters, Catholicus will be cited.

The version of the letters that will be used here first appeared in The Times in February 1841 and re-published in Newman’s Letters and Diaries (8:536-561); references in the text will use these page numbers.
the whole world in newspapers, and then to offer his second thoughts to such as choose to buy them at a bookseller’s (534).63

In comparing Peel’s address in *The Times* to the pamphlet, Newman seemed to have received quite a shock.64 Peel did “harangue” the working class and even certain members of the Church in his speech. Newman’s notion of “the whole world” was hyperbole, yet the address had been circulated in one form or another in all the major newspapers.65 Newman was concerned with more than the address *in se*. Peel had derived certain of his ideas on knowledge, religion, and education from a philosophical tradition that ranged from ancient stoics to the vanguard of the Enlightenment in Britain. This tradition in its current form targeted secular education for the working class but also

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63 Burgis (“An Edition of Newman’s *Tamworth Reading Room,*” 64) provided the context for this arresting line: “In the MS of Letter 1 the first paragraph originally ended at ‘express act of its author’. Before despatch [sic] Newman added a sentence . . . and when the letter appeared in *The Times* the sentence had been expanded and altered [‘A public man . . .’]. In addition, the arrival of the pamphlet after the letter had been written would account for a difference between the MS and *The Times* in one of Newman’s quotations from Peel.”

64 Coats (“Rhetorical Approaches,” 175) maintained that Newman’s depiction of Peel “haranguing the whole world” was simply *ad hominem*. Jay (*Evangelical and Oxford Movements*, 152) found Newman’s phrase disingenuous, “Such revision between editions was the habitual practice of writers on controversial subjects and makes Newman’s opening jibe at a politician exercising his immemorial right to emend between speech and pamphlet appear even more cavalier.” Peel, however, had not anticipated that his address would be picked up by the national press or his pamphlet to be widely circulated. Newman’s observation about Peel’s revisions was both sardonic and yet addressed his concern about how language, ideas and media influence opinion.

65 Jay, *Evangelical and Oxford Movements*, 152. In certain spots Peel reverted to what must have been customary, although condescending if not scolding, tones toward the poor and working class in his address.
for relatively new secular universities in England. In a passage analogous to The Spectator’s, Newman averred:

I shall surprise no one who has carefully read Sir Robert's Address . . . that, did a person take it up without looking at the heading, he would to a certainty set it down as a production of the years 1827 and 1828,—the scene Gower Street, 66 the speaker Mr. Brougham or Dr. Lushington, and the occasion, the laying the first stone, or the inauguration, of the then-called London University (534). 67

Newman then set the course for his critique of Peel—on education but also on the epistemic and religious principles underpinning the address: “Sir Robert [has given] expression to a theory of morals and religion, which of course, in a popular speech, was not put out in a very dogmatic form . . . .” (534). Newman gleaned from and expanded on these principles from Peel’s remarks and examples. He then shaped and summarized Peel’s convictions about human nature, the function of knowledge—and indirectly—religion: 68

Human nature . . . if left to itself, becomes sensual and degraded. Uneducated men live in the indulgence of their passions, or, if they are merely taught to read, they dissipate and debase their minds by trifling or vicious publications. Education is the cultivation of the intellect and heart, and useful knowledge is the great instrument of education. It is the parent of virtue, the nurse of religion; it exalts man to his highest perfection, and is the sufficient scope of his most earnest exertions.

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66 Armytage (Four Hundred Years, 103) noted that, the University of London was erected upon a “disused rubbish dump in Gower Street.”

67 The University of London was the first university in England to have no religious affiliation.

68 Newman (LD, 8:536) added a caveat, distinguishing Peel and Brougham, with a tinge of satire: The only “difference between the Gower Street and the Tamworth Exhibition” was that “Sir Robert's personal religious feeling breaks out in his Address across his assumed philosophy. The author I say assumed; I might say affected—for I think too well of him to believe it genuine.”
Physical and moral science\textsuperscript{69} rouses, transports, exalts, enlarges, tranquillizes, and satisfies the mind. Its attractiveness obtains a hold over us; the excitement attending it supersedes grosser excitements; it makes us know our duty, and thereby enables us to do it; by taking the mind off itself, it destroys anxiety; and by providing objects of admiration, it soothes and subdued us.

And, in addition, it is a kind of neutral ground, on which men of every shade of politics and religion may meet together, disabuse each other of their prejudices, form intimacies, and secure cooperation (534).

Had Newman simply confined his argument to adult and university education or to Peel’s politics of expediency, then his letter would have been indistinguishable from several articles that had already appeared in press. However, Newman critiqued Peel’s ideas about human nature. Peel, he implied albeit sardonically, believed religion to be important: to discipline the populace and to uphold the Church-State alliance. However, because Peel equated religion to the moral order and thus did not consider other important theological doctrines, he apparently did not understand the nature-grace distinction. As a result, Peel believed that nature could be fulfilled by an increase in empirical knowledge, e.g., geology, political economy, etc. Newman’s analysis plunged into these ideas, in many cases going beyond what Peel actually had allowed (or imagined) in his address.

Peel had tried to equate faith with reason and science with religion. However, in Newman’s judgment, Peel had allowed faith and religion to be usurped by reason and science. He exploited Peel’s position that a scientific education could become “the parent of virtue and the nurse of religion”; or that such knowledge truly could satisfy, “exalt, if

\textsuperscript{69} Although Peel discussed physical science at length, he did not address morality or ethics thematically or directly; however, he certainly made moral many claims, e.g., that investigations into physical science could lead to an exalted Christianity.
not complete” the desires and lacunae inherent in human nature. Finally, Newman honed in on Peel’s wish to overcome real difference that existed among people. Peel had extolled the new sciences and morals and presumed that they wielded such power that they would produce a unity that neither politics nor religion had yet achieved.

Newman swept into a swift dialectic about knowledge—not grace—completing nature. To do so, he catalogued the affinities between the writings of Henry Brougham and Peel’s speech. Newman began with an excerpt from Brougham and then followed

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70 A Discourse of the Objects, Advantages, and Pleasures of Science (London: Baldwin, Craddock, and Joy, 1827). Newman mistakenly attributed George Lille Craik’s The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties (London: Charles Knight, 1830) to Brougham; Craik’s work had been published anonymously through Brougham’s S.D.U.K. Newman most likely did not have a copy that attributed the work to Craik.

Of the twenty three different quotations which Newman attributed to Brougham in the first letter, twelve came from Craik; however, many of Craik’s ideas are similar if not identical to ideas in Brougham’s writings. Newman seemed to have been familiar with both works, and used them simultaneously when composing the letter. What is surprising, if not disappointing, is that by 1872, Newman realized his error about Craik—or it had been pointed out to him. Newman emended this in a footnote (DA, 256): “This latter work is wrongly ascribed to Lord Brougham in this passage. It is, however, of the Brougham school.” He chose not to attribute phrases to Craik which were found in his work, but continued to identify them with Brougham. Although rhetorically more effective to have one name counter posed to Peel’s, it was rather disingenuous in its re-publication, not to acknowledge Craik, whose importance in the letters, in some sense outweighed Brougham’s.

71 Newman noted that Brougham’s university address was wandering and “expatiated” where Peel’s approach showed a more “characteristic moderation.” In bringing these two together, Newman knew that this was not an immediate or obvious comparison for his readers, considering they had been political rivals. However, according to Wendell Harris (“Historical Forces,” 194), Brougham circa 1841 generally was held in disrepute and thus: “to cite and develop the parallel is of course a strategic choice; there was evident gain from directing an attack against the less popular figure while lamenting that Peel, who had increasing following among the influential men Newman wished to convince, seemed to be following in his footsteps.” John Walter III also noticed this mischievous marrying of minds; see his letter of 5 February (LD, 8:26).
with a word or phrase from Peel’s address. Indeed, seven consecutive paragraphs began with “Mr. Brougham,” and then “Sir Robert.” Newman’s decision to lead with Brougham was not simply chronological; Brougham had been a prominent figure in secular education. In this letter, his figure eclipsed Peel’s.

That Peel had capitulated to radical or Utilitarian ideas about education had already been noted in the *Sun* and in the *Spectator*. Neither, however, had developed Newman’s selective pairing. He flashed terms and ideas so that his readers could quickly apprehend the connections:

Mr. Brougham pronounces that a man by “learning truths wholly new to him,” and by “satisfying himself of the grounds on which known truths rest,” “will enjoy a *proud consciousness* of having, by his own exertions, become a *wiser*, and therefore a *more exalted* creature.” Sir Robert runs abreast of this great sentiment. He tells us, in words which he adopts as his own, that a man “in becoming *wiser* will become *better*;” he will “rise at once in the scale of intellectual and moral existence, and by being accustomed to such contemplations, he will feel the *moral dignity* of his nature *exalted*” (536).

Such comparisons were meant to shock, amuse, and generate curiosity. Newman, however, also made a sober point about what he deemed a distortion of the purpose of scientific knowledge. For Peel, knowledge induced an “aspiration for distinction” among the poor and placed “premiums on skill and intelligence”:

72 Newman’s excerpts from Craik and Brougham, did not always conform to their original wording or, on occasion, to their original context. Some newspapers made much of this fact. Newman however did not betray either author’s general sense.

73 Newman seemed to concede that Peel did not rely intentionally or explicitly on Brougham (*LD*, 8:537; 540).

74 Coats (“Rhetorical Approaches,” 178) mistakenly accused Newman of claiming that Peel adopted Brougham’s words “as his own” and thus “plagiarized” Brougham. Peel was actually quoting Sir Humphry Davy.
At length [Peel] breaks out into almost conventical eloquence, crying, “Every newspaper teems with notices of publications written upon popular principles, detailing all the recent discoveries of science, and their connexion with improvements in arts and manufactures. Let me earnestly entreat you not to neglect the opportunity which we are now willing to afford you!”

Newman confronted Peel’s advocacy for societal progress, especially through university and adult education. He insisted that Peel’s general view of education and its impact upon the working class was unreal.

Newman also provided an indirect critique of knowledge in relation to the university and to religion. Drawing from Brougham’s inaugural address at the University of Glasgow, Newman highlighted Brougham’s view of religion in relation to

75 Newman then quoted the following lines of Peel’s speech: “‘It will not be our fault if the ample page of knowledge, rich with the spoils of time, is not unrolled to you! We tell you,’ etc., etc.” To Newman, Peel’s “harangue” seemed grandiose and out of touch with the working class.

76 Some scholars concluded that Newman’s questioning of science and technology seemed a camouflaged form of antipathy towards the working class; see Harris, “Historical Forces,” 205-206. Coats (“Rhetorical Approaches,” 176) also believed Newman harbored resentment against the working class: “The opening of the reading room took on a particularly odious character when Newman considered the public targeted for improvement, namely men and women of all classes. The great danger here, he said, lay in allowing scientific instruction to take place prior to religious instruction.” Coats conflated two separate issues: although Newman wanted religious instruction to have a priority, the letters did not indicate a desire to impede education for all. Indeed, Newman seemed to agree with Peel that all people should receive an education—the questions for him was what constituted an education, and from where.

77 Recent articles in the British Critic may have inspired Newman’s critique.

78 “Inaugural Discourse of Henry Brougham, Esq., M. P., on being installed Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow” (Wednesday, April 6, 1825), in Speeches of Henry Lord Brougham: upon Questions relating to Public Rights, Duties, and Interests with Historical Introductions (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1841), 2:114-129; hereafter, Speeches. Although Newman did not mention this address, he may have assumed his
knowledge. Brougham believed that knowledge, by “putting to flight ‘the evil spirits of tyranny and persecution . . .’,” would no longer leave men to wander “blindfold, in ignorance.” Peel, in a similar vein, implied that those who are disposed to dogmatic or partisan “religion” are prone to “depress” those trying to obtain knowledge (536).

Newman then abruptly shifted from the pairing of Brougham and Peel and turned the brunt of his critique toward Brougham:

Mr. Brougham laid down at Glasgow the infidel principle, or, as he styles it, “the great truth,” which “has gone forth to all the ends of the earth, that man shall no more render account to man for his belief, over which he has himself no control” (536).

These lines from Brougham’s speech provided crucial insight into Newman’s argument about knowledge and religion. Moreover, Newman returned to his initial difficulty with the secular university. His spare and subtle editing, however, did not provide the full context surrounding Brougham’s Infidel Principle. Yet, the principle was imbedded in a speech which some readers might have recalled. The full passage disclosed many elements recapitulated in Peel’s address that disconcerted Newman.

Brougham’s Infidel Principle revealed a sharp distinction between meritorious action and accidental opinion, his hope for the end of bigotry (implied in religious and

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79 By implication, these “evil spirits” owed their life to religion (Speeches, 128).

80 Newman equivocated here: Brougham used the word “depress” to describe the philosopher Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) in a way akin to psychological depression; Peel, however, used “depressed” in the sense of actually keeping someone down.

81 Brougham, Speeches, 128. An excerpt of the text can be found in Appendix III.
political factions), and the unity formed by rational and scientific discourse. Newman combined the Infidel Principle with excerpts from Stephen Lushington’s address at the opening of the University of London. Lushington was a colleague of Brougham and supported his efforts in education:

And Dr. Lushington applied it [the Infidel Principle] . . . by asking, “Will any one argue for establishing a monopoly to be enjoyed by the few who are of one denomination of the Christian Church only?” And he went on to speak of the association and union of all without exclusion or restriction . . . [thus] the softening of asperities which ignorance and separation have fostered” (536).

Lushington had blended practical reasons for a secular university \(^{82}\) with a desire to reduce confessional religious ties. \(^{83}\) Newman objected to the view that secular knowledge necessarily softens bigotry and engenders society cohesion and unity. He thought Peel to be the unwitting progeny of the designs of Brougham, Lushington’s et alii—although not (yet) as daring. Nevertheless, the themes of unity through knowledge and of relaxing religious commitments were cemented in his mind:

Long may it be before Sir Robert Peel professes the great principle itself! even though, as the following passages show, he is inconsistent enough to think highly of its application in the culture of the mind. He speaks, for instance, of “this preliminary and fundamental rule, that no works of controversial divinity shall enter into the library”—of “the institution being open to all persons of all descriptions, without reference to political opinions, or religious creed,”—and of “an edifice in which men of all political opinions and all religious feelings may

\(^{82}\) In this speech, Lushington invoked a general Providence—a non-denominational God who has given man intellectual excellence as his greatest gift.

\(^{83}\) The broader swath of Lushington’s speech possibly prompted Newman to include it in his portrait of Peel. For Lushington, progress to societal enlightenment required the severing of the University of London from Oxford and Cambridge, as indicated in the *Statement by the Council of the University of London, Explanatory of the Nature and Objects of the Institution*, edited by Thomas Coats (London: Richard Taylor, 1827), 52-54. An excerpt of the text can be found in Appendix III.
unite in the furtherance of knowledge, without the asperities of party feeling.”
Now, that British society should consist of persons of different religions, is this a
positive standing evil, to be endured at best as unavoidable, or a topic of
exultation? Of exultation, answers Sir Robert; the greater differences the
better, the more the merrier. So we must interpret his tone (537).

Similar to the Spectator, Newman marveled at how Brougham’s doctrines had
infiltrated Peel’s public words; in contrast, he felt that Brougham was “leading in chains
behind his chariot-wheels, a great captive, is a fact beyond question. Such is the reward
in 1841 for unpopularity in 1827” (537). Behind this derisive image, however, was
Newman’s apprehension that the triumph of scientific knowledge in opposition to
religious knowledge, was now moving to politically powerful leaders such as Peel.

Newman realized that comparisons to Brougham might be considered “a slur
upon the fair fame of Sir Robert Peel . . . .” however, Brougham’s influence on Peel’s
views (whether direct or indirect) required Newman’s critiques. Indeed, he hoped “to be
allowed an opportunity of assigning others.”

It is, indeed, most melancholy to see so sober and experienced a man practising
the antics of one of the wildest performers of this wild age; and taking off the
tone, manner, and gestures of the versatile ex-Chancellor, with a versatility almost
equal to his own. Yet let him be assured that the task of rivalling such a man is
hopeless, as well as unprofitable. No one can equal the great sophist. Lord
Brougham is inimitable in his own line (537).

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84 In Tract 90, Newman made it clear that he desired unity between Catholics and
Anglicans. The letter broached a different aspect of Christian unity, emphasizing that a
fundamental faith united Churches in ways that human knowledge could not.

85 In regard to ecclesial schism, Newman earlier commented in his essay, “The
State of Religious Parties,” The British Critic 25 (1839): 396: “It is melancholy that
there should be parties at all in a body which its Divine Founder intended to be one.”

86 Burgis (“An Edition of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 166) has
captured Newman’s humor: “Two ‘humorous images’ sum up his drift in the first Letter:
Changing Liaisons: From Walter III to Walter II

On the day that his first letter was published Newman received a note of praise from *The Times*. The author of the note, however, was not John Walter III, rather, it was from his father, John Walter II. Newman’s diary entries did not distinguish between authors. Nor did the notes themselves contain explicit evidence as to their author. The editors of Newman’s *Letters and Diaries* have attributed the notes which Newman received throughout February to Walter III’s hand. Burgis and Henry Tristram have maintained that only the first note to Newman was written by Walter III. All subsequent correspondence was from Walter II. 87

The Burgis/Tristram position seems the most plausible for several reasons. First, a formal tone, absent in the first, can be detected in the second note. Second, the content of the letter indicated someone responsible for formatting and printing; Walter III’s note indicated that his father would be the one who received Newman’s manuscripts for publication. In addition, Walter III was not associated with the day-to-day operations of the paper, while his father was. Finally, the conventional closing of the second letter, “Believe me my dear Sir yours most truly,” differed from Walter III’s more intimate closing, “Believe me sincerely Yr obliged friend.” This closing remained a consistent feature in subsequent exchanges, as found in the letter from Walter II below:

Peel dragged at the wheels of Brougham’s chariot, and Peel taking off Brougham’s tone, manner and gestures, but both are lightly touched in and the effect is intellectual rather than pictorial; moreover Newman studiously preserves his own gravity, finding Peel's antics ‘most melancholy’ not ‘most amusing’.

My dear Sir,

You will perceive by today’s Paper, that no time has been lost in publishing your first letter, which is no less admirable as the most fitting introduction to the subject, than as presenting a striking instance of the similar effect produced on very different minds (if indeed they be different) by the false notions about education now so prevalent. I trust you will find it has been correctly printed, and that you will, ere long, favour us with your next.

Believe me my dear Sir yours most truly J. Walter

Walter II’s suggested that the interest of The Times was to expose Peel’s “false notions about education.” By requesting the next letter, Walter II reiterated his son’s suggestion of 2 February that there would be a series.

However, Newman may not have fully understood the Walters’ offer. He included a conspicuous line in the conclusion of the first letter: “Were there no other reason against the doctrine propounded in the Address which has been the subject of these remarks, (but I hope to be allowed an opportunity of assigning others).” His hope of continuing his critique of Peel suggests some ambiguity about a series of letters.

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88 John Walter II to JHN (8 Charing Cross Friday, 5 February 1841), LD, 8:26.

89 The note also seemed to confirm Newman’s statement in 1872 that the letters “were written off as they were successively called for by the parties who paid the author the compliment of employing him” (DA, iii).

90 The 5 February letter had included the Roman numeral “I” signaling The Times’s intention.

91 This ambiguity was picked up by the Editorial in the Morning Chronicle on 8 February 1841, which commented about what “promises to be a series” because it was titled “Letter I,” with others presumably to follow.
This ambiguity presented two possibilities: first, after writing his initial letter, Newman may have been uncertain of whether *The Times* would actually publish a series—especially one so sharp in critique and thick in satire. Newman was aware of the potentially unfavorable response that might have precipitated, for example, by his graphic depiction of Peel as led “in chains behind [Brougham’s] chariot-wheels.” The other possibility was that Newman had already planned the series according to Walter III’s directives, but made a rhetorical play to create a sense of anticipation for his audience.

Before his second letter appeared, Newman received a letter from either Walter II or Walter III on 6 February. Newman’s reply on 8 February most likely included the manuscripts for the second and third letters.\(^2\)

**Section 2: Letters 2-4**

This section details letters two through four, as well as correspondences and editorials related to the *Catholicus* letters. The second and third letters, published consecutively on 9 and 10 February, appeared to be a single argument divided into two parts. The second letter, while continuing the initial critique Peel and Brougham, also advanced some of Newman’s ideas concerning human nature and morality.\(^3\) The letter

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\(^2\) The letter of 6 February has not been preserved and its author remains unclear because Newman only recorded “Walter” in his diary. He did not further communicate with *The Times* or Walter II until 11 February. However, the symmetry of the letters two and three and their consecutive printing suggest that they were included on 8 February.

\(^3\) Newman recapitulated these ideas in 1872 with the title, “Secular Knowledge not the Principle of Moral Improvement.” The titles adopted in 1872 in letters two through six announced what secular knowledge *could not be*. 
contained theological allusions, e.g., that human nature was disordered by original sin and that the Church—in contrast to secular institutions—were necessary for true repentance and healing. The third completed the second by offering robust theological insights, including the importance of Christian faith, Church, and underscoring that it was grace, not knowledge, which completed and converted human nature. The fourth letter, which bore close affinities to the second and third and possibly was written in concert with them,⁹⁴ made clear that faith and grace given through the Church were the true antecedents of moral improvement.

**Letters to the Editor and the “Leading Article”: from Anonymous to Catholicus**

Newman referred to his contributions to *The Times* in 1841 as the “letters of Catholicus”.⁹⁵ His first letter was anonymous; for the remaining letters, however, Newman decided on a pseudonym that could convey his meaning yet conceal his identity. In the case of his first letter, Burgis speculated that the omission of his name was an error on the part of the editor of *The Times*, Thomas Barnes. She observed that none of the manuscripts contained the word *Catholicus*: “the word ‘Catholicus’ was only written on

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⁹⁴ In 1872 (*DA*, 277), Newman titled the fourth letter: “Secular Knowledge not the Antecedent of Moral Improvement.” The title clearly indicated similarities to the prior two. These three titles, as well as the content of the letters, denoted Newman’s concern about the limits of “secular knowledge” and what truly creates moral improvement.

the wrapper” which contained the letters. Another possible reason for the omission of this pseudonym was that Newman did not know whether he was going to contribute a full series of letters and so did not presume to create a name for himself. Walter II’s note of 5 February, prompting him to send more letters, may have encouraged him to adopt a name. Finally, the adoption of a pseudonym might have been suggested in the missing correspondences Walter II between the 6th and the 8th of February.

Newman’s choice of the name Catholicus may have derived from his simultaneous work on Tract 90 and his desire for unity between the Church of England and Rome. Catholicus may have implied the significance of religion in contrast to Peel’s dream of science “harmonizing the gradations of society, and binding them together.” Or Newman may have chosen the name because of what it evoked—disquiet for some and mystery for others. In 1855, reflecting on “my Catholicus in the Times,” he noted: “The mystery [of the name] will make people begin to read.”

96 Burgis, “An Edition of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 64. This label may have been affixed a decade later (LD, 15:62).

97 On 8 February, Newman may have sent Walter II a list of errata found in the printed version. See below his letter of 10 February and errata on 11 February.

98 LD, 10:203-204.

99 Coats (“Rhetorical Approaches,” 175) maintained that “The pseudonym ‘Catholicus’ was chosen not for its High Church ramifications, but for the universal, the catholic, need for religion in education.” Coats gratuitously added: “Newman slanted his attack against science and secularism in every article” (Ibid.).

100 LD, 17:429.
Once Newman selected this name, it had an impact on the ensuing letters. As Burgis has observed:

The anonymity of the Letters allowed him to spice them with politics and he took advantage of the freedom it gave him in this and in other ways. The high spirits which characterise ‘The Tamworth Reading Room’ would have been unsuitable flippancy had they been signed, but hidden behind ‘Catholicus’ he could picture the ‘sober and experienced’ Peel ‘practising the antics of one of the wildest performers of this wild age’, soliciting the working classes like ‘a street preacher, or the cad of an omnibus’; attribute his arguments for the spread of knowledge to muddled thinking . . . and allow himself such delightful digressions as that on the implications of the admission of ‘virtuous women only’ to the Reading Room . . . and the account of the incongruous juxtapositions of persons in the ‘new Pantheon’ of the Pursuit of Knowledge.  

**The Second Letter: Catholicus Appears**

Newman’s second letter, which appeared on page six of The Times, began with a critical observation: “A distinguished Conservative statesman” held that the acquisition of scientific knowledge necessarily led to moral improvement. Catholicus then recounted Peel’s rhetorical flourishes about knowledge and drew attention to his advocacy of “well-educated and virtuous women” who could become members of the library. Catholicus slyly surmised that “It would be difficult to exhaust the reflections which rise in the mind on reading avowals of this nature” (538). Peel’s claim that knowledge leads to moral or spiritual improvement prompted Newman to raise several questions: “How [are] these wonderful moral effects to be wrought under the instrumentality of the physical sciences?” Does scientific knowledge contain the means to perfect persons or does it “act like a dose or a charm” to divert the mind? Catholicus continued: if “you drench the popular mind with physics” could such knowledge impel religious and moral progress for

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society “in spite of individual failures?” Mechanic’s institutes, local libraries, and the University of London had grown in the past fifteen years; yet their results were inconclusive: “Where has the experiment been tried on so large a scale as to justify such anticipations?”

*Catholicus* then used some literary images which had a Dickensian quality that captured “the kind of obstinate depressing reality excluded from Peel’s bland pronouncements”:  

To know is one thing, to do is another; the two things are altogether distinct. A man knows he should get up in the morning,—he lies a-bed; he knows he should not lose his temper, yet he cannot keep it. A labouring man knows he should not go to the ale-house, and his wife knows she should not filch when she goes out charing; but, nevertheless, in these cases, the consciousness of a duty is not all one with the performance of it.

His vividly portrayed persons in concrete situations in contrast to Peel’s, Brougham’s and Craik’s ideals of how persons should be. Work-a-day persons had knowledge “without becoming [morally] better.” What then did Peel and Brougham (and Craik) mean by knowledge improving a person?

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103 Jay (*Evangelical and Oxford Movements*, 153) commented that in this passage: “Newman operates a particularly devious sleight of hand in his use of the verb ‘to know’ in order to confirm his distinction between the acquisition of secular knowledge and the conscience through which alone God is revealed to man.”

104 Filch (steal); charing (house cleaning).

105 This distinction seemed to echo Romans 7:19: “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.”
Catholicus did not immediately answer; instead he folded Jeremy Bentham into the discussion.106

[Bentham] would answer, that the knowledge which carries virtue along with it, is the knowledge how to take care of number one—a clear appreciation of what is pleasurable, what painful, and what promotes the one and prevents the other. An uneducated man is ever mistaking his own interest, and standing in the way of his own true enjoyments. Useful Knowledge is that which tends to make us more useful to ourselves—a most definite and intelligible account of the matter, and needing no explanation (539).

While agreeing with Peel and Brougham about the utility of knowledge, Bentham differed from them in two ways. First, knowledge did not exalt human nature but turned it upon itself—a type of solipsism. Second, Bentham viewed language differently than the Knowledge School. Catholicus noted that although Peel did “obiter talk of improved modes of draining, and the chemical properties of manure,” both men tended to valorize knowledge and couch their ideas in decadent language. In contrast, Bentham,

had not a spark of poetry in him . . . . [For] Mr. Bentham . . . fine language [wasn’t] any better than a set of words representing nothing—flowers of rhetoric, which bloom, smell sweet, and die.107

106 By this time, Bentham had become identified with radical utilitarianism—in contrast, for example, to the Christian utilitarianism of William Paley—and a target of the Tractarians, e.g., Rogers’ articles in the British Critic. Bentham deeply influenced Brougham and, to a lesser extent, Peel. Newman’s use of Bentham, although brief, was a distinctive feature in his letters, as Newman intended to show that Peel was part of a tradition, and not simply articulating a view sui generis. Coats (“Rhetorical Approaches,” 174-175) attempted to show Newman’s motives for including Bentham in the letters; however, Coats conjectured but provided no correlation between these two thinkers; he also used Bentham as a foil for casting Newman in a negative light.

107 Rogers (“Utilitarian Moral Philosophy,” 97) captured this sentiment: “[Bentham’s] want of subtlety of mind (which has been observed by more friendly critics than we can pretend to be) leads often to a slovenliness and inaccuracy of thought and language most remarkable in a writer who professes to effect every thing, and does effect so much by a process requiring perhaps, beyond any other, the contrary excellences—
Catholicus believed that Peel’s words and ideas, although superficial, were not meaningless rhetoric. Catholicus then attempted to illustrate Peel’s basic idea of human nature, which he himself shared:

Now, without using exact theological language, we may surely take it for granted, from the experience of facts, that the human mind is at best in a very unformed or disordered state; passions and conscience, likings and reason, conflicting, might against right, and the prospect of things getting worse (539).

However, for Peel, and the “school of philosophy in which he has enrolled himself,” the solution to the chaotic human condition was, not a victory of the mind over itself . . . not the education of the rebels—not the unity of our complex nature—but the mere lulling of the passions to rest by turning the course of thought; not a change of character, but a mere removal of temptation (539).

Catholicus opposed this “school’s” doctrine with concrete, amusing, and psychologically astute examples:

When a husband is gloomy, or an old woman peevish and fretful, those who are about them do all they can to keep dangerous topics and causes of offence out of the way, and think themselves lucky, if, by such skilful management, they get

exhaustive division. Most unusual definiteness, without any unusual precision—minute arrangement without subtle analysis—searchingness without depth—rough vigour joined to laboured technicality—are the curious characteristics of Bentham's moral inquiries. But it is yet a more serious obstacle to his pretensions, that he seems actually without all knowledge of one half of human nature, and that the better half. Poetry and refinement clearly are strangers to him.”

Peel would have disagreed with Newman as to the prospects of human nature getting worse. Harris (“Historical Forces,” 207) accurately captured Peel’s view that the goodness in human nature simply needed to be nurtured. Although distorting Newman’s view of original sin, he also provided a useful contrast (Ibid.).

Newman wrote “reduction” in the manuscript, but “education” was erroneously printed by The Times; see Burgis, “An Edition of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 67.
through the day without an outbreak. When a child cries, the nurserymaid dances it about, . . . or shows how ashamed poll parrot or poor puss must be of its tantarums.

Adverting to the fact of original sin, Catholicus despaired that Peel,

makes no pretence of subduing the giant nature, in which we were born, of smiting the loins of the domestic enemies of our peace, of overthrowing passion and fortifying reason, he does but offer to bribe the foe for the nonce with gifts which will avail for that purpose just so long as they will avail, and no longer.

Catholicus then summoned another name—ancient and venerable—to his critique of Peel: Cicero. Cicero excelled in the art of using knowledge or philosophy to distract the mind; however, for Catholicus this could not truly improve a person: “Cicero handed the recipe to Brougham, and Brougham has passed it on to Peel” (539).

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110 Newman, who held Cicero in high regard as a rhetorician, wrote an article—“Personal and Literary Character of Cicero”—for the Encyclopaedia Metropolitana in May 1824 (Historical Sketches 1:239-299; also available at: http://www.newmanreader.org/works/historical/volume1/index.html). In 1869 (LD, 24:241), Newman remarked that “the only master of style I have ever had (which is strange considering the differences of the languages) is Cicero.”

111 Cicero was included in the literature from which Newman drew in his critiques. For example, Craik (Pursuit, 1:106) observed: “The cultivation of science and literature has often been united with the most active and successful pursuit of business, and with the duties of the most laborious professions. It has been said of Cicero, that ‘no man whose life had been wholly spent in study, ever left more numerous or more valuable fruits of his learning in every branch of science and the polite arts . . . .’”

112 Coats (“Rhetorical Approaches,” 175) did not see Newman’s argument as a critique of a philosophic tradition, but as a disingenuous pairing ad hominem: “The guilt by association which Newman laid at the feet of Peel [concerning Cicero] was that the latter's secularism was paganistic in its origin and, therefore, suspect in modern, Christian England.”
Brougham (and Craik) advocated this tradition where knowledge functioned essentially as a distraction:

If a man was in grief, he was to be amused; if disappointed, to be excited; if in a rage, to be soothed; if in love, to be roused to the pursuit of glory. No inward change was contemplated, but a change of external objects; as if we were all White Ladies or Undines, our moral life being one of impulse and emotion, not subjected to laws, not consisting in habits, not capable of growth. When Cicero was outwitted by Caesar, he solaced himself with Plato; when he lost his daughter, he wrote a treatise on Consolation (540).

Catholicus returned to Peel, acknowledging, albeit satirically, that he may not have been consciously drawing from this tradition. Yet, if he had not, then his address at Tamworth was meaningless:

Whether Sir Robert Peel meant all this, which others have meant before him, it is impossible to say; but I will be bound, if he did not mean this, he meant nothing else, and his words will certainly insinuate this meaning . . . (540).

\[113\] Possibly a reference to Sir Walter Scott’s poems about the “White Lady of Avenel,” a soulless spirit who haunts river ways (The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott: with a Memoir of the Author [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1861], 7:208-210). Also see the suggestion in LD, 8:540, n. 2, that the reference may be to a French fairy also called the White Lady.

\[114\] See LD, 8:540, n. 3: “Udine was a water nymph who was born without a soul. By marrying a human she acquired a soul but also all the pains and trials of the human race. Undine was the subject of an enormously popular novel by F. H. de La Motte Fouqué [1777-1843]. A new translation by Thomas Tracy was published in 1840 and was reviewed in the October 1841 number of the Bri. Crit.”

\[115\] Burgis (“An Edition of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 190) observed: “Often he [Catholicus] draws on commonplaces and on familiar objects and situations, calculated to come home to the widest readership and often, besides, providing the best comment on the oratory of Peel and Brougham. When he said that their morality, built on curiosity not conscience, was adapted for beings without souls like the White Lady and Undine, he knew that in 1841 he could count on almost as many readers knowing Scott and de la Motte Fouqué . . . .”
He underscored Peel’s “high authority” in advocating his view of knowledge, which had ancient roots but a modern, utilitarian ethos that, in one form or other is a chief error of the day, in very distinct schools of opinion,\textsuperscript{116}—that our true excellence comes not from within, but from without; not wrought out through personal struggles and sufferings, but following upon a passive exposure to influences over which we have no control.\textsuperscript{117} They will countenance the theory that diversion is the instrument of improvement, and excitement the condition of right action; and whereas diversions cease to be diversions if they are constant, and excitements by their very nature have a crisis and run through a course,\textsuperscript{118} they will tend to make novelty ever in request, and will set the great teachers of morals upon the incessant search after stimulants and sedatives, by which unruly nature may, \textit{pro re natà}, be kept in order (541).

Turning to Brougham’s “philosophy of expedients,” \textit{Catholicus} employed a series of images that illustrated knowledge was used as a distraction. Using a sympathetic, world-wise idiom, he suggested that remedies for the drudgeries of life whether of the wealthy or the working class could not be secured by mere quantities of knowledge:

\begin{quote}
Digestive pills half an hour before dinner, and a posset at bedtime at the best; and at the worst, dram-drinking and opium,—the very remedy against broken hearts, or remorse of conscience, which is in request among the many, in gin-palaces \textit{not} intellectual. . . . Strong liquors, indeed, do for a time succeed in their object; but who was ever consoled in real trouble by the small beer of literature or science?
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{116} Newman did not think that this tradition was exclusively confined to a distinct school of thought like Bentham’s Utilitarianism.

\textsuperscript{117} Newman contrasted the utilitarian doctrine that the moral life was one of conditioning and consequence with his basic moral position: the Aristotelian/Christian doctrine of intrinsic virtue or excellence.

\textsuperscript{118} Newman was critical of Evangelical doctrines which insisted upon emotional stimulation; for example, see: “Times of Private Prayer,” \textit{Parochial and Plain Sermons} 1:252): “It is very easy to be religious by fits and starts, and to keep up our feelings by artificial stimulants; but regularity seems to trammel us, and we become impatient.”
Burgis observed that these images contributed “to the devaluation of the vague but splendid aspirations of the Address and Brougham’s Discourse.” Catholicus also drew upon Craik’s examples:

Or who was made to do any secret act of self-denial, or was steeled against pain, or peril, by all the lore of the infidel La Place, or those other “mighty spirits” which Lord Brougham and Sir Robert eulogize? Or when was a choleric temperament ever brought under by a scientific King Canute planting his professor's chair before the rising waves? And as to the “keen” and “ecstatic” pleasures which Lord Brougham, not to say Sir Robert, ascribes to intellectual pursuit and conquest, I cannot help thinking that in that line they will find themselves outbid in the market by gratifications much closer at hand, and on a level with the meanest capacity (541).

Catholicus reprised his jibe about the admission of women to the institute:

Sir Robert makes it a boast that women are to be members of his institution; it is hardly necessary to remind so accomplished a classic, that Aspasia and other


120 Laplace supposedly stated in his Système du Monde that he “had no need for the hypothesis” of God. This statement and others led some in the nineteenth century to suspect that Laplace was agnostic or atheist; however, historical evidence for this suspicion is ambiguous at best. Brougham (Discourse, 47) had lavished praise upon Laplace and Newton, which may have led to Newman’s characterization.

121 M. K. Lawson, “Cnut,” Canute [d.1035], DNB, (accessed 15 December 2010) was King of England, Denmark, and Norway. A legendary tale “not recorded until the twelfth-century works of Henry of Huntingdon and Gaimar, [told] of how he attempted to turn back the waves [by planting his throne on the shore] and then used his failure to demonstrate to his courtiers the weakness of his power compared with that of God.”

122 Newman (LD, 1:38) presumably knew that Peel had attained academic distinction in Classics at Oxford.

123 See LD, 8:541, n. 2: “Aspasia was the consort of Pericles from c. 445-429 B. C., and a woman of considerable intellectual talent, who taught rhetoric and [possibly] conversed with Socrates.” This reference does not adequately illustrate Newman’s meaning: In nineteenth century scholarship, Aspasia, often ridiculed for “impiety” in Greek drama, was considered a prostitute and a brothel keeper. Newman was not
learned ladies in Greece are no very encouraging precedents in favour of the purifying effects of science (541).

Parting shots were fired at Peel’s praise for Davy and his belief in “the power, not of religion, but of scientific knowledge on a death bed.” Peel’s class-consciousness was rebuked as detached from the actual lives of working people. Catholicus lamented that the glories of knowledge could not in themselves directly alleviate cold and hunger: 124

If anything were necessary in cumulum to complete the folly and nonsense of the whole affair, it is found in the circumstance125 that this new art of living, offered to the labouring classes—for instance, in a severe winter, snow on the ground, glass falling, bread rising, coal at 20d. the cwt., and no work (541).

Finally, Catholicus summarized his central argument that the “cultivation of knowledge” cannot effect moral or spiritual conversion:

That the mind is changed by a discovery, or saved by a diversion, or amused into immortality—that grief, anger, cowardice, self-conceit, pride, or passion, can be subdued by an examination of shells or grasses, or inhaling of gases, or a chipping of rocks,126 or observing the barometer, or calculating the longitude, is the veriest pretence which sophist or mountebank ever professed to a gaping auditory (542).127

slanding women but rather claiming that knowledge does not make a person better: Aspasia’s intellectual virtue did not prevent her harlotry. Newman later played upon Peel’s stricture that only “virtuous” women would be allowed in the reading room.

124 Newman was alluding to the cold weather that had persisted through January and into February (LD, 8:3; 25).

125 This first clause was excised from the 1872 edition (DA, 268).

126 Newman reprised this image in remarkable fashion in the Idea of a University (110): “Quarry the granite rock with razors, or moor the vessel with a thread of silk; then may you hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend against those giants, the passion and the pride of man.”

127 Harris (“Historical Forces,” 192) considered this passage the hermeneutical key to the letters; although it was an important facet of his critique of the Knowledge
Catholicus then set the table for his theological response to this doctrine in his next letter. The church—not the library or the reading room—was the true place of conversion: “If virtue be a mastery over the mind, if its end be action, if its perfection be inward order, harmony, and peace, we must seek it in graver and holier places than in libraries and reading rooms” (542).

The “E” Critique

Along with the second letter The Times published a response to the first letter of 5 February; Burgis explained The Times’ motivation for publishing this letter:

The ministerial and radical press had already seized on the appearance in The Times of an attack on the Tory leader and the insertion of E.’s letter may have been an attempt by the paper to satisfy Peel’s supporters that they were being given a chance to reply and to draw some response from those who approved of ‘Catholicus’: whether it succeeded in this is not known, no letter in praise of ‘Catholicus’ appeared and none has been preserved by The Times.¹²⁸

In a letter to the editor, “E” expressed his reaction to the first letter; he felt “exceedingly grieved that such a misrepresentation of the character of that address should have found so extensive a circulation as your paper has given it.”¹²⁹ Had the letter’s anonymous author the “charity which thinketh no evil,” he would not have been so wrong in his conclusions or so hard on Peel. The anonymous author was clearly mistaken to equate Tamworth to the University of London and had not read with enough care the

School, it was Newman’s theological arguments, especially regarding the Church, that presented the real challenge to this tradition.


¹²⁹ One of the main reasons why Newman accepted the commission was The Times’ extensive circulation.
details of the speech—the reading room was “for all classes in Tamworth and its neighborhood.” Moreover, “E” felt that the author—Newman—had disparaged Peel’s noble attempt to redress the wrongs in the education of children of Tamworth.\textsuperscript{130} While most libraries were limited to “religious books only, or . . . in mechanics’ institutions, they attempted to put religion out of their system,” at Tamworth “the desire has been to make science and knowledge the handmaids of religion . . . .”\textsuperscript{131} The anonymous author had not fully appreciated the role of the clergy at Tamworth and had made an “unjust comparison” to the University of London “over whose doors there seemed to be written, ‘Whereas we cannot agree what religion is, therefore we will have none at all.’”

“E” claimed that the letter had taken many of Peel’s statements about knowledge, religion, and morals out of context. “E” noted that the bulk of the address had been dedicated to mundane details about the institution.\textsuperscript{132} The author of the letter did not fully understand that Peel’s “object is to encourage intellectual and scientific pursuits in preference to animal gratifications, \textit{in all persons}, whether under the influence of religion or not.” “E” celebrated Peel’s leading role in the institution and hoped that it would open “the paths of sound knowledge and philosophy in all the parishes of our land.” The great

\textsuperscript{130} An errant criticism insofar as the reading-room excluded those under fourteen.

\textsuperscript{131} This statement was contrary to both the content of Peel’s speech and Newman’s critique.

\textsuperscript{132} Harris (“Historical Forces,” 193) reprised this sentiment with “E” noting that Newman did not mention any of the mundane details in Peel’s address: “Peel’s initiative in founding the library was quite evidently being indirectly censured as well as his comments on the value of scientific education.” Newman, in fact, mentioned mundane details in the second letter and did not censure scientific education.
success of Tamworth is that the “ministers of our holy religion” would manage the institution. Finally, with his final jab that the anonymous author’s letter was juvenile, “E” declared:

If these observations should induce the author of the letter and its admirers to suspend their judgments till they have more maturely considered the whole of the address, and the rules of the institution established at Tamworth, the object of the writer of these remarks will be answered.  

“E’s” response was a careful reading of some of Newman’s statements, even if he misapprehended or ignored Newman’s satire. “E” was able effectively to extrapolate certain themes which Newman had only implied. This may be an example, as Harris surmised, of the reading public’s ability to understand Newman’s critiques:

Given the form of publication, Peel’s contemporary status . . . and the equally general awareness of the long struggle still taking place over the role of religious doctrine in education, the readers of *The Times* in 1841 would have had no difficulty [understanding Newman’s letters].

However, Harris seemed to overstate his case about readers having no difficulty in understanding the letters. “E”, for example, seemingly did not understand that Newman was attacking philosophical first principles of a tradition, and not an institution.

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133 *The Times*, February 9, 1841. All quotations are from this day.

134 Harris, “Historical Forces,” 192.
The Third Letter: Grace and the Church

The following day—Wednesday, 10 February 1841—saw the publication of *Catholicus*’ third installment. Newman had begun to move beyond the initial philosophical critiques and theological allusions in his first two letters. Although playful satire and irony punctuated the third letter, he made several theological claims, which were cast for a wide audience and presented without technical precision. However imprecise the terms, Newman nevertheless sounded the first tones of a Christian Difference, engendering a contrast between the Church and the views of Bentham, Brougham, and Peel.135

*Catholicus* recalled his distinction between the realist/empiricist/solipsist tradition of Bentham and the idealist/rationalist/stoic tradition of Brougham and Peel:

> There are two schools of philosophy, in high esteem, at this day, as at other times, neither of them accepting Christian principles as the guide of life, yet both of them unhappily patronized by many whom it would be the worst and most cruel uncharitableness to suspect of unbelief. Mr. Bentham is the master of the one; and Sir Robert Peel is a disciple of the other (543).

This coy but grave implication of unbelief may have been included because the mechanic’s movement was notorious for attracting subversive and radical views toward politics and religion. The religious beliefs of Bentham, Brougham or Peel were not

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135 The 1872 title (*DA*, 269)—“Secular Knowledge not a direct Means of Moral Improvement”—mirrored that of the second letter. Newman seemed to mark out continuity and progression. However, the title may have seemed deceptive; the content of the third letter was preponderantly theological, yet the title did not indicate religion, doctrine, etc. Implied in the terms—“Means of Moral Improvement”—were Newman’s notions of Christian morality found in grace and in the Gospel.
Newman’s immediate concern.\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Catholicus} then spelled out the distinction between Bentham, Peel, and Brougham:

Mr. Bentham’s system has nothing ideal about it; he is a stern realist,\textsuperscript{137} and he limits his realism to things which he can see, hear, taste, touch, and handle. He does not acknowledge the existence of anything which he cannot ascertain for himself. Exist it may nevertheless, but, till it makes itself felt, to him it exists not; till it comes down to him, and he is very short-sighted, it is not recognized by him, as having a co-existence with himself . . . . With him a being out of sight is a being out of mind; nay, he allows not the traces or glimpses of facts to have any

\textsuperscript{136} Coats (“Rhetorical Approaches,” 179) interpreted Newman’s sleight of hand about atheism as his most egregious attack \textit{ad hominem}. James E. Crimmins (“Religion, Utility, and Politics: Bentham versus Paley,” in \textit{Religion, Secularization, and Political Thought: Thomas Hobbes to J. S. Mill}, edited by James E. Crimmins [London: Routledge, 1990], 140) has vindicated Newman’s suspicion of Bentham: “Around 1815 Bentham set about elaborating systematically the materialist, nominalist, and linguistic principles that had informed his social science from the outset of his philosophic career. . . . On the religious front, however, Bentham’s critique took on a far more urgent character. [He] conducted an attack on religion with the declared aim of extirpating religious beliefs, even the idea of religion itself, from the minds of men.”

According to Michael Lobban, “Henry Brougham” [1778–1868], \textit{DNB}, (accessed 2 August 2010), Brougham was at best a liberal Anglican and more plausibly an agnostic. Newman’s doubt about the sincerity of Brougham’s faith was echoed by Leslie Stephen (\textit{The English Utilitarians} [London: Duckworth and Co., 1900], 2:269: “The Whigs were inclined to Shaftesbury's doctrine that sensible men had all one religion, and that sensible men never said what it was. Those who had a more definite and avowable creed were content to follow Stewart's amiable philosophising. Brougham professed, let us hope, sincerely, to be an orthodox theist, and explained the argument from design in a commentary upon Paley.”

\textsuperscript{137} Ker (\textit{Biography}, 201) has detected an element of praise in Newman’s view of Bentham: “As a great proponent of realism himself, Newman has a certain reluctant respect for that ‘stern realist’ Jeremy Bentham . . . .” Ker also noted Newman’s critique of Bentham’s strictures about sensate knowledge. Yet, the above passage does not seem to indicate that Newman really did respect Bentham’s “realism”, especially in stating how “short-sighted” Bentham was. While Newman agreed about the importance of sense knowledge, his view of Bentham’s “realism” was ultimately that it was unreal—sense knowledge simply could not account for all that humans can know, especially spiritual matters; moreover, Newman recognized the importance of transcendence (which was absent from Bentham’s philosophy).
claim on his regard, but with him to have a little and not much, is to have nothing at all. With him to speak truth is to be ready with a definition, and to imagine, to guess, to doubt, or to falter, is much the same as to lie (543).

Bentham was “such an iron thinker” that he would not accept Cicero’s, Brougham’s and Peel’s “airy nothings” about the glories of knowledge. *Catholicus*, however, appeared partial to the latter tradition which somewhat allowed for personal transcendence:

Their misfortune [was], not that they look for an excellence above the beaten path of life, but that whereas Christianity has told us what that excellence\(^{138}\) is, Cicero lived before it was given to the world, and Lord Brougham and Sir Robert Peel prefer his involuntary error to their own inherited truth (543).

*Catholicus* considered these schools of philosophy as a recapitulation of a pagan philosophical tradition. These modern Stoics in effect ignored the difference which Christianity had made in the world. For Newman, Christian excellence is derived not from knowledge or philosophical virtue, but from the gospel proclaimed by the Church:

Surely, there is something unearthly and superhuman in spite of Bentham; but it is not glory, or knowledge, or any abstract idea of virtue, but great and good tidings [the Gospel] which need not here be particularly mentioned, and the pity is, that these Christian statesmen cannot be content with what is divine without hankering after what was heathen (543).

The principal difference between the Knowledge School and the Christian Church was faith and grace:

Now, independent of all other considerations, the great difference, in a practical light, between the object of Christianity and of heathen belief, is this—that glory, science, knowledge, and whatever other fine names we use, never healed a wounded heart, nor changed a sinful one; but Christ’s word is with power.\(^{139}\) The

\(^{138}\) Newman used the word “excellence” [*arête*] to signify transcendence.
ideas which Christianity brings before us are in themselves full of influence . . . in order to meet the special exigencies of our nature (543).

*Catholicus* contrasted Brougham’s claims—which had co-opted and distorted Bacon’s *scientia potestas est*140—-with the Christian claims of grace. Grace or Christ’s Word provided humans with the power to be converted. In contrast to libraries or reading rooms, grace allowed for the creation of a new society—the Church:

> Knowledge is not “power,” nor is glory “the first and only fair;”141 but “grace,” or “the word,” by whichever name we call it, has been from the first a quickening, renovating, organizing principle. It has new-created the individual, and diffused

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139 A possible gloss from *Hebrews* 4:12. In the 1872 revision (*DA*, 270), Newman substituted the “Divine Word” for “Christ’s word”.

140 Kelly (*History*, 78-79; 96-97) has pointed out that “Knowledge is Power” became the motto of the *Mechanics’ Magazine* in 1823. This axiom, a clarion call for the London Mechanic’s Institute, became synonymous with the adult education movement spearheaded by reformers such as J. C. Robertson, Thomas Hodgskin and Birkbeck. Hodgskin triumphantly declared in the October 1823 issue of *Mechanic’s Magazine*: “‘KNOWLEDGE,’ says one of the wisest men, Lord Bacon, ‘IS POWER’; and the first step, probably, towards the mechanics of this great empire obtaining power to raise themselves to their proper station in society, is to acquire knowledge.” The new humanist use of this phrase was ironic: Bacon originally intended to describe God’s attributes against those who would limit God’s potency. In “De Haeresibus” (*Meditationes Sacrae*, in *The Works of Francis Bacon: Minor Latin Works*, edited by Basil Montague [London: William Pickering, 1829], 11:373), Bacon argued: “Tertius gradus est eorum, qui arcant et restringunt opinionem priorem tantum ad actiones humanas, quae participant ex peccato, quas volunt substantive, absque nexus aliquo causarum, ex interna voluntate et arbitrio humano pendere, statuentque latiores terminos scientiae Dei quam potestatis, vel potius ejus partis potestatis Dei (nam et ipsa scientia potestas est), qua scit, quam ejus, qua movet et agit: ut prœsciat quaedam otiose, quae non praedestinet et praëordinet.”

141 Eventually Brougham’s S.D.U.K. adopted the motto; Newman directly attacked a statement in Craik’s *Pursuit* (2:2): “Knowledge is, essentially and directly, power; but it is also, indirectly, virtue.”
and knit him into a social body, composed of members each similarly created.\textsuperscript{142} It has cleansed man of his moral diseases, raised him to hope and energy . . . :—it introduced a new force into the world, and the impulse which it gave continues in its original vigour down to this day (543-544).

\textit{Catholicus} then depicted the “light” of the Church’s tradition in contrast to the tradition of knowledge in pagan antiquity:

Each one of us has lit his lamp from his neighbour, or received it from his fathers, and the lights thus transmitted are at this time as strong and as clear as if 1800 years had not passed since the kindling of the sacred flame. What has glory or knowledge been able to do like this? Can it raise the dead? can it create a polity? can it do more than testify man’s need and typify God’s remedy? (544).

Although grace can change “the whole man,” \textit{Catholicus} lamented that “the great orators and statesmen\textsuperscript{143} are busy, forsooth, with their heathen charms and nostrums, their sedatives, correctives, or restoratives.”\textsuperscript{144} Not only did they act as quack doctors, but

\textsuperscript{142} An apparent reference to the Church as the Body of Christ (e.g., 1 \textit{Corinthians} 12:12-14).

\textsuperscript{143} Unlike Peel’s address and Brougham’s \textit{Discourse}, which put a premium on physical scientists, Newman limited his critique not to scientists but to social reformers and politicians such as Bentham, Brougham and Peel. Brougham had done some amateur scientific work, and was a member of the Royal Society, but eventually turned to law and politics. Scientists such as Bacon and others were cited in the text, but none received the wrath directed towards Brougham or Peel. Newman focused his attack on social reformers who extolled science without really understanding its practice; he was not against scientists or science, but the naïve views of science by those who had little or no experience of the field.

\textsuperscript{144} Burgis ("An Edition of Newman’s \textit{Tamworth Reading Room}," 165-167) noted that Newman used “humorous images” to convey serious critique of Peel’s view of knowledge: “The image of the quack doctor runs through the second without being made explicit [and is explicit in the third]: Newman asks whether the production of moral effects by the physical sciences is like a dose or a charm which comes into general use empirically’ (Using ‘empirically’ here in the sense of ‘through an empiric or quack doctor’) and whether it is only necessary to drench (that is forcibly to administer a dose)
they were retrograde in their prescriptions: just as ancient scientific knowledge did not hold sway in the present neither should pagan philosophy and morality substitute for Christianity. Such an idea was preposterous—“as if we were to build our men-of-war [warships], or conduct our iron-works, on the principles approved in Cicero's day.” Catholicus’ analogy effectively turned the philosophical radical’s paradigm of enlightenment on its head: Christian faith had vivified the modern world with worship and morality. To return to the past would be to return to darkness.

Brougham’s and Peel’s view of knowledge as amusement, curiosity, and distraction from moral faults did not compete with the “Christian fact” in eradicating sin:

I will not assert that Lord Brougham, and certainly not that Sir Robert Peel, denies any higher kind of morality, yet when he rises above Benthamism, in which he often indulges, into what may be called Broughamism proper, he commonly grasps at nothing more real and substantial than these Ciceronian ethics.

Catholicus illustrated the contrast between the Knowledge School and the Christian tradition. Grace actually produced moral and spiritual progress. Knowledge shorn of grace imprisoned its masters:

In morals, as in physics, the [stream] cannot rise higher than its source. Christianity raises men from earth, for it comes from Heaven; but human morality

the popular mind with physics for moral and religious advancement to follow; he speaks of Peel’s ‘prescription’ for ‘the good people of Tamworth’. . . .”

145 Newman provided a lengthy quotation from Brougham’s Discourse on literary knowledge—a “degrading waste of precious time”—in contrast to scientific knowledge—a “pure delight.” In 1872, Newman (DA, 271-272) altered the quotation, making it more appropriate to his overall argument.

146 In the published article, the word “spring” had appeared instead of “stream”; it is not clear who made the mistake—Newman or Barnes.
creeps, struts, or frets upon the earth's level, without wings to rise. The Knowledge School does not contemplate raising man above himself; it merely aims at disposing of his existing powers and tastes, as is most convenient or practicable under circumstances. It finds him, like the victims of the French Tyrant, doubled up in a cage in which he can neither lie, stand, sit, nor kneel, and its highest desire is to find an attitude in which his unrest may be least (545).

*Catholicus* turned from these impressionistic metaphors to the actual social reality: the poor and laboring classes. Drawing from his own pastoral experience with and concern for the poor, he criticized Peel’s obliviousness to their plight:

The poor indulge in low pleasures; they use bad language, swear loudly and profanely, laugh at coarse jests, and are rude and boorish. Sir Robert would

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147 Newman was at his rhetorical finest: his personification of human morality in contrast to Christian grace provided a sharp contrast to Peel’s vision.

148 According to LD, 8:545, note 1, this was, “almost certainly Louis XI (1461-83) who features prominently in Scott’s *Quentin Dunward.*”

149 This image was reprised to hilarious effect in Newman’s *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching Considered,* 1:167. Here the metaphor was not related to the Knowledge School but to the Church of England:

If, however, on the contrary, you find that the more those great principles which you have imbibed from St. Athanasius and St. Augustine, and which have become the life and the form of your moral and intellectual being, vegetate and expand within you, the more awkward and unnatural you find your position in the Establishment, and the more difficult its explanation; if there is no lying, or standing, or sitting, or kneeling, or stooping there, in any possible attitude; if, as in the tyrant's cage, when you would rest your head, your legs are forced out between the Articles, and when you would relieve your back, your head strikes against the Prayer Book; when, place yourselves as you will, on the right side or the left, and try to keep as still as you can, your flesh is ever being punctured and probed by the stings of Bishops, laity, and nine-tenths of the Clergy buzzing about you; is it not as plain as day that the Establishment is not your place, since it is no place for your principles?

150 As a young curate at St. Clement’s in Oxford (4 July 1824 to 21 February 1826), Newman often worked with the poor in the community (Ker, *Biography,* 25).
open on them a wider range of thought and more intellectual objects, by teaching
them science; but what warrant will be given us that, if his object could be
achieved, what they would gain in decency they would not lose in natural
humility and faith? If so, he has exchanged a gross fault for a more subtle one.
“Temperance topics” stop drinking; let us suppose it; but will much be gained, if
those who give up spirits take to opium? *Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret,*\(^1\) is a heathen truth though a Christian fable, and universities and
libraries which recur to heathenism may reclaim it from the heathen for their
motto (545).

Human nature, “hardly or partially Christianized” remains under “the heathen
law” and even “where Christianity has power, the venom of the old Adam is not
subdued” (545). *Catholicus* provided a humorous example of the ‘old Adam’ in

university students:

. . . external discipline may change the fashionable excess, but cannot allay the
principle of sinning. Stop cigars, they will take to drinking parties; stop drinking,
they gamble; stop gambling, and a worse license follows.\(^2\) You do not get rid of
vice by human expedients . . . You must go to a higher source for renovation of
the heart and will (545).

However, “human expedients” do have their place and should not be forsaken.

Calling to mind both Bacon (and Aristotle) regarding the proper place of science and
methods, *Catholicus* averred:

I say, you must use human methods in [their] place, and there they are useful; but
they are worse than useless out of their place.\(^3\) I have no fanatical wish to deny

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\(^1\) In this passage, one cannot know if *Catholicus* was playing to his audience’s
presumptions, or reflecting Newman’s own prejudice, or a combination of both. Harris
(“Historical Forces,” 202, 205) implied that Newman held antipathy towards the poor.

\(^2\) “You may drive nature out with a pitchfork, but she will return every time”
(Horace, *Epistles*, 1.10.24).

\(^3\) Newman ruefully observed his peers’ drunken revelry as an undergraduate at
Oxford (*LD*, 1:66) and as a Tutor (*AW*, 207).
to any whatever subject of thought or method of reason a place altogether, if it chooses to claim it, in the cultivation of the mind . . . . The great and true maxim is to sacrifice none—to combine, and therefore to adjust all (545).

The heart of Catholicus’ argument—Christian faith and grace in the Church (Christianity) must be the human priority—was then presented in a précis of the previous letters, including an explicit reference to adult and university education. The priority of Christianity completed the second letter and set the course for subsequent letters.

Here then it is that the Knowledge Society, Gower-street College, Tamworth Reading-room, Lord Brougham, and Sir Robert Peel, are all so deplorably mistaken. Christianity, and nothing short of it, must be made the element and principle of all education. Where it has been laid as the first stone, and acknowledged as the governing spirit, it will take up into itself, assimilate, and give a character to literature and science. Where revealed truth has given the aim and direction to knowledge, knowledge of all kinds will minister to revealed truth. The evidences of religion, natural theology, metaphysics,—or, again, poetry, history, and the classics,—or physics and mathematics, may all be grafted into the mind of a Christian . . . . But if in education we begin with nature before grace, with evidences before faith, with science before conscience, with poetry before practice, we shall be doing much the same as if we were to indulge the appetites

154 Jane Rupert (“Newman and Bacon,” The Downside Review 118 [2000]: 46) has noted that “Newman shared Bacon’s appreciation of the importance of method. From his vantage point in mid-nineteenth century, he recognized that the [inductive] method proposed by Bacon had come to dominate the processes of thought, to be accepted as the sole rational instrument . . . . Newman agreed with Bacon’s clear distinction between the divine and the natural; but, while he admired Bacon, he deplored the Baconian successors who recognized only a single method and applied it to all subject matters. Newman observed that although this favoured method had enjoyed dazzling success in the physical sciences, if applied to other subject matters such as theology or ethics, it led to distortions through omission.” She also observed that Newman and Bacon “shared common ground with Aristotle,” who recognized the importance of a variety of methods in relation to a given subject (49).

and passions and turn a deaf ear to the reason. In each case we misplace what in
its place is a divine gift. If we attempt to effect a moral improvement by means of
poetry, we shall but mature into a mawkish, frivolous, and fastidious
sentimentalism—if by means of argument, into a dry, unamiable
longheadedness—if by good society, into a polished outside, with hollowness
within, in which vice has lost its grossness, and perhaps increased its
malignity—156—if by experimental science, into an uppish supercilious temper,
much inclined to scepticism. But reverse the order of things; put faith first and
knowledge second; let the university minister to the church, and then classical
poetry becomes the type of gospel truth, and physical science a comment on
Genesis or Job, and Aristotle changes into Butler, and Arcesilas into Berkeley
(545-546).157

For Brougham, faith could derive from reason or science. Peel believed the
same—an institution free of “religious” doctrine could still effectively create moral order:

Far from recognizing this principle, the teachers of the Knowledge School would
educate from natural theology up to Christianity, and would amend the heart
through literature and philosophy (546).

Knowledge, Peel hoped, would contribute to the “intellectual and moral improvement of
the neighborhood” (546). Catholicus concluded the piece with a doleful question: “Can
the nineteenth century produce no more robust and creative philosophy than this?” (546).

A Second Note from Walter II

Walter II sent a note of fear and panic to Newman on the day in which his third
letter appeared. The “E” letter had apparently not satisfied Tory/conservative readers;
rather it was the Whig and Radical press that had delighted in Newman’s letters. These

156 Here Newman specifically countered the claims of the wealthy or elite. Although seemingly harsh with the poor, he gave no quarter to the rich.

157 Jay (Evangelical and Oxford Movements, 213-214) claimed that Newman’s thought was truly affected by Berkeley, but Edward Sillem (The Philosophical Notebook of John Henry Newman [Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1969], 1:25), is more convincing in concluding that Berkeley was but a minor influence upon Newman.
developments plus political pressure\textsuperscript{158} apparently jarred Walter II and Barnes. Walter II wrote to Newman, rescinding \textit{The Times}'s offer:

8. Charing Cross Wednesday. [10 Feb. 1841]

My dear Sir,

I am sorry your note has not arrived in time to admit of the wrong expressions you mention being corrected, but they shall be mentioned as ‘Errata’ in tomorrow’s paper.

Nothing can possibly be more convincing and satisfactory than the letters themselves, and I know they have made a great impression on many of the literati, but unfortunately we are so situated with reference to the political world, that [it] is thought dangerous to raise a question about the principles of the leader whose party we are supporting, even on the most independent subject, and people cannot be persuaded that the condemnation of certain principles when adopted by such a person does not imply an attack on his character, and a desertion of his cause. I am thus explicit with you my dear Sir, because I wish you fully to understand, that all here whose opinions I am bound to respect are perfectly satisfied themselves with the opinions you have expressed on Sir R. P.’s conduct, but yet think it would hardly be \textit{discreet} to pursue the subject at present, when a change in the Government is contemplated as likely, and Conservatives however much they may disapprove of Sir R. P. for this and many reasons, have yet no one else to look to as a leader.\textsuperscript{159} If however you should have finished a fourth letter, we shall doubtless be able to make use of it, if you please, in some other way.

The three other papers shall be forwarded to you, but I am not aware of anything worth sending you from any other.

Believe me my dear Sir Yours most truly J. Walter\textsuperscript{160}

P. S. I hear the Chronicle has been attacking your letters. It shall be sent with the rest.

\textsuperscript{158} There is no direct evidence of political pressure; however, Walter II’s letters, the leading article of 12 February and comment in \textit{The Spectator} on 13 February provide indirect evidence that pressure had been applied on \textit{The Times}.

\textsuperscript{159} Walter II acknowledged what many Tories and Conservatives had come to think about Peel; see for example, Evans, \textit{Peel}, 41.

\textsuperscript{160} John Walter II to JHN (8 Charing Cross, 10 February 1841), \textit{LD}, 8:30.
**Newman’s “Incendiary” Response**

Walter II’s letter arrived on 11 February and Newman immediately replied. His note, which mirrored the flat praise from Walter II, agreed to end the series. Newman closed with the suggestion to “burn” the letter—a suggestion perhaps intended to shame Walter II, rather than propose how it should be used:

My dear W

I had your kind note this morning and thank you for it. I quite acquiesce in it and enter into your reasons, and am content with such opportunity as I have had of putting out views which I think important through so influential a medium—though of course I should not have begun unless I had expected to finish. Do what you will with No. 4—perhaps you had better burn it.  

Yrs very truly JHN

Although Newman’s note signaled disgust, it also showed his desire not to press controversy. The note also provided a good window into his motivation for his initial acceptance of the Walters’ commission. Newman had a certain number of letters in mind because he wanted to develop an idea. He may have assented to writing a series of letters

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161 JHN to John Walter II, (11 February 1841), *LD*, 8:31. Newman’s *Letters and Diaries* did not indicate whether this letter was a copy of Newman’s letter to *The Times* or if, as Burgis noted (“An Edition of Newman’s *Tamworth Reading Room,*” 68), it was Newman’s draft that he wrote on Walter’s note. The latter alternative seems more plausible, since this is the only extant letter from Newman to the Walters. Burgis nevertheless transcribed the draft note. *The Times*, and especially Walter II (*The Thunderer*, viii) had the practice of destroying correspondence “so that the public men of his day were safe” from later, and possibly scandalous, revelations.

162 Newman’s reply provided further evidence that he was writing to Walter II. His greeting, “My dear W”, seemed to imply a familiarity and friendship which he shared with Walter III rather than with Walter II; however, his use of “dear” and the ingratiating tone of the note suggested annoyance rather than friendship. Such conjecture can be corroborated from Newman’s abrupt line to “burn” the fourth letter. Walter II also was the one who had received the manuscripts and this letter indicated that one was enclosed.
because he realized that he would have “so influential a medium”—*The Times*—to
develop popular theological arguments for Christianity. Contrary to what Walter II,
many of the *literati*, and some contemporary scholars believed, Newman did not hope
simply to score political or religious points against Peel.¹⁶³ Nor did Newman desire to
exact revenge for Catholic Emancipation in 1829 or the Ecclesiastical Commission which
Peel established in 1835.¹⁶⁴ Although these events may have factored into Newman’s
decision to write the letters, his principal motive seems to have been a desire to put forth
an informal yet vital theology and philosophy to the widest possible readership. He
availed himself of the opportunity in *The Times* to broadcast certain of his ideas
throughout all of England.¹⁶⁵ Peel had happened to be a very prominent messenger for
what Newman considered a subversive ideology. Newman hoped both to expose the
principles latent behind Peel’s message and to promulgate his own message.

¹⁶³ Walter’s note seemed to indicate that Newman was only writing about
education. The wider press and the leading article of *The Times* on 12 February
construed the letters as mainly political. Harris (“Historical Forces,” 201) and Coats
(“Rhetorical Approaches,” 175) caricatured Newman as an Ultra-Tory Churchman.
These interpretations do not necessarily accord with Newman’s idea for the letters.


¹⁶⁵ Not only his note to Walter II but also a letter to Henry Wilberforce later that
month (*LD*, 8:41) indicated Newman’s desire to cast Tractarian thought far and wide.
“Errata” in the Second and Third Letters

Walter II’s note of 10 February suggested that Newman sent The Times a list of several mistakes in the second and third letters. On Thursday, February 11, page four of The Times published the corrections which Walter III mentioned:

Errata.—In yesterday’s paper, the 3d letter of “Catholicus,” first column, 17th line from the bottom, for “spring” read “stream;” and in the second letter, published Tuesday, 43d line from the bottom of the 1st column, for “education of the rebels” read “reduction of the rebels.”

The Leading Article: Praise for Peel

The following day, Friday, 12 February, The Times’s leading article on page four—presumably written by Barnes—took note of the Catholicus controversy and reaffirmed its support for Peel.

We insert one more letter from our correspondent “Catholicus.” It is necessary to use some caution upon this subject. We find an idea gradually creeping forth—probably only among very hasty reasoners—that our attachment to Sir ROBERT PEEL is sustaining some diminution. A morning paper also, the organ of Government, throws out hints to that effect, and casts an imputation upon us of being influenced by a bigoted party—acting under the highest impulses of Toryism. Now the answer to such an imputation is, to men of taste and judgment, easily found in the letters themselves. Was it fit that such letters should be suppressed or rejected? Sir R. PEEl himself, we are convinced, as a man of learning and knowledge, would answer that question in the negative. The attention which the letters have excited concur also in that decision. We know not whether it be our misfortune or not, but certainly the fact is—and we refer to the past history of this journal for the confirmation of it—that we have judged of public men, have adhered to or rejected them, without any reference whatever to their political position: whether they were in or out of office has made no

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166 Newman did not record this list in his diary; the last entry which indicated correspondence with Walter was on 8 February.

167 The Times, 11 February 1841.

168 The Morning Chronicle, 8 February 1841.
difference with us; and Sir Robert Peel’s obvious approach to Her Majesty’s councils, from the incapacity of those who now direct them, does in no degree tend to make us think or speak more highly of his talents than we have hitherto done. He is beyond all doubt a great and able statesman—virtuous and disinterested—much more capable of directing the councils of the Sovereign than those by whom Her Majesty is at present surrounded; but still not infallible: and it is right that he himself should know what great and able men think of him. He will have his own natural and acquired talents to conduct him; but he is not placed beyond availing himself of the advantages which may be derived from attending to those opinions which others entertain of his separate acts and proceedings. The speech at Tamworth we think not a wise one. What man is wise at all times? Its errors and blemishes are ably exposed in those letters which we have published: Sir Robert, we are convinced, will be the better for them; at least in one respect—he will be more cautious in future; and the country will gain also by any improvement which he may derive from the suggestions of others.  

While the editorial offered oblique praise of the letters—only “hasty reasoners” would judge the letters as bigoted and of an Ultra Tory cast—its main line throughout was that Peel was an important leader who nevertheless made rash statements in his Address. The suggestion that Peel would see the wisdom in Catholicus’ response and would not have asked that they be suppressed appeared to be an attempt to appease critics. The Times apparently realized that Newman had not simply cast aspersions on Peel, as was the case with several Whig and Radical papers in January, e.g.,

169 The Times, 12 February 1841.

Harris (“Historical Forces,” 193) considered the letter a “brief defense” of Catholicus. The contents of the letter do not bear this interpretation.

171 That Peel had been careless represented a Tory/Conservative wish; Peel had held these convictions for some time.

172 It remains unclear who was pressuring The Times to end the Catholicus series. Likely, some of Peel’s supporters, and possibly Peel, made the request. See for example remarks from The Spectator, 13 February 1841 in Chapter 4. The Times also miscalculated Peel’s magnanimity: Peel rebuked the letters in Parliament in March and recalled them in an address to the Tamworth library in 1849.
The Spectator. Rather, the letters were unequivocal that Peel had explicitly adopted a philosophical tradition opposed to Christianity. It was apparent that Newman was concerned not solely with the immediate issue of education, but also with a rival tradition that had steadily emerged over the past several decades.

The Fourth Letter: Rising from the Ashes

Newman did not know whether his fourth manuscript would go to press. Fortunately, Walter did not follow Newman’s advice—the letter did not go up in flames. The letter, which appeared on Friday, 12 February 1841, recapitulated his argument that Christianity provided the true good for improving the human condition in contrast to the utilitarian tradition or the “Knowledge School.”

Catholicus claimed that human nature needed to be “recast” (alluding to his arguments for grace in the third letter); in contrast, Brougham’s solution was to “tinker” with it. He avoided any mention of Peel; instead he contrasted those who believed knowledge to be equal to or superior to faith—Brougham to Bentham:

[Brougham] understands that something more is necessary for man’s happiness than self-love; he feels that man has affections and aspirations which Bentham does not take account of, and he looks about for their legitimate objects. Christianity has provided these; but, unhappily, he passes them by. He libels them with the name of dogmatism, and conjures up instead the phantoms of Glory and Knowledge; idola theatri, as his famous predecessor [Bacon] calls them (547).173

173 Although utilitarianism has been synonymous with Bentham (and his disciple J. S. Mill), Newman labeled Bacon as the Prophet of utility in The Idea of a University (118): “His mission was the increase of physical enjoyment and social comfort; and most wonderfully, most awfully has he fulfilled his conception and his design.” Rupert (51) has pointed out that “Bacon’s affirmation of the limitations of human reason, of the role of ‘the word and oracle of God’ in the experience of moral and religious life, is on a
A passage from Bacon’s *Novum Organon* followed which imputed to the Knowledge School that their theories were, of kin to those that in great variety formerly flourished among the Greeks. And these theatrical fables have this in common with dramatic pieces, that the fictitious narrative is neater, more elegant and pleasing, than the true history.

*Catholicus* then acknowledged that, at present, physical science seemed more interesting “than the study of the New Testament” and added that Brougham fixed “upon such science as the great desideratum of human nature, and puts aside faith under the nickname of opinion.” *Catholicus* wished that “Sir Robert Peel had not fallen into the snare, insulting doctrine by giving it the name of ‘controversial divinity.’” Peel, however, differed from Lord Brougham—his address celebrated science as leading to Christianity. To support this claim, Peel had concocted a “long and complicated sentence,” which “sets before us a process and deduction.” Yet from the premise of scientific induction there is no guarantee of a conclusion in Christian faith.

different plane from the shift in perspective evident in Bacon’s followers who moved towards utilitarian ethics and natural theology . . . .”


175 By citing Bacon and criticizing Brougham, Newman was highlighting the reversal between knowledge and faith which was increasingly characteristic of his era. In contrast to a time when philosophies of knowledge were considered “theories” and faith was commitment, the situation had changed: e.g., according to Brougham persons were no longer responsible for their opinions or faith.

176 Newman did not believe natural theology could substitute for the faith found in the Church’s tradition. See Patrick J. Fletcher, “Newman and Natural Theology,” *Newman Studies Journal* 5/2 (Fall 2008): 26-42. Frank Turner (*John Henry Newman:
The way is long, and there are not a few half-way houses . . . along it; and who is to warrant that the members of the Reading-room and Library will go steadily on to the goal he would set before them? And when at length they come to “Christianity,” pray how do the roads lay between it and “controversial divinity”? Or, grant the Tamworth readers to begin with “Christianity” as well as science, the same question suggests itself, What is Christianity? Universal benevolence? Exalted morality? Supremacy of law? Conservatism? An age of light? An age of reason?—Which of them all? (548).

These questions recapitulated themes from the previous letters and set the path for an answer as to what Christianity was. However, Catholicus did not answer directly. He rather pushed on with his argument. He disclaimed any insinuation that Peel had “any intention at all to put aside Religion,” nonetheless his words could “mean something very irreligious.” Peel’s exhortation for the laboring classes to study and learn science after a hard day’s work, was troubling. He had offered mere rhetoric to workers and, along with Brougham, had effectively “taken from Christianity what he [gave] to Science.”

Catholicus countered with “common sense and practical experience”:

The multitude of men have neither time nor capacity for attending to many subjects. If they attend to one, they will not attend to the other; if they give their leisure and curiosity to this world, they will have none left for the next. We cannot be everything; as the poet says, “non omnia possumus omnes.” We must make up our minds to be ignorant of much, if we would know anything. And we must make our choice between risking Science, and risking Religion (548).

Catholicus declared: “I will make this fair offer to both of them.” If Peel would ensure that Tamworth’s inhabitants earn “a ticket” granted by “public ministers of

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The Challenge to Evangelical Religion [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002], 331) has suggested that through these letters “Newman short-circuited the entire debate over natural theology that was to erupt throughout the British scientific community from the mid-1840’s through the 1870’s.” Turner did not substantiate this claim, nor has evidence been found linking the Tamworth Reading Room to such an exaggerated conclusion.

177 Virgil, Ecologues, 8.63.
religion”¹⁷⁸ that attested to their “proficiency in Christian knowledge” then “they shall have a carte blanche from me to teach anything or everything else second.” Thus, “We will have no ‘controversial divinity’ [doctrine] in the Library, but a little out of it.”¹⁷⁹ In high tones and with great affect, Catholicus made plain his view of the priority of Faith to knowledge without disparaging the latter:

Not a word has been uttered or intended in these letters against science; I would treat it, as they do not treat “controversial divinity,” with respect and gratitude. They caricature doctrine under the name of controversy. I do not nickname science infidelity. I call it by their own name, “useful and entertaining knowledge;” and I call doctrine “Christian knowledge;” and, as thinking Christianity something more than useful and entertaining, I want faith to come first, and utility and amusement to follow (548-549).¹⁸⁰

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¹⁷⁸ Peel considered the clergy “public” servants—a standard Tory view of the alliance between Church and State; Newman considered this position opposed to the principle of ecclesial independence. See Nockles, “Church and King,” 106-107.

¹⁷⁹ Jay (Evangelical and Oxford Movements, 152) has claimed that this paragraph was only added later in the pamphlet version; however, she confused this paragraph for the two paragraphs omitted in the fifth letter and later added to the pamphlet. Newman’s “offer” paragraph was originally published in the fourth letter to The Times.

¹⁸⁰ Coats (“Rhetorical Approaches,” 179) claimed that “Peel and Brougham had reason and logic on their side,” thereby implying that Newman rejected them for “dogmatic expressions.” Harris (“Historical Forces,” 206) claimed that Peel “looked to the logical/scientific model of thought,” while Newman “insisted on the inviolability of dogmatic principles” garnered through converging probabilities. Jay (Evangelical and Oxford Movements, 153) claimed that Newman was “anxious only to deny any connection between reason and faith . . . .” In this passage and elsewhere, Newman consistently argued that neither Peel nor Brougham were “logical” nor “scientific”; rather they acted as rhetoricians seeking to convince people of sciences with which they [especially Peel] were little or no longer acquainted. Newman did not seek to belittle scientific knowledge; rather he maintained a priority of faith in relation to acquiring scientific knowledge. This priority, in his eyes, did not undermine scientific knowledge, but rather allowed it to be itself for they were not equal in their origins or ends.
Catholicus was no enemy to education. Unlike the Ultra-Tories, he did not prescribe who could and could not learn. Rather, he questioned Peel’s “enlightened” but rather arbitrary prescriptions against age and religious affiliation:

That persons indeed are found in all classes, high and low, busy and idle, capable of proceeding from sacred to profane knowledge, is undeniable; and it is desirable they should do so. It is desirable that talent for particular departments in literature and science should be fostered and turned to account, wherever it is found. But what has this to do with this general canvass of “all persons of all descriptions without reference to religious creed, who shall have attained the age of fourteen”?

Peel’s patronizing focus on laboring classes was then queried.¹⁸¹

Why solicit “the working classes, without distinction of party, political opinion, or religious profession;” that is, whether they have heard of a God or no? Whence these cries rising on our ears, of “Let me entreat you!” “Neglect not the opportunity!” “It will not be our fault!” “Here is an access for you!” very like the tones of a street preacher, or the cad of an omnibus¹⁸²—little worthy of a great statesman and a religious philosopher? (549).

¹⁸¹ Burgis (“An Edition of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 166) noted Newman’s use of humorous images was not intended to terminate in their subject (e.g., Peel or Brougham) but to awaken readers to the gravity of his argument: “The subject matter and the anonymity of the Letters allowed greater freedom to the controversialist and he certainly justified his treatment of Peel and Brougham by ‘humorous images,’ ‘satirical nicknames, epigrammatic hits’ calculated to excite attention and to ‘diffuse light’ over his subject; but to make the verses an epigraph to the pamphlet would have been an unnecessarily cruel stroke . . . and one likely to direct the reader to the humour at Peel's expense to the exclusion of the ideas for which it was a vehicle.”

¹⁸² By comparing Peel to a “cad,” Newman would either have inflamed Peel’s supporters or had his opponents doubled over in laughter. By 1841, the “cad” had become notorious in Victorian England: “It was [George] Shillibeer who introduced the omnibus to London . . . . Their lower fares, regular service, and speediness made the new omnibus hugely popular. Conductors were initially treated with enormous respect, hired only if there were fluent in French and English, and dressed in smart military-style uniforms to enhance their authority. However, they soon became infamous for swindling foreigners, mistreating passengers, drunkenness, and other rude behavior. The popular term for them was ‘cad.’” Jessica Lang and Jennifer Speake, “Buses and Coaches,” in Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia, edited by Jennifer Speake (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 2003), 1:152.
This manifest of questions and critiques climaxed in \textit{Catholicus}' repeated gibe at the library’s policy on women and virtue: “A very emphatic silence is maintained about women not virtuous. What does this mean? Does it mean to exclude them, while bad \textit{men} are admitted?” (549). Exploiting the institute’s hypocrisy, \textit{Catholicus} wondered if knowledge would make the vicious virtuous, then why exclude the former at the outset? If knowledge could do what religion could not, then why have any barriers?

Alas, that bigotry should have left the mark of its hoof in the great “fundamental principle of the Tamworth Institution!” Sir Robert Peel is bound in consistency to attempt its obliteration. But if that is impossible, as many will anticipate, why, O why, while he is about it, why will he not give us just a little more of it? \textit{Cannot} we prevail on him to modify his principle, and to admit into his library none but “well-educated and virtuous” \textit{men}? (549).

\textit{The Times’ Volte-Face}

That the leading article was published along with the fourth letter of \textit{Catholicus} signaled a reversal by \textit{The Times}. Newman was not notified of this change in course until after his letter was published. Walter II sent a note which feebly explained the \textit{volte-face}; he indicated that the political pressure on \textit{The Times} had subsided. Possibly the editorial affirming \textit{The Times’} support of Peel was the crucial element allowing Newman to complete his series of letters. Yet Burgis commented:

\begin{quote}
Walter was in a very difficult position: he [and his son] had offered Newman a free hand and the brilliance of the ‘Catholicus’ letters was beyond question. At
\end{quote}

Burgis (‘An Edition of Newman’s \textit{Tamworth Reading Room},” 167-168), commented that the image was the “least dignified of the comparisons [Newman] finds for Peel and was carefully worked over as the MS shows. Like the other images (the imitation of Brougham’s antics and the quack doctor), it is justified because it conveys with such force Newman’s criticism of a ‘great statesman’ treating neither reader nor subject with the respect and seriousness they deserve from him.”
the same time, he and his editor Barnes may well have had strong objections to the publication of any further letters. Their doubts about the wisdom of allowing ‘Catholicus’ to continue [were] unlikely to have been removed by Letter 4—where Peel [was] compared to “a street preacher” or the “cad of an omnibus” . . . .

Walter II apologized to Newman and asked him to finish his letters. He recognized their brilliance—hoping to publish them as a pamphlet—while recommending how the letters should end!

8. Charing Cross Feb 12. [1841]

My dear Sir,

You will perceive that your fourth letter has been inserted in today’s paper, and also that some remarks have been made on the former ones in the leading Article, which it is hoped will have the effect of satisfying people’s minds that they were not intended to serve political purposes, nor to create any personal animosity towards the subject of them.

I should be sorry indeed, that any difficulties on our part should prevent you from completing the task you have so kindly undertaken or defeat the good ends that we all anticipate from it; but the materials we have to deal with are so various that it is difficult, as you may suppose, to please all. I am very glad however to find that persons who were alarmed, on the grounds I have mentioned, at the first two letters are now becoming wiser, and we therefore hope that if you can sum up in one or perhaps two letters more what you have to say you will let us have them, and they shall appear immediately. We then propose, with your leave, to publish the whole series in a pamphlet, and if you will state anything you may have omitted, or may wish to add, in, the form of a preface, it shall be published in the Paper likewise. I hope to be in Oxford next Wednesday and to have the opportunity of explaining personally what cannot be so well stated in a letter.

Believe me my dear Sir Yours most truly J. Walter

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184 John Walter II to JHN (8 Charing Cross, 12 February 1841), LD, 8:31.
This letter from Walter II to Newman was the last that has been preserved. Unlike his ebullient son, who had left the number of letters up to Newman, Walter II knew that this series must come to a close quickly lest there be further backlash. Sometime afterward, Newman agreed.

**Hiatus between Letters Four and Five**

Walter II’s note of 10 February, Newman’s response and Walter’s retraction and the publication of the fourth letter on 12 February—must have given Newman pause. Burgis provided a hypothetical account of what might have transpired during the eight day interim between the fourth and fifth letters:

Walter said that *The Times* was willing to publish one or two more letters and any prefatory matter Newman thought necessary, that the letters should be published immediately, and that he would arrange for their publication in pamphlet form. Three more letters in fact appeared but no preface, and the letters did not appear immediately . . . . The eight days between 4 and 5, the longest interval in the series, may be accounted for in at least three ways. *The Times*, in spite of Walter's assurances, may have been responsible; or Newman may not have been able to complete another letter before that date—he was probably engaged in seeing Tract 90 through the press. Another explanation that suggests itself is that having, completed four letters, Newman could see his way clear to the end and knowing that he needed three more letters was reluctant to continue until he had a more certain undertaking than Walter's agreement to insert ‘one or perhaps two letters more.’

Further, Newman may have temporarily abandoned the letters because he was put off by Walter II’s previous letter and *The Times*’s editorial. He may have decided to finish the series as a result of negotiations with Walter II later in the week:

The fifth letter did not appear until after Wednesday, 17 February, the day when Walter hoped to call on Newman and give him a personal explanation of his

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treatment of his distinguished contributor. There is no record of the interview in Newman’s diary but he wrote to Walter accepting his suggestions on 18 February.\textsuperscript{186}

Although no record of their meeting remains, apparently Newman did meet with Walter II or as he recounted in 1850, “Old Walter.”\textsuperscript{187} Henry Tristram’s claim that Newman wrote a letter to Walter II on 18 February and his exchange with Henry Wilberforce on 22 February, in which he mentioned Walter as visiting Oxford, provided corroborating evidence of such a meeting.\textsuperscript{188} Moreover, the fact that Newman wrote three more letters rather than a concluding letter and a preface which Walter II had requested suggests that a \textit{modus procedendi} had been achieved in their personal meeting. This meeting may also explain why Newman recalled that he had been “pressed several times” by “Old Walter” before he consented to write against Peel.\textsuperscript{189} Newman had met with Walter III initially on 30 January and it seems only on one occasion; however, he subsequently met “Old Walter” on 17 February 1841. In his later recollections, Newman may have conflated these meetings. Newman had to be convinced initially to write against Peel—he may have also needed encouragement to finish the series of letters.

\textsuperscript{186} Ibid., 72. Burgis’s source for the 18 February letter was Henry Tristram’s unpublished article, “Newman and The Times,” where Tristram noted that Newman had “accepted” Walter’s suggestions. Unfortunately, this letter was most likely destroyed by The Times. Like Newman’s reply of 12 February, Newman probably composed a rough draft on a piece of paper, which has since been lost.

\textsuperscript{187} LD, 14:52

\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., 8:40.

\textsuperscript{189} Ibid., 14:52.
Another Account of the Hiatus

Jerry Coats’s study of the *Tamworth Reading Room* has posed an alternate explanation for the hiatus and the formation of the *Catholicus* letters. Coats believed that as a series they lacked any coherent theme or idea.\(^{190}\) Newman had simply followed the convention of the time—his letters were occasional and thus conceived independently of one another.\(^{191}\) However, Coats asserted that the first three did resemble one another although their bond was extrinsic—these letters merely shared Newman’s conservative political and religious agenda filtered through attacks *ad hominem* against Peel, Brougham, and Bentham.

Coats refined this claim regarding the final four letters: in light of the “E” critique and commentaries in other papers, Newman had softened his tone, and mitigated his attacks on Peel and Brougham. This softer tone accounted for another form of extrinsic unity. According to Coats, Newman was forced to adjust the form and substance of his letters because he was chastened by the press:

\[^{190}\text{Coats, “Rhetorical Approaches,” 177.}\]

\[^{191}\text{This observation has merit. Reflecting on the *Catholicus* letters in 1855, Newman understood that most readers would only peruse a letter or two. Accordingly, Newman thought that each letter had to stand on its own merit so that it would create a lasting impression on the reader (*LD*, 17:428-429). However, Tracey (*LD*, 8:525) has noted that, “the extant manuscript working drafts show that, while not conceived as a single unit, they [the *Catholicus* Letters] were not composed as individual letters.” Newman revisited certain themes throughout the letters, sharpening their intent and allowing the idea of the Church as the Christian Difference to develop.}\]
In this and in similar letters in the columns of other periodicals, Newman perceived a challenge which he answered by altering the rhetoric of his final four offerings to *The Times*. All *ad hominem* efforts were abandoned.\(^{192}\) Moreover, Newman separated Peel from Brougham and in a serious tone offered refutation for their ideas. The references to Cicero and Bentham are entirely absent\(^{193}\) as Newman concentrated on the more recent antagonists. Throughout the seventh letter, Peel is described as being “a religious man” whose only fault rests in his misunderstanding that science does not directly lead man to God . . . . Brougham, whose earlier speech is more clearly anti-religious, is no longer scoffed at. He is handled with a new sense of sadness . . . . Unlike the first article which had Brougham actively perverting his nation, Newman's last description of the older statesman lamented that the latter spent his time “in preserving the mean, not in aiming at the high.”

Newman's altered rhetoric compromised an advantageous response to his critics in the press. By dropping the personal attacks against Peel and Brougham (especially the charge of atheism leveled at Peel), he relieved himself from similar *ad hominem* attack and focused on issues of dogma which historically were his strength in argument. In forgiving Peel the grievous association with Brougham and praying for the latter's soul, Newman took on a mantle of magnanimity and demonstrated the hope of new life offered by his theological principles. By no longer trivializing the opposing arguments, he did not so much dignify his antagonists as he dignified his own statements. After all, Peel and Brougham had reason and logic on their side . . . .\(^{194}\)

Unfortunately, Coats’s study lacked any evidence of reading through Newman’s personal correspondence in order to support these claims. Had Coats done so, he presumably would have noticed that Newman relished the attention he received.\(^{195}\) In

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\(^{192}\) The letters show plainly that *ad hominem* arguments were used in the fourth letter; they continued in the fifth, sixth and seventh letter, although abated.

\(^{193}\) Bentham or Benthamism was mentioned in the fourth and sixth letters.

\(^{194}\) Coats’s (“Rhetorical Approaches,” 179) assessment unwittingly resurrected many of the same arguments found in the Whig press in 1841. This is ironic insofar as his work showed little or no familiarity with the contemporary press other than *The Times*. His conclusions also seem influenced by various historical and hermeneutical errors in his account. Harris, “Historical Forces,” 193; 200-201, also seemed to advocate what the Whig press argued against Newman in 1841.
addition, although Coats believed that it was the reaction in the press that caused Newman to shift the tone and content of his letters, he offered no evidence of having read other critiques outside *The Times*, e.g. the *Chronicle* of 10 February. Had he done so, he might have concluded otherwise.

Coats rightly perceived change in the letters. Newman did adjust his rhetorical approach. Yet, Coats misinterpreted the causes and timing of this adjustment. He believed that because of the attacks in the press Newman shifted his mode and method of attack between the third and fourth letters. The exchange between Walter II and Newman between 10 and 11 February, however, revealed that Newman had not yet read other press critiques prior to his fourth letter. This exchange also showed that Newman had composed most, or all, of the fourth letter before receiving newspapers from Walter II. Thus, whatever changes Newman made occurred after the fourth letter and during the week during which he did not publish for *The Times*.

Newman had conceived this shift in the tone and content of the letters prior to and independent of outside critiques. His exchange with Walter II on 11 February indicated that he wanted compose more letters in order to develop the idea that had gradually emerged in the first four. His fifth letter clearly expressed the idea of the letters—the Church as the Christian Difference. This letter denoted the real change in his approach for it laid bare the unifying idea of the letters.

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195 Burgis ("An Edition of Newman’s *Tamworth Reading Room*," 92) arrived at the same conclusion.
Section 3: Letters 5-7

This section details letters five through seven, as well as correspondences and editorials related to the *Catholicus* letters. Most importantly this section emphasizes a change in Newman’s letters, one that indicates The Christian Difference.

Newman’s note to Walter II on 18 February may have included his fifth and sixth installments; nevertheless, the hiatus and subsequent meeting with Walter II was providential. Newman must have used the time to hone the idea which guided the remaining *Catholicus* letters. He did not directly follow the threads of letters two, three, and four; rather, he returned to a theme in the first letter: unity and difference.\(^{196}\) This theme, which undergirded the first four letters, became fully manifest as an idea in the fifth: the faith of the Church cleansed the disordered mind, helped to purify human nature, and united Christians. Christian faith also differentiated sincere believers from secular society. Scientific or inferential knowledge, on the contrary, could not unify persons and tended to veil qualitative differences. In revealing this idea, Newman tempered the rhetoric that played with Peel and Brougham’s Knowledge School. The difference between what the Church and secular institutions offered was the idea which he chose to impress upon his readers.

In his sixth letter Newman provided epistemological warrant for the Christian Difference. In the fifth, he argued for readers see the difference between the Church and a secular institute. In the sixth, he extended the difference to an intimate, personal

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\(^{196}\) Newman’s 1872 title, “Secular Knowledge not a Principle of Social Unity” (*DA*, 283), indicated this new direction.
level—between ecclesial faith and secular knowledge held in the concrete person. Indeed, Newman saw these two levels distinct but unified. Thomas Vargish has maintained that:

Newman based his criticism of society, including his reaction to the romantics and to the utilitarians, upon his philosophy of the mind. In *The Tamworth Reading Room* . . . his views on the scope and limitations of knowledge led him not only to a complex of qualifications about the aims and limits of education but to a direct attack on what he ironically termed his ‘civilized age’.  

In order to reach the personal level Newman crafted the most distinctive letter in the whole series. The sixth contained few of Peel’s or Brougham’s words; rather, it presented a didactic argument on the distinctions between forms of knowledge that characterize believing and reasoning in a person.  

Finally, the seventh letter articulated, albeit incompletely, Newman’s understanding of modern science in relation to religion. The surface of his argument about religion displayed the importance of conscience—the Moral Governor that spoke to persons across time and culture. Undergirding this argument was the shadow of atheism that threatened the delicate balance of conscience, faith, and scientific knowledge. The letter ultimately united many strands which ran through the previous six, including a return to *Catholicus*’s wicked satire. This was the *coda* for his score.  

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198 This distinction was enshrined in his 1872 title, “Secular Knowledge not a Principle of Action” (*DA*, 292).

199 The 1872 title, “Secular Knowledge without Personal Religion tends to Unbelief” (*DA*, 298) provides several important clues about the letter: first, it reclaimed
The Fifth Letter: The Christian Difference

In his fifth letter to the editor of *The Times*, published on Saturday, 20 February 1841, *Catholicus* began by recalling the egalitarian nature of the Tamworth library: it would be open to all “without with reference to political opinions or to religious creed.” Peel wanted all members on the book committee—especially the Anglican ministers—subject to the rule that there would be no debate over religious or political differences in the reading room. Rather, members should unite “in furtherance of knowledge.” *Catholicus* emphasized that Peel had equated religious difference and political difference:

... are religious principles to be put upon a level even with political? Is it as bad to be a republican as an unbeliever? ... To a statesman, indeed, like Sir Robert, to abandon one’s party is a far greater sacrifice than to unparliamentary men; and it would be uncandid to doubt that he is rather magnifying politics than degrading religion in throwing them together; but still, when he advocates concessions in theology and politics, he must be plainly told to make presents of things that...

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elements from the first letter and its subsequent title. Second, it departed from the formulaic “Secular Knowledge not . . . .” Third, it implied Newman’s repeated claims that secular knowledge in se was not dangerous—as long as it did not attempt to usurp religious knowledge. Finally, the title also highlighted a new element: if secular knowledge eclipsed religious knowledge, the loss of faith would follow.

200 Peel had noted the exception would be for those under fourteen years of age; however, families would be able to use library materials. Were women, as Newman was wont to remind his readers, who were not well educated and virtuous, excluded?

201 Many of the lines in this opening foray were quoted from the newspaper address. Peel either excised or radically altered them in the Bain pamphlet. The pamphlet muted the comparison between political and religious difference and primarily censuring the latter.

202 This line also was removed from the Bain pamphlet. The revision resembled the original proposition but didn’t have the clear meaning which *Catholicus* derided. These excerpts reintroduced the themes unity and difference introduced in the first letter.
belong to him, nor seek to be generous with other people’s substance (550).

In the next paragraph, Catholicus directly answered the question raised in his fourth letter: “What is Christianity?” His answer pierced Peel’s conflation of politics, the Knowledge School, and religion:

Christianity is faith,\(^{203}\) faith implies a doctrine; a doctrine propositions; propositions yes or no, yes or no differences.\(^{204}\) Differences, then, are the natural attendants on Christianity, and you cannot have Christianity, and not have differences (550).\(^{205}\)

Catholicus insinuated that Peel, “so cautious, so correct,” obliterated this difference because he thought not primarily as a Christian but as a secular politician:

His great aim is the peace and good order of the community, and the easy working of the national machine. With this in view, any price is cheap, everything is

\(^{203}\) On 21 February, one day after this letter was published Newman preached “Judaism of the Present Day” (PPS, 6:174-189). That sermon contained a striking parallel to this passage that may clarify what Newman intended: “Christianity is religion, and something more; and the spirit of love is faith, and something more. Christian faith is faith developed into love, it lives in love, and love is greater than faith, because it is its Gospel perfection . . .” (PPS, 6:185). Although his diaries do not indicate when Newman worked on the fifth letter or the sermon, it is reasonable to conclude both were composed during the same interval.

\(^{204}\) Newman may have been improvising upon 2 Corinthians 1:18-21: “But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us . . . was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God . . . .”

\(^{205}\) Gilley (Newman and His Age, 197) commented that this statement “was the heart of the matter.” Gilley concluded that Newman made this declaration because by 1841, the Church of England’s power had eroded. This erosion “led a realistic politician like Peel to edge towards a Christian ecumenism away from Anglican confessionalism.” Although correctly interpreting Peel’s religious situation, Gilley’s identification of Newman with the Tory High Church tradition was not accurate. Newman was less concerned about preserving Anglican trappings of power than with his desire for the renewal of faith in what he termed the Church Catholic.
marketable; all impediments are a nuisance. . . . It is a mistake, too, to say that he considers all differences of opinion as equal in importance; no, they are only equally in the way. He only compares them together where they are comparable in their common inconvenience to a minister of State. They may be as little homogeneous as chalk is to cheese, or Macedon to Monmouth, but they agree in interfering with social harmony; and, since that harmony is the first of goods and the end of life, what is left us but to discard all that disunites us, and to cultivate all that may amalgamate? (550-551).

Peel had given himself over to his political foe, Brougham, by cultivating the latter’s philosophical tradition and rejecting faith as the “fulcrum of society.” Instead he rested society “upon knowledge” (551) that purportedly would “harmonize” the working and wealthy classes and provide a new bond of unity.

The old and ordinary bond, he seems to say, was religion; Lord Brougham’s . . . is knowledge. Faith, once the soul of social union, is now but the spirit of division. Not a single doctrine but is “controversial divinity;” not an abstraction can be imagined (could abstractions constrain), not a comprehension projected (could comprehensions connect), but will leave out one or other portion or element of the social fabric. We must abandon religion, if we aspire to be statesmen. Once, indeed, it was a living power, kindling hearts, leavening them with one idea, moulding them on one model, developing them into one polity. Ere now it has been the life of morality; it has given birth to heroes, it has wielded empire. But another age has come in, and faith is effete; let us submit to what we cannot change; let us not hang over our dead, but bury it out of sight. Seek we out some young and vigorous principle, rich in sap, and fierce in life, to give form to

206 Newman seemed to have associated Peel’s notion of “biding” with the common etymology of religion—*religare*: to rebind. On 14 February 1841, Newman preached an untitled sermon on “faith, baptism, and regeneration” (Newman, *Sermons 1824-1843*, edited by Placid Murray and Francis McGrath [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010], 3:272) that clarified his notion of religion:

By religion is meant the relations between man and God . . . . It consists of the means of approaching him [*sic*] <God>, the means of pleasing Him—viewed externally it consists of doctrines, ordinances, precepts, a polity, and a course of action—viewed internally it consists of faith, obedience, worship, and the like.
elements which are fast resolving into their inorganic chaos; and where shall we find such a principle but in knowledge? (551).  

Brougham had laid the foundation that “knowledge can do for society what has hitherto been supposed the prerogative of faith.” He had “complimented” “faith and its preachers,” by characterizing them as the “evil spirits of tyranny and persecution . . .”; his Infidel Principle “borrowed from the records of faith (for after parsons no men quote Scripture more familiarly than Liberals and Whigs)” that Christian faith or belief was but an opinion (552).

And then he proceeds to his new Vitæ Sanctorum, or, as he calls it, “Illustrations of the Pursuit of Knowledge”; and, whereas the badge of Christian saintliness is conflict, he writes of the “pursuit of knowledge under difficulties;” and, whereas this knowledge is to stand in the place of religion, he assumes a hortatory tone, a species of eloquence in which decidedly he has no rival but Sir Robert (552).

_Catholicus_ reprised his critique of the mechanic’s motto that knowledge equates to happiness and power\(^\text{209}\) and that knowledge teaches its “children” virtues such as

\footnote{207}{In Newman’s manuscript was an ensuing paragraph not included by _The Times_ (LD, 8:551-552). The editors made an unfortunate omission, although, this paragraph was reinserted when his pamphlet was published in March. Newman had chastised Peel’s concession that Anglican clergy would be on the book committee as they were functionaries of the State. In circumscribing their roles as moralists, as literati and as able to be removed by popular demand, Peel and the library committee had ensured that ministers could not unify members through faith. Rather all would have to submit to political strictures. The paragraph indirectly revealed a central piece of Newman’s developing ecclesiology: the Church must be independent of the State. See Appendix I.}

\footnote{208}{This does not appear to be an exact quotation from Craik or Brougham, but rather Newman’s encapsulation of the contents of Craik’s volumes which sketched individual after individual pursing knowledge.}

\footnote{209}{Craik, _Pursuit_, 1:418.}
patience, heroism, etc.\textsuperscript{210} On the contrary, faith and conversion united a community of believers in the Church:

Faith, viewed in its history through past ages, presents us with the fulfilment of one great idea in particular—that, namely, of an aristocracy of exalted spirits, drawn together out of all countries, ranks, and ages, raised above the condition of humanity, specimens of the capabilities of our race, incentives to rivalry and patterns for imitation (552).

Disciples of Brougham and Craik “borrowed” the notion of unity in the Church and applied to knowledge without acknowledging their source. This clandestine substitution refashioned the Church into something radically different. Brougham’s, new pantheon, which is equally various in all attributes and appendages of mind, [has] this one characteristic in all its specimens—the pursuit of knowledge. Some of his worthies are low born, others of high degree; some are in Europe, others in the Antipodes; some in the dark ages, others in the ages of light; some exercise a voluntary, others an involuntary toil; some give up riches, and others gain them; some are fixtures, and others adventure much; some are profligate, and others ascetic; and some are believers, and others are infidels (552-553).\textsuperscript{211}

\textsuperscript{210} Ibid., 1:2.

\textsuperscript{211} Newman listed names found in the two volumes of Craik’s work, e.g., from Protagoras to Newton, and from Democritus to Pascal. He was concerned because some of these characters were amoral save for their pursuit of knowledge. For example, Craik (\textit{Pursuit}, 2:8-9) described Julian the Apostate:

The emperor Julian in a later age, though, perhaps, surpassing Marcus Aureliius in literary talents and accomplishments, and endowed also with many great qualities by nature, does not exhibit to us quite so beautiful a picture of philosophy on a throne. He had neither the simplicity, sincerity, and perfect truthfulness of his predecessor’s moral character, nor the unimpassioned sagacity and clearness of vision which distinguished his understanding; and is chargeable indeed with acting in many respects in a spirit of affectation and blind prejudice, anything but creditable to a philosopher. Yet, during his short reign of little more than a year and a half, Julian proved himself both an able monarch and a man possessed of great virtues. In war his valour was only equalled, by his clemency. An enemy to all luxury and excess, he did everything in his power, by his authority and his example, to repress the growing extravagances and debaucherries of the times, and abolished many customs of the imperial court which he considered only occasions
Yet, in the new Pantheon none were truly unified or converted; rather, all are “human beings who agreed in nothing but in their humanity and in their love of knowledge, are all admitted by Lord Brougham\textsuperscript{212} to one beatification, in proof of the Catholic character of his substitute for faith” (553).\textsuperscript{213} Catholicus stated that in Brougham/Craik’s pantheon, “saints and sinners” had been “torn from their proper homes and recklessly thrown together under the category of knowledge.”\textsuperscript{214} He concluded that they had excluded angels from their “intellectual temple” (553).\textsuperscript{215}

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\textsuperscript{212} Newman meant Craik and in 1872 substituted for Brougham: “this writer” (DA, 289).

\textsuperscript{213} A paragraph, which listed more luminaries in the pantheon of knowledge, was originally in the manuscript, but omitted from The Times, and restored to the pamphlet (LD, 8:553); see Appendix I. Jay (Evangelical and Oxford Movements, 213) identified most of the persons mentioned in this passage.

\textsuperscript{214} Craik (Pursuit, 2:1-2) justified the listing of seemingly disparate and arbitrary persons found in his two volume study:

We remarked, at the close of our former volume, that the moral habits which the Pursuit of Knowledge has a tendency to create and foster, form one of its chief recommendations. Knowledge is, essentially and directly, power; but it is also, indirectly, virtue. And this it is in two ways. It can hardly be acquired without the exertion of several moral qualities of high value; and, having been acquired, it nurtures tastes, and supplies sources of enjoyment, admirably adapted to withdraw the mind from unprofitable and corrupting pleasures. Some distinguished scholars, no doubt, have been bad men; but we do not know how much worse they might have been, but for their love of learning, which, to the extent it did operate upon their characters, could not have been otherwise than beneficial. A genuine relish for intellectual enjoyments is naturally as inconsistent with a devotion to the coarser gratifications of sense, as the habit of assiduous study is
Such is the oratory which has fascinated Sir Robert; yet we must recollect that in the year 1832, even the venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge herself, catching its sound, and hearing something about sublimity, universality, and brotherhood, and effort, and felicity, was beguiled into an admission of this singularly irreligious work into the list of publications which she had delegated to a Committee to select *in usum laicorum*. That a Venerable Society should be caught by the vision of a Church Catholic is not wonderful; but what could possess philosophers and statesmen to dazzle her with it, but man's need of some such support, and the divine excellence and sovereign virtue of that which faith once created? (554).

215 In support of his biting remark Newman lifted a few lines from Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, 1:558-9; 564-565.

216 Charles Taylor (A Secular Age, 339-343) has offered an interesting discussion of the notion of the sublime. This notion developed in the eighteenth century as a vague form of the transcendent and functioned as a romantic alternative to the “shallow” anthropocentrism evinced by Enlightenment rationalists; however, this notion was also devoid of the doctrinal depth of the Christian tradition. Newman seemed to imply that the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (S. P. C. K.) had opted for this romantic alternative (Brougham or Craik’s intellectual pantheon) instead of doctrinal Christianity.

217 Newman had been in a controversy with the S. P. C. K. over Craik’s book seven years prior. On 4 June 1834 (*LD*, 2:265), Newman’s friend John William Bowden informed him that the S. P. C. K had Craik’s *Pursuit* in their catalogue and asked Newman to “furnish me with whatever information you can respecting the crimes and misdemeanors of the Committee in question.” Newman replied on 5 June: “As to the Education Committee I have already talked to my friends here and will with others. The Pursuit of Knowledge is on the Supplemental Catalogue I believe—a worse place, but nothing to the Education Committee . . . . I hope to send you a budget of criticisms before the time” [of the next meeting].

218 Here, Newman referred neither to Rome nor to the Tractarian notion of the Church; rather, he was playing with the false “catholic” pantheon which Brougham, Craik, *et alii* had attempted to portray as one in the pursuit of knowledge.
The Sixth Letter: Faith as Action, Reason and the Person

The Catholicus letters, which had extended over almost the entire month of February, caused quite a stir in the Tory, Whig, and Radical press. His critiques of Peel and the Knowledge School were dissected, applauded, or derided. Newman’s awareness that his message was being construed mostly along political lines may have influenced the form and method of the sixth letter. Newman may have realized that in attempting to clarify his idea, he could not continue to thrust and parry with Peel and the Knowledge School. Little space was given to satire, quotation, or dialectical engagement; rather, the majority of the letter offered a compact argument about faith as action in contrast to scientific reasoning. This contrast elucidated the difference that Christian faith, nurtured in the Church, made within persons.

In his sixth letter to the Editor of The Times, published on Monday, 22 February 1841, Catholicus deftly reacted to all the press his letters were receiving. He reminded his readers that the purpose of his letters was to offer religious resistance to the “pretense” of utilitarian thought:

People say to me, that it is but a dream to suppose that Christianity should regain the organic power in human society which once it possessed. I cannot help that; I never said it could. I am not a politician; I am proposing no measures, but exposing a fallacy, and resisting a pretence. Let Benthamism reign, if men have no aspirations; but do not tell them to be romantic, and then solace them with glory; do not attempt by philosophy what once was done by religion. The ascendancy of faith may be impracticable, but the reign of knowledge is

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220 There is no record as to when Newman sent this letter to Walter II; he either sent it with the fifth on 18 February or did not record having done so.
impossible. The problem for statesmen of this age is how to educate the masses, and literature and science cannot give the solution (555).

*Catholicus* recalled Peel’s “sanguine” view that science transcended the “cold doctrines of Natural Religion” and would necessarily lead to Christian faith. Peel was “wrong” and *Catholicus* explained why:

Science gives us the grounds or premises from which religious truths are to be inferred; but it does not set about inferring them, much less does it reach the inference—that is not its province. It brings before us phenomena, and it leaves us, if we will, to call them works of design, wisdom, or benevolence; and further still, if we will, to proceed to confess an Intelligent Creator. We have to take its facts, and to give them a meaning, and to draw our own conclusions from them. First comes knowledge, then a view, then reasoning, and then belief. This is why science has so little of a religious tendency; deductions have no power of persuasion (555).

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221 In 1872 *(DA, 292)* Newman replaced “impossible” with the more fitting “incomprehensible.”

222 In 1822, Newman helped Richard Whately to compose an article on “Logic” for the Encyclopaedia Metropolitana (“Logic,” edited by Edward Smedly et al. [London: B. Fellowes and J. Rivington, 1845], 1:202), which described: “Three operations of the mind which are concerned in argument: 1st. Simple Apprehension; 2d. Judgment; 3d. Discourse or Reasoning. 1st. Simple apprehension is the notion (or conception) of any object in the mind, analogous to the perception of the senses. 2d. Judgment is the comparing together in the mind two of the notions, (or ideas) whether complex or incomplex, which are the objects of apprehension, and pronouncing that they agree or disagree, with each other; (or that one of them belongs or does not belong to the other. Judgment therefore is either affirmative or negative. 3d. Reasoning (or discourse) is the act of proceeding from one judgment, to another founded upon it, (or the result of it).”

Newman seemed to have recapitulated Whatley’s terms in less technical language for *The Times*’ readers. The parallel between “knowledge, view, reasoning” and “simple apprehension, judgment, and reasoning” seems plausible. Newman’s addition of the term “belief” in this sequence seemed a logical consequence of the preceding terms. Belief, here, did not have the sense of a conviction received by the imagination; rather it is synonymous with a conclusion or opinion reached at the end of an inferential investigation.
Catholicus tutored his readers on the distinction between inferential knowledge and personal religious knowledge.223:

The heart is commonly reached, not through the reason,224 but through the imagination, by means of direct impressions, by the testimony of facts and events, by history, by description. Persons influence us, voices melt us, looks subdue us, deeds inflame us. Many a man will live and die upon a dogma; no man will be a martyr for a conclusion. A conclusion is but an opinion; it is not a thing which is, but which we are certain about; and it has often been observed, that we never say we are certain without implying that we doubt. To say that a thing must be, is to admit that it may not be. No one, I say, will die for his own calculations; he dies for realities. This is why a literary religion is so little to be depended upon; it looks well in fair weather; but its doctrines are opinions, and, when called to suffer for them, it slips them between its folios, or burns them at its hearth.... Now Sir Robert thinks better of natural history, chemistry, and astronomy, than of such ethics; but they too, what are they more than divinity in posse? He protests against “controversial divinity:” is inferential much better? (555-556).

223 The former characterized scientific investigation, the latter either relational or religious understanding. Each form of knowledge had its own sphere and meaning in human life; but one could not be substituted for the other.

224 Newman meant the faculty of mind that performed calculative or scientific reasoning in contrast to the heart or νοος. Newman maintained this contrast since his studies of Aristotle’s Nichomachean Ethics as a student at Oxford. In 1884 he concluded a public controversy over faith and reason with Protestant theologian, A. M. Fairbairn, with an informal summa of his epistemological principles (John Henry Newman, Stray Essays on Controversial Points Various Illustrated [Privately Printed, 1890]). In the course of his exposition (Stray Essays, 97), he noted that:

There is a faculty in the mind which acts as a complement to reasoning, and as having truth for its direct object thereby secures its use for rightful purposes. This faculty, viewed in its relation to religion, is, as I have before said, the moral sense; but it has a wider subject-matter than religion, and a more comprehensive office and scope, as being “the apprehension of first principles,” and Aristotle has taught me to call it [nous], or the noetic faculty.
This line of argument introduced readers of *The Times* to recent formulations of what constituted contemporary scientific knowledge.\(^{225}\) *Catholicus* depicted how religion might be unreal in the hands of those who trade solely in inferential knowledge:

I have no confidence, then, in philosophers who cannot help having religion, and are Christian by implication. They sit at home, and reach forward to distances which astonish us; but they hit without grasping, and are sometimes as confident about shadows as about realities. They have worked out by a calculation the lie of a country which they never saw, and mapped it by means of a gazetteer;\(^{226}\) and like blind men, though they can put a stranger on his way, they cannot walk straight themselves, and do not feel it quite their business to walk at all (556).\(^{227}\)

*Catholicus* wanted his readers to recognize the difference between the Knowledge School’s pronouncements about inferential knowledge and the knowledge that grounds personal relationships and religious belief. He pointed out what he knew from

\(^{225}\) Many who read this *Catholicus* letter may not have fully comprehended the method of scientific investigation: one commences with doubt, questions facts, and arrives at conclusions about which one could be certain. In turn, these certitudes could be further questioned. This form of knowledge may pause in a conclusion, but did not end. He wanted to provide a contrast—beliefs/assents begin with trust in concrete realities, are immediate and complete. *Catholicus* reminded his readers that this is the form of knowledge for which people will lay down their life for one another or for a dogmatic teaching about justice, love, resurrection, etc.

\(^{226}\) Newman reformulated this example in his *Grammar of Assent* ([Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979], 234; hereafter cited: GA) in order to explain how a person can believe something without fully understanding the subject:

We are all absolutely certain, beyond the possibility of doubt, that Great Britain is an island . . . . Our reasons for believing that we are circumnavigable are such as these:—first, we have been so taught in our childhood, and it is so in all the maps; next, we have never heard it contradicted or questioned; on the contrary, every one whom we have heard speak on the subject of Great Britain, imply it in one way or another (234).

\(^{227}\) In regard to these paragraphs, Ker (*Biography*, 211) has remarked that Newman was at the “height of his literary powers. He would certainly write as well again, but hardly with greater force than in these passages where the aphoristic, the colloquial, and the ironic come together in a dazzling display of imagery.”
experience: people had little time to spend working out religious inferences in a logical way; this in no way invalidated personal knowledge or true belief:

Logic makes but a sorry rhetoric with the multitude; first shoot round corners, and you may not despair of converting by a syllogism. Tell men to gain notions of a Creator from His works, and if they were to set about it (which nobody does), they would be jaded and wearied by the labyrinth they were tracing. Their minds would be gorged and surfeited by the logical operation. Logicians are more set on concluding rightly than on drawing right conclusions. They cannot see the end for the process. Few men have that power of mind which may hold fast and firmly a variety of thoughts. We ridicule “men of one idea;” but a great many of us are born to be such, and we should be happier if we knew it. To most men argument makes the point in hand only more doubtful, and considerably less impressive (556).

“The man of one idea” contrasted with the popular definition of the rationalist who doubted all and inferred everything. *Catholicus* believed the human person transcended endless questions or a calculative habit of mind:

After all, man is not a reasoning animal; he is a seeing, feeling, contemplating, acting animal. He is influenced by what is direct and precise. It is very well to

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228 This arresting and perplexing phrase denoted the idea of impossibility. Ian Ker (e-mail to author, 15 December 2010) has also suggested that “Newman . . . is surely thinking of trains going round corners and the dangers of that in the early railways.” This is a plausible interpretation, as Newman was apprehensive of rail travel (*LD*, 7:392). On 16 September 1840, he wrote to his sister Jemima, “I would propose to come to you for some days after the 29th, but that these numerous railroad accidents frighten one.”

229 Newman was playing with the classical Aristotelian definition of man, although modified in the empiricist tradition. He had studied Aristotle’s *Organon* and *Nichomachean Ethics*, was aware of the term “animal”, i.e., that which had a sensitive soul included seeing, feeling, and acting. Humans contemplate (in religious or philosophical ways) and this distinguished them from other animals.

Regarding the attribution to Aristotle that “man is a rational animal” Hannah Arendt (*The Human Condition* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998], 27), observed, “Aristotle meant neither to define man in general nor to indicate man’s highest capacity [e.g., in the *Politics*, 1253a:4; 10 “ἀνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικόν ζῶν” or “λόγον δὲ μόνον ἀνθρωποζέχει τὸν ζῶον”], which to him was not logos, that is, not speech or
freshen our impressions and convictions from physics, but to create them we must go elsewhere (556).

_Catholicus_ then returned to Peel’s address to present another instance of inferential versus personal knowledge. Peel had argued that science would lead to “a higher reverence for His name”; yet, “If he speaks of religious minds, he perpetrates a truism; if of irreligious, he insinuates a paradox.” He wanted his readers to recall that one finds God in all things in the world because one first assented to God, and not necessarily the other way around:

Life is not long enough for a religion of inferences; we shall never have done beginning, if we determine to begin with proof. We shall ever be laying our foundations; we shall turn theology into evidences, and divines into textuaries. We shall never get at our first principles. Resolve to believe nothing, and you must prove your proofs and analyze your elements, sinking further and further, and finding “in the lowest depth a lower deep,”

230 till you come to the broad bosom of scepticism. I would rather be bound to defend the reasonableness of assuming that Christianity is true, than to prove a moral governance from the physical world. Life is for action. If we insist on proofs for everything, we shall never come to action: to act you must assume, and that assumption is faith (556).

The idioms and examples that _Catholicus_ used to paint the contrast between the two forms of knowledge culminated in his teaching that faith/belief/assent leads to action; reasoning leads to more reasoning. The former impelled the human spirit to God and

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Milton, _Paradise Lost_, 4:76.
through other persons; the latter, if allowed to dominate, rendered the self paralyzed in its own mental process.

Let no one suppose that in saying this I am maintaining that all proofs are equally difficult, and all propositions equally debatable. Some assumptions are greater than others, and some doctrines involve postulates larger than others, and more numerous. I only say that impressions lead to action, and that reasonings lead from it. Knowledge of premises, and inferences upon them,—this is not to live. It is very well as a matter of liberal curiosity and of philosophy to analyze our modes of thought; but let this come second, and when there is leisure for it, and then our examinations will in many ways even be subservient to action. But if we commence with scientific knowledge and argumentative proof, or lay any great stress upon it as the basis of personal Christianity, or attempt to make man moral and religious by libraries and museums, let us in consistency take chemists for our cooks, and mineralogists for our masons.

Now I wish to state all this as matter of fact, to be judged by the candid testimony of any persons whatever. Why we are so constituted that Faith, not Knowledge or Argument, is our principle of action, is a question with which I have nothing to do; but I think it is a fact, and if it be such, we must resign ourselves to it as best we may, unless we take refuge in the intolerable paradox, that the mass of men are created for nothing, and are meant to leave life as they entered it (556-557).

_Catholicus_ challenged his readers to think to themselves—do they act upon a question or a belief in matters of everyday life? If they acknowledge the latter then they can accept _Catholicus’s_ climactic analogy for religious commitment. Religion, like many ways of human living, originates in a command not in a question. This fact has been embraced from age to age and he laid bare the absurdity that the nineteenth century should be the exception:

So well has this practically been understood in all ages of the world, that no religion has yet been a religion of physics or of philosophy.\(^{231}\) It has ever been

\(^{231}\) The case could be made that during Newman’s lifetime and certainly afterwards, there had been a cult or religion of “science”, e.g., Darwinism. This would of course depend upon how one used the term “religion”; for Newman the term denoted
synonymous with revelation. It never has been a deduction from what we know: it has ever been an assertion of something to be believed. It has never lived in a conclusion; it has ever been a message, or a history, or a vision. No legislator or priest ever dreamed of educating our moral nature by science or by argument. There is no difference here between true religions and pretended. Moses was instructed, not to reason from the creation, but to work miracles. Christianity is a history supernatural, and almost scenic; it tells us what its Author is, by telling us what He has done (557).

A nuanced comparison followed to illustrate further the difference between religious faith and inferential knowledge. Instead of simply pitting scientists and politicians against believers, Catholicus contrasted two Christian traditions: Protestant Dissenters and the Church Catholic. For Catholicus, the preaching and theology of Dissenters was the closest thing to a “religion of inferences.” Unlike a sacramental faith which allowed for direct impressions and real assent, their “religion of inferences” came to nothing—that it was dissipated in thoughts which had no point, and inquiries which converged to no centre, that it ended as it began, and sent away its hearers as it found them. Whereas, the instruction in the church, with all its defects and mistakes, came to some end, for it started from some beginning (557).

some form of supernatural revelation and relationship with the divine and so a religion of “science” was impossible.

232 Here and throughout the letter, Newman attacked the tenets of Paleyan Natural Theology. To see how Newman approached Paley, see Amico, The Natural Knowability of God..., 43-57.

233 Dissenters, e.g., Baptists or Methodists, not in the Established Church

234 In this passage, Newman averred that he did not intend to disparage Dissenters, although there may have been hint of irony in this admission. Newman had long believed that dissenting theology depended essentially upon private judgment, a form of religious rationalism. That Newman included Dissenters in his critique of secular knowledge may have seemed odd to readers; however, he did not have the opportunity to explicate his position that dissenting religion could easily tend toward skepticism.
Catholicus concluded with an abrupt return to Brougham/Craik. He noted that orators like Brougham didn’t present their “philosophical religion” in strictly logical arguments; rather they used words and figures which played upon the human imagination. Thus the Knowledge School was not strictly “logical” or “scientific”; rather, it had its own form of affective rhetoric:

Why should he depict a great republic of letters, and an intellectual Pantheon, but that he feels that instances and patterns, not logical reasonings, are the living conclusions which alone have a hold over the affections, or can form the character? (557).

Letter to Henry Wilberforce: The Identity of Catholicus

The same day that the sixth letter appeared, Newman wrote to his close friend Henry Wilberforce about the Catholicus letters, among other matters.

I fear I shall be, or am, found out in that matter [Catholicus]. London people say they come from Oxford—and Ryder saw Walter coming into and going out of Oxford in the course of a few hours, and knew that I saw him. And then comes internal evidence.

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235 In 1872 (DA, 297), Newman added a line to clarify this passage: “Such is the difference between the dogmatism of faith and the speculations of logic.”

236 Letters two through six concluded with a question; the first and the seventh letter concluded with an assertion. The concluding questions seemed to indicate that another letter would follow—in part as an answer. These questions also created a sense of anticipation for his readers. The fact that Newman did not conclude the first letter with a question may indicate that he was unsure if he would actually write a series; the absence of a question at the end of the seventh letter signaled an end to the letters.

237 JHN to Henry Wilberforce (Oriel, 22 February 1841), The Correspondence of John Henry Newman with John Keble and Others (London: Longmans, Green, 1917), 142; the editors mistakenly commented: “Even Newman’s friends did not know who Catholicus was”; this mistake was repeated by Harris (“Historical Forces,”193). This letter indicated that Wilberforce and Newman had already some discussion about the letters, even though Newman was concerned that his identity not be discovered.
The Article in the M Chr. [Morning Chronicle] was not at all in Carlile’s [sic] style. I thought of Macaulay.

You should have seen a late article in the Globe, silently alluding to Catholicus. It seems as if hitherto they had thought of Puseyism a thing of copes and lighted tapers. Geese, they never read a word, till the fist is shaken in their face.\(^{238}\)

The note disclosed three important facts about what Newman was thinking about his own letters. First, Newman was concerned to keep a low profile; he had only waded into this controversy on the promise of anonymity; he also confirmed a visit, presumably, from Walter II.\(^{239}\) Second, Newman was interested in the reaction to his letters in the press; at least two of the papers he listed were sent to him by Walter II on or around 10 February. Third, Newman’s exclamation—“Geese, they never read a word, till the fist is shaken in their face”—underlined his motives for writing the letters. As he indicated to Walter II on 12 February, *The Times* had provided him an extraordinary venue for reminding England of some central truths of the Christian faith. Yet Newman seemed peeved at what the press and the general populace thought of “Puseyism” in contrast to what he believed he and his colleagues actually taught: the doctrinal truths of the Apostolic Church. Finally, Newman’s image of the “fist shaken in their face” revealed that he understood the power of his letters.

\(^{238}\) *LD*, 8:40-41. This letter included several topics; only portions relevant to the *Catholicus* letters are included here.

\(^{239}\) The editorial notes in Newman’s *Letters and Diaries* add to the ambiguity of who actually visited Newman by vacillating between Walter II and Walter III. This letter seemed to confirm that Walter II recently had visited him and had been seen by Newman’s acquaintances. A visit by Walter III, who at that time was at Oxford, would not have given rise to suspicion; this letter also seemed to validate Newman’s recollection that “Old Walter” (*LD*, 14:52) had visited him.
The Seventh Letter: Final Arguments and Summary

Five days after his exchange with Wilberforce, Newman’s seventh and final letter was published, on 27 February 1841. It was also the day that Tract 90 was released. The seventh letter may have been what Walter II had in mind when he requested a summary on 12 February. The last letter was, however, more than a concession to that request. Newman considered this seventh installment, and thus necessary for his overall project.

Catholicus began his last letter by reminding his readers that Peel was not a scientist but a politician and, at times, an orator. Peel’s claim that “physical science must lead to religion” was “unreal.” Peel had distorted both the priority of his own personal faith and the processes of scientific induction.

Now, considering that we are all of us educated as Christians from infancy, it is not easy to decide at this day whether science creates faith, or only confirms it; but we have this remarkable fact in the history of heathen Greece against the former supposition, that her most eminent empirical philosophers were atheists, and that it was their atheism which was the cause of their eminence (558).

To bolster his critique, Catholicus cited Bacon’s account of the Greek atomists, like Democritus, “who [allowed] no God or mind in the frame of things,” for all was reduced to the arbitrary combination of matter. Bacon believed their physics was superior to the physics of Plato and Aristotle because the latter viewed the natural world

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240 There is no record in Newman’s diaries of when he sent the letter to Walter II.

241 When Walter II and Newman met on 17 February, there must have been some negotiations about letters five and six.

in terms of final causes (558). Bacon had thus given “both the fact and the reason for” the atomist’s atheism:

Physical philosophers are ever inquiring whence things are, not why; referring them to nature, not to mind; and thus they tend to make a system a substitute for a God. Each pursuit or calling has its own dangers, and each numbers among its professors men who rise superior to them. As the soldier is tempted to dissipation, and the merchant to acquisitiveness, and the lawyer to the sophistical, and the statesman to the expedient, and the country clergyman to ease and comfort, yet there are good clergymen, statesmen, lawyers, merchants, and soldiers, notwithstanding; so there are religious experimentalists, though physics, taken by themselves, tend to infidelity; but to have recourse to physics to make men religious is like recommending a canonry as a cure for the gout, or giving a youngster a commission as a penance for irregularities (558).

Catholicus then offered an extended argument contrasting science, natural theology, and Christian faith and simultaneously demonstrated an apprehension of some his contemporaries’ scientific postulates. He framed these postulates in order to reinforce question of the priority of faith to science:

The whole framework of Nature is confessedly a tissue of antecedents and consequents; we may refer all things forwards to design, or backwards on a physical cause. La Place is said to have considered he had a formula which solved all the motions of the solar system; shall we say that those motions came from this formula or from a divine fiat? Shall we have recourse for our theory to physics or to theology? Shall we assume matter and its necessary properties to be eternal, or mind with its divine attributes? Does the sun shine to warm the earth, or is the earth warmed because the sun shines? The one hypothesis will solve the phenomena as well as the other. Say not it is but a puzzle in argument, and that no one ever felt it in fact. So far from it, I believe that the study of nature, when religious feeling is away, leads the mind, rightly or wrongly, to acquiesce in the atheistic theory, as the simplest and easiest. It is but parallel to that tendency in anatomical studies, which no one will deny, to solve all the phenomena of the

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243 Traité de Mécanique Céleste (1799).

244 Newman was not appealing here to romantic notions of feeling versus reason; rather, “Religious feeling” here connoted faith as a cognitive principle of belief.
human frame into material elements and powers, and to dispense with the soul. To those who are conscious of matter, but not conscious of mind, it seems more rational to refer all things to one origin, such as they know, than to assume the existence of a second origin such as they know not. It is religion, then, which suggests to science its true conclusions; the facts come from knowledge, but the principles come of faith (558-559).  

The world could be thus read in two ways: “as a machine and as a work.” If by faith the world is assumed a creation, then “we shall study it with awe; if assuming it to be a system, with mere curiosity.” Peel did not “make this distinction” (559). Rather he, believed that “greater insight into nature will lead a man to say, ‘How great and wise is the Creator, who has done this!’” However, he did not consider “that that his thoughts may take the form of ‘How clever is the creature who has discovered it!’ and self-conceit may stand proxy for adoration.” To the Knowledge School’s claim that physical science could elevate human nature, Catholicus retorted:

So, this is the religion we are to gain from the study of nature; how miserable! The god we attain is our own mind; our veneration is even professedly the worship of self.  
The truth is that the system of nature is just as much connected with religion, where minds are not religious, as a watch or a steam-carriage. The material world, indeed, is infinitely more wonderful than any human contrivance; but wonder is not religion, or we should be worshipping our railroads.  

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245 Newman (DA, 304) amended this statement in 1872: “This is too absolute, if it is to be taken to mean that the legitimate, and what may be called the objective, conclusion from the fact of Nature viewed in the concrete is not in favour of the being and providence of God.—Vide ‘Essay on Assent,’ pp. 336, 345, 369, and ‘Univ. Serm.’ p. 194.” Newman’s later emendation reflected his view, edified as a Roman Catholic, which maintained that human reasoning could admit, with certainty, to the divine inferred from nature.

246 Charles Frederick Harrold (John Henry Newman: An Expository and Critical Study of His Mind, Thought and Art [London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1945], 172) observed: “At a time when Carlyle was declaring wonder to be the essence of religion, Newman tersely reminds his readers that “Wonder is not religion . . . .””
the physical creation presents to us in itself is a piece of machinery, and when
men speak of a Divine Intelligence as its author, this God of theirs is not the
living and True, unless the spring is the god of a watch, or steam the creator of the
engine. Their idol, taken at advantage (though it is not an idol, for they do not
worship it), is the animating principle of a vast and complicated system; it is
subjected to laws, and it is connatural and coextensive with matter. Well does
Lord Brougham call it “the great architect of nature;” it is an instinct, or a soul of
the world, or a vital power; it is not the Almighty God (559-560).

For Catholicus, Brougham’s Knowledge School did not allow for a relationship
with a personal God. The cosmos may inspire a sense of awe in a shadow of divinity, but
not necessarily gratitude toward a personal Creator. If one held the premise that there
was not necessarily a Creator then it was logical to conclude that there was only “a
system of nature.” “Why,” Catholicus pondered, “persist in calling the study of it
religious, when it can be treated, and is treated, thus atheistically?” In response to the
ideas of science advanced by Peel and the Knowledge School, Catholicus proposed a
view of religion founded in personal conscience: 247

The essence of religion is the idea of a Moral Governor; 248 now let me ask, is the
doctrine of moral governance conveyed to us through the physical sciences at all?
Would they be physical sciences if they treated of morals? Can physics teach
moral matters without ceasing to be physics? But are not virtue and vice, and
responsibility, and reward and punishment, nothing else than moral matters, and
are they not of the essence of religion? In what department, then, of physics are
they to be found?

Catholicus then provided his own answer to this question:

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247 The term “Moral Governor” was one title that Newman gave to conscience;
see, e.g., ‘A Letter Addressed to the Duke of Norfolk on Occasion of Mr. Gladstone’s
Recent Expostulation’, in Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching
Considered, Volume II (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1900), 250; available at

248 Newman later added “and a particular Providence” (DA, 303).
What we seek is what concerns us, the traces of a Moral Governor; even religious minds cannot discern these in the physical sciences; astronomy witnesses divine power, and physics divine skill; and all of them divine beneficence; but which teaches of divine holiness, truth, justice, or mercy? Is that much of a religion which is silent about duty, sin, and its remedies? Was there ever a religion which was without the idea of an expiation? (560).

Returning to the address, Catholicus noted Peel’s admiration of Davy, who as he lay dying, derived a modicum of consolation pondering physical science:

Now, if we are on trial in this life, and if death be the time when our account is gathered in, is it at all real or serious to be talking of “consoling” ourselves at such a time with scientific subjects? Are these topics to suggest to us the thought of the Creator or not? If not, are they better than story books, to beguile the mind from what lies before it? But, if they are to speak of Him, can a dying man find rest in the mere notion of his Creator, when he knows Him also so awfully as His Moral Governor and his Judge? (560-561).

Desiring to move beyond this “most painful portion of Sir Robert’s address,” Catholicus attempted to “sum up in a few words” the meaning of his letters:

I consider, then, that intrinsically excellent and noble as are scientific pursuits, and worthy of a place in a liberal education, and fruitful in temporal benefits to the community; still they are not, and cannot be, the instrument of education; that physics do not supply a basis, but only materials for religious feeling; that knowledge does but occupy, instead of forming the mind; that faith is the only known principle capable of subduing moral evil, educating the multitude, and organizing society; and that whereas man is born for action, action flows not from inferences, but from impressions; not from reasonings, but from faith (561).

Catholicus concluded by suspending his satirical treatment of Peel. He returned to his opening letter’s concerns about Peel. He knew that Peel wielded considerable

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249 Newman included this sharp refrain in 1872 (DA, 304): “Meditate indeed on the wonders of Nature on a death-bed! Rather stay your hunger with corn grown in Jupiter, and warm yourself by the Moon.”

250 Newman replaced “education” with “an ethical training” in 1872 (DA, 304).

251 Newman substituted “apprehension of the unseen” for “faith” in 1872 (Ibid).
political power, power to truly affect society. A critical and conciliatory plea was made for Peel to return to the first principles of faith and religion which truly unify society:

That Sir Robert would deny these propositions I am far from contending. I do not even contend that he has asserted the contrary at Tamworth. It matters little to me whether he spoke boldly and intelligibly, as the newspapers represent, or guarded his strong sayings with the contradictory matter with which they are intercalated in his own report. In either case the drift and the effect of his address are the same. He has given his respected name to a sophistical school, and condescended to mimic the gestures and tones of Lord Brougham. How melancholy is it that a man of such exemplary life, such cultivated tastes, such political distinction, such Parliamentary tact, and such varied experience, should have so little confidence in himself, so little faith in his own principles, so little hope of sympathy in others, so little heart for a great venture, so little of romantic aspiration, and of firm resolve, and stern dutifulness to the Unseen! How sad that he who might have had the affections of many, should have thought, in a day like this, that a Statesman's praise lay in preserving the mean, not in aiming at the high; that to be safe was his first merit, and to kindle enthusiasm his most disgraceful blunder! How pitiable that such a man should not have understood that a body without a soul has no life, and a political party without an idea, no unity! (561).

*Catholicus*’ final plea was to spur Peel to action, to *metanoia*; however, he did not have the opportunity to continue to engage him. In fact, Newman would never again write for *The Times*. *Tract 90* immediately embroiled Newman in a far-reaching controversy which consumed him for the rest of 1841. Newman’s absence, however, did not stop the wider press, nor Peel, from commenting upon and keeping the *Catholicus* letters alive in the Victorian mind throughout the spring and summer.

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252 Harrold (“Introduction,” xiv) claimed that because of the *Catholicus* letters, *The Times* offered Newman a staff position, which he declined. No evidence exists for this offer—neither in Newman’s *Letters and Diaries* nor in the archives of *The Times*. Harrold may have confused the offer that *The Times* made in 1844 to Thomas Mozley, who was Newman’s brother-in-law (“Tom Mozley,” DNB).

253 Newman, however, wrote a letter—“Rome and the St. Bartholomew Massacre”—to *The Times* on 13 September 1872, concerning Pope Gregory XIII’s alleged role in the massacre and the doctrine of infallibility.
Chapter 4 – The Reception and Legacy of the Tamworth Reading Room

Newman’s fiery responses in February 1841\(^1\) to Peel’s address “set the *quidnuncs* gossipping throughout the kingdom . . . .”\(^2\) His mixture of satire and argument presented a form of Christian *kerygma*,\(^3\) accenting how the Church united persons of faith and also divided them from secular traditions and institutions. The *Catholicus* letters thus challenged certain political, religious, scientific, industrial and agrarian ideals prevalent in early Victorian culture. The goal of this chapter is to show how the letters, through the medium of *The Times*, had an instant and widespread impact in Britain’s press and on people. It will also show that their influence waned except in Newman’s later writing.

In order to illustrate Newman’s use of *The Times* to express his views, a parallel is offered: Paul arguing at the Areopagus. The chapter begins by framing Newman’s letters as a modern analogue to an ancient narrative. Like Paul, who was carried up the Hill of Ares to explain his views contrary to popular philosophy (*Acts* 17:19), Newman was “pressed” to write against Peel. Both chose to engage the curious and the philosophically proud in order to advocate for the faith of the Church.

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\(^1\) On 1 February, Newman noted: “Frost and severe weather this week” (*LD*, 8:25).


\(^3\) As Ian Ker (*Biography*, 206) has observed, the *Tamworth Reading Room* was Newman’s first sustained work of satire, but not his last; he also employed satire in his *Difficulties Felt by Anglicans, Present Position of Catholics in England, Idea of a University* and *An Essay in Aid of Grammar of Assent*. 
Section 1: The Reception of the *Catholicus* Letters

Because Newman’s letters advocated the faith of the Church as distinct from the developing Knowledge School, and because they involved a popular politician, the press instinctively knew they had a controversy to sell. The first section chronicles and examines many of the most important articles published for and against the *Catholicus* letters throughout 1841. This section also narrates the political backlash against the letters, provoked by Peel, which extended the controversy and which provoked a lengthy review of the whole affair in the *British Critic*. The anonymous letters were a part of the transformations that engulfed Britain in 1841. However, they did not have a visible, lasting effect, perhaps because Newman could not reveal his identity as *Catholicus* because of the *Tract 90* conflagration.

The Areopagus: “The wise men of Athens heard the Apostle and despised him”

Newman’s call to ecclesial faith in response to the advocacy of the Knowledge School paralleled the Areopagus narrative in *The Acts of the Apostles* (17:16-34), which he cited at various times during the 1830’s. He employed this narrative to illustrate his

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4 “Righteous not of us, but in us” (19 January 1840), *PPS*, 5:128.

5 The complete passage from the King James Version is found in Appendix III.

6 Newman did not seem to make much use of this narrative before 1830; it is not found earlier in his published *PPS* or *OUS* sermons. Prior to 1841, there are no direct references to Paul at Athens in his *Letters and Diaries*, though there is a possible indirect reference (*LD*, 1:108).
notions of conscience and divine economy, faith and reason. In April 1830, his *Oxford University Sermon* “The Influence of Natural and Revealed Religion Respectively” discussed the import and role of conscience in “natural religion,” i.e., philosophic or pagan religious traditions:

While, then, Natural Religion was not without provision for all the deepest and truest religious feelings, yet presenting no tangible history of the Deity, no points of His personal character (if we may so speak without irreverence), it wanted that most efficient incentive to all action, a starting or rallying point,—an object on which the affections could be placed, and the energies concentrated. . . . It did but witness [through conscience] against those who disobeyed, while they acknowledged It; and who, seemingly conscious where their need lay, made every effort to embody It in the attributes of individuality, embellishing their “Logos,” as they called It, with figurative actions, and worshipping It as the personal development of the infinite Unknown.

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7 Newman made use of this narrative in relation to his conversion to the Roman Catholic Church in 1845; references to Paul at Athens can be found in his *Idea of a University* and in his *Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*. To list and explain the ways in which Newman used the narrative in his later career would be a study in itself; one example, however, might suffice. One of Newman’s most insightful uses of the narrative occurred in 1847, in his “Rough Draft of Matter for Preface to French Translation of Univ. Sermons, Afterwards Written for Dalgairns in Latin,” where he was attempting to elucidate *evidentia credibilitatis* as applied “to the case of faith”:

For instance, the probability itself prior to any proof that God will give a revelation appears faint to one man, strong to another . . . . To such a one . . . might have sufficient *evidentia credibilitatis* for his coersion . . . as we know it was enough in the case of those converted by St. Paul at Athens. On the contrary, had St. Paul been directed to work a miracle, it would have done far more towards making his divine mission evident, but would have tended to reduce the proof to a scientific instead of personal character, and, as it were, to force spectators to believe, instead of giving opportunity for their respective characters to display themselves (*OUS*, “Appendix B,” 243).

8 Unlike his sermons which were preached to parishioners, his university sermons were intended primarily for students and faculty at Oxford and were “given ten times a year by a clergyman especially chosen for the occasion” (Mary Katherine Tillman, “An Introduction,” *Fifteen Sermons Preached before The University of Oxford Between A.D. 1826 and 1843* (1872), [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997], viii).
But, it may be asked, was Heathen Religion of no service here? It testified, without supplying the need;—it bore testimony to it, by attempting to attribute a personal character and a history to the Divinity; but it failed, as degrading His invisible majesty by unworthy, multiplied and inconsistent images, and as shattering the moral scheme of the world into partial and discordant systems, in which appetite and expedience received the sanction due only to virtue. And thus refined philosophy and rude natural feeling each attempted separately to enforce obedience to a religious rule, and each failed on its own side. The God of philosophy was infinitely great, but an abstraction; the God of paganism was intelligible, but degraded by human conceptions. Science and nature could produce no joint-work; it was left for an express Revelation to propose the Object in which they should both be reconciled, and to satisfy the desires of both in a real and manifested incarnation of the Deity.  

Newman then pointed out that St. Paul had used “Heathen Religion” as a way to present Christianity:

When St. Paul came to Athens, and found the altar dedicated to the Unknown God, he professed his purpose of declaring to the Heathen world Him “whom they ignorantly worshipped.” He proceeded to condemn their polytheistic and anthropomorphic errors, to disengage the notion of a Deity from the base earthly attributes in which Heathen religion had enveloped it, and to appeal to their own literature in behalf of the true nature of Him in whom “we live, and move, and have our being.” But, after thus acknowledging the abstract correctness of the philosophical system, as far as it went, he preaches unto them Jesus and the Resurrection; that is, he embodies the moral character of the Deity in those historical notices of it which have been made the medium of the Christian manifestation of His attributes.  

In October, Newman, preaching at St. Mary’s, coupled his idea of conscience with Paul’s preaching at Athens to portray conscience as the natural desire to know God:

As far as we can trace the history, we find the early Christian Church was principally composed of those who had long been in the habit of obeying their consciences carefully, and so preparing themselves for Christ's religion, that kingdom of God from which the text says they were not far . . . . [At] Athens the Apostle still disputed with the Jews, and with the professedly religious persons,

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9 “Natural and Revealed Religion,” 13 April 1830, OUS, 28-29 [23-24].

10 Ibid., 29 [24-25].
though he also addressed the educated heathens who lived there. Here then is
much evidence that Christ and His Apostles chiefly sought and found their first
followers, not among open sinners, but among those who were endeavouring,
however imperfectly, to obey God.¹¹

Newman returned to the University pulpit on 22 January 1832 to deliver a
University Sermon on “Personal Influence, the Means of Propagating Truth.”¹² Paul, the
exemplar in proclaiming Christian faith, was, like Christ, scorned and mocked:

Turn to the history of Truth, and these anticipations are fulfilled. Some
hearers of it had their conscience stirred for a while, and many were affected by
the awful simplicity of the Great Teacher [Christ]; but the proud and sensual were
irritated into opposition; the philosophic considered His doctrines strange and
chimerical; the multitude followed for a time in senseless wonder, and then
suddenly abandoned an apparently falling cause. For in truth what was the task of
an Apostle, but to raise the dead? and what trifling would it appear, even to the
most benevolent and candid men of the world, when such a one persisted to chafe
and stimulate the limbs of the inanimate corpse, as if his own life could be
communicated to it, and motion would continue one moment after the external
effort was withdrawn . . . . Truly such a one must expect, at best, to be accounted
but a babbler, or one deranged by his “much learning”—a visionary and an
enthusiast . . . fit for the wilderness or the temple; a jest for the Areopagus, and
but a gladiatorial show at Ephesus, . . . an actor in an exhibition which would
finish in his own death.¹³

In his first book length study of the early church, The Arians of the Fourth
Century,¹⁴ Newman again presented Paul at the Areopagus as an illustration of the
principles of divine economy and reserve in preaching the Gospel:

¹¹ “Obedience to God the Way to Faith in Christ,” 31 October 1830, PPS, 8:207-
208.

¹² Earnest, “Introduction”, OUS, xxxviii, has pointed out that this sermon has been
considered the clarion call of the Oxford Movement.

¹³ Newman, OUS, 69-70 [87-88].
The mode of arguing and teaching in question which is called economical by the ancients, can scarcely be disconnected from the *Disciplina Arcani*, as will appear by some of the instances which follow, though it is convenient to consider it by itself. If it is necessary to contrast the two with each other, the one may be considered as withholding the truth, and the other as setting it out to advantage. The Economy is certainly sanctioned by St. Paul in his own conduct. To the Jews he became as a Jew, and as without the Law to the heathen. His behaviour at Athens is the most remarkable instance in his history of this method of acting. Instead of uttering any invective against their Polytheism, he began a discourse upon the Unity of the Divine Nature; and then proceeded to claim the altar consecrated in the neighbourhood to the unknown God, as the property of Him whom he preached to them, and to enforce his doctrine of the Divine Immateriality, not by miracles, but by argument, and that founded on the words of a heathen poet. This was the example which the Alexandrians set before them in their intercourse with the heathen . . . .

In 1836, Newman commented on the ecclesial significance of preaching noting Paul’s evangelization at Athens in “The Visible Church for the Sake of the Elect”:

If we were asked what was the object of Christian preaching, teaching, and instruction, what the office of the Church, considered as the dispenser of the word of God, I suppose we should not all return the same answer . . . . It may be useful then to consider with what end, with what expectation, we preach, teach, instruct,

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14 Newman finished writing his *Arians* in 1832 and it was published in 1833 (Ker, *Biography*, 44-52). It was considered a masterful if not controversial interpretation of the turbulent period prior to Nicea (325); it also served as a powerful critique of the Anglican ecclesiastical situation in turbulent 1830’s England; however, Rowan Williams (“Introduction,” *Arians of the Fourth Century* [South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press: 2002], xxxv-xxxvi), has observed that

As a guide to the theological or ecclesiastical history of the fourth century, the book cannot be sensibly recommended. Its virtue is in the questions it raises, not the answers it provides. It is emphatically a powerful and original essay, questioning received wisdom on a number of major topics; but Newman’s own perspectives and proposals are often flawed by a colossally over-schematic treatment and a carelessness in detail.

Newman might have agreed with Williams’ assessment; he wrote to Henry Wilberforce on 29 December 1836: “As to the Arians, except that [[the matter of]] it is true, I have long thought it just the most imperfect work that was ever composed” (*LD*, 5:399).

discuss, bear witness, praise, and blame; what fruit the Church is right in anticipating as the result of her ministerial labours.

Paul gives us a reason . . . different from any of those which I have mentioned. He laboured more than all the Apostles; and why? not to civilize the world, not to smooth the face of society, not to facilitate the movements of civil government, not to spread abroad knowledge, not to cultivate the reason, not for any great worldly object, but “for the elect’s sake.” This is instanced of him and the other Apostles in the book of Acts. Thus, when St. Peter first preached the Gospel, on the day of Pentecost, “they were all amazed,” some “mocked,” but “they that gladly received the word were baptized.” . . . When St. Paul preached at Athens, “some mocked,” others said, “We will hear thee again,” but “certain men clave unto him.”

On 6 January 1839, Newman’s tenth University Sermon, “Faith and Reason, Contrasted as Habits of Mind” invoked the example of Paul at Athens to illustrate how faith endures even upon scant proof:

Various instances are given us in Scripture of persons making an acknowledgment of Christ and His Apostles upon Faith, which would not be considered by the world as a rational conviction upon evidence . . . . Again, St. Paul at Athens did no miracle, but preached, and yet “certain men clave unto him and believed.”

One week later, on 13 January 1839, in his eleventh University Sermon, “The Nature of Faith in Relation to Reason,” Newman’s extended analysis of faith in the Areopagus narrative recapitulated several of the themes which he had treated over the course of the decade:

16 “The Visible Church for the Sake of the Elect” (20 November 1836), PPS, 4:150.

17 Newman, OUS, 129-130 [180-181]. The manuscript of this sermon indicates that Newman originally penned a more profound insight into Paul’s motives and actions: St Paul’s preaching at Athens: Then he was among the disputers of this world. Did he merely tell them that they reasoned badly, captiously, dishonestly, profanely? No—he does not appeal to their reason at all. He appeals to quite a different principle—their existing sense of religion—to their inward convictions . . . (OUS, n. 130, 358).
Thus Faith is the reasoning of a religious mind, or of what Scripture calls a right or renewed heart, which acts upon presumptions rather than evidence, which speculates and ventures on the future when it cannot make sure of it.

Thus to take the instance of St. Paul preaching at Athens: he told his hearers that he came as a messenger from that God whom they worshipped already, though ignorantly, and of whom their poets spoke. He appealed to the conviction that was lodged within them of the spiritual nature and the unity of God; and he exhorted them to turn to Him who had appointed One to judge the whole world hereafter. This was an appeal to the antecedent probability of a Revelation, which would be estimated variously according to the desire of it existing in each breast. Now, what was the evidence he gave, in order to concentrate those various antecedent presumptions, to which he referred, in behalf of the message which he brought? Very slight, yet something; not a miracle, but his own word that God had raised Christ from the dead; very like the evidence given to the mass of men now, or rather not so much. No one will say it was strong evidence; yet, aided by the novelty, and what may be called originality, of the claim, its strangeness and improbability considered as a mere invention, and the personal bearing of the Apostle, and supported by the full force of the antecedent probabilities which existed, and which he stirred within them, it was enough. It was enough, for some did believe,—enough, not indeed in itself, but enough for those who had love, and therefore were inclined to believe. To those who had no fears, wishes, longings, or expectations, of another world, he was but “a babbler;” those who had such, or, in the Evangelist's words in another place, were “ordained to eternal life,” “ clave unto him, and believed.”

This instance, then, seems very fully to justify the view of Faith which I have been taking, that it is an act of Reason, but of what the world would call weak, bad, or insufficient Reason; and that, because it rests on presumption more, and on evidence less. On the other hand, I conceive that this passage of Scripture does not fit in at all with the modern theory now in esteem that Faith is a mere moral act, dependent on a previous process of clear and cautious Reason. If so, one would think that St. Paul had no claim upon the faith of his hearers, till he had first wrought a miracle, such as Reason might approve, in token that his message was to be handed over to the acceptance of Faith.  

18 Newman, OUS, 144-145 [203-204].
In sum, Paul’s evangelization at the Areopagus was an occasional, yet significant, theme in Newman’s theology.\(^{19}\) Newman’s *Catholicus* letters resembled St. Paul’s speech in ancient Athens, insofar as they reflected the Pauline desire to correlate the Gospel message with contemporary philosophy and popular thought. In the fifth letter, Newman explicitly referred to Paul at the Areopagus in contrast to Brougham/Craik’s intellectual pantheon to Christian faith:

> The persecuting Marcus is a “good and enlightened emperor,” and a “delightful” spectacle, when “mixing in the religious processions and ceremonies” of Athens, “re-building and re-endowing the schools,” whence St. Paul was driven in derision (553).\(^{20}\)

St. Paul debated his cultured despisers at the Areopagus and won some of them over; Newman directed his letters toward the politicians and intelligentsia who sponsored institutions like the Tamworth Reading Room and Library. The *Catholicus* letters consistently called attention to certain members of the political and philanthropic classes as practicing an idolatry analogous to first century Athenians.

Newman opposed those in nineteenth century England who had reduced God to “a representation by the art and imagination of man” (*Acts*, 17:29); however, this manufactured God was no longer simply enshrined in statues and temples. Rather, Newman accused certain presumably enlightened people of replacing God with modern

\(^{19}\) Newman also mentioned the Areopagus in: “Jacobson’s *Apostolical Fathers*,” *British Critic* 25:49 (January 1839): 49-76, and in “Righteousness not of us, but in us” (19 January 1840), *PPS* 5:128.

\(^{20}\) This sentence, which was in the original manuscript, was not included in *The Times* on 20 February 1841; it was however, reinstated in the pamphlet published in March and in the 1872 revision.
technological science and self-centeredness. As Paul had done in the early church, Newman summarized the religious errors of his day in his seventh letter:

So, this is the religion we are to gain from the study of nature; how miserable! The god we attain is our own mind; our veneration is even professedly the worship of self.\(^{21}\)

Newman’s view of knowledge mirrored Paul who did not remonstrate against Athenian philosophers and poets, but praised what the wise men of the day held in high esteem: “Not a word has been uttered or intended in these letters against science; I would treat it . . . with respect and gratitude” (548). This knowledge, however, could not usurp the knowledge of Christ and his Church. Newman, however, did not wholly adopt Paul’s conciliatory style to explain these notions; rather, his letters contained barbs of invective and sinews of satire, absent from Paul’s plaintive tone.\(^{22}\) Yet in asserting the priority of faith to knowledge or science, Newman, like Paul, appealed to people’s fundamental but forgotten “sense of religion [and] inward convictions,” which were distinct from knowledge attained from method and material. Finally, the Catholicus letters, like the Areopagus narrative, called for an acceptance of Christ’s grace:

Now, independent of all other considerations, the great difference, in a practical light, between the object of Christianity and of heathen belief, is this—that glory, science, knowledge, and whatever other fine names we use, never healed a wounded heart, nor changed a sinful one; but Christ’s word is with power. The ideas which Christianity brings before us are in themselves full of influence . . . in order to meet the special exigencies of our nature (543).

\(^{21}\) *LD*, 8:559.

\(^{22}\) This also was Luke’s narration of the Areopagus event, and was molded into Luke’s softer narrative tone and style. Paul himself used all forms of rhetoric—including barbs!—in his Apostolic letters.
However, Newman’s age differed from Paul’s in one important way. The Apostle preached for those who did not know the Gospel. Newman had a more complicated task—he was writing to a culture formed by the Gospel and by the Church, however fractured. In his eyes, many had either forgotten the message or had begun to adopt “enlightened” alternatives to Christianity. His Catholicus letters were not intended merely to bludgeon Peel and Brougham or inundate readers with High-Church doctrine or Tory platitudes. Although his arguments and aphorisms contained Tractarian elements, they developed from his early experiences of God, of Oxford, of his parishes. The idea for the letters originated in his desire to be a member of the Church Catholic. The Apostolic and Catholic Church was the luminous idea in Newman’s mind in 1841 and this idea, more than anything, propelled him to discourse upon Britain’s Areopagus.

**Press Reaction to the Catholicus Letters**

Newman noted on several occasions that Paul’s preaching at the Areopagus resulted in accusations and ridicule. Yet, Paul’s witness also won converts for, “certain men [and women] clave unto him and believed” (Acts 17:34). Where St. Paul preached “strange notions” about the Christian God to philosophers and pagans upon the Hill of Ares, Newman’s Areopagus was The Times of London. The Catholicus letters were not intended primarily to show certain resonances between the Gospel and pagan religion or philosophy, but were meant to reawaken readers to the Gospel of Christ and His Church.
Was Newman successful? How was his “apology” for the Church and faith in English life received by the public?²³

Newman’s letter to Walter II on 11 February 1841 indicated that he was “content with such opportunity . . . of putting out views which [he thought] important through so influential a medium.”²⁴ Newman was aware of The Times’s immense influence. It was

a towering Everest²⁵ of a newspaper with sales ten times those of any other daily, combining leadership in circulation, in new services . . . in advertisement revenue, commercial profit and political influence to an extent no other newspaper anywhere in the world has ever done before or since.²⁶

The format of The Times was conducive to propagating his ideas. The paper

consisted of eight pages, four of which were usually filled with advertisements; on the average only one letter was published per issue. Any letter to The Times thus had high visibility.²⁷

The Times published leading articles or prominent letters in either larger, leaded type—which indicated importance—or small, unleaded type. Peel’s speech was published in the latter; Newman’s letters in the former.²⁸

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²³ Portions of this chapter rely on the excellent scholarship of Nina Burgis, who traced the British newspaper reaction to the Catholicus letters (“An Edition of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 75-124); although her work merits reading, there are some lacunae which this chapter attempts to fill.

²⁴ LD, 8:31.

²⁵ This is an apt although anachronistic description of the paper in 1841; Mount Everest was so named by the Royal Geographic Society in 1865.


²⁷ Harris, “Historical Forces,” 193.
Newman did not stand before Britain as an evangelist preaching a new religious doctrine. He intended to proclaim what seemed old as new. As the mysterious *Catholicus*, he used bold arguments and subtle allusions; authorial anonymity was essential for Newman and for *The Times* to communicate the message. Newman chose the pseudonym, *Catholicus*, to avoid controversy and to elicit a reaction from readers. His intentions aligned with Thomas Barnes, editor of *The Times* from 1817-1841. Barnes “made *The Times* the most obstinately anonymous newspaper in the world. Power he loved, but it was sweeter to him for its secrecy.”

Although Walter III was the initial liaison and Walter II the subsequent contact, Newman’s letters were addressed to Barnes, who decided on their placement and most likely had a hand in some final editing.

That Barnes agreed to accept these letters, critical of Peel and Brougham, revealed the editorial philosophy of *The Times*. A decade earlier, Barnes had been under the sway of Whig-liberals, especially Brougham. By 1834, after a public “war” with the Lord Chancellor, he somewhat shifted his allegiance to Peel’s up and coming Conservative party. Barnes tried to remain politically neutral, although *The Times* was widely regarded as sympathetic to Tory principles. He

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28 Ibid. Harris implied that Peel’s speech may have been printed in smaller type because *The Times’* did not agree with its content. While *The Times* did not condone the address, the length of his remarks—over 6500 words—also may have been a factor in the choice of type.

29 *The Thunderer*, 205.

30 Ibid., 209.
consulted, first, public interest, and secondly, public opinion. *The Times*, not being tied to a party could afford to vary its expressions in accordance with the ebb and flow of public sentiment. It could direct and it could indicate public opinion.\(^\text{31}\)

Newman’s anonymous letters fit perfectly into Barnes’ philosophy:

Whereas newspaper readers had been accustomed since the days of “Junius”\(^\text{32}\) to devote their attention to “Decius”\(^\text{33}\) or “Vetus”\(^\text{34}\) or some similarly signed communication addressed “To the Editor,” Barnes brought them to regard the leading article as the *vital part of the paper* [emphasis added]. He addressed not a governing class but all classes. He was eager to be read by all who could read . . . he accustomed the whole country to ask “What does *The Times* say?”\(^\text{35}\)

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\(^\text{31}\) Ibid., 207.


Junius was the pseudonym adopted by the author (or possibly authors) of a series of letters which appeared once or twice monthly (sometimes more often) in the *Public Advertiser* . . . between 21 January 1769 and 21 January 1772. In this series Junius—named after the popular republican hero Lucius Junius Brutus—opposed the policies of George III and the administrations of the serving prime ministers. . . . Now a classic of English political commentary, the correspondence owes its influence to three interrelated factors: the high whig philosophy espoused to attack tory policies and celebrated political personalities; the literary power of the letters, one of the most effective uses of slanderous polemic ever employed in English political controversy; and, finally, the uncertainty surrounding their authorship.” Newman’s *Catholicus* letters were in a vein very similar to “Junius,” especially as regards the last two factors.

\(^\text{33}\) “Decius” was an anonymous correspondent to *The Times* who in 1808 wrote letters to the Editor “on the causes of late military disasters” (*The Thunderer*, 149).

\(^\text{34}\) “Vetus” composed a series of letters to *The Times* in 1812. These letters became quite popular and “came to be identified with a certain strident patriotism” as well as attacks on certain political leaders (*The Thunderer*, 150-151).

\(^\text{35}\) *The Thunderer*, 391-392.
Newman availed himself of The Times’ influence. He knew that he had a “towering” peak upon which he could proclaim his message. He may have shared Barnes’s idea that:

Newspaper writing is a thing sui generis; it is in literature what brandy is in beverages. John Bull, whose understanding is rather sluggish—I speak for the majority of readers—, requires a strong stimulus. He consumes his beef and cannot digest it without a drain; he dozes composely over his prejudices which his conceit call opinions; and you must fire ten-pounders at his densely compacted intellect before you can make it comprehend your meaning or care one farthing for your efforts.36

The power of The Times and the principle of anonymity hurtled Newman’s letters like ten pounders toward Peel and the Knowledge School as well as torpid or confused Christians who did not or could not see a clear distinction between ecclesial faith and the onrush of secular knowledge.

The Times did not offer cover for Peel but set up Peel’s easy alliance of scientific knowledge and religion to be blown away: Peel’s name had been prominently tied to the address, yet the address itself was diminished by small, unleaded type. Neither Barnes nor Walter II supported Peel’s ideas.37 The Catholicus letters had the full support of The Times—at least initially. They incited a new surge of reaction, swift and fierce, from readers of The Times and the wider press.38

36 Ibid., 210-211.

37 This policy changed in reaction to Newman’s success.

38 In contrast, comment about Peel’s address was left to lesser, more partisan newspapers. The string of January editorials about Peel’s address faded quickly.
On 8 February, three days after Newman’s first letter to *The Times*, two London-based Whig papers, *The Morning Chronicle* and *The Globe* published reactions. Newman’s first letter, concerned mainly with the relationship of knowledge to human nature and societal unity, were immediately translated by the papers into politics. *The Chronicle* pounced upon the status given to the letter. The commentary interpreted the letter as signaling the offense of “old Tories” at Peel’s promotion of learning for the “industrious classes.” *The Globe* had an article on the special election in Monmouth yet made an indirect comment on Peel’s desire to avoid controversial divinity and Newman’s critique of his position.

The following day, 9 February, *The Times* published the “E” critique. *The Sun* and *The Morning Herald* published articles on the *Catholicus* letters on 10 and 11 February. In an attempt to tamp down mounting criticism of Newman’s letters, the pusillanimous leading article from *The Times* by Walter II or—most likely—Barnes

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40 There was special election in Monmouthshire in February 1841 because an MP resigned due to illness; see Philip Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work: Local Politics and National Parties, 1832-1841* (Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewer, 2002), 93.


42 Walter II’s letter to Newman on 10 February mentioned that he was sending four newspapers to Newman—three of them unnamed in addition to *The Morning Chronicle*. Newman seemingly wanted to know how his letters were being received and Walter II obliged. Burgis (Ibid., 76) identified two of the three of unnamed papers: *The Globe* and *The Sun*. She could not locate the fourth paper and speculated that it might have been a “provincial” paper or one of the papers that had written about Peel’s address in January. It may have been that one of the unnamed papers was a copy of *The Times* which included the “E” critique.
appeared on 12 February. That same day new articles from *The Globe* and *The Morning Chronicle* appeared in which “neither paper quoted from the letters, or indeed showed any interest in the way Newman's argument was developing”;\(^43\) rather, they mostly interpreted the letters along the lines of political and ecclesiastical conflict.\(^44\) Newman did not mind that the contents of his letters were being dissected. Rather, he relished the attention his letters were garnering—specifically the religious element in his arguments.

Newman especially savored the *Chronicle*’s critique—he speculated that it was written by Macaulay.\(^45\) Newman copied by hand the entirety of the article and later included it in his manuscripts labeled, “Movement towards Rome. 1841.”\(^46\) The editorial showed that Newman had an intellectual peer who had theological insight into his letters. Newman held the editorial in high esteem—it was one of only two articles which he mentioned in his correspondence:

> The growing spirit of Puseyism in the Church appears thus far to have worked tolerably well in harness with Toryism. But the symptoms of restiveness are beginning to show themselves, which plainly indicate that such will not be the

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\(^{44}\) Interestingly, Coats’s assessment unwittingly resurrected many of the same arguments found in the Whig press in 1841. This is ironic insofar as his work showed little or no familiarity with the contemporary press other than *The Times*. Harris, “Historical Forces,” 193; 200-201, also seemed to advocate what the Whig press argued against Newman in 1841, thus not substantially providing scholarly insight into Newman’s actual positions.

\(^{45}\) JHN to Henry Wilberforce (Oriel, 22 February 1841), *LD*, 8:40-41, at 40. Newman’s speculation may have been correct, because others, e.g., Newman’s friend, R. W. Church writing to Frederic Rogers on 14 March 1841, independently reached the same conclusion (*LD*, 8:108-111, at 108).

case long. Nor is it difficult to foresee that eventually this Popish heresy in a Protestant Establishment will split the Tory faction into fragments incapable of any further re-union.

With the Toryism of two centuries ago, Puseyism might have permanently amalgamated. But it has come too late into the world. Modern Toryism is quite a different affair from the absolutism and Jacobitism to which it has succeeded. The vitality of principle is gone; and the carcass is only animated by the demon of expediency. The professed attachment of Toryism to national institutions never regards the idea and final cause of those institutions, but some sinister class interest which, in them it would conserve . . . . It is a thing of shreds and patches.

Not so Puseyism. That is earnest and uncompromising. It disclaims and disdains expediency . . . . The one duty of its education is obedience; first to the parent, then to the State; above all to the Church.

The columns of the Times itself are thrown open to this sect for attacks upon Sir ROBERT PEEL. We do not say the attacks are not well founded. His sincerity of speech is impeached in the form of a compliment to his understanding. His philosophy is shown to be superficial. The low-toned character of his morality is exposed. His shiftings, turnings, and inconsistencies, to catch this or that class, are laid bare unmercifully. The conviction of his thorough want of mental honesty is enforced . . . . The Puseyites work out their morality into politics and practice. They do not play at religion and righteousness according to the good old conventional ways of the Church. They are all for realities. We like their spirit. But it will never do with the Tories. . . .

[We] are mistaken in the Puseyites if they will either put up with a rebuff or consent to a compromise. With the exception of their dishonest participation in the moneys of the National Church—and they, doubtless, make that out, somehow, to their own consciences—they have all the marks of the most right-down earnestness that the world has seen, in religion, since the times of the Puritans and the Reformers.47

The author of the Chronicle article made several astute observations. First, he noted that the three letters were composed by a Puseyite—not simply a Tory Partisan or a High Churchman. The power behind the Catholicus letters flowed from an adherent to the Oxford Movement—that since 1833 had increasingly distanced itself from the High

47 The Morning Chronicle, 12 February 1841; see the full text in Appendix III.
Church and elements of the Tory party.⁴⁸ Although certain of these ideals undergirded the letters, there was a philosophy and theology that went beyond Tractarian positions.

The editorialist’s insight into the transformation of the Tory party and its alliance with the High Church was also significant. Newman’s letters were not primarily political and that they were treated as political or as rantings by a reactionary High-Churchman revealed the aims and intentions of the Whig and Tory press. The author of the *Chronicle* article knew that there was a difference in the form and substance of the letters. The letters were articulating something beyond convention, something bold:

> The Puseyites work out their morality into politics and practice. They do not play at religion and righteousness according to the good old conventional ways of the Church. They are all for realities. We like their spirit. But it will never do with the Tories.

The *Chronicle* editorial was an exception to the common Whig reaction to the letters. Burgis’ survey found two main lines of approach in the Whig press:

> The [Catholicus] letters then were treated as evidence of Tory hostility to the intellectual advancement of the masses, and of the religious intolerance of a powerful ‘priest-party’ within it. Their appearance in *The Times* [sic] could be made to show either that the Tamworth Address was no more than a liberal mask on the same old Tory face, or that Peel, if he was not a hypocrite, was the leader of a divided party and his own liberalism doomed to defeat by reactionary ultra-Tories and churchmen.⁴⁹

*Catholicus* was also attacked by Tory and Conservative editorials, as evidenced by the “E” critique in *The Times* and by *The Standard* on 2 March. *The Standard* came to the defense of Peel’s ideals and lamented the bigoted critique of *Catholicus*:

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⁴⁸ Nockles, “Church and King,” 95.

We have read those strictures [of *Catholicus*] with pain, and with compassion for one who, possessing so many accomplishments as the writer, and evidently meaning so well, could still allow his mind to be compressed within the narrow limits by which it is too plainly confined.\(^{50}\)

The weeklong hiatus between Newman’s fourth and fifth letters did not quell the press: between 13 and 20 February, at least five more critiques of the letters were published, with one or more coming from Ireland.\(^{51}\) The most incisive of these articles appeared in the *Spectator*. The author recapitulated the paper’s January derision of Peel, indicated the widespread comment on the letters, and offered a sharp appraisal of Peel and of *The Times*’ pathetic leading article. The author also indicated that Peel had been in contact with *The Times* about the letters:

Sir Robert Peel’s début as a diffuser of useful knowledge, at Tamworth, has made a commotion among both the parties of which he may be reckoned a leader, Tories and Whigs. The Whigs exhibit a sort of hesitating desire to welcome him as their own, as if still doubtful whether too open advances might not be spurned. The Tories are quite shocked at his having committed himself so far; and three or four clever letters have been published in the *Times* in large type, by way of timely check. They started from nearly the same ground that the *Spectator* occupied the week before last; and afterwards laughed and scolded by turns, to bring the scapegrace back to his duty. These letters have given rise to much remark; and the *Times* hints that its correspondent is some great man, or the Coryphaeus of “great and able men.” The Leading Journal seems to fear, however, lest the severe correction might render the offender desperate; and yesterday it had a grave talk with Sir Robert upon the subject, winding up with an imposing air of forgiveness . . . \(^{52}\)

\(^{50}\) *The Standard*, 3 March 1841.

\(^{51}\) “Peel’s Tamworth Speech,” *Dublin Freeman’s Journal*, 15 February 1841.

\(^{52}\) *The Spectator*, 13 February 1841.
The Spectator and the other papers seemed to expect that more letters were forthcoming; however, eight days elapsed without letters. Newman had reconsidered the letters in response to Walter II, had sharpened them in light of Tract 90, and had clarified the unifying idea which animated the letters: the Church as the Christian Difference.

**Newman’s View of the Controversy**

After Newman had published his fifth and sixth letters, he revealed his identity to Henry Wilberforce. Newman savored the treatment that his letters received. He marveled at how this “popular medium” combatted certain prejudices against Tractarians and displayed their prophetic impetus behind the movement—a call for a return to the faith of the Church.

Newman seemed cheerfully annoyed at the article of *The Globe and Traveller* of 22 February, which was a direct assault on Puseyism:

> We leave to more expert theologians the task of deciding whether the Puseyites are heretics or schismatics, and take the humbler course of occasionally directing public attention to their doctrines, and the effect produced upon their followers . . . . The age is unfavourable to clerical assumption . . . .

> A procession round the church with “bell, book, and candle,” splendid dresses and a goodly train of choristers may produce reverence; but a man in a simple surplice, folding his arms, and making unusual bows and genuflections, is likely to produce tedium or ridicule.

> Though Puseyism may have made progress in the clergy, we do not hear that it has taken root in the congregations. When, however, it does get hold of a layman, we its symptoms in increased dogmatism and intolerance . . . . LAY PUSEYISM—that fine assertion of infallibility and scorn of public opinion . . . .

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53 *LD*, 8:41.
The *Globe*’s contrived fear of “LAY PUSEYISM” may have been the veiled reference to which Newman referred. Tractarian principles shot forth from the *Catholicus* letters and some must have appeared like “shaking fists” to the general reader.

During this time, Newman wrote to Wilberforce with his plans concerning the letters.\(^{54}\) Newman was already thinking ahead to their pamphlet form:

Tell me if this be common or coarse as a motto to my letters to Sir R P [Peel] which are to be published separate

Away went Gilpin neck or nought,
Away went hat and wig
He little thought when he set out
Of running such a rig\(^{55}\)

I want a second opinion—and quick\(^{56}\)

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\(^{54}\) The letter was written in February or March, 1841 (*LD*, 8:46-47).


\(^{56}\) Tracey (*LD*, 8:47) also noted that, “Wilberforce replied on 26 Feb.:

‘Given, that the letters [[of “Catholicus”]] are to be published— and that it is intended to hit Peel hard;— I think the Gilpin verses will make a capital motto[.]

‘But you know you never asked me anything about it till you had resolved to write and had written the first 2 letters. Else I confess I should have hesitated whether it is politic to pull Peel[’]s tail at all. Won[’]t it prevent Pusey being a Bishop perhaps. Also, I never thought of any one dreaming that you wrote anything in the Times. So that I never thought what the effect might be if it were discovered.

‘However all this is only to the point of your publishing the letters at all for certainly they must be regarded as an attack on Peel. Now if they are to be so published I don't see that the motto is much worse than the letters (or indeed so bad) and it [is] certainly capital.’

Though the letters were published in pamphlet form the motto was not used.
Four more articles and a cartoon depicting Peel as Brougham’s lackey appeared before Newman’s final letter on 27 February.\textsuperscript{57} Tract 90 was published on the same day as this letter; however, the press did not immediately seize upon this tract nor did they discover any connection between the letter and the tract. Papers continued to probe and critique \textit{Catholicus}. On 28 February, the \textit{Weekly Chronicle} published an article concerning the letters. Eleven more articles were written between 1 and 10 March.\textsuperscript{58}

Coats claimed that \textit{The Times}, “printed an editorial [on 6 March] meant to conclude its part in the ensuing debate” [about the \textit{Catholicus} letters].\textsuperscript{59} However, the leading article of 6 March, responded to criticism of an unrelated editorial published by

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\textsuperscript{57} Harris, “Historical Forces,” 197. Burgis (“An Edition of Newman’s \textit{Tamworth Reading Room},” 93) observed:

This sign of controversial success was conferred on the ‘Catholicus’ letters on 25 February when there was published ‘Nicholas Nickleby’s Introduction to Squeers’, no. 672 of the current series of caricatures by the famous H. B. (John Doyle) whose satire on political subjects and public men, prolific in comic ideas and noted for faithful likenesses and lack of exaggeration, had been delighting a wide audiences since 1829.

\textsuperscript{58} Burgis (“An Edition of Newman’s \textit{Tamworth Reading Room},” 96-97) noted that during this time one particularly able critic from the \textit{Morning Chronicle} wrote under the names “Tamworth” and “Protestans.” The form of his critiques mirrored Newman’s: Letter I of ‘Protestans’ is clearly intended to be an answer to ‘Catholicus’ using his own approach. Just as Peel was reproached with imitation of Brougham, ‘Catholicus’ was said to be ‘reviving the arguments of Mr. Collins, and other free thinkers and Atheists’ of the eighteenth century, in opposing physical science and faith. Just as ‘Catholicus’ had absolved Peel of intending an attack on religion, so ‘Protestans’ declared, ‘I do not, of course, presume to charge you with joining in the views of such persons; you seem, on the contrary, to have sincere objects of religion at heart’, although what ‘Catholicus’ had written was reminiscent of dilemmas often pronounced between Popery and Atheism (Ibid., 96).

“Protestans” also raised questions about Newman’s probity in selecting quotations from Peel’s address.

\textsuperscript{59} Coats, “Rhetorical Approaches,” 179.
the paper two days earlier. On 4 March, *The Times* had raised questions about a recent Parliamentary debate, which centered on public funding for Maynooth Seminary in Ireland, yet curiously included a swipe at the recently published *Tract 90* and the “Puseyites.” The author of the editorial (likely Barnes) questioned this oblique condemnation. The article of March 6 was written to counter accusations that had arisen about this supposed “defense” of Puseyism. The article offered a brief history of Puseyism and a fair reading of the Oxford Movement. It is unclear whether or not, the article was also intended as an indirect defense of the Tractarian elements embedded in the *Catholicus* letters.

While *The Times* sought to justify and to clarify its position on Puseyism, opposition to *Tract 90* was gaining momentum. Newman was aware of this, yet not overtly concerned about the bourgeoning controversy; he still had to finish his work for *The Times*. It seems that on 4 March Walter II paid Newman for his letters. Newman

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60 The thoughts and sentiments in *The Times*’s leading article were echoed and expanded in a private letter from R. W. Church to Frederick Rogers (*LD*, 8:108-111).

61 Coats misinterpreted this letter as a direct critique of the *Catholicus* letters. He also claimed that no other mention of the letters was given in *The Times*; however, on 10 March, *The Times* published a rebuttal to *Catholicus* which was signed by an anonymous MP (which will be discussed below). On 26 March, the pamphlet, *Tamworth Reading Room*, was advertised in *The Times*. Finally, a recapitulation of the letters was given in Newman’s obituary on 12 August 1890.

62 In his diary for 4 March (*LD*, 8:54) Newman recorded that Walter II had sent him “½ notes”; for the sake of security in sending currency through the mail, Victorians cut banknotes in half and sent the halves in separate letters.
wrote to him the following day; he also wrote to Wilberforce on 5 March, wryly observing the vain searching in the press for the identity of Catholicus:  

The Globe says that the letters of Catholicus are written by an Oxford Dignitary —Faussett? it is a fit occasion for such a Malleus Hæreticorum.

On 6 March, Walter II sent him the printed letters to be revised for the upcoming pamphlet. Newman sent out “a parcel” to Walter II that same day. Jay has suggested that Newman’s consent to publish a pamphlet included a small measure of hypocrisy. Newman had ridiculed Peel’s revised pamphlet: “A public man must not claim to harangue the whole world in newspapers, and then to offer his second thoughts to such as choose to buy them at a bookseller's” (534). However, unlike Peel’s, Newman’s pamphlet changed very little in tone or style. He did add two paragraphs to the fifth letter which were originally in his manuscript and were excised, most likely because the letter exceeded the requisite column length. Neither addition in the pamphlet altered his argument or the tone of the letters. Newman, however, had little time to revise his letters, as the controversy over Tract 90 increased from the beginning of March.

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63 Burgis (“An Edition of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 105-122) analyzed at length the press’ preoccupation with the identity of Catholicus.

64 JHN to Henry Wilberforce (Littlemore, 5 March 1841), LD, 8:56.

65 Ibid. Newman also recorded receiving a “packet” (presumably his letters) from Walter II.

66 Jay, Evangelical and Oxford Movements, 152.

67 Newman revised and republished the pamphlet as a part of his uniform collected works in 1872, so that his work continues to “harangue the whole world”; in contrast, Peel’s speech, except in reference to Newman, has faded into obscurity.
Peel’s Counter Attack

March 10 marked a new turn in the drama surrounding the Catholicus letters. *The Times* published a letter to the editor that brazenly supported Peel and commended the principles embedded in his address. Strong words and sharp questions were directed at Catholicus. This was the second letter published by *The Times* to ameliorate Peel’s supporters. For all their efforts in printing Newman’s letters—anonymously and in bold type—*The Times* offered little outward and no direct support for them. Walter II neglected to notify Newman about their decision to print this last letter to the editor of *The Times* under the heading, *SIR ROBERT PEEL’S ADDRESS AND CATHOLICUS*:

Sir,—I cannot regret that the letters of “Catholicus” have come to a conclusion. I do not know, that in giving them so prominent a position in your columns, you have overrated their literary value or incidental importance, but I think you can hardly have calculated the effect they were likely to produce on your readers.

Perhaps the exact sense and precise intention of an author is never perfectly apprehended by any readers but those whose minds are not only analogous to, but nearly on the same level with his own; and thus I am by no means prepared to accuse this writer of a desire to leave an unjust impression on the general reader; indeed, he has positively disclaimed any such result, but it is none the less certain that persons not conversant with the metaphysics of theology, and not familiar with philosophical distinctions, have risen from the perusal of these letters with a vague notion that Sir Robert Peel has promulgated doctrines of an irreligious tendency, and that he has avowed himself an adherent of a school of philosophy which ostentatiously excludes religion from its consideration . . . .

. . . In all this [Peel’s speech] there was nothing extraordinary, nothing perhaps not common-place—nothing that looked for any wider fame than the county newspaper . . . . “Catholicus” has surely shown himself somewhat deficient, in taking this simple and customary incident as the text for an elaborate discussion of the most solemn questions which are agitating the heart of Christendom, and fixing on Sir Robert Peel as his hero and his victim . . . . 68

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68 “Sir Robert Peel’s Address and Catholicus,” *The Times*, 10 March 1841. The letter was signed: A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.
What made this letter significant were not its contents. Although it shrewdly underscored the theology and philosophy interlaced throughout the letters, much of its argument extolled Peel’s thought or reiterated complaints similar to “E’s” and to other Tory publications. Rather, the timing and authorship raised important questions: Why did *The Times* publish the letter two weeks after *Catholicus*’ final installment? Why was the author identified, not in name, but as an MP?

The answers to these questions materialized the next day in Parliament. On 11 March, Peel took the floor and delivered an impassioned denunciation of the *Catholicus* letters. The timing and authorship of the MP’s letter and Peel’s speech appeared to be more than a coincidence but rather a coordinated counterattack against *Catholicus*. The attack indicated that Peel had kept abreast of the *Catholicus* letters and had not forgotten their sting. He mocked the letters during a debate about public funding for mechanics’ institutes. He took the occasion to push beyond the private patronage set out in his Tamworth address and seeking public funding for secular institutes. In the course of his remarks he pivoted to confront a more pressing, personal concern:

. . . I hope public money will only be required as a stimulus to local exertion; I hope the affluent who are connected with the great seats of manufacture, who have derived and are deriving their wealth from the manufacturing industry of the country; that they will insist upon reserving to themselves the gratifying duty of promoting the social improvement of the working classes, and providing for them the means of rational amusement and recreation.

It may be well to ridicule all this; it may be well to see with perfect indifference countless thousands of rational beings immersed in ignorance and low degrading vices, and to insinuate the charges of irreligion and infidelity against those who would tell a working man of the pleasures or advantages of knowledge; and who would think of substituting some relaxation from labour,

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69 No evidence exists, however, that explicitly relate their connection.
connected with mental improvement, for drunkenness and quarrelling, and mere sensual indulgence. I for one look down with scorn on such insinuations my consolatory belief is, that by refining the tastes, and improving the habits and manners of those who subsist by the sweat of the brow, you are advancing the cause of morality, advancing the cause of true religion. As Mr. Hope observes, we be not foolish enough or wicked enough to suggest these means of improvement, as superseding religious instruction; but we hope and believe, that they are aids to religious instruction; and that you cannot reclaim men from indolence and vice, without softening their minds, and subjecting them to the higher and purer influence of religious impressions.

There is one material consideration that must not be overlooked. Great efforts have been made by public authorities, and by individuals, for the education of youth. Every year releases from the restraints of school, thousands and tens of thousands of intelligent boys, into whose hands we thus put the keys of knowledge. We can impose by law no restraint upon the subsequent uses to which those keys may be applied; they give free access to good and evil, and there are many temptations to select that which is evil; if there be no effort made to supply that which is good. But if that effort be made; if there be the ready access to useful knowledge and rational amusement, there is that in the human mind which will secure a preference for the good, and the instruction that has been given to the child, instead of being perverted to evil purposes, will be made subservient to the improvement and the happiness of the man. I do what I can within my own narrow circle, to found education on a religious basis. I insist in every school to which I contribute, on conformity to the doctrines, and attendance on the worship, of the Church, and shall I be told, that I am defeating the purpose for which this early training of the mind was intended, if I extend my care beyond the age of thirteen or fourteen, and endeavour to provide salutary food to satisfy the appetite which I have created?70

The preemptive letter and Peel’s speech signaled a coup de grâce. Peel would have the last word and Catholicus would be vanquished. However, Burgis detailed how Peel’s speech yielded the opposite effect:

Predictably this public reply to the letters revived the dying controversy; it was followed by comment from the Ministerial Globe, Chronicle, Sun, Spectator, and Weekly Dispatch, and from the Conservative Post, Standard, Britannia, and Conservative Journal. The Globe and the Chronicle made much of the alleged

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discomfort of Peel’s own party in the House. The *Globe* of 12 March described him as repeating the part of “Juvenile Whig” played at Tamworth, and said that if he kept moving at that rate, he would ‘come to be considered as a ‘perfect Young Rabid’; though his performance did not seem to have been “a cure for the heartache” to his party.  

Peel’s speech not only raised concern in the press. Privately, people were commenting. On 14 March, Charles Greville, recorded in his diary:

The other night Peel, who has been a good deal nettled by the attacks on him in a series of letters, signed ‘Catholicus’ in the ‘Times,’ made a very striking speech upon the education and recreation of the people, which was enthusiastically cheered by the Whigs, but received in silence by the Tories. He made a sort of reply in this speech to the charges of irreligion insinuated in these letters, and took the opportunity of expressing those liberal sentiments which mark his own identification with the progress of society, and which render him, from their liberality and wisdom, the object of such suspicion, fear, and dislike with the Tory democracy who reluctantly own him for their leader.

That same day, 14 March, Newman’s close friend, R. W. Church, began a letter to fellow Tractarian Frederick Rogers, providing him with details about two recent articles in *The Times* and the emerging crisis surrounding Tract 90:

I quite dread to begin a letter to you, not from lack, but from abundance, of matter. Don’t, however, prick up your ears too high, else you may be disappointed: people on the spot can scarcely tell what is great and what little; yet

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73 Although not penned by him, this letter was in Newman’s archives. Church started the letter on the 14th and finished it on the 21st. He sent Newman a copy of the letter for comment and Newman then forwarded it to Rogers. Anne Mozely (*Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman to 1845*, 2:298-299) recorded that on the flap of the letter dated 21 March, Newman wrote a personal note to Rogers about the controversy over Tract 90. Newman chose not to reveal his identity as *Catholicus* to either of his compatriots—possibly because of the storm brewing about *Tract 90.*
I think that curious things have happened since I wrote last. I think I told you that the ‘Times’ had been letting in letters signed ‘Catholicus’ against Sir R. Peel, criticising an address delivered by him in the Tamworth Reading Room, in which he took Lord Brougham’s scientific natural-theology line; and not only had let them in, but puffed them in its leading article, without however giving up Peel. These said letters, signed ‘Catholicus,’ with one or two others of the same sort on duelling, &c., were thought to smack strongly of Puseyism, and brought out furious attacks on the said Puseyites in the ‘Globe,’ expostulations and remonstrances on political and theological grounds from the ‘Standard,’ and a triumphant Macaulayism in the ‘Morning Chronicle,’ in which the writer, with great cleverness, drew a picture of alliance between effete plausible, hollow Toryism with Puseyism, which he described as a principle which for earnestness and strength had had no parallel since the Reformers and Puritans, and rejoiced greatly over the prospect that Puseyism must soon blow Toryism to shivers. And the ‘Globe’ admitted that people were most egregiously out in supposing that this same Puseyism was an affair of vestments and ceremonies: that it was, on the contrary, something far deeper and more dangerous. Such was the state of things out of doors last month.  

Newman quietly concluded his business with *The Times* in March. He did not avenge Peel’s direct challenge. He wrote to Walter on the ninth, sixteenth, and twenty-second, presumably to put the finishing touches on the pamphlet although he did not mention the letters. The last explicit reference to the *Catholicus* letters in *The Times* occurred on 26 March on page 7 within columns of advertisements. The ad included a boisterous line from the first letter:

**Sir Robert Peel and his Address at the Tamworth Reading Room.—Revised and corrected by the Author, price 2s.**

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74 R. W. Church to Frederick Rogers, *LD*, 8:108-111, at 108; the remainder of the letter concerned *Tract 90*. Church finished with a postscript:

P.S.—H.B. [possibly Hablot Knight Browne, a caricaturist] has brought out a caricature: Nicholas Nickleby (Sir R.P. [Peel]) coming to Mr. Squeers (Lord Br. [Brougham]), and asking, ‘Do you want an assistant?’ (*LD*, 8:111).

75 *Oxonius-Catholicus* and *Anglo-Catholicus* were pseudonyms used at different times in 1841, in addressing a range of issues including *Tract 90*, the Jerusalem Bishopric, and greater tolerance of Roman Catholics.
THE LETTERS OF CATHOLICUS. “It is, indeed, most melancholy to see so sober and experienced a man practising the antics of one of the wildest performers of this wild age, and taking off the tone, manner, and gestures of the versatile ex-Chancellor, with a versatility almost equal to his own.”—Catholicus. London, John Mortimer, 21, Wigmore-street, Cavendish-square.76

The press did not take the opportunity to comment on the newly minted *Tamworth Reading Room* pamphlet. The politics of the High Church and *Tract 90* had become a story and consumed Newman’s personal life. However, a trickle of speculation ran through the newspapers concerning the author of the letters.77 They had become quite well known and such speculation added to their notoriety.78 Some papers continued to reference the letters as a pretense to critique Peel. Monthly and quarters commented on the *Catholicus* letters and some on the newly minted pamphlet into June.79

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76 *The Times*, 26 March 1841. Although the advertisement announced the publication as “The Letters of Catholicus,” the pamphlet was titled *The Tamworth Reading Room*. Newman often referred to these letters as “Catholicus”; however, the title, *The Tamworth Reading Room*, was retained in 1872. On 2 October, the *Morning Chronicle* also printed an advertisement for the pamphlet following closely, but not exactly, the format of *The Times*. Although unclear, it may have been announcing a second edition; however, the title, *The Tamworth Reading Room*, was still not used; apparently, the “Letters of Catholicus” still remained the popular reference.

77 On 23 March Newman’s friend, J. F. Christie, wrote him (*LD*, 8: 117-118), commenting on the *Tract 90* controversy; he concluded his letter with a line that may indicate that he knew of the identity of *Catholicus*: “I have seen one or two of the newspaper Articles—a very good one in the Times of a fortnight or three weeks back” (*LD*, 8:118).


79 Ibid., 103-108.
The Tamworth Reading Room in the British Critic

The fading controversy was briefly resuscitated during the summer. In June of 1841, the Melbourne government collapsed. Following the elections in June and July, Peel became Prime Minister. The change in his political fortunes increased the media’s scrutiny of him. Concurrently, a caustic fifty-three page article on “The Tamworth Reading Room” was published by Thomas Mozley in the July issue of British Critic.

Newman had turned over the editorship of the Critic to Mozely during the spring and encouraged him to continue writing for the quarterly. In late May and early June, they discussed Mozely’s first issue that would be published in July. Mozley informed Newman of his plans to contribute an article about “Mechanic’s Institutes.” Newman raised some questions about the article, but because Mozley had written on this topic in prior installments and no explicit mention was made of Peel’s Tamworth institute, he did not press further. Newman may have suspected it would include his Catholicus letters, but he did not disclose his identity as Catholicus to Mozley.

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80 Gash, Sir Robert Peel, 265-270.


82 LD, 8:150-151; 156; 164.

83 Ibid., 8:200-201.

84 In late July, Mozley ran into some trouble with his first issue, especially regarding his criticism of a prominent Anglican and Peel; Mozley acknowledged this to Newman in a letter on 24 July:

My dear Newman,

I do not think that for the next two numbers of the B. C. there is any reason to fear excessive sharpness or satire. It is true I said the same beforehand
In his autobiographical *Reminiscences chiefly of Oriel and the Oxford Movement* (1882), Mozley recounted this event:

[There was] an article on an Address delivered by Sir R. Peel, on the establishment of a reading-room at Tamworth, and on letters written thereupon by “Catholicus,” in the “Times.” I had utterly forgotten the article and the address for a whole generation, till just now reminded by opening the number of the Review. I did not at the time know, though I half suspected, that Newman was “Catholicus,” but was informed of the fact some years after by one who could not but know, and who could hardly understand my ignorance on the point. But I have always made it a rule to avoid secrets. I cannot keep them, except by immediately forgetting them; and the communicators of secrets never intend them to be kept, thus putting the persons confided with them into false position. The article labors under the incurable disadvantage of being a comment upon a comment, the weak echo of a vigorous original. However, I introduced “Catholicus” to speak for himself.\(^{85}\)

Mozley’s reminiscence was peculiar. He did not know the identity of *Catholicus* in 1841, even though his later account mischievously and incorrectly hinted that he might have. However, he provided insight into his aim for the article—a commentary on Peel via the *Catholicus* letters. Although *Catholicus* needed no further introduction—Mozley lapsed into moment of hubris—his article expanded on some ideas that could only be briefly touched upon in *The Times*.

\(^{85}\) Thomas Mozley, *Reminiscences Chiefly of Oriel and the Oxford Movement* (London: Longmans, Green, 1882), 243-244. Newman did not think highly of Mozley’s *Reminiscences*. Writing to his brother Frank on 13 June 1882, shortly after receiving a copy from Mozley, Newman complained: “I could show, by letters which I have kept, as well as from personal memory that what he says or implies is untrue” (*LD*, 30:99).
Because he was close to Newman, and to the Oxford Movement, Mozley’s commentary was important. He clearly saw the Tractarian elements in the letters and ably expanded on some of them. Mozley gathered that *Catholicus* was not simply engaging in political satire, but exposing the principles of the Knowledge School which undergirded Peel’s Address. He recognized one of Newman’s core objectives—to provide philosophical and theological arguments against Peel’s prescriptions which could be understood by the populace:

We cannot suppose that so flimsy and unoriginal a thing as the Tamworth Address is really likely to draw any right-minded person into burning incense to the Baal of our day, the God of nature and natural science, to the manifest contempt of revealed truth. Surely, though the writer be “the leader of the Conservative party in the House,” and has great weight in questions of malt, registration, and sugar,—surely by this time his name is a nullity in any question in the smallest degree connected with religion. We are therefore quite content that the Address should have been delivered for the sake of one of the most noble confutations, not of it (for it needed none), but of its pernicious principles, which has appeared of late years; the series of letters by Catholicus . . . .

Whoever this may be, he has done his work well, and written a series of letters worthy of any subject or any occasion; deep, yet brilliant; philosophical, yet popular; fit to be read at the breakfast-table, perused again in the study, and honourably installed on the shelf for future reference.

Mozley’s piece did not have much of a theological or philosophical accent. Nor did Mozley employ Newman’s delicate satire and irony; rather he directly skewered Peel:

Sir Robert is small with nations, petty with a constitution of ages, and (we say it sadly and seriously) unfaithful to the everlasting Catholic Church. He wishes to know nothing beyond the House of Commons.

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86 In his article, Mozley used the pamphlet, rather than the letters in *The Times*.
87 Mozley, “The Tamworth Reading Room,” 47.
88 Ibid., 59.
Long and meandering, the article flashed at times with brilliance. Mozley often thematically combined and categorized passages from Catholicus’ letters rather than offering a chronological commentary. He also showed his own experience and interest in social and political topics. He developed many of the political consequences either asserted or implied in the Catholicus letters:  

The Conservative leader, however, as Catholicus most strikingly points out, is merely following the lead. His party has been stigmatized as bigoted, as hostile to social improvement, as preferring orthodoxy and legitimacy to general knowledge. He is therefore anxious to rescue “himself and his party” from an imputation so grievously in his way, and suddenly obtrudes himself on the public as the patron and founder of a Mechanics’ Institute. He would probably have been the last person in the kingdom to originate the project; but finding it existing as a popular idea, however unpractical, he takes it up.

Mozley recognized that Peel’s and Brougham’s prescriptions for science as an elixir did not really address the problems of the working poor. Mozley believed that the working class looked for God, not simply distractions:

The artisan is exhausted with toil, chained to his post by the pressure of poverty, dispirited by the all but impossibility of rising, with pauperism ever gaping beneath his feet; the strength of his days is broken by labour, his moments of leisure spoilt by anxiety; he sees above him a class whose prosperity he little shares, whose reverses he must often feel; his position is the focus of grievances, which may perhaps bear equally upon all, yet press palpably on him, for he is at the very paying point of taxation, and his scanty income is the very gauge of fiscal pressure and mercantile vicissitude. Meanwhile he is one of the multitude, and it is in the mid sea of human affairs that he is tossed to and fro. He is surrounded by distresses which he cannot remedy, systems which he cannot comprehend, anomalies which he cannot explain, projects and projector whose prudence and justice he cannot weigh; yet still everything about him is human: abstraction, seclusion, speculation, are the luxuries of pampered ease and cultivated mind, not

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89 Burgis (“An Edition of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 112) arrived at similar conclusions; she also provided an account of Mozley’s article (110-117).

90 Mozley, “The Tamworth Reading Room,” 60-61.
of incessant manual toil. The mechanic sees man and human motives in every circumstance of his condition; and when he rises above what he sees, it is not so much to general laws as to their Almighty Author.91

Mozley pointed out that the artificial restrictions of religion or politics at Tamworth bucked the general trend of most institutes. Peel’s decision to exclude “controversial divinity” had more to do with his own predilections:

In the majority of [mechanics’] institutes, we believe, there is no longer any attempt to exclude either politics or “controversial” divinity, if there ever was. They receive any books that are given to them; and in some cases we know have so received and now retain what we should call professedly infidel works, though not of the most flagitious sort. These . . . are not aimed at by the ban against controversy; for in point of fact now . . . a man who professes himself to hold any positive opinion in theology which he might lawfully not have held, is thought a much greater enemy to society, than he who professes himself to hold positively nothing.92

Finally, Mozley understood the import of Catholicus’ emphasis on the Christianity, which contradicted the false narrative spun by the Knowledge School and Britain’s most powerful political figure:

Little as we think Sir Robert is accustomed to look beyond the present emergency, yet he cannot be so blind as to facts, as to think the institutions he is abstractedly contemplating and recommending, to be really possible. There is no such thing, and there cannot be such a tiling, as a society utterly excluding political opinions or religious creeds. Such a pretence of neutrality and indifference to differences is seldom made but with a smile at its own utter insincerity. The thousand and one religious societies in London, not to speak of their provincial offspring, which

91 Ibid., 57.

92 Ibid., 93. Mozley’s belief has been confirmed by Kelly’s History (125; 128) of the mechanic’s institutes movement. Harris (205), in his zeal to show Newman’s (and Mozley’s) supposed hostility to science, claimed the opposite: “The program of education in basic scientific knowledge advocated by Brougham and others early in the century was evidently still persuasive when the Tamworth library was founded in 1841.” Being privy to Mozley’s contemporary view and to Kelly’s scholarly work, which showed mechanics’ institutes eschewing strictly scientific paradigms, this seems an incredible conclusion.
pretend to comprehend all Christians, without distinction, &c, no longer attempt
to keep their countenance at the farce they are exhibiting. A few years ago
perhaps they laughed at it in the committee room, but were serious on the
platform. They now think they can afford to be honest, and avow that they
include all opinions but one, and that is Catholic truth as such . . . . A universal
peace, not based on justice, is merely the prelude of universal war.93

Mozley then questioned whether the presumed neutrality of the mechanics’
institutes was really possible:

If it were possible for a Mechanics’ Institution open to all creeds to be really
neutral,—as really neutral as a grocer's shop, i. e. neutral, without expressly
laying down the principle of neutrality, which, in the matter of religion, is no
neutrality at all,— that would be a very different thing from the Tamworth
Reading Room, as Sir Robert has made it . . . . The Tamworth Reading Room
excludes all who think it wrong to covenant not to confess Christ before men;—in
other words, all good and honest Christians. Many good sort of people doubtless
are content to be silent for a time, in hope to purchase thereby future influence;
Jesuitry? It doubtless is right not to obtrude the most awful doctrines on all kinds
of people, but it does not follow that it is allowable to enter into covenant with
those people not to do so.94

The most significant aspect of Mozley’s article was its ability to reignite reactions
from the press and from people like Peel and Greville. Although the British Critic’s
readers benefited from Mozley’s nuanced discussions of the mechanics’ movement,
newspapers did not return to those winter and spring debates. Rather many leading
articles opportunistically made use of Mozley’s acerbic lines to attack Peel. Burgis
observed that the politics of the moment concerned Peel’s ascendency:

For many readers of the British Critic the article may have done the useful service
of emphasizing that reading rooms were not hotbeds of sedition and irreligion and
that the real importance of the ‘Tamworth Reading Room’ lay in Newman's
exposing the false ideas about education which had found expression in Peel's

93 Mozley, “The Tamworth Reading Room,” 54.

94 Ibid., 54-55.
Address in such a diluted and muddled form. For the Whig-Liberal press, on the other hand, its appearance at just that time provided welcome material for leading articles which did not fail to quote from the personal criticism of Peel, while omitting any reference to the discussion of institutes and reading rooms.\footnote{Burgis, “An Edition of Newman’s \textit{Tamworth Reading Room},” 117.}

Peel’s letters indicated that he had read Mozley’s article. On 26 July, Peel received a letter from Lord Ashley admonishing him that the people had elected him to be “an instrument in the hands of Almighty God for the advancement and glory of His Church the welfare of His people, and all of Mankind.” Ashley implored Peel to avoid “false and liberal shoals” and rather keep his eye fixed on the Lord.\footnote{Ashley to Peel 26 July 1841, \textit{Sir Robert Peel: From his Private Papers}, 474.} Peel did not respond directly to Ashley’s admonishments, but rather offered a rather pointed comment about Mozley’s article and added a general statement on the status of the Church:

If you will read a late article in the ‘British Critic’ you will find that I do not stand very high in the estimation of the Puseyites. I have no doubt you state correctly both the extent and the bitterness of the feud which is raging in the Church. It is fit and right that men should adhere steadfastly to sincere religious opinions, and should enforce and maintain them with all the ability and strength of argument they can command. But it frequently happens that these zealous controversialists on religious matters leave on the minds of their readers one conviction stronger than any other, namely, that Christian charity is consumed in their burning zeal for their own opinions.\footnote{Peel to Lord Ashley, 1 August 1841, \textit{Ibid.}, 475.}

On 1 September, two days after Peel took office as Prime Minister, Charles Greville summarized what many sympathizers thought of Peel’s January address. As he did in March, Greville also provided insight in the controversy that surrounded Peel’s speech. He hoped that Peel had repudiated many of the ideas of his Tamworth speech:
It is impossible for Peel to have begun more auspiciously than he has done. I expected that he would act with vigour and decision, and he has not disappointed my expectations . . . . Those liberal views, which terrified or exasperated High Tories, High Churchmen, and bigots of various persuasions; those expressed or supposed opinions and intentions which elicited the invectives of the ‘British Critic,’ or the impertinences of ‘Catholicus’ were to me a satisfactory earnest that, whenever he might arrive at the height of power, he was resolved to stretch his wings out and fly in the right direction.  

By the fall only a few references to the Catholicus letters or the Tamworth Reading Room were made. In a letter on 14 September to John Keble, Newman acknowledged that the Tractarians would have no place in Peel’s new government:

Again, (entre nous) from what we hear, though of course we must expect heterogeneous proceedings, it is not at all certain that Sir R. P.[Peel] will not be taking men called Puseyites, as thinking them more suited for certain places.

As the year came to a close, the controversy faded—save for a cryptic reference that appeared in the Morning Chronicle on 2 December. Mixed in the middle of several advertisements for theatre events appeared this sentence: “Catholicus” should give us his name. It is not clear whether the reference was to Newman and the controversy that had lingered throughout the year, since “Catholicus” was a pseudonym used by others.

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99 Burgis (“An Edition of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 119-121) examined a pamphlet by an anonymous “Verus” that attacked Mozley and Catholicus and defended Peel.

100 Newman to Keble, 14 September 1841, LD, 8:274.

101 Morning Chronicle, 2 December 1841.

102 For example, a letter to The Times published on 14 September in the Times was signed by Anglo-Catholicus.
Section 2: The Legacy of the Tamworth Reading Room

The Catholicus controversy was essentially finished by the summer of 1841. Peel did not modify the ideas which he articulated in his address and then defended on the floor of Parliament; indeed, the Whig-radical movements in education which he had repudiated\(^\text{103}\) were now held in a rigid embrace. Similarly, the principles and arguments that Newman expressed in his Catholicus letters resurfaced again in his final Anglical works, his later correspondence and in his Roman Catholic works. The goal of this section is to trace the effects of the letters and the controversy to end of the Victorian Age focusing especially how the letters continued to arise Newman’s life and thought.

The 1842 Tamworth Report

The first to reflect on the 1841 controversy was Peel. On 20 January 1842, a year and a day after Peel’s Tamworth address, the new Prime Minister received a letter from R. C. Savage, the vicar of Tamworth. Savage, a member of the Book Committee, had sent the institute’s annual report for Peel’s approval and also commented on the harsh criticism leveled against the institution yet noted that despite the negative press the reading room was thriving.\(^\text{104}\) Peel responded:

"The best answer that can be given to the gross misrepresentations which have been published in respect of the Constitution and objects of our Society—The best answer also, to the calumnies with which I have been assailed for having attempted to substitute for idleness and dissipation (under conditions and

\(^\text{103}\) Peel to John Wilson Croker (12 November 1837), The Croker Papers, 323.

regulations that appeared to me calculated to preclude the Risk of their abuse or perversion to any evil purpose), the means of rational recreation—and intellectual and moral improvement.

You can bear witness that in the district in which this Institution has been established the higher Interests connected with the religious education of the Young—and with the means of attendance on the services of the Church have not been disregarded.  

The report was in large part a justification for excluding religious books from the institute’s inventory—a reaction to the critiques of Catholicus’ and Mozley:

[I]t would be unwise in the formation of an institution like this, designed for the benefit of a population constituted as our own is, to declare by the name we give it, or the principles on which we found it that . . . there was any chance of making our young men indifferent about the attainment of religious knowledge still less that it could produce opposition to religious truth—or that such advantages for intellectual improvement, could have any other than a beneficial influence on their moral and religious conduct.  

Peel was still clearly nettled by the letters and generally disdainful of the Tractarian movement. He was chagrined that Catholicus had disagreed with what he believed to be the most rational and humane solution to religious and political conflict.

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107 Tracey (LD, 8:437) noted that Peel made a controversial ecclesial recommendation which were related to the Catholicus letters: A. T. Gilbert had been nominated to the vacant see of Chichester by the Duke of Wellington on 22 Jan. (DNB says 24 Jan.), and was consecrated Bishop on 27 Feb. The idea had come from Peel, who was said to be distressed at the alarming spread of Tractarian doctrines, and had admired Gilbert’s tenacious opposition to I[ssac] Williams in the contest for the Poetry Professorship. Woodgate wrote on 30 May: ‘Peel is known, (or presumed) to be hostile to the Puseyites, on account of the article on Catholicus letters in the B. C.’
The Trajectory of *Catholicus*

Newman did not directly acknowledge the *Catholicus* letters after March 1841. The *Tract 90* controversy had enveloped him. As Coats surmised:

Newman quickly left the Tamworth Articles and the public debate they stirred. With the publication of *Tract 90* [sic], he had new public and private battles of faith to wage. . . . Years later, he must have felt the letters to be of little importance as he did not mention them at all in the *Apologia*. Instead he indeed remarked that “since the summer of 1839 I have written little or nothing on modern controversy.”

Coats’s conclusion, while true in part—especially regarding Newman’s desire to avoid controversy—unfortunately contained several errors. In the years following 1841, Newman at times forgot about the letters and was possibly embarrassed by them. This could be because they were associated with the painful *Tract 90* controversy which precipitated his alienation from the English Church and the Tractarian *Via Media*.

However, as will be shown below, Newman commented on the *Catholicus* letters in his correspondence and diary entries in the 1840’s and 1850’s. He also included several lines from the letters in his *Discourses on the Nature and Scope of University Education* in 1852. Newman listed the letters of *Catholicus* in an appendix of his *Apologia* (1864). He employed the letters in his *Grammar of Assent* and included them

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108 Coats, “Rhetorical Approaches”, 179; cited in *Apologia*, 172. The context of the reference in the *Apologia* was the poignant correspondence of 25 October with Henry Manning (*LD*, 9:584-586). In the letter, Newman began to retrace his movement away from the Anglican Church beginning in 1839; he mentioned a certain reticence toward public controversy; he clearly was not looking to wage an open battle with Peel. The letters did not originate from his own initiative but from the Walters’ insistence and the pseudonym *Catholicus* effectually kept him clear of a direct public battle.
in a collection of his works with the title *Discussions and Arguments*. The *Catholicus* letters, in one form or another, followed Newman throughout his life.

**Correspondence between Newman and William and Catherine Froude 1844**

In April 1844, Newman began a lengthy correspondence with William Froude, one of his former pupils and the brother of his departed friend Hurrell, and his wife Catherine.109 At the time, Froude, a promising young engineer who eventually became a leading naval architect in Victorian England, was beginning to experience doubts about his faith. He was also perplexed by Newman’s now palpable drift towards the Church of Rome. How could Newman, once so vigorous a defender of Church of England, really consider such a move? What would such a move mean for William’s own understanding of truth and of certainty? Newman for a time evaded William’s (and his wife’s) questions about these matters, but eventually decided to respond.110

Newman planned to share with the Froudes111 his own changing ecclesial opinions that had raised questions about where truth is to be found and what to do about doubt. In pastoral way, he also wanted to address the problems of “skepticism and

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109 On 8 July 1859, Newman recorded in his diary: “Mrs. Froude has lent me the Letters which I sent her in 1844. I am going to transcribe them, before returning them to her. I have not seen them, from the day I wrote them, till now that I transcribe them. JHN” (*LD*, 10:183).

110 JHN to William and Catherine Froude, 2 April 1844, *LD*, 10:183.

111 JHN to William and Catherine Froude, 3 April 1844, *LD*, 10:185. Newman addressed all but the first letter to Catherine, for William was “working as an engineer on the Exeter-Barnstaple railway . . . and was frequently away from home. Hence Newman’s reason for addressing the rest of the correspondence to Mrs. Froude, on the
unsettlement about truth and falsehood generally.”

Although Newman briefly discussed the problem of doubt vis-à-vis truth and falsehood—especially how change may actually reveal the objectivity of truth—his letters to the Froudes also provided Newman an opportunity reflect on his own life.

Newman began by recounting how he had earlier thrown himself into the Anglican tradition via the Oxford Movement, but by the mid-1830’s had wanted to surrender his “heart to the authority of the Church of Rome.” However, he had been repulsed by certain Roman Catholic doctrines and practices, such as the worship of Mary and so could not conceive of converting. Because of his repulsion to certain aspects of the Roman Church, he set about to further the Via Media as the Anglican ecclesial position. He also admitted that his belief in the Via Media began to unravel in 1839: first with his reading about the Monophysite controversies surrounding the Council of

understanding that the correspondence was a three-sided one.” Eventually, Mrs. Froude and her children entered the Roman Catholic Church under Newman’s guidance; William Froude remained skeptical towards religion and become increasingly agnostic later in life; however, these and later exchanges with Newman, especially after he became a Roman Catholic, became part of the impetus for An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent.

Ibid.

Twenty years later, these letters figured prominently in Newman’s Apologia Pro Vita Sua (1864); Newman, some months earlier (25 October 1843; LD, 9:584-585) rehearsed several themes found in his letters to then Archdeacon Henry Manning. What was important in the Manning and Froude exchanges and eventually in his Apologia was Newman’s insistence on avoiding controversy after 1838-1839. At that time, Newman’s ideal theological position (Via Media) fell apart and so he proceeded to act cautiously, rather than controversially, in his capacity as an Anglican minister.

LD, 10:187.
Chalcedon and then by carefully reading Nicholas Wiseman’s article in the Dublin Review, “The Anglican Claim of Apostolical Succession.”

Newman emphasized that while he had started to entertain serious doubts, “I set about . . . to keep myself in my own place” (the Church of England). Yet, because of the shock that he had received, he began to make some practical changes in his life; in particular, he had ceased writing about controversial topics or “subjects of the Day”:

Except [Tract] Number 90, I have not (as far as I remember) written anything on subjects of the Day since 1838, six years—I have always excepted Sermons. (I suppose you will say certain Letters in the Times in the beginning of 1841 are exceptions. I was pressed to write them).

There are several striking features about this parenthetical mention of the Catholicus letters: first, Newman apparently considered his Catholicus letters an exception to his desire to avoid conflict. Second, Newman indicated that by 1844, his identity as Catholicus had become common knowledge, at least among his friends. Finally, Newman implied that he had felt compelled to produce the letters. Unlike other “subjects of the day,” the impetus for the letters which became the “Tamworth Reading Room” did not derive directly from his ministerial duty (sermons) or his involvement in the Oxford Movement (Tract 90).

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115 The Dublin Review 7 (August 1839): 139-180.


117 LD, 8:10-11; 23.

118 In his Autobiographical Writings, edited by Henry Tristram (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1957), 272, Newman noted: “What I have written has been for the most part
This brief and oblique avowal was the only reference to his letters that Newman provided for the rest of the 1840’s. His entrance into the Roman Catholic Church in 1845, his ordination in Rome (1847), and the establishment of the first English Oratory (1848) seemed to have made the Tamworth Reading Room controversy a fading memory.

**Peel at Tamworth in 1849**

Peel, however, had not forgotten. He had decidedly opposed the Tractarians and was glad that Newman left the Church of England in 1845. His residual bitterness was manifested publicly in 1849. Almost eight years to the day his Tamworth address was published in *The Times*, Peel gave another speech at the institute. He had experienced a brutal political defeat in 1846 and his career was on the wane; however, he had neither forgiven nor forgotten the controversy; as *The Times* reported on 27 January 1849, in an article with the heading, *SIR ROBERT PEEL AND MIDDLE-CLASS EDUCATION*:

> This morning a meeting of the subscribers to the public library in this town, instated several years ago under the auspices of Sir Robert Peel, was held at the rooms of the institution, Lichfield-street. The right hon. Baronet took the chair, and was supported by the clergy, magistrates, and leading inhabitants of the town. The report for the past year described the operation of the society as most successful. Several resolutions of a formal character having been adopted, thanks were voted by acclamation to the President for his kindness in attending the meeting, and his able conduct in the chair. In acknowledging the compliment,

> Sir R. PEEL said,—I am very much gratified by the kind feeling which has induced you so cordially to acquiesce in the resolution . . . . Although there has been no call for any great ability on my part in presiding on the present occasion, I watch the progress of this institution with very great interest. I dare not what may be called official, works done in some office I held or engagement I had made . . . or has been from some especial call, or invitation, or necessity or emergency . . . .”

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say some of you recollect the objections made to its first establishment. It was said it would utterly fail,—that, on account of its disconnexion with religion, there was reason to apprehend infidelity would take root in Tamworth. I felt confident that the reverse would be the case; I knew that animosities, political and personal, would here be assuaged, that the class now most exposed to temptation would here find new sources of amusement,—that we should improve their morality, and strengthen the foundation of religion, by the means we took to insure the progress of knowledge. To those who objected to the course I took in promoting this institution I deem this statement in the report a sufficient answer,— “The number of the volumes issued is 5009 and discussed circulation numbers. That, I think, is a conclusive proof that the interests of morality have not been injured by the establishment of the Tamworth Library and Reading-room (Cheers.) Now, the great object we should have in view is to increase the number of those who derive benefit from it . . . .”

This was the last public mention of the controversy from Peel. There was no further commentary on this speech in The Times. Unlike in 1841, when the British press buzzed about his views of education in connection to his rise to power, his political fortunes had faded. In July 1850, a little over a year and a half after this address, Peel died tragically from an equestrian accident.

**Correspondence between Newman and Faber**

That same year, Tamworth Reading Room again occupied Newman’s attention in a series of letters exchanged between 21-23 August, with his fellow Oratorian, Frederick Faber. Faber had decided to compile various pamphlets which Newman had written as an Anglican and present them to Archbishop Nicholas Wiseman in Rome. Newman had several pamphlets, such as Tract 90, to give. He also recalled the Catholicus letters:

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120 “Sir Robert Peel and Middle-Class Education,” The Times, Saturday, 27 January 1849.

121 LD, 14:47.
As to the Pamphlets, I can’t tell till I rummage about at St. W’s [Wilfred’s],\(^{122}\) what I can give you. But I should like you to try to get them in London—if the price asked is above the original price (and I don’t suggest it would be for Suffragans and Catholicus\(^{123}\) if they can be got at all) I won’t offer them you, supposing I have them—but if the price is raised, then I will.\(^{124}\)

Newman’s letter suggested certain works that he still considered valuable—the letters of *Catholicus* apparently at this time were not among them.

**Correspondence between Newman and John Moore Capes**

One week later, on 28 August, Newman revisited *Catholicus*. John Moore Capes, editor of the lay Catholic journal, *The Rambler*, had been working on a three part series, “The Rise, Progress and Results of Puseyism.”\(^{125}\) Newman provided Capes with a list of important dates, events, and explanations regarding his life and the Oxford Movement.

He answered what appeared to be a series of questions about the *Catholicus* letters:

> Old Walter called on me at Oriel, and pressed me several times to write against Peel’s address, before I consented. It was just when the *Times* took us up, and just as the publication of Number 90 (the *same month*) took us down. It was a false step in the Times—had it waited a month, it would not have made it.\(^{126}\)

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\(^{122}\) A religious community established by Faber in rural North Staffordshire.

\(^{123}\) In his correspondence, as well as in labeling his manuscripts, Newman referred to the “letters of *Catholicus*.“ One might surmise that the title “Tamworth Reading Room” was suggested by *the Times*, when the pamphlet was published in March 1841.

\(^{124}\) *LD*, 14:49.

\(^{125}\) The requests from Capes were in regard to the second part, published in 1851; see Appendix III for an extended excerpt of Capes’ article.

\(^{126}\) *LD*, 14:52. Newman’s recollection in 1850 could have referred to Walter III as an “old” acquaintance or in a colloquial way: “In familiar or affectionate forms of address, usually with no connotation of age, as in “old boy or old chap” (“Old”, *Oxford English Dictionary*). However, this rendering of “old” is not likely for two reasons.
In this passage, Newman used the word “pressed” as he had in his 1844 letters to the Froudes.\textsuperscript{127} He also ruefully viewed the letters as a “false step” which he would have avoided had he foreseen the furor that was later triggered by \textit{Tract 90}.\textsuperscript{128} Capes, however, was impressed by the letters. He believed that 1841 was a pivotal year for the Oxford Movement. He seemed to reaffirm Newman’s view that the \textit{Catholicus} letters were fists shaken in the face of the public. In January 1851, Capes provided the first account of the letters and the first acknowledgment that Newman was \textit{Catholicus}.

First, in his diaries Newman consistently referred to Walter III as “Walter” or “younger Walter,” e.g. (\textit{LD}, 7:28; 188; 239; 457). Second, Newman’s exchange with Capes in 1850 (\textit{LD}, 14:52) used the phrase “old Walter” twice; prior to mentioning “Old Walter” in connection with the \textit{Catholicus} letters, he noted the “Surplice Row”: “It was the occasion old Walter took of ratting round in the Times.” An editorial note added that although Walter II been sympathetic to the Tractarians in 1841, “He seized the opportunity of the Surplice Riots at Exeter in 1844 to revert to his attitude of opposition.”

\textsuperscript{127} Although the correspondence between Newman and Walter III in 1841 did not show any duress in his decision to write the letters; it may have been that he conflated his meeting with Walter II later in February. Nevertheless, Walter III was persistent: an exchange between Frederick Rogers and his sister in July 1840 seemed to corroborate that Newman felt “pressed” by Walter III. Rogers (\textit{LD}, 7:448) indeed used similar language to Newman in accenting that it was the “younger” Walter who was apt to “press” fellow Tractarians into writing for \textit{The Times}. Rogers outlined the basic agreement between Newman and Walter III for the \textit{Catholicus} letters: “I have had young Walter with me again pressing me to write for his father even if I cannot edit. . . . I almost think I shall try my hand. No one will know anything about the matter except my own private friends and I can do just as much and as little as I please.”

\textsuperscript{128} In his remarks, Newman mentioned nothing of his critique of Peel as a public figure. This was an issue at the time, raised by the Walters and by his friend Henry Wilberforce. Twenty years later in his \textit{An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent}, 91, Newman recalled Peel as holding a “dangerous doctrine. He seemed, in hindsight, to have altered his view about his letters to \textit{The Times} being a “false step.”
Capes’ piece was heavily shaped by Newman’s terse remarks. Unfortunately Newman’s recollections were not quite accurate and Capes did not corroborate the information from other sources (although this would have been difficult, since Capes was the first to write about the history of the Catholicus letters and Puseyism). Burgis has provided background information about and a critique of Capes’ account:

[T]heir occasion was the publication of Newman’s Anglican Difficulties. Capes’s thesis [was] that the movement was bound to carry men to Rome if its truths were taken to their logical conclusions and he singles out Tract 90 as the occasion of the movement showing itself before the world ‘in its true colours’. Walter's commissioning of the [Catholicus] Letters was ‘a singular step taken in its regard by a no less acute observer than the proprietor of The Times newspaper’ which proved ‘how strange and unexpected had been its [i.e. the Movement’s] progress up to 1841’. Capes, who had some of his information from Newman, makes no mention of young John Walter’s part in the affair and only alludes to his continuing espousal of the Tractarian cause in an amusing account of his father’s part in the ‘surplice’ controversy, the occasion John Walter senior took, in Newman's words, ‘of ratting round in the Times’. The omission of any reference to John Walter III or to the articles of Roundell Palmer which had been appearing since October 1840, makes the commissioning of the Letters sound a far more ‘singular step’ even than it was.129

The Idea of a University

Media reaction to Newman’s identification as Catholicus was minimal or non-existent.130 That controversy had passed. Newman did not mention the letters again in his correspondence until 1855. However, in the spring of 1852 it appears that Newman


130 Burgis (“An Edition of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 126) has pointed out that in 1859, William Gresely’s second volume of Bernard Leslie contained a scathing review of the Catholicus letters and their treatment of Peel. Along with Capes article, Gresely’s book was the second history of the Movement that included the letters.
revisited his *Catholicus* letters for the first time since 1841 and labeled the manuscripts. According to Dwight Culler:

> During the early months of 1852 the Oratorians were engaged in moving from their house in Alcester Street to the new building in Edgbaston . . . . It was on April 3 that he “finished getting in all my books and papers into my room at Edgbaston” . . . . He put his papers in their places and felt how much of his past life they contained . . . . He sorted them out not merely as one does who is moving but also (he wrote to Mrs. Bowden) “as if I were dying.” He tied them up in packets and labeled them, he wrote comments on them for some future biographer or literary executor and all the time he did this he was simultaneously composing the first three discourses of the *Idea of a University*.132

Newman must have consulted the letters for his *University Discourses*. Ironically, his *Discourses* responded to a major policy decision in Peel’s second administration. In 1845, Peel’s government founded the “Queen’s Colleges” in Ireland. These colleges were modeled on the Knowledge School platform and that Peel himself had espoused in 1815 and 1841—secular knowledge would be primary in order to reduce religious strife.133 In 1847 and in 1849, Rome issued rescripts against the Colleges. The foundation of a Catholic university in Ireland was also urged. Newman was invited by Archbishop Cullen in 1851, to offer lectures on Catholic university education, in opposition to the Queen’s Colleges. These discourses were a prelude to his appointment as the first rector of the Catholic University of Ireland and eventually were included in his *The Idea of a University*.

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131 Burgis (“An Edition of Newman’s *Tamworth Reading Room*,” 64) noted that the manuscripts were rolled in a wrapper labeled “Catholicus”.


Newman’s aim was to present the university as “the place of teaching universal knowledge”\textsuperscript{134}—which would include Catholic Theology and religious formation. His ideal university was a direct rebuke to Brougham’s University of London and Peel’s Queen’s Colleges. Although Newman did not directly mention the Catholicus letters in his Idea, he used themes and passages from them. For example, he reprised his critique of Brougham’s Infidel Principle.\textsuperscript{135} He also devoted an entire discourse to the notion that positive knowledge was not confined to the secular sciences. Newman modified and expanded on his view in the fourth letter that “religious doctrine is [also] knowledge.”\textsuperscript{136}

Fergal McGrath has pointed out the intrinsic connection between The Tamworth Reading Room and the Idea:

Again and again in his Discourses on the Idea of a University and in his correspondences concerning the Catholic University the main themes of his letters to the Times, [concerning] the proper relations between secular and religious knowledge [recur].\textsuperscript{137}

Implicitly, Newman had redressed Peel and the Knowledge School—this time as a Roman Catholic.

\textsuperscript{134} Newman, The Idea of a University, edited by Martin J. Svaglic (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), xxxvii.

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 22-23.

\textsuperscript{136} Newman, Idea, 31.

\textsuperscript{137} Fergal McGrath, The Consecration of Learning (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), 90-91. Vargish (Contemplation of Mind, 129) has also compared these two works.
Catholicus in The Catholic Standard

In the spring of 1855, Newman wrote a series of letters for the Catholic Standard about England’s involvement in the Crimean War. These letters were eventually re-published in 1872 as “Who’s to Blame” in his Discussions and Arguments, the same volume that included his Tamworth Reading Room. “Who’s to Blame” was the only other work in which Newman used the pseudonym, Catholicus.

Writing to Henry Wilberforce, the one time confidant regarding the letters to The Times in 1841, now the editor of the Standard and a recent convert to the Roman Catholic Church, Newman explained the advantages of the pseudonym Catholicus:

As to my Letters [[[signed Catholicus, ‘Who’s to blame?’]]] I think altogether your wish is not to be entertained.

1. If they are known as mine, you separate them off from the Standard. What you should aim at is that people should say ‘Really there was a very good letter in the Standard on such and such a subject.’

2. Next . . . People may not read the 1st 2nd or 3rd—but some one or other will read the 4th—he won’t read 5th or 6th—but he will take up the 7th. Then it will come to him, ‘well, really there is a good deal in these letters—whose can they be?’ My Catholicus in the Times [[February 1841]] was ascribed to Phillpotts. The mystery will make people begin to read. But even supposing they are but half read by any one, by the end of them the idea is created and grown up. ‘There are clever writers in the C. [[Catholic]] Standard.’ People won’t recollect what was cleverly done—but there will be a general feeling— ‘I recollect reading one or two very good letters’, etc.

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138 In March, The Patriot and The Examiner speculated that Henry Phillpotts was the author of the Catholicus letters. Burgis (“An Edition of Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 86) noted: “Those who identified ‘Catholicus’ with Phillpotts must have done so only because he was a High Church ‘pamphleteering Bishop’. Phillpotts, by the way, issued no denial, and newspapers of July 1841 show that five months later he was still being given the credit (or blame) for the letters, in some quarters at least.”

139 LD, 17:428-429.
The Apologia Pro Vita Sua

Newman’s first public admission that he was the author of the Catholicus letters occurred in an appendix of the 1864 edition of his Apologia Pro Vita Sua, which he wrote to vindicate his “religious opinions” in response to the charges of dishonesty made by the popular Victorian author, Charles Kingsley. In his response to Kingsley, Newman stated: “The request has been made to me from various quarters for a list of my writings. This I now give, omitting several pamphlets and articles in Reviews &c. of minor importance.” Newman then included “the Letters of Catholicus” under the heading “Pamphlets,” thereby suggesting the letters were of some significance; indeed, he may have reviewed them while writing his Apologia. Also, in his note on “Liberalism” in the Apologia, Newman “denounced and abjured” eighteen tenets of “Liberalism”; the last one clearly echoed themes in the Catholicus letters:

18. Virtue is the child of knowledge, and vice of ignorance.

Therefore, e.g. education, periodical literature, railroad travelling, ventilation, drainage, and the arts of life, when fully carried out, serve to make a population moral and happy.

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140 Newman, Apologia, 1-4. Newman used the occasion to recount his dramatic conversion as a young man, his involvement in the Oxford Movement, and his reasons for entering the Roman Catholic Church.

141 Apologia (1864), Appendix, 121. Newman also included the list in the Appendix of subsequent editions of the Apologia. In the first and second editions of 1864 and 1865, Newman used the label “Letters of Catholicus”; in the third edition (1875), the title was changed to “The Tamworth Reading Room” and the material was no longer in the section under pamphlets, but cited in the uniform edition of his works under Discussions and Arguments.

142 Newman, Apologia, 224.
An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent

Six years after his Apologia, Newman published An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent (1870),\(^{143}\) which was an innovative and sustained effort to navigate between the exigencies of faith/assent and experiential knowledge.\(^{144}\) The roots of his Grammar included his correspondence with his brother Charles; his reflections on the relationship between faith and reason in the University Sermons; his spirited exchange of letters with William Froude;\(^{145}\) as well as his justification for converting to the Roman Catholic Church detailed in his Apologia pro Vita Sua.\(^{146}\) Newman believed the Grammar was a definitive achievement; as he commented to Richard Hutton shortly after its completion:

> For twenty years I have begun and left of an inquiry again and again . . . I began in my Oxford University Sermons; I tried it in 1850-and at several later dates, in 1859, in 1861 . . . but, though my fundamental ideas were ever the same, I could not carry them out. Now at last I have done all that I can do according to my measure—I finished it yesterday.\(^{147}\)

Newman conceived his Grammar as a personal and apologetic argument about the multifoliate activity that is human knowing: knowing can not be reduced merely to

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\(^{143}\) Newman, GA, 25-27.

\(^{144}\) See Nicholas Lash, “Introduction,” GA, 12. To view the Grammar strictly as a strictly formal written composition would be to overlook the fact that it grew out of sermons, conversations, letters, etc. In a letter dated 12 June 1853, Newman acknowledged: “How could I syllogize either in the pulpit of St. Mary’s . . . . Nearly every thing I have published of an argumentative nature, has been spoken (LD, 15:381).

\(^{145}\) LD, 21:541.

\(^{146}\) Robert A. Colby, “The Structure of Newman’s Apologia pro Vita Sua in Relation to his Theory of Assent,” The Dublin Review (Summer 1953): 140-156.

\(^{147}\) LD, 25:29.
verified sensible realities; nor can knowing consist solely of relative, indeterminate perspectives; finally, knowing is not reducible to a fideistic view of the world. Rather, knowing included the personal dimensions of both reason (empirical/perspectival) and faith. The latter was crucial to Newman’s thought—faith is an assent to truth without necessarily having a full complement of formal evidence. Newman’s Grammar marked out the activities of the mind: notional and real apprehension/assent; simple and complex assent; certainty and certitude; formal, informal and natural inference. He also advanced an epistemological innovation—*the illative sense*—which described how the mind really interacts with and judges events, persons, and the Divine in the world.148

With the publication of the Grammar, Newman explicitly revisited the letters of *Catholicus* and, for the first and only time, commented extensively on them. In discussing “Real and Notional Assents,” Newman first noted the distinctions between:

beliefs . . . and notional assents and inferences . . . present the doctrine on which I have been insisting, from a second point of view, and with a freshness and force which I cannot now command, and . . . almost with the cogency of an independent testimony.149

He then traced these distinctions to,

a protest which I had occasion to write in February, 1841, against a dangerous doctrine maintained, as I considered, by two very eminent men of that day, now no more—Lord Brougham and Sir Robert Peel. That doctrine was to the effect that the claims of religion could be secured and sustained in the mass of men, and in particular in the lower classes of society, by acquaintance with literature and physical science, and through the instrumentality of Mechanics’ Institutes and

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148 For a brief discussion of each of these categories, see William R. Fey, *Faith and Doubt: the Unfolding of Newman’s Thought on Certainty* (Shepherdstown, WV: Patmos Press, 1976), 145-155.

Reading Rooms, to the serious disparagement, as it seemed to me, of direct Christian instruction. In the course of my remarks is found the passage which I shall here quote, and which, with whatever differences in terminology, and hardihood of assertion, befitting the circumstances of its publication, nay, as far as words go, inaccuracy of theological statement, suitably illustrates the subject here under discussion.150

Following this comment, he included almost the entirety of his sixth Catholicus letter without any substantial change.

**Discussions and Arguments**

Newman’s final statement about the Catholicus letters appeared in his *Discussions and Arguments* (1872), a compilation, which was intended as “a fresh contribution . . . towards a uniform Edition of his publications.” “The Tamworth Reading Room”, was included with this preface:

[It] was written for the *Times* newspaper, and appeared in its columns in February 1841, being afterwards published as a pamphlet. The letters, of which it consists, were written off as they were successively called for by the parties who paid the author the compliment of employing him, and are necessarily immethodical as compositions.151

Although Newman stated that the letters were composed one at a time in response to *The Times*, his correspondence of 1841 indicated that the exchange did not happen so smoothly. In fact, Newman composed several of the letters in rapid succession and he had envisioned an ideal number of them apart from what *The Times* proposed.

The most interesting comment in this preface was Newman’s claim that his letters were “immethodical.” His correspondence and manuscripts, as well as the his comments

150 Ibid., 91-92.

in the *Grammar*, indicated that Newman did have a guiding idea which unified the letters. However, unlike the rigorous reasoning in *Tract 90*, or the explicit connections between the final six *Oxford Sermons*, the *Catholicus* letters were not programmatic and explicitly connected as they would have been for a scholarly audience. Peel’s address, the column length allotted by *The Times*, and the uncertainty of how many letters would be written, were factors in Newman’s rhetorical and unsystematic approach to these letters. Despite lacking a coherent method, the letters did have an underlying idea that united them.

In addition to his brief preface, Newman provided another indirect hermeneutic, often overlooked by later commentators—the titles assigned to each letter. When the *Catholicus* letters were originally drafted, they did not have titles, but were simply numbered. His 1841 pamphlet simply retained the number; however, for the 1872 republication, Newman attached headings to each of the letters.

1. *Secular Knowledge in contrast with Religion*
2. *Secular Knowledge Not the Principle of Moral Improvement*
3. *Secular Knowledge Not a direct Means of Moral Improvement*
4. *Secular Knowledge Not the Antecedent of Moral Improvement*
5. *Secular Knowledge Not a Principle of Social Unity*
6. *Secular Knowledge Not a Principle of Action*
7. *Secular Knowledge Without personal Religion, a Temptation to Unbelief*

While these headings may have been inserted to provide a formal structure to the letters, they did not always provide a sufficient portal into the letters’ contents. Although these headings do elicit one or other theme in each letter and so reveal something of what Newman wanted to communicate—morality, religion, and the limits of secular knowledge—the headings also muted some of the theological ideas within each letter.
Burgis noted that following the publication of *Discussions and Arguments* there were several specific comments in the press about the *Tamworth Reading Room*:

Most of the periodicals which noticed it made special mention of the ‘famous’ letters, whether they welcomed them as particularly relevant, ‘now that we have to face a secular system of National Education with Huxley for its prophet’, or saw them as an illustration of the ‘antagonism which a large body of clergy, Protestant as well as Roman Catholic, maintains towards all who are earnestly striving to promote the secular education of the people.’

Burgis found that the *Tamworth Reading Room* provoked some strong reactions in the press; for example, Sidney Colvin in the *Fortnightly Review*, simultaneously loathed and marveled at the letters a generation removed:

> How dexterously he anon deserves assent in order that he may anon command it without deserving; how he mixes up the preposterous with the obvious, the just with the unjust, and hits the real blots in our mechanical ideas of progress, our ampullated self-congratulations over sterile gain, at the same moment as he reverses all order of history and all hope of human nature. How delightedly he strikes and smiles when he gets at his real butts and aversions—over the body of Sir Robert Peel at Bentham, and at Lord Brougham.

Burgis concluded that, “Colvin’s review shows why the letters were more than a brilliant response to a particular occasion; even for a man to whom Newman’s first principles were incomprehensible, the work of 1841 hit the real blots in the ideas of progress of 1872.”

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153 Ibid., 199.


Newman seemed to understand the concrete yet timeless quality of the letters. Burgis found that unlike many of his controversial works that Newman produced as an Anglican and republished as a Roman Catholic, he did not extensively amend or alter the *Tamworth Reading Room*. Most of the ideas in this work continued into his new ecclesial home. This stood in stark contrast, for example, with his lengthy revision of *Via Media* (1877) and *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1878):

When he revised the Letters for *Discussions and Arguments* he found necessary only a single modification of the views he had expressed in 1841 . . . . The ‘Tamworth Reading Room’ did not need the corrective as [his other] works of Anglican controversy did . . . .

As Burgis observed:

The piece of writing which he found worth all this care, weaves together many different strands and makes of them something colourful and sparkling. The issues it raises he explored more fully elsewhere, but their combination in this playfully ironic context is everywhere a delight, and rewards the reader with insights into ‘our complex nature’ . . . .

*The Times’s Obituary*

The final press reaction in the nineteenth century to the *Catholicus* letters seems to have occurred the day after Newman’s death. On 12 August 1890, *The Times* published a lengthy obituary which recounted the facts of his death and a narrative of his life and work. Within the piece, the author (unnamed) offered a stirring passage:

The present generation, that knows of the Cardinal chiefly in the comparatively quiet retreat of the Oratory and in the continual ovation everywhere and by almost all people accorded to his pre-eminent character, can be little aware of the inexhaustible energy and indefatigable industry with which he fought, what no

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157 Ibid., 206.
doubt he believed the fight of faith. It would be exceeding the limits of our space to do common justice to his manifold labours. He was incessant in correspondence; he was always accessible to visitors; he kept journals and wrote “memoirs justificatives:” he read, translated, analyzed, and abstracted; he wrote and delivered sermons of the most intense originality; he lectured, he kept account of his army of followers. Before the publication of the Tracts, he wrote letters to the *Record* newspaper, which he had helped to start, and which inserted his letters till he had taxed to the utmost its forbearance and its space. Some years afterwards, upon the occasion of Sir R. Peel’s delivery a “march of mind” address on the opening of Tamworth Reading Room, he wrote, with the signature of Catholicus, a series of letters in this journal, read with eager interest by many who never guessed the author, still less that he would one day be a member of the “Sacred College.”

**Conclusion: The Tamworth Reading Room as Kerygma**

*The Times’s* obituary appeared to be the only one which mentioned Newman’s *Catholicus* letters. Following Newman’s death, the letters were briefly treated in Dean Church’s *The Oxford Movement* (1890). However, other biographical portraits, for example, Richard Hutton’s *Cardinal Newman* (1891), Wilfrid Meynell’s *Cardinal Newman* (1907), and Wilfred Ward’s magisterial biography, *The Life of Cardinal Newman* (1912) did not cite the event. Not until Ward’s *Genius of Newman* (1914) did the letters receive scholarly attention. Most subsequent Newman biographies discussed the *Tamworth Reading Room* as a significant but isolated event, eclipsed by *Tract 90.*

The *Catholicus* letters, however, were more than an isolated event. They formed a portion of Newman’s Christian *kerygma*. His ideas were cast amid the torrents of politics, science, industry, and religion in the nineteenth century yet remain perennial—like Paul’s impassioned soliloquy at the Areopagus.

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159 For example, Gilley, *Newman and His Age*, 195.
Chapter 5 – The Christian Difference

Peel’s address had assumed that impartial scientific knowledge administered in settings such as the Tamworth Reading Room and Library were requisite for individual and societal progress.¹ Such knowledge would purportedly improve the moral character of persons with the added benefit of securing a path to religious truth without the burden of ecclesiastical tradition.² From Britain’s Areopagus, *The Times*, Newman contested the ideas of Peel and the Knowledge School. Newman responded to these ideas in an informal style, previously forged in his *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, in order to reach *The Times*’s audience. Through the letters, he conversed with his readers, reminding them of what the Church offered in contrast to secular knowledge and institutions.

This goal of this chapter will be to demonstrate Newman’s informally crafted responses to Peel and the Knowledge flowed from a coherent idea—the Church as the Christian Difference. In order to demonstrate this idea, a previously unpublished sermon will be correlated with the letters. This sermon revealed Newman’s thinking about the Church, and how his ecclesiology undergirded his letters.

Discovering the Church in the *Catholicus* Letters

Peel had envisioned an institution free of bias “without reference to rank or to political and religious distinctions.”³ In his address, Peel stated that the goal of the

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¹ *LD*, 8:526.
² Ibid., 8:530.
³ Ibid., 8:525.
institution—knowledge—would unite persons. He delineated the usefulness and “glories” of the new sciences for both the laboring classes and the gentry, which would become a new foundation for society:

I cannot help thinking that by bringing together, in an institution of this kind, intelligent men of all classes and all conditions in life, by uniting together, as we have united, in the committee of this institution the gentleman of ancient family and great landed possessions with the skilful mechanic and artificer of good character.—I cannot help thinking that we are all establishing a bond of social connexion that will derive more than common strength from the pure motives that influence us, and from the cause in which we are engaged. (Applause.) I cannot help believing that we are harmonizing the gradations of society, and binding men together by a new bond, which, as I said before, will have more than ordinary strength on account of the object which unites us. (Loud applause.)

Newman’s response to Peel ostensibly revolved around knowledge, education, and faith. For example, in his seventh letter, Newman indicated that faith was the anecdote to the “charms and nostrums” prescribed by the Peel, Brougham, et alii:

I consider, then, that intrinsically excellent and noble as are scientific pursuits, and worthy of a place in a liberal education, and fruitful in temporal benefits to the community; still they are not, and cannot be, the instrument of education . . . that faith is the only known principle capable of subduing moral evil, educating the multitude, and organizing society; and that whereas man is born for action, action flows not from inferences, but from impressions; not from reasonings, but from faith.

Newman, recapitulating this summary in 1870 in his An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent, stated that his letters were a “protest” against a “dangerous doctrine” espoused by Peel and Brougham “that the claims of religion could be secured and

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4 Ibid., 8:531.

5 Ibid., 8:545

6 Ibid., 8:561.
sustained in the mass of men, and in particular in the lower classes of society, by
acquaintance with literature and physical science.” This “dangerous doctrine” in turn
supplanted “direct Christian instruction.”

In both 1841 and 1870, Newman was not concerned principally with science or
education in general, but with what specifically was being taught directly to the wealthy,
working classes, and the poor alike. The Catholicus letters were not intended simply to
ridicule or demolish Peel’s address or the Knowledge School. Newman presented a
substantive “counter-offer”: faith or “the claims of religion,” because they involved
action, salvation and communion, had to be prior to the acquisition of secular knowledge.
His Grammar, like his third letter, elucidated his intentions, implying not just what was
important to have, but from where. Implicitly Newman’s desire for “direct Christian
instruction” involved the locus of faith: the Apostolic and Catholic Church. The Church,
as he viewed it, stood in stark contrast to Peel’s idea of an institution that would “unite”
all classes in a harmonious blend of those who would worship railroads!

Initially the Catholicus letters were viewed by the press and individual observers
in terms of British politics or as an outcry from the Tractarian faction of the High Church

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7 GA, 91-92.

8 Ibid. Newman had also stated this in a different way in his third letter:
“Christianity, and nothing short of it, must be made the element and principle of all
education” (LD, 8:545).

9 LD, 8:548.

10 Ibid., 8:560.
against inevitable change.\textsuperscript{11} Some scholars subsequently interpreted aspects of the letters in terms of education, class conflict, or a political and religious conservatism versus political and religious liberalism. Many of those who have analyzed the \textit{Tamworth Reading Room} have tended to follow Newman’s summary in letter seven: his principal motive for writing was to clarify the proper relation between religious faith and scientific knowledge in education. For example, Burgis wrote: “[The] single theme, the relation between knowledge, faith and action and popular misconceptions about that relation as seen particularly in the Address, does give them [the letters] a loose unity . . . .”\textsuperscript{12} Keith Beaumont has concluded that the letters were concerned with the role of knowledge and religion in Victorian society.\textsuperscript{13} James Arthur and Guy Nichols have emphasized that Newman “excoriated” Peel’s “idea of secular knowledge as a substitute for religion” and “his approbation of the utility of education.”\textsuperscript{14} These conclusions derive fittingly from the contents of the letters and from their 1872 titles. Faith in contrast to scientific knowledge appeared as a unifying idea undergirding the letters. Jerry Coats has agreed with these conclusions, while claiming that the letters had no unifying idea:

“The Tamworth Reading Room” cannot be appraised by the modern reader as a single work. It may not even be correct to say that they are a series of works since the concept of a “work” can suggest an integrity of development that none

\textsuperscript{11} The main exception was the editorial of 12 February in the \textit{Morning Chronicle}.  

\textsuperscript{12} Burgis, “An Edition of Newman’s \textit{Tamworth Reading Room},” 151.  

\textsuperscript{13} Beaumont, “Savoir et Foi,” 56: “Son objet dans \textit{The Tamworth Reading-Room} est de denoncer les presupposes qui concernent la place et le rôle, respectivement, du \textless \textit{savoir}\textgreater\ et de la religion, dans la culture et la société de l’époque.”  

\textsuperscript{14} Arthur and Nichols, \textit{John Henry Newman}, 100.
but the first of the letters maintained. What *The Times* published after that initial letter was one part of a dialogue concerning a public discourse on the subjects of religion, education, society and politics. As with most conversations on volatile subjects, the Tamworth discussion changed throughout the debate.\(^\text{15}\)

The letters, on the contrary, were as Newman envisioned: complete in themselves yet conceived and executed as a whole, adjusted for time and circumstance.

Newman’s understanding of the Church, however, has not been addressed in previous analyses of *Tamworth Reading Room*. By way of exception, J. H. L. Rowlands’s appraisal connected Newman’s letters with the Church, but he offered only an astute conclusion rather than a nuanced argument:

> It was Newman’s conviction that intellectual knowledge by itself was inimical to true religion . . . . Christianity had never emphasised the kind of man at the cost of minimising his other faculties . . . . Newman was always trying to join together what man had put asunder. By drawing many things into one, the human personality became an indivisible whole. As Newman’s concern was with the whole Church, so too in a social matters his interest was in the whole man . . . . In his Baptism man was originally made whole . . . . Newman’s concern was to gather all things into one, in the totality of the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and in the unique individuality of each human personality.\(^\text{16}\)

Newman refuted secular knowledge as an elixir and extolled faith as a true principle of action. Yet the faith that he advocated was set in a tradition—a tradition that for the British was at once ubiquitous yet hidden—the Apostolic and Catholic Church.\(^\text{17}\)

\(^{15}\) Coats, “Rhetorical Approaches,” 177.

\(^{16}\) Rowlands, *Church State and Society*, 170-171.

\(^{17}\) Alaisdair MacIntyre (Whose Justice? Which Rationality? [Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1988] 8; 353-354) has recognized that Newman understood how traditions developed and has stated that he was indebted to Newman’s insightful theorizing.
Two Traditions

In his letters, Newman sketched the range of assumptions and limits to secular knowledge, identifying them with an alternative tradition stretching back to the Atomists and to Cicero. These assumptions reappeared in modern form, arising in the utilitarian doctrines beginning with Bacon, developing through Bentham and the Mechanics’ movement, which included Brougham and subsequently Peel. This tradition was what Newman termed the Knowledge School. By 1841 this tradition was palpable, one with which he and his co-religionists had to contend. He knew that he could not challenge the Knowledge School from an abstract vantage point. A religious faith dependent upon reason and advocated by Peel and the Knowledge School would not do. Human faith could not accomplish what Christian faith could. He had previously outlined this distinction in his third Oxford University Sermon, “Evangelical Sanctity the Perfection of Natural Virtue”:

The difference, then, between the extraordinary Christian “spirit,” and human faith and virtue, viewed apart from Christianity, is simply this:—that, while the two are the same in nature, the former is immeasurably higher than the other, more deeply rooted in the mind it inhabits, more consistent, more vigorous, of

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18 E.g., “Cicero handed the recipe to Brougham, and Brougham has passed it on to Peel” (LD, 8:539-540). Newman’s historical sketch is of necessity cursory.

19 Newman rejected this type of faith succinctly in his eleventh Oxford University Sermon “The Nature of Faith in Relation to Reason”: “It is usual at this day to speak as if Faith were simply of a moral nature, and depended and followed upon a distinct act of Reason beforehand,—Reason warranting, on the ground of evidence, both ample and carefully examined, that the Gospel comes from God, and then Faith embracing it” (OUS, 143 [202]). Such faith, for Newman, was not an ecclesial faith, but a distortion thereof.

20 Newman (OUS, 37 [37-38]) cited Paul’s “spirit of faith” (2 Corinthians 4:13) as indicative of “the temper of which faith is the essence.”
more intense purity, of more sovereign authority, with greater promise of victory—the choicest elements of our moral nature being collected, fostered, matured into a determinate character by the gracious influences of the Holy Ghost, differing from the virtue of heathens somewhat in the way that the principle of life in a diseased and wasted frame differs from that health, beauty, and strength of body, which is nevertheless subject to disorder and decay.\(^\text{21}\)

In contrast to natural human faith—which Peel donned in Christian idiom—the “spirit of faith” or Christian faith, to be real and effective, required a setting, a tradition. Such a setting must involve, as Rowlands noted, the whole person in a community. Newman implied this much at the conclusion of his second letter to The Times:

If virtue be a mastery over the mind, if its end be action, if its perfection be inward order, harmony, and peace, we must seek it in graver and holier places than in libraries and reading rooms.\(^\text{22}\)

The setting which distinguished Christian faith from secular knowledge—the Church—has not received scholarly attention in relation to the Tamworth Reading Room. This may be because Newman’s concern with the Church in Tract 90 eclipsed its presence in his Catholicus letters or because the term “Church” was found only five times and only implied in a handful of others in the Catholicus letters. Coats, for example, has claimed that Newman’s letters were free of ecclesial concerns and were simply intended to attack the Knowledge School’s Infidel Principle. Newman “preferred [sic] here to argue not among religious values but in favor of faith as against unbelief”.\(^\text{23}\)

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\(^{21}\) 6 March 1831; Newman, OUS, 40–41 [43].

\(^{22}\) LD, 8:542.

\(^{23}\) Coats, “Rhetorical Approaches,” 175.
the Tamworth articles [were] singularly, for this particular period in Newman's publishing life, devoid of High Church/Broad Church controversies. Instead, Newman concentrated on refuting “the infidel principle” (Times 5 February) as styled by Peel and Brougham.  

Coats was correct in noting that Newman contrasted faith or belief with Brougham’s equation of belief and opinion. Coats was also accurate in noting that Newman did not intend the letters to settle disputes between Tractarians and the High or Broad Church. However, Newman’s attack upon the Infidel Principle sprung from his understanding of faith given through the Church. The faith which he understood and for which he advocated was an ecclesial faith. Newman’s vision of the Church was the center of the Tamworth Reading Room controversy.

**The Church as the “Idea” of the *Catholicus* Letters**

Newman intended the images and arguments in the *Catholicus* letters to lead readers to ask about an alternative to the Tamworth Reading Room and similar institutions. The Church was that alternative setting.

Newman considered the reality of the Church an “original idea.” Although implicit in his thought for most of his Tractarian career, Newman eventually articulated

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24 Ibid, 175.

25 Although Newman’s first letter alluded to, and his sixth letter acknowledged, ecclesial controversies between factions in the Anglican Church, he espoused various Tractarian views in these letters (*LD*, 8:537; 557).

26 Newman’s “platonism” may have been the foundation for his understanding of an “idea.” Terrance Merrigan (*Clear Heads and Holy Hearts: The Religious and Theological Ideal of John Henry Newman*, Monograph Number 7 [Louvain: Peeters Press, 1991], 24) has commented that from an early age Newman had a profound sense of
what an “idea” and its development signified. In his fifteenth *Oxford University Sermon*, “The Theory of Developments in Religious Doctrine” (2 February 1843), he emphasized that original ideas “are whole, indivisible, substantial, and may be called real, as being images of what is real.”

According to John Coulson,

> It was in this sense that the Church was an idea, and our acquaintance with it was not with a simply series of concepts or propositions, but with an object as indefinable, complex, and concrete as a living thing . . . . Since, therefore, our response is both to a whole and to its component parts, the Church cannot be confined to one mode of presence: it will be both as diverse as the human personality, and as unified.

Newman developed his understanding of the Church as “whole, indivisible, and substantial” prior to and concurrent with his *Catholicus* letters—for example in his

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Parochial and Plain Sermons and in Tract 90. The Church was the original idea undergirding and developed in his letters to The Times. Newman clarified how an idea, such as the Church, develops. Appealing to Paul at the Areopagus, he explained:

... [The] mind which is habituated to the thought of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, naturally turns, as I have said, with a devout curiosity to the contemplation of the Object of its adoration, and begins to form statements concerning Him before it knows whither, or how far, it will be carried. One proposition necessarily leads to another, and a second to a third; then some limitation is required; and the combination of these opposites occasions some fresh evolutions from the original idea, which indeed can never be said to be entirely exhausted. This process is its development, and results in a series ... Ideas and their developments are commonly not identical, the development being but the carrying out of the idea into its consequences.

Although he did not use the term (Church) often in the Catholicus letters, Newman indicated in his fifth letter that faith was transmitted through an “idea”—The Church—which united persons:

Faith, viewed in its history through past ages, presents us with the fulfilment of one great idea in particular—that, namely, of an aristocracy of exalted spirits, drawn together out of all countries, ranks, and ages, raised above the condition of

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29 Among the sermons in which Newman treated the Church are the following: “Unity of the Church” (8, 15, 22 November 1829), PPS 7:17; “Submission to Church Authority” (29 November 1829), PPS 3:14; “The Visible Church an Encouragement to Faith” (14 September 1834): PPS 3:17; “The Church Visible and Invisible” (25 October 1835), PPS 3:16; “The Church a Home for the Lonely” (22 October 1837), PPS 4:12.

30 Newman in his An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine (Introduction by Ian Ker [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1845; 2005], 35), explained the difference between an aspect and an idea:

There is no one aspect deep enough to exhaust the contents of a real idea, no one term or proposition which will serve to define it; though of course one representation of it is more just and exact than another, and though when an idea is very complex, it is allowable, for the sake of convenience, to consider its distinct aspects as if separate ideas.

31 Newman, OUS, 221-222 [329-330].
humanity, specimens of the capabilities of our race, incentives to rivalry and patterns for imitation.\textsuperscript{32}

Political, pedagogical, theological aspects of this idea bloomed and developed in the course of the composition of his letters. These various blossoms were what Newman’s detractors and admirers have seized upon while interpreting the letters. No interpreters, however, identified the Church as a central idea in the letters.\textsuperscript{33} However, Newman wanted his readers to glimpse the idea even if only reading a few letters or grasping only certain aspects. Newman recounted the importance of an idea and its development to Henry Wilberforce in 1855:

\begin{quote}
The \textit{mystery} [of Catholicus] will make people begin to read. But even supposing they are but half read by any one, by the end of them the \textit{idea} is created and grown up.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

\textbf{The Literary Form of the \textit{Catholicus} Letters}

The literary form of the \textit{Catholicus} letters expressed his core idea. The letters were unique among Newman’s Anglican corpus. He had written letters and editorials to newspapers as early as 1821.\textsuperscript{35} However the \textit{Catholicus} letters differed from his earlier, 

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\textsuperscript{32} \textit{LD}, 8:552. \\
\textsuperscript{33} For example, Burgis’s study of the \textit{Tamworth Reading Room} paid little attention to the ecclesial and theological dimensions of the letters. While recognizing Newman’s critique centered upon faith versus secular knowledge, she did not address the role of faith in Newman’s thought. \\
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{LD}, 17:428-429; emphasis added. \\
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 1:102-105. Newman wrote his first editorial for the \textit{Christian Observer} in May 1821. As a Tractarian he wrote “a series of lengthy letters to the \textit{Record} newspaper on the revival of church discipline” beginning in October 1833 (Ker, \textit{Biography}, 85; LD 4:141): “I had sent 5 letters to the \textit{Record}, and they were well
more sober, and reflective attempts. One important difference was his use of satire to drive the letters. According to Ker, “From a literary point of view alone, the most important of Newman’s Anglican writings is the Tamworth Reading Room . . . . It is also the one sustained work of satire that Newman wrote as an Anglican.”

Newman seemingly chose to infuse satire into his letters, because he found Peel and the Knowledge School wildly inconsistent in their assumptions. According to Ker:

One of the most efficacious ways of winning an argument is show that one’s opponent is inconsistent, but it is also one of the best ways of showing that his point of view is not only wrong but also absurd . . . . [It] is remarkable how pervasively the theme of inconsistency runs through Newman’s satirical writings.

received. My 6th stuck—at length appeared a most ominous leading article about the Society, the Address and the Tracts, with quotations of the transubstantiation passages (which have brought us into all sorts of trouble . . .). Newman also wrote an editorial to the British Magazine in October 1834 on “Centralization” (LD, 4:339-343). Newman countenanced the advantages and disadvantages of political centralization in Burkean fashion, while observing deleterious effects upon the English Church. Some of his concerns in this article resurfaced in the Catholicus letters, (Ibid., 341-343):

Certainly, the principle itself is involved in the very notion of government, and no novelty; indeed it seems to be an admitted axiom in politics that, in respect to some branches of national power, as in the executive, a strict centralization is plainly requisite for the well-being of a state, and a division of them among several parties a great evil. Yet this being granted, it seems to have been a characteristic of the British constitution hitherto, whether rightly or wrongly, to view the principle with jealousy, as hostile in its tendency to the liberty of the subject, and to allow each neighbourhood to provide as much as possible for itself; and it is a growing peculiarity of the present age, whether rightly or wrongly, to purchase a respite from present actual evils by the introduction of it into various departments of the body politic to which it was before a stranger . . . . Now, how does this bear upon the church? . . . But circumstances are changing; and let us consider where the church is likely to stand, having abandoned that centralizing character, which the state is adopting instead. (Ibid., 340-341).

Nothing seems to inspire so much amused contempt in him as the absence of or lack of consistency.\(^{37}\)

Newman’s analysis of the Knowledge School attempted to demonstrate that its euphemisms and claims for knowledge were inconsistent with of human life. According to Ker, Newman chose satire to drive the letters because the Knowledge School’s “substitution of knowledge for religious faith [was] so incongruous and absurd.”\(^{38}\)

Newman viewed Peel’s speech as a 6,500 word contradiction.\(^{39}\) He considered the Knowledge School’s creation of an indiscriminate Pantheon of Science another: “Nothing comes amiss to this author [Craik]; saints and sinners, the precious and the vile, are torn from their proper homes and recklessly thrown together under the category of Knowledge . . . .”\(^{40}\) Through satire, metaphor, aphorism and argument, Newman exposed the assumptions and wishes latent in Peel’s address and in the Knowledge School’s position. Although satire vivified most of the letters, the actual form and method which Newman chose to oppose both parties was didactic and conversational. He wanted his readers to question and ponder his ideas along with him. Both his satirical and conversational format differentiated the *Catholicus* letters Newman’s earlier forays in newspaper editorials and other writings.

\(^{37}\) Ibid, 8.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 13.

\(^{39}\) For example, in his first letter (*LD*, 8:537) Newman wrote of Peel’s seeming adoption of Brougham’s “infidel principle”: “as the following passages show, he is inconsistent enough to think highly of its application in the culture of the mind.”

\(^{40}\) *LD*, 8:553.
The Catholicus Letters as an Address on Britain’s Areopagus

The letters of Catholicus resembled several of the compositional styles that Newman developed in the course of the 1830’s, such as his early out-spoken Tracts for the Times. Newman explained that the Tracts,

…were written with the hope of rousing members of our Church to comprehend her alarming position . . . having this object, they spontaneously used the language of alarm and complaint. They were written, as a man might give notice of a fire or inundation, to startle all who heard him, with only so much of doctrine and argument as might be necessary to account for their publication, or might answer more obvious objections to the views therein advocated.41

The early tracts were short, prophetic bursts of doctrinal argument meant to rouse his fellow churchmen. They warned of the state’s usurpation of the Church and emphasized a return to earlier practices and doctrines that had been lost in the contemporary English Church.42 The Catholicus letters shared the early tracts’ urgency, as well as their concern for the Church. However, the letters were addressed to a different audience for a different purpose:

Unlike his tracts, lengthy review articles, systematic treatises, or even his Oxford University Sermons, Newman’s Parochial and Plain Sermons provide the best analogue to the Catholicus letters. Burgis has also observed this association:

[The] separate Letters are organised in a way that resembles that of the series; that is to say he does not proceed by means of a chain of argument, but by circling round a subject clearly announced at the beginning, so that not even the most cursory reader could fail to make something of it while the more leisurely would


42 Imberg, Quest for Authority, 44-125, has traced the development of Newman’s ecclesiology in the Tracts.
find that from the consideration of particular instances and the use of quotation and comment upon it . . . had some real content for him to take hold of. The method is not so much that of the early Tracts, which often consist of a short sharp sequence of admonitions; as of the Parochial Sermons . . . .

Ker has commented that “during at least the Anglican half of his life, [Newman] probably spent more time composing sermons than writing anything else.” An example of his prodigious output survives in his Parochial and Plain Sermons. The entire collection of these sermons constituted almost a quarter of his total literary production, yet “represent only about a third of the pastoral sermons he actually wrote as an Anglican.” Those that were published nevertheless presented “one of the great classics of Christian spirituality.”

Newman’s sermons extended from his early years as an Anglican Evangelical at Oxford to the eve of his entrance into the Roman Catholic Church. Gilley has captured the tension in his sermons as Newman sought to navigate between these two traditions:

The sermons are not directly controversial, but have the severe moral tone of one who no longer had the Evangelical doctrines of election and assurance . . . of salvation, and who had not yet come to the more comforting teachings of Rome on indulgences, confession, human merit and the intercession of the saints for forgiveness of sin.

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43 Burgis, “Newman’s Tamworth Reading Room,” 152.


45 Ibid.

46 Ker, Biography, 90.

47 Gilley, Newman and His Age, 123.
Evidence of this tension was not only manifest in his sermons, but also in his reflections on them. After the publication of the first volume of his *Parochial and Plain Sermons* in 1834, Newman was engaged in a significant exchange with several Evangelical-Anglicans who both praised and critiqued his work. Explaining his intentions for the sermons, he differentiated between his own intentions for writing the sermons and the prevalent Evangelical notions concerning the use and functions of sermons for the Church. As he wrote to Samuel Wilberforce:

I allow that my sermons are not adapted to *influence*: first I have selected them [for the first published volume] on purpose on a different principle, next the Xtian preacher using his own words cannot dare hope to be more than a Baptist preparing the way for the Gospel . . . . The Baptist is but the friend of the bridegroom – and hath not the bride, and speaketh (so to say) of the earth. It is as a Priest that I should have influence (i.e. the Sacraments, ordinances, etc. of the Church) – and since their divinely ordained system is . . . but poorly developed among us, no wonder I seem cold and uninfluential. The single ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, rightly taught and administered, is full of persuasion . . . .

Often, his sermons exhibited a movement or dialectic between spiritual ideals and practical realities. Ker observed that Newman would use his “rhetorical art to inspire his listeners with the ideal”:

But by contrast, the means to attaining the ideal are highly practical and specific. Newman’s sermons are distinguished not for vague platitudes and pious assertions, but for their utter concreteness and definiteness. If the ideals are high . . . the spirituality is ruthlessly real, with no time for merely idealist emotions or flourishes.

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49 Ker, *Achievement*, 76.
Newman had a personal way of composing, usually beginning with a particular passage from the daily scripture readings found in the *Book of Common Prayer*.\(^{50}\) This passage served to introduce a given theological subject, e.g., baptism, the Holy Spirit or the visible Church. He then developed the given subject in the form of a conversation—incorporating various arguments or perspectives into the sermon, providing concrete images from Scripture or from everyday life, and raising questions that engaged his listeners.\(^{51}\) Tristram has noted that “His manner of speaking was the same in the pulpit as on ordinary occasions; in fact, he was not preaching but conversing, very thoughtfully and earnestly, but still conversing.”\(^{52}\)

Newman seemed to have stumbled upon this conversational method in October of 1831; as he candidly recorded in his diary: “Walked back to Oxford, through clay fields, streams, and miry roads, about fifteen miles. [It was in this walk that I devised the mode of writing sermons which is my published mode].”\(^{53}\) This new “mode of writing” represented a significant change from a typically evangelical form that had characterized his earlier preaching. Prior to 1831 he had appropriated a style outlined by the great

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\(^{53}\) *LD*, 2:366.
James Packer has noted elements of Simeon’s style: he stressed a systematic approach to and delivery of a sermon. Simeon recommended that a sermon should have a singular purpose, clear organization, as well as utilize plain and common language. Simeon believed that sermons were dually meant to instruct and to raise the spirits and the moral awareness of the congregation.

Although certain features of Simeon’s style persisted in Newman’s preaching, his exhortative method contrasted with Newman’s conversational approach. While his sermons remained informative, inspiring, and simply worded, Newman also sought to dialogue with his listeners. Tolhurst observed that Newman galvanized, “the insights of many individual minds and drawing out from them their best, while preserving that bond of love which makes of the Church . . . a communion.”

The conversational approach of Newman’s sermons closely paralleled that of his Catholicus letters. Newman knew that words could only do so much in “preparing the way for the Gospel”; his priestly office and the Church’s sacraments could do far more than either the pulpit or the columns of a paper. He nevertheless understood the evocative power of words spoken and printed. The letters to The Times, like the sermons

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54 Ker, Biography, n. 90.


given to St. Mary’s, attempted to draw his audience into the conversation and were composed in a personal way rather than by formal or artificial method. The sermons and the letters were not simply to influence opinion like Evangelical sermons or popular editorials. They utilized images and provided arguments that invited assent—about grace and about faith. Newman’s letters, like his sermons, were not ends in themselves, but as signs to point readers to the Church.

The Catholicus letters, however, differed in two respects from his sermons. First, the letters did not take their cue from the characters and images in scripture; rather they began with the premises of the Knowledge School, popular idioms, and work-a-day portraits of common people. As a preacher, Newman attempted to unfurl the mysteries latent in scripture for his congregation; as the pseudonymous Catholicus, he sought to highlight the contradictions of the Knowledge School for the British public in contrast to the revealed truths of Christianity. The second difference between the letters and the sermons was audience. Newman’s parochial sermons were for his congregation. In contrast, the letters were for anyone who read The Times—Christians of all denominations, other religious minorities, and non-believers. Thus, the Catholicus letters could not follow the assumptions and language of a preacher in a pulpit. The letters were crafted by Newman as a modern Pauline evangelist—sharing the Gospel with any who might listen on Britain’s Areopagus.

57 LD, 17:428-429.
58 DA, iii.
The Church in the *Parochial and Plain Sermons*

While the form of the *Catholicus* letters resembled Newman’s sermons, an analogue between the ecclesial content in the letters and sermons can also be established. Newman presented his ecclesiology in many formats: letters, tracts, monographs, and sermons. Tolhurst has observed that Newman’s Anglican sermons,

provide a unique source of information on the development of Newman’s ecclesiology precisely because they were preached week after week . . . . The idea of the Church was not a literary exercise for Newman but a part of his very life which he gradually unfolded within the community of his parishioners . . . .

Unlike his more focused and refined meditations on the Church in such works as the *Via Media*, Newman’s sermons offered a way for one trying to understand the meaning of “Church,” precisely because they did not offer a singular and systematic presentation. The Church can be discovered in his *Parochial and Plain Sermons* “because they were preached Sunday after Sunday to a particular congregation rather in the manner of an extended conversation; and as in a conversation we can discover a thread which links the thoughts together and gradually becomes plain.”

Newman figuratively walked his parishioners around the Church and its doctrines, allowing them to glimpse and assemble different views into a cohesive whole.

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59 Tolhurst, *Church*, ix, xii.

60 Ibid.

61 See Mary Katherine Tillman (“An Introduction,” xii-xxix) for an insightful analysis of how Newman used words to depict a serial view of an idea. For example, Tillman (Ibid., xx) writes, “Words, whole sermons, or an entire volume of sermons, like the artist’s dabs of paint, whole canvases, and entire series of painting, are employed by Newman to portray a multi-faceted subject from a particular point of view.”
Newman’s spiritual and intellectual influences pervade his *Parochial and Plain Sermons*. They converged in ways that allowed him to work out an effective ecclesiology for himself and more importantly for his parishioners. Although the Church was presented with different images and at different times, Coulson has noted that Newman consistently viewed the “idea” of the Church—the visible Body of Christ:

For Newman the starting point [of understanding the Church] must be the objectified presence or ‘Body’ of Christ existing in the world. It is to be identified by what Newman calls his ‘method of personation’, a method [where] Christ is not encountered directly or introspectively as an *alter ego*, but always through the Church and its sacraments, or, Christ. Christ is uniquely present to each Christian when the Church is gathered to form the Eucharistic community, since this is that special mode of approaching Him which he has bequeathed.62

This view of the body of Christ found in the *Parochial and Plain Sermons* was the idea sustaining the *Catholicus* letters. The serial view of the Church presented in the sermons resembled Newman’s approach in the letters. Throughout February, he guided *The Times*’s readers around the various tenets of the Knowledge School while also presenting aspects of the Church. These aspects gradually revealed the distinction between the Church and the Knowledge School.

**Newman’s Search for a “Fundamental Faith”**

Ecclesial themes of visibility and invisibility, regeneration, and the Church in contrast to the “World” found in the *Parochial and Plain Sermons* were also evident in the *Catholicus* letters. These aspects and the “idea” which they revealed took form in Newman’s mind during his *Parochial and Plain* “conversations” and the construction of

the *Via Media* in the 1830’s. Newman saw the Church, not only as personal refuge or a means to conversion, but also as a visible presence that marked out a boundary from certain modern traditions, such as rationalism. For the Church to provide the difference between faith and worldly knowledge, faith had to be essentially related to Church.

He recognized, however, that since the Reformation a theological error had developed—to imagine faith and truth apart from the Church. Newman wrestled with this error in his *Apologia*. He personally and theologically had to contend with the question of the relation of faith to the Church:63

... [At] the end of 1835 or beginning of 1836, I had the whole state of the question before me, on which, to my mind, the decision between the Churches depended. ... [In] my view the controversy ... turned upon the Faith and the Church. This was my issue of the controversy from the beginning to the end. There was a contrariety of claims between the Roman and Anglican religions, and the history of my conversion is simply the process of working it out to a solution. In 1838 ... [I said that] the peculiarity of the Anglican theology was this,—that it “supposed the Truth to be entirely objective and detached, not” (as the Roman) “lying hid in the bosom of the Church as if one with her, clinging to and (as it were) lost her embrace, but as being sole and unapproachable, as on the Cross or at the Resurrection, with the Church close by, but in the background.”

As I viewed the controversy in 1836 and 1838, I viewed it in 1840 and 1841.64

Ker has commented on the effects of Newman’s searching:

What Newman saw as early as 1838, seven years before his conversion to Rome, as the essential and fundamental difference between Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism is the underlying difference also, of course, between Protestantism generally and Catholicism.65

63 See Ian Ker, “‘Mere Christianity’ and Catholicism,” in *C. S. Lewis and the Church: Essays in honor of Walter Hooper*, edited by Judith E. Wolfe and Brendan N. Wolfe (London: T & T Clarke, 1988), 129-134.

Ker noted that this fundamental difference was that for Anglicans and other Protestants, “the faith is separate from the Church and comes before the Church, whereas on the Catholic view, the faith is inseparable from the Church, which comes first as the source of faith.”

The relation of faith to the Church vexed Newman. Ker noted that Newman queried this relation, in terms of a “fundamental faith.” In 1838 Newman had a view of what constituted the Anglican view of faith:

The received notion in the English school seems to be, as has already been observed, that the faith which the Apostles delivered, has ever existed in the Church whole and entire, ever recognized as the faith, ascertainable as such, and separable (to speak generally) from the mass of opinions, which with it have obtained a footing among Christians. It is considered definite in its outline, though its details admit of more or less perfection; and in consequence it is the property of each individual, so that he may battle for it in his day, how great so ever the party attacking it; nay, as not receiving it simply from the Church of the day, but through other sources besides, historical and scriptural, he may defend it, if needs be, against the Church, should the Church depart from it; the faith being the foundation of the Church as well as of the individual, and the individual being bound to obey the Church, only so far as the Church holds to the faith. This is the doctrine of Fundamentals, and its peculiarity is this; that it supposes the Truth to be entirely objective and detached, not lying hid in the bosom of the Church as if one with her, clinging to her and (as it were) lost in her embrace, but as being sole and unapproachable as on the Cross or at the Resurrection, with the Church close by, but in the background.

Ker observed: “But if this fundamental faith is prior to and superior to the Church, then who decides what this faith is? ‘The chief difficulty obviously lies,’

65 Ker, “‘Mere Christianity’ and Catholicism,” 133.

66 Ibid.

conceded the Anglican Newman, ‘in determining what is the fundamental faith.’”68 Ker continued that,

. . . this takes us back to the question to the question of whether Christianity means fundamentally a Church or a religion that is fundamentally distinct from any Church. To put it another way, is Christianity primarily a religion of the book (the Bible), that precedes any Church, or of the Eucharist, that presupposes the Church?69

The “Idea” of the Catholicus Letters in an Unpublished Sermon

The Church and unity of the faith weighed heavy on Newman’s mind in early 1841. For example, in Tract 90 he explored a path to communion with Rome.70 He later reflected on this to Catherine Froude on 9 April 1844: “At the time of the publication of Number 90, I was...desirous of union with Rome, i.e. Church with Church.”71 To achieve this end, however, unity was also required within the Church of England and among all Protestant traditions. In the tract, Newman urged faithful Christians to strive for communion:

. . . The present writer, for one, will be no party to the ordinary political methods by which professed reforms are carried or compassed in this day. We can do nothing well till we act “with one accord;” we can have no accord in action till we

68 Ker, “‘Mere Christianity’ and Catholicism,” 133; Newman, “Palmer’s Treatise on the Church of Christ,” 368.

69 Ibid., 134.

70 For the background and aims of Tract 90, see Chapter 3, Section 1.

71 JHN to Catherine Froude, 9 April 1844, LD, 10:203-204. Newman added three more points: “2. I was strongly opposed to the idea of individual moves. 3. I thought the practical system of Rome very corrupt—and thought those corruptions balanced our quasi-schism . . . .” After the publication and public outcry against Tract 90, especially its rejection by many Anglican bishops, Newman commented: “4. I thought my occupation quite gone in the Anglican Church.”
agree together in heart; we cannot agree without a supernatural influence; we cannot have a supernatural influence unless we pray for it; we cannot pray acceptably without repentance and confession. Our Church’s strength would be irresistible, humanly speaking, were it but at unity with itself: if it remains divided, part against part, we shall see the energy which was meant to subdue the world preying upon itself, according to our SAVIOUR’S express assurance that such a house “cannot stand.” Till we feel this, till we seek one another as brethren, not lightly throwing aside our private opinions, which we seem to feel we have received from above, from an ill-regulated, untrue desire of unity, but returning to each other in heart, and coming together to GOD to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, no change can be for the better. Till we, her children, are stirred up to this religious course, let the Church . . . sit still; let her children be content to be in bondage; let us work in chains; let us submit to our imperfections as a punishment; let us go on teaching with the stammering lips of ambiguous formularies, and inconsistent precedents, and principles but partially developed.  

Newman did not pursue or fully address these aspirations of full ecclesial unity in Tract 90. However, he articulated the possibility of unity through the “fundamental faith” of the Apostolic and Catholic Church in an untitled sermon preached at St. Mary’s, 31 January 1841. This sermon, which Newman preached one day after he had accepted the commission from Walter III to respond to Peel’s address, displayed his preponderant theological and personal apprehensions at that time. Newman presented the Apostolic and Catholic Church—the “idea” of the Church, which permeated the Catholicus letters. The sermon clarified the “idea” that resurfaced the letters: faith and knowledge were grounded in the life of the Church. Newman preached the sermon “for [the] Queen’s

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73 *Sermons 1824-1843*, 3:399; the sermon was subsequently labeled “Duty of Christian Educators.”
letter for [the] National Society." Because he was preaching for the National Society, he concentrated upon education as administered by the Church of England.

Newman commenced by noting that the congregation had just heard Paul’s focus (1 Corinthians 12) on the “strict and intimate connection of all its members with each other.” To be in the body of Christ “every part is necessary to the whole and all to each.”

Unity was an imperative:

Such is the contribution of the Church of Christ; not more certain is a human body of destruction if divided, not more incapable . . . those individual Christians of spiritual life, warmth, motion and action when separated from their brethren.

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74 LD, 8:25. The Queen’s Letter was a tri-annual pecuniary grant given to the National Society.

75 The tone and substance of this sermon show a shift away from Newman’s earlier thought about educating those from other ecclesial traditions. Culler (The Imperial Intellect, 102) recounted that in 1834, on the heels of the Reform Act and the push to nationalize education, a petition was offered for “mixed” education of Dissenters and Anglicans at Cambridge and Oxford. Newman opposed this petition, “scribbling” a prophetic yet practical response to Hugh James Rose, then editor of the British Magazine:

The Universities are called upon to open their gates to dissenters . . . . Let it be recollected that the dissenters advance their demands as a claim of justice . . . What then do we gain? What does truth, justice, religion, gain? What is gained but a precedent for innovation . . . ?

It is urged that we should admit dissenters, at least, to the advantages of education, if not to degrees. At Oxford . . . the students are required to attend chapel, morning and evening, and the Lord’s Supper terminally. Each tutor knows his pupils personally, with more or less intimacy according to the disposition of each party, etc. . . . The tutor is often the means of forming his pupils’ minds, of setting up a standard of thought and judgment in his society, and that, of course, in accordance with, or rather based upon, the doctrines of the church. Now consider what can be more different than the respective tempers . . . of dissent and churchmanship . . . . How can a tutor do anything for pupils whose first element of character differs from the church? (LD, 4:208-209).

76 Sermons 1824-1843, 3:399-400.
The need for community was not limited to the Church, but a fundamental principle of human life and culture:

Man is not sufficient for himself. He needs informants, guides, patterns, associates, objects of love and admiration. He is a social, imitative, progressive being; he reaches around him and forwards. He is not born complete, entire, defective, mature. He cannot rest in self. He cannot live solitary; he cannot be content with what he is. He depends on others, and is able to help others—he has powers and he has needs. And his happiness and his work lies in supplying those needs and exercising those powers. 77

Because people depend upon each other and knowledge and experience is cumulative, Newman regarded the formation of opinion or belief important. For him, beliefs were not relative: some were true and others false.

And what is true of man in other respects, is quite as true as regards his opinions, moral and religious—He has to learn them. He is not born with them, he [is] not able to form them; he must receive them. And this is the use of education, in that point of view in which I am especially called today to consider it, it is the formation of opinion. 78

Newman observed some prevalent approaches to the formation of opinion, especially religious opinion. The first, which he perceived to be relatively limited, was that the young should be left to form their own opinions. The second, which he considered widespread, was that because Christians were divided, a general notion of religion should be taught, “but not Christian principles in their fullness.” 79 These flawed approaches were the result of a fractured Christianity:

77 Ibid., 3:400.

78 Ibid.

79 Sermons 1824-1843, 3:400.
We Christians are all divided into sects and when we educate we seem to be giving, not the opinions of the body, but (as it were) the opinions of the separate hand, or foot, or eye . . . . We seem to impart the belief not of the Church, but of our own sect . . . .

Newman affirmed the plausibility segregated Christian education in the present age, but this fell short of the Christian idea of the Church:

It was not always this. Once there was in Christendom one Church Catholic, and one only, full of the notes of grace, uniform in teaching, various in gifts, rich in saints . . . . When the truth by [sic] was quite plain, there is no doubt whether day is light or dark, or night dark or light. But when we come to fine varied shades of colour, the case is different. Such is the case in these dreary times, in this cold melancholy anxious age, when all that is of this world abounds and thrives, when nations are great, and art has almost reached miracle, and science has well nigh revealed mysteries, and the riches of the whole earth are becoming the property of each part of it, but alas in which religion to has become rank and grown into many unhealthy shapes and run into wild courses, and is weaker and weaker in proportion as it has become more various. Now no longer is it a choice between light and darkness, day and night, but between finer and paler shades of colour—and in which it is difficult to say which is good and which is bad, and this or that is to be chosen only because it is less far removed from that which certainly is not to be chosen.

Newman returned to the initial objection that Christian educators should refrain from teaching their own “particular notions of Christianity.” He did “not deny the reasonableness of the objection” but he denied that it applied to the “English Church educating our children carefully and exactly in her faith . . . .”

Now if we look abroad all over the whole world and do not confine ourselves into this narrow corner of the earth in which we live, we shall find that Christians do every where agree in the main points of doctrine, in spite of their differences in lesser matters, and if so the objection will be found clearly not to apply to our

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80 Ibid.

81 Ibid., 3:401.

82 Ibid.
teaching, so far as that teaching agrees with the teaching of the Catholic Church at large. The Church of Christ looked at in its width and breadth cannot err; for the promise is express to it . . . .\textsuperscript{85}

Appealing to the scriptures to bolster his assertion, Newman explained:

We have nothing to fear then while we teach after the pattern of that Church which the Apostles founded—and which has the promises—and while that Church is there is no manner of doubt at all—for there is but one such, and it lasts (as was foretold) to this day, and all over the earth too, as was also foretold . . . . Are not those words clearly in our Bibles? [Is] there any doubt when we look abroad into the world at large, what and where the Church is and what is her teaching every where? Is she not called the Church? does not the Scripture now belong exclusively to one religious communion? . . . where can we be wrong if the Bible is right?\textsuperscript{84}

Newman acknowledged the difficulty teaching a Catholic faith among the many Christian traditions as well as the “fearful” responsibility—to God and one’s fellow Christians—that a Christian educator has by influencing the young. He believed, nevertheless, that this difficulty could be overcome:

We are not teaching private opinions while we teach doctrines which the Christian Church, (with whom are the promises), has ever taught, which it teaches now and everywhere in every part of the world . . . . For while we thus proceed, we discover and secure the teaching of that Spirit who lives in the whole body, and not in parts of the body except while they are its parts—in <by> whom the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified, by whom we are baptized into the one body, and into whom we been all made to drink.\textsuperscript{85}

In Newman’s view, and despite of the “most serious and melancholy differences” between ecclesial communities, the English Church taught what the “Catholic Church teaches.” He supported his claim by citing the Catechism of the Church of England as

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 3:402.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 3:403.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 3:404.
the “rule of [their] teaching.” The Catechism essentially contained the “fundamental faith”: the doctrine of Baptism, the Creed, Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and “ends with a distinct account of the two sacraments necessary for salvation.”

Here we have the teaching which all the Church has ever held,—everywhere and always. The Greek will recognize it and the Latin which [would] not dissent from it. The first age of Christians held it, and the present has not forsaken it. This is the faith of the Saints—the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity in Unity—the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ—His immaculate conception—His birth, ministry, sufferings, death, atonement, resurrection, victory, Kingdom—the Mission of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Law, the privilege of prayer, the power of the Sacraments, the prerogatives of Holy Church, the unseen communion of all Saints, the resurrection of the dead, the life everlasting, such I say is the faith of the Church throughout the whole world—In putting it forward therefore we hazard no private speculation. If Christianity itself be true, this faith is true too. The revelation and the faith have ever gone together—the one was never without the other. Revelation implies a thing revealed—This is that message; not a private idea of our own minds…but a public notorious announcement . . . . If this is a sectarian doctrine, Christianity is sectarian.

Newman reminded his listeners that those who diverge from this faith are really sectarian. But those who have adhered to the faith—which he adroitly summarized—are but “fulfilling the divine command ‘Freely ye have received, freely give’ [Mat. 10:18].” Newman concluded with a nod to the Queen’s patronage of the Church and the duty of all “to teach what you have learned—to aid in continuing unto the end what has the promise of eternity.

86 Baptism and the Lord’s Supper; Sermons 1824-1843, 3:404-405.

87 Ibid., 3:405.

88 Ibid., 3:405-406.

89 Ibid., 3:406.
Conclusions Drawn from the “Duty of Christian Educators”

In this sermon, Newman proclaimed what he believed to be the Church: “Once there was in Christendom one Church Catholic, and one only, full of the notes of grace, uniform in teaching, various in gifts, rich in saints . . . .”\(^{90}\) This Church had, over time, disintegrated into various sects. However, this Church had a maintained a unified, “fundamental faith”—in so far as various ecclesial communities proclaimed the Trinity, performed baptism, preached the Word, etc. Indeed, this sermon represented Newman’s summation of the “fundamental faith” for which he had been searching. He identified the faith to the Church in terms of the Vincentian canon: \(^{91}\) “we have the teaching which all the Church has ever held,—everywhere and always”.\(^{92}\)

Perhaps the most important contribution of the “Duty of Christian Educators” to understanding the Catholicus letters derived from Newman’s equation of Christianity to the Apostolic and Catholic Church.\(^{93}\) Newman’s impassioned summary of what the Holy Church teaches concluded with this important identification: “If this is a sectarian doctrine, Christianity is sectarian.”\(^{94}\) Christianity—as the Church—embodied the

\(^{90}\) *Sermons 1824-1843*, 3:401.

\(^{91}\) Vincent of Lerins (d. 450) expressed the universality of the Church in the phrase: “quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est.”

\(^{92}\) *Sermons 1824-1843*, 3:405.

\(^{93}\) Newman also made this identification in “Evangelical Sanctity the Perfection of Natural Virtue” (6 March 1831), *OUS*, 37-47 [37-53]. He provided further explanation in his *Development of Christian Doctrine*, 33-41; 55-75.

\(^{94}\) *Sermons 1824-1843*, 3:405.
fundamental faith and in doing so presented a difference to those who did not share this fundamental faith. By identifying Christianity to the Church Newman did not create an abstract referent that encompassed all Christian sects. Rather Christianity was the full expression of the Apostolic and Catholic Church.\footnote{95 E.g., Newman, “Milman’s History of Christianity,” 85-86.}

**The Church as the “Christian Difference”**

The ecclesial concerns and ideals which Newman had at the beginning of 1841 were not confined to St. Mary’s or to the *Tracts for the Times*. The offer from *The Times* to mount the Areopagus and dispute with Peel and the Knowledge School provided another venue to illuminate the fundamental faith of the Church: at the center of this dispute was fundamental faith identified with the Church in contrast to the knowledge of the world identified with the Tamworth Library and Reading Room.

Peel considered himself a faithful member of the Church of England—he adhered to basic Christian mores and was dutiful in observing the Church’s rites. The Knowledge School consisted of an array of Christians, Deists, Skeptics, and a few nonbelievers. For those who believed they were faithful Christians, Newman thought it inconsistent and objectionable that they conceived of faith apart from doctrine and thus apart from the Church. For those outside the Christian faith, Newman thought they needed to be evangelized. The separation of faith from the Church was clear in Peel’s address—ministers, deprived of their office, could only act as advisors who recommended secular literature; the glory of science either lead to or could be substituted for religious faith;
scientific knowledge or faith could be discovered free from institutions, parties, and the bigotries Peel believed they tended to impart. Moreover, a faith independently derived or scientific knowledge could do what a narrow, doctrinal faith could not—harmonize the classes in society. These notions mirrored much of the Knowledge School’s platform that had developed since the 1820s.

Newman could not abide emasculated ministers or a rationalized human philosophy coequal with the Church’s faith. As he declared in his sixth letter:

I have no confidence then in philosophers who cannot help having religion, and are Christian by implication. They sit at home, and reach forward to distances which astonish us; but they hit without grasping, and are sometimes as confident about shadows as about realities.  

Human philosophy lacked divine action, sacramental edification, and doctrinal content. In contrast, Christian faith was a grace given by Christ, a gift that united believers and opened them to the fullness of God’s grace—through the sacraments and through their quotidian experiences. Peel and the Knowledge School had misplaced “what in its place is a divine gift.” The fullness of grace was nurtured and edified through the Church; faith divorced from grace and the Church could not save (Ephesians 2:8-9).

The Church was the difference between faith in harmony with knowledge and science shorn of faith. Newman was able accent this difference by blending elements

96 *LD*, 8:556.

97 Ibid., 8:545.

98 “For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of your selves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”
from of the *Parochial and Plain Sermons* and the “Duty of Christian Educators” into *Catholicus* letters.\(^9\) For example, Newman noted in the “Duty of Christian Educators” that humans were dependent upon each other—Man is not sufficient for himself\(^{100}\)—and ultimately upon God. Humans needed to learn from others; an education through a community formed character and tamed rebellious human nature.\(^{101}\) These principles were at times implicit and explicit in the letters—particularly in Newman’s denunciation of the Infidel Principle.\(^{102}\) A library or university devoid of Christianity may impart useful knowledge but could not form the whole person or community. The result of a life without religious faith would be not a bold and intelligent person unaccountable for his or her religious opinions. Rather, as Newman depicted in the third letter, they:

\[
\ldots \text{shall but mature into a mawkish, frivolous, and fastidious sentimentalism} \ldots \\
\text{into a dry unamiable longheadedness} \ldots \\
\text{into a polished outside, with hollowness within, in which vice has lost its grossness, and perhaps increased its malignity} \ldots \\
\text{into an uppish supercilious temper, much inclined to scepticism.}\(^{103}\)
\]

Newman knew that accountability in formation was essential. Only a religious community and tradition could touch persons; and, with grace, divert them from a life of mawkishness or doubt. As he noted in his seventh letter:

\(^9\) Whether this was Newman’s explicit intention or whether they exerted an unconscious influence on the letters cannot be determined.

\(^{100}\) Newman, *Sermons 1824-1843*, 3:400.

\(^{101}\) Ibid.

\(^{102}\) *LD*, 8:536.

\(^{103}\) Ibid., 8:546.
I consider, then, that intrinsically excellent and noble as are scientific pursuits, and worthy of a place in a liberal education, and fruitful in temporal benefits to the community; still they are not, and cannot be, the instrument of education.\textsuperscript{104}

In his third letter, he declared what this “instrument” should be:

Christianity, and nothing short of it, must be made the element and principle of all education. Where it has been laid as the first stone, and acknowledged as the governing spirit, it will take up into itself, assimilate, and give a character to literature and science. Where revealed truth has given the aim and direction to knowledge, knowledge of all kinds will minister to revealed truth. The evidences of religion, natural theology, metaphysics,—or, again, poetry, history, and the classics,—or physics and mathematics, may all be grafted into the mind of a Christian, and give and take from the grafting.\textsuperscript{105}

As \textit{Catholicus}, Newman demonstrated that faith does not interfere with knowledge but rather gives it “character”. He expressed his admiration of science and technology, showed command of the classics and of current trends, while consistently putting faith first. \textit{Catholicus} showed exactly the type of person, formed in faith and knowledge, one could be. Whereas Peel and the Knowledge School envisioned a “neutral ground, on which men of every shade of politics and religion may meet together, disabuse each other of their prejudices, form intimacies, and secure cooperation,”\textsuperscript{106} Newman inverted their idea—bigotry did not necessarily arise from ecclesial faith, but by using secular institutions (academic or political) to exclude faith formation:

[Peel’s] great aim is the peace and good order of the community, and the easy working of the national machine. With this in view, any price is cheap, everything is marketable; all impediments are a nuisance . . . . It is a mistake, too, to say that he considers all differences of opinion as equal in importance; no, they

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 8:561.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 8:546.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 8:534.
are only equally in the way. He only compares them together where they are comparable in their common inconvenience to a minister of State.\textsuperscript{107}

Notions of salvation and regeneration through the Church found in the \textit{Parochial and Plain Sermons} were palpable in the \textit{Catholicus} letters. For example, Newman observed in “The Church Visible and Invisible” (1835) that regeneration is “gift of a new spiritual nature.”\textsuperscript{108} Those who are baptized in the Church experience “a new birth . . . for the essence of regeneration is the communication of a higher nature.”\textsuperscript{109}

Soteriology became a theme in Newman’s letters, in response to the Peel’s view of salvation found in his address. Newman assumed that Peel shared a similar belief that human nature and life was distorted by sin.\textsuperscript{110} In his second letter he explained:

Now, without being exact in using theological language, we may surely take it for granted, from the experience of facts, that the human mind is at best in a very unformed or disordered state; passions and conscience, likings and reason, being in conflict, might against right, and the prospect of getting worse.\textsuperscript{111}

Newman and Peel also concurred that a formative education helped save persons from sin or disorder; each had a radically different idea of salvation in mind. For Peel, individual effort—like the poor man who transcended his class through study—could save a person if given a communal setting such as the Tamworth Reading Room and

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 8:550-551.


\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 3:231.

\textsuperscript{110} This assumption may not have been accurate, as Peel may have had a more different view of human nature.

\textsuperscript{111} \textit{LD}, 8:539.
The idea of divine grace as necessary for an individual was absent in Peel’s address. For him and the Knowledge School, a “neutral ground” like a library or a secular university combined with the glories of knowledge could effect a person’s salvation. Free of dogma and party, one could make his or her way on the path to salvation. Newman contended that Peel’s proposal lead to a false self and religion:

> When we survey the marvellous truths of astronomy, we are first of all lost in the feeling of immense space, and of the comparative insignificance of this globe and its inhabitants. But there soon arises a sense of gratification and of new wonder at perceiving how so insignificant a creature has been able to reach such a knowledge of the unbounded system of the universe.” So, this is the religion we are to gain from the study of nature; how miserable! The god we attain is our own mind; our veneration is even professedly the worship of self.

Peel and the Knowledge School desired that the community supported an individual’s growth in knowledge—by providing materials or lectures to improve one’s mind. Increasing one’s knowledge was, for Peel, a path to salvation for the individual and indirectly the community.

Newman’s letters challenged this secular soteriology. He reminded readers throughout his letters that knowledge or human efforts might yield technology useful to the community or amuse and distract many, but could not apply the necessary salve to the moral and spiritual conflicts that actually split persons and communities apart. For him, education through Christianity not only allowed for enlightenment, but also regeneration by Christ’s grace. He emphasized this contrast in his third letter:

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112 Ibid., 8:529-531.

113 Ibid., 8:559.

114 Ibid., 8:555.
Now, independent of all other considerations, the great difference, in a practical light, between the objects of Christianity and of heathen belief, is this—that glory, science, knowledge, and whatever other fine names we use, never healed a wounded heart, nor changed a sinful one; but Christ's word is with power. The ideas which Christianity brings before us are in themselves full of influence, and they are endowed with a supernatural gift over and above, in order to meet the special exigencies of our nature. Knowledge is not “power,” nor is glory “the first and only fair;” but “grace,” or “the word,” by whichever name we call it, has been from the first a quickening, renovating, organizing principle. It has new-created the individual, and diffused and knit him into a social body, composed of members each similarly created. It has cleansed man of his moral diseases, raised him to hope and energy, given him to propagate a brotherhood among his fellowmen, to form a large family or rather kingdom of saints all over the earth, and with wonderful vigour prolonged its original impulse down to this day.\textsuperscript{115}

Newman used the term “Christianity” almost exclusively throughout his \textit{Catholicus} letters to represent the Catholic and Apostolic Church. The term may have served as a short-hand for the Church in order to avoid the qualifications he had made in the “Duty of Christian Educators”; or he may have assumed that his readers understood this identification. His fourth letter raised the question—“What is Christianity?” His answer to this question came to the fore in his fifth letter in a passage that laid bare the “idea” of the letters:

Christianity is faith, faith implies a doctrine; a doctrine propositions; propositions yes or no, yes or no differences. Differences, then, are the natural attendants on Christianity, and you cannot have Christianity, and not have differences.\textsuperscript{116}

Newman’s equation of Christianity—the Church—to faith, first in his sermon on Christian education and then in this passage, represented an innovation in his thinking. Faith and the Church were intricately entwined and their intimate relationship marked out

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 8:543-544.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 8:550.
the difference from the “Intellectual Pantheon” that saw human salvation in the strict embrace of secular knowledge. The Church created “The Christian Difference” between these traditions.

Because the “Christian Difference” involved the visible Church, it also necessitated unity in difference. The underlying principle of the visible Church is the unity commanded by Christ and found in the Spirit. For example, in the “Unity of the Church” (1829) Newman averred:

[Unity] is the condition of our receiving the privileges of the Gospel is confirmed by the mode in which the Prophets describe the Christian Church; that is, instead of addressing individuals as independent and separate from each other, they view the whole as of one body; viz. that one elect, holy, and highly-favoured Mother, of which individuals are but the children favoured through her as a channel . . . .

What he recognized in 1829 as central to the life of the Church, he saw as a secular attempt in Peel’s address. Yet for Newman, cultural unity could not be born from scientific knowledge or from industrial, commercial, or political advances. Peel and the Knowledge School aspired to unify people through conclusions garnered by these means. Newman countered:

A conclusion is but an opinion; it is not a thing which is, but which we are certain about; and it has often been observed, that we never say that we are certain, without implying that we doubt.\(^\text{118}\)

\(^{117}\) *PPS*, 7:233-234.

\(^{118}\) Ibid., 8:555.
Scientific knowledge could not provide unity because it was always revisable. The dialectic of conclusion and doubt was always operative. Definitive commitments and actions, such as faith and love—the ingredients for unity—could not arise.

Rather, ecclesial faith—the “fulcrum of society . . . and the soul of social union”\textsuperscript{119}—was a true principle of unity: “faith is the only known principle capable of subduing moral evil, educating the multitude, and organizing society.”\textsuperscript{120} Faith, through the ministry of the Church, embraced the working class, women virtuous and not, and had the ability to regenerate the drunkard, the thief, the insolent and the angry. Moreover, faith was expressed in doctrine, which Newman identified in his fourth letter as “Christian Knowledge.”\textsuperscript{121} Christian Knowledge was open to and incorporated all the sciences yet pointed to the definitive—the God revealed in Christ through the Church.

Ecclesial faith could not create the artificial and universal harmony for which Peel and the Knowledge School had hoped. Nor could the Tamworth Reading Room or the University of London solve the dilemma of disagreements about fundamental convictions. The Church, in Newman’s mind, was more dynamic. He acknowledged that differences of opinion occur in the Church.\textsuperscript{122} However, there existed clear boundaries, fundamental doctrines that informed faith around which believers in the Church could unite.

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 8:551.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 8:561.

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 8:549.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 8:537; 550.
Unity achieved in faith had consequences: ecclesial unity allowed for difference within the body of Christ but also engendered difference and separation from those who only embraced worldly ends. Indeed the Christian Difference presented the contrast between the Church and the World. Newman anticipated this contrast in his sermon “The Church a Home for the Lonely” (1837). He presented the world was a place of both excitement and toil, of partial contentment (e.g., in marriage) and seduction. Because of its binary structure and its inability to give lasting happiness, Newman concluded that the world cannot be a place that can “really inspire confidence and love.”

The world was not the place where Christ completed His work. Rather, he explained (in language similar to “The Duty of Christian Educators” and the Catholicus letters):

> The world is no helpmeet for man, and a helpmeet he needs. No one, man nor woman, can stand alone; we are so constituted by nature; and the world, instead of helping us, is an open adversary. It but increases our solitariness . . . . We may be full of sorrows; there may be fightings without and fears within; we may be exposed to the frowns, censure, or contempt of men; we may be shunned by them; or, to take the lightest case, we may be (as we certainly shall be) wearied out by the unprofitableness of this world, by its coldness, unfriendliness, distance, and dreariness; we shall need something nearer to us.

For Newman the only home for persons was the Church:

> What is our resource? It is not in arm of man, in flesh and blood, in voice of friend, or in pleasant countenance; it is that holy home which God has given us in His Church; it is that everlasting City in which He has fixed His abode. It is that Mount invisible where Angels are looking at us with their piercing eyes, and the voices of the dead call us.

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123 *PPS*, 4:189.

124 Ibid., 4:196.

125 Ibid.
Newman subtly maintained this contrast in the Catholicus letters. Contra Peel, Christian faith and doctrine embraced and lived by persons are what distinguished them from the World. The Church provided the boundary between the unity of faith and World, symbolized in the letters by the Knowledge School and the exclusive Tamworth Reading Room and Library. Unlike secular knowledge and their institutions, the Church, oracle of God’s grace, was truly able to remediate sin, and divinize the human person.

The Knowledge School does not contemplate raising man above himself; it merely aims at disposing of his existing powers and tastes, as is most convenient or practicable under circumstances…. It leaves man where it found him—a sinner, not a saint; but it tries to make him look as much like what he is not as ever it can…. Nay, every where, so far as human nature remains hardly or partially Christianized, the heathen law remains in force; as is felt in a measure even in the most religious places and societies…. You do not get rid of vice by human expediencies; you can but use them according to circumstances, and in their place. You must go to a higher source for renovation of heart and will. You do but play a sort of “hunt the slipper” with the sin of our nature till you go to Christianity.126

Epilogue

As a young man, John Henry Newman recognized the importance of belonging to a visible Church which would communicate the fundamental rites and doctrines of Christian faith.127 Through the course of the 1830’s he had developed a paper construct of the Church—The Via Media. This Church did not exist. Rather, his research and personal searching evinced a sobering conclusion: that there really was a Catholic and Apostolic Church, for which he longed.

126 LD, 8:545.
127 Newman’s lifelong belief in doctrine and the necessity of an ecclesial community, embedded within his Anglican sermons, were as seeds that grew and developed in Newman and grounded his later thought as a Roman Catholic. See Tolhurst, The Church, ix-xiii.
In early 1841 Newman’s various writings and activities revealed that he had identified the fundamental faith of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. Yet, he did not feel at home in his church, and the full “idea” of the Church had yet to be realized concretely in his life. Newman entered the fray against Peel and the Knowledge School existentially in-between his life in the Church of England, his ideal of the Apostolic and Catholic Church, and the Church of Rome.

Newman’s personal quest was to discover the true Church for himself and for others. His pilgrimage toward what he believed to be the true Church animated his Catholicus letters. Faith informed, nurtured, and developed in the practice of the Church, and in concert with knowledge of the world, was for him, the only way to live the Christian Difference. The Tamworth Reading Room was an apology for this Christian Difference and Newman’s crie de coeur for himself and for others was to embrace the faith of the Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The Catholicus letters were a defense of and an invitation to this Church set within the cross currents of science, technology, and the politics of the modern world. The idea of the letters was intended to renew a great theological axiom—that the Church, traveling through time and place, nevertheless subsists as the bearer of God's revelation in relation to human thought and culture. Newman knew that this relationship needed to be recast the modern world; for, “the philosophies and religions of men have their life in certain true ideas, though they are not divine.”

128 Like the pagan religious and philosophical ideas which Paul encountered at the Areopagus, the “true ideas” of modern

science and institutions had to be elevated by the grace of the Church. Living in the Church, and not simply accepting the platitudes of a Christian society usurped by the Knowledge School, created the Christian Difference. The letters invited all to this conversation about the Church and the World atop the Areopagus. This conversation—full of humor, satire, questions, and assertions—was a means to conversion. For the letters did not simply posit a stark choice of light and dark, sacred and profane. Rather, they proclaimed an embrace of the emerging knowledge of the world, while returning to the ground of faith:

. . . Instruction in the church, with all its defects and mistakes, came to some end, for it started from some beginning. 129

Although the Catholicus letters and most of Newman’s writings during this period pointed to the Catholic and Apostolic Church, he himself had not fully realized his place in that Church. It was an “idea” idealized until he entered the Roman Catholic Church in 1845. The rebellious Anglican minister and mysterious Catholicus had found a home.

As a Catholic, Newman continued to speak atop the Areopagus, to offer various iterations of the Christian Difference as a Catholic. In 1879, Newman recapitulated perhaps his last great statement of the Christian Difference. He returned to the the “idea” of the Tamworth Reading Room, no longer working behind the veil of Catholicus. Upon receiving his Cardinal’s hat he declared in his famous Bigletto Speech:

In a long course of years I have made many mistakes. I have nothing of that high perfection which belongs to the writings of Saints, viz., that error cannot be found in them… I rejoice to say, to one great mischief I have from the first opposed myself. For thirty, forty, fifty years I have resisted to the best of my

129 LD, 8:557.
powers the spirit of liberalism in religion. Never did Holy Church need champions against it more sorely than now, when, alas! it is an error overspreading, as a snare, the whole earth; and on this great occasion, when it is natural for one who is in my place to look out upon the world, and upon Holy Church as in it, and upon her future, it will not, I hope, be considered out of place, if I renew the protest against it which I have made so often.

Liberalism in religion is the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another, and this is the teaching which is gaining substance and force daily. It is inconsistent with any recognition of any religion, as true. It teaches that all are to be tolerated, for all are matters of opinion. Revealed religion is not a truth, but a sentiment and a taste; not an objective fact, not miraculous; and it is the right of each individual to make it say just what strikes his fancy. Devotion is not necessarily founded on faith. Men may go to Protestant Churches and to Catholic, may get good from both and belong to neither. They may fraternise together in spiritual thoughts and feelings, without having any views at all of doctrine in common, or seeing the need of them. Since, then, religion is so personal a peculiarity and so private a possession, we must of necessity ignore it in the intercourse of man with man. If a man puts on a new religion every morning, what is that to you? It is as impertinent to think about a man's religion as about his sources of income or his management of his family. Religion is in no sense the bond of society.

Such is the state of things in England, and it is well that it should be realised by all of us; but it must not be supposed for a moment that I am afraid of it. I lament it deeply, because I foresee that it may be the ruin of many souls; but I have no fear at all that it really can do aught of serious harm to the Word of God, to Holy Church, to our Almighty King, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Faithful and True, or to His Vicar on earth. Christianity has been too often in what seemed deadly peril, that we should fear for it any new trial now. So far is certain; on the other hand, what is uncertain, and in these great contests commonly is uncertain, and what is commonly a great surprise, when it is witnessed, is the particular mode by which, in the event, Providence rescues and saves His elect inheritance.

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Appendices

Appendix I – Peel’s Address and the Catholicus Letters

Sir Robert Peel’s Address

THE TIMES, TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 1841
SIR ROBERT PEEL’S ADDRESS ON THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIBRARY AND
READING-ROOM AT TAMWORTH.

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(From the Staffordshire Advertiser)

Our readers are aware that the Right Hon. Sir Robert Peel has come forward most liberally to assist in the establishment of a library and reading-room for Tamworth and its neighbourhood (525). We understand that Sir Robert has given the munificent sum of 100l. towards the object, and has kindly accepted the office of president. The institution is founded on a comprehensive basis, without reference to rank or to political and religious distinctions. Sir Francis Lawley, Bart., is the chairman of the managing committee.

The committee of management and the book committee having been appointed, a public meeting was held on Tuesday last, the 19th inst., at the Town-hall, Tamworth, the Right Hon. President having consented to deliver on that day an address explanatory of the objects of the institution. The Town-hall was crowded on the occasion. Sir R. Peel was accompanied by Lady Peel and two sons. Amongst the company present were Sir F. Lawley, Bart., Sir J. C. B. Cave, Bart, Mr. H. J. Pye (High Sheriff of the county) and Mrs. Pye, Mr. S. P. Wolferstan, Mrs. and the Misses Wolferstan, Mr. J. Colville, Mr. E. W. Dickenson, Mr. W. Tongue, Mr. H. Stokes, Mr. W. Parsons, sen., Mr. W. Parsons, jun., Mr. F. Willington, Mr. T. Bramall, Mr. J. Hall, the Rev. Dr. Lally, and the Rev. Messrs. F. Blick, R. C. Savage, R. W. Lloyd, J. Hodge, T. Laugharn, C. Thompson, &c.

At 1 o'clock, the hour fixed for the purpose, Sir R. Peel rose, and addressed the assembly as follows:—It has been usual, on the foundation of an institution similar to that which it is now proposed to establish in this town, to open the proceedings with an inaugural lecture or address, explanatory of the objects of the institution, and of the regulations on which it is proposed to conduct it; and in conformity with that practice, and because I am sincerely desirous of faithfully discharging the functions which belong to the appointment to which I have been recently elected, I have willingly undertaken to perform a duty which is generally assigned to the office of president. I feel that I shall best perform that duty by attempting to explain to you, in very simple and very

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1 The address and letters presented here can be found in Newman’s Letters and Diaries, Volume 8. The page numbers are given parenthetically in the text and accurately reflect the page breaks found in the Letters and Diaries.
perspicuous language, the views of those who have taken a leading part in the establishment of this institution, and the advantages which we think it holds out to those who are willing to become members of it. I feel perfectly convinced that on such subjects as the extension of knowledge and intellectual improvement it would be vain to hope to discover any novelty, either of argument or of expression. I conceive that on such an occasion, and in such a meeting as this, any parade of learning would be an idle affection; and if I do add anything to the simple explanation of the objects of this institution, it will be to recall to your minds truths which are very obvious and very trite, but which do not, generally speaking, exercise a practical influence upon the conduct of men that corresponds with their obviousness and with their importance. The printed paper which I hold in my hand, and which, probably, most of you have seen, explains so fully the basis on which the institution is founded, and the fundamental rules by which it is proposed to govern it, that it is hardly necessary for me to enter into any minute detail; but perhaps a general summary of those regulations would be convenient.

It is proposed to establish a library and a reading-room, for the advantage of this town and neighbourhood—the reading-room to be open for certain hours of every day (with the exception of particular holydays and Sundays), under such regulations as the committee of management shall determine. It is proposed that the library shall be open to all persons, and that they shall be permitted, under certain regulations, to have books from the reading-room at their own houses, for the amusement and instruction of themselves and their families. We propose that the advantages of this institution shall be open to all persons of all descriptions, without reference to political opinions or to religious creed, who shall have attained the age of 14 years. We propose that the institution shall be open to the female as well as the male portion of the population of this town and neighbourhood; because we consider that we should have done great injustice to the well-educated and virtuous women of this town and neighbourhood, if we had supposed that they were less capable than their husbands or their brothers of benefiting by the instruction which we hope to give, or if we had supposed that they were less interested in the cause of rational recreation and intellectual improvement. We propose, also, that they shall have equal power and equal influence in the management of this institution with others, being well assured that the influence which a virtuous woman can hold (if it be necessary to call it into action) will always be exercised in favour of whatever is sound and profitable in respect of knowledge, and whatever is decorous and exemplary in respect to conduct. It would be presumptuous in me to anticipate the decision of the committee of management on many points which are reserved for their consideration; but I do hope it may be possible hereafter, and at no distant period, to extend the advantages of this institution beyond those which are contemplated in the printed paper. I hope that it may be possible to make some arrangement, by which, at some hour of the day, not interfering with the hours set apart for reading, it may be possible for parents to take their children, below the age of 14, that they may benefit by access to the maps or globes, or books of reference, which may be deposited in the library. I hope, also, that we are laying the foundation of a great treasury of knowledge—of stores, more various and more rich than those we at present contemplate. For instance,
I am not too sanguine in hoping to live to see the day when it may be possible in this
district, not deficient itself in mineral productions, and bordering upon a great division of
England that is pregnant with iron and coal (the great incentives to human skill and
industry), to form a collection of minerals most interesting to a mind inquisitive after
knowledge, and facilitating the comprehension of such treatises as may be written, and
such works as may be published, on mineralogy and such kindred subjects. It is
proposed, also, if our funds will permit, to cause the delivery of plain and popular
lectures (comprehensible by all) on such subjects as astronomy, botany, and mineralogy--
upon the recent improvements that may have been made in the arts and manufactures--
upon the application of scientific discoveries, and on the result of the experience of
practical observers as to agriculture and to those various trades and occupations which
chiefly engross the attention of this district of the country. These are not, I trust, over
sanguine expectations. I think the acquisition of knowledge has a great tendency to
multiply itself; and if I can only persuade you to enter upon that delightful path, I am
sanguine enough to believe that there will be open to you gradual charms and temptations
which will induce you to persevere. (Applause.) But our immediate object is with the
present rules and regulations of the society, and with that species of information which
we can at once undertake to provide. (The right hon. baronet here proceeded to refer to
the difficulties to be contended with in constituting such a society, explaining the course
which he had thought proper to adopt in order to establish it, by calling a preliminary
meeting for the purpose of considering, first, the policy of forming such an institution,
and next, the regulations by which it should be conducted.)

Sir Robert observed, that to
that preliminary meeting he had invited all the chief authorities of the town—the
ecclesiastical and the municipal authorities—the clergy, the mayor, the town-clerk, the
aldermen, and all persons holding any public responsible employment. He also invited
those who were chiefly concerned in manufactures, or in occupations which gave the
greatest opportunity of employment to the working classes, without distinction of party,
political opinion, or religious profession. A preliminary meeting must necessarily be
limited as to numbers; and it was impossible to act upon any rule of selection without
excluding many persons who, he was perfectly willing to admit, were quite as much
entitled to be present as those who actually took a part in the preliminary proceedings;
but he hoped he had said (527) enough to satisfy all that the exclusion was not a captious
or an arbitrary one, but was unavoidable; and he therefore trusted no one would refuse his
sanction to the institution on account of their exclusion from taking a part in the
preliminary proceedings. (Applause.) The right hon. baronet proceeded to state, that at
the preliminary meeting a very decided preponderance of opinion was in favour of the
regulations which had been printed and circulated (applause), that in compliance with
those regulations the subscribers entitled to vote had met and had appointed the officers
of the institution, and the committee of management.

To the office of president Sir Robert Peel had been appointed (loud applause); to
the office of treasurer, Mr. Bramall had been appointed; and to the office of honorary
secretary, Mr. Gray. The committee of management consisted of the officers before
mentioned, together with Sir Francis Lawley, Mr. John Hall, Mr. E. Hamel, Mr. W. Brindley, Mr. Francis Hunter, and Mr. S. Watton. It also consisted of three men who were entitled to exercise in the committee equal influence and equal power with those he had mentioned—namely, John Bailey, James Simmons, and Thomas Woodcock. The committee of management had met that morning, and had appointed the book committee. It consisted of the president, of the vicar, and one of the curates of Tamworth, to be named by the vicar (who were to hold their appointments ex officio, on account of their sacred functions), together with Mr. Pye, Mr. Wolferstan, and Mr. Stokes. Now (said the right hon. baronet, I particularly call your attention to the appointment of this book committee, because I have reason to believe that the chief objection (I may almost say the only objection, which has been urged against these regulations is as to that particular rule which refers to the appointment of the book committee; and I should be particularly sorry, in addressing a public meeting of this nature, if I evaded, or on the other hand if I did not distinctly court, a reference to any regulation which has been the subject of doubt or objection. (Applause.) It is felt by some to be objectionable that two of the clergy of this great parish should, by virtue of their offices, be members of the book committee. I confess, for myself, that I do not feel the force of that objection. (‘Hear’ and applause.) I do not think it an unreasonable proposal that when we find public ministers of religion holding prominent and responsible offices, whose education necessarily implies that they are conversant with literary subjects and with literary works—who are endowed by the state for the performance of certain duties (those duties being immediately connected with the moral condition and improvement of the inhabitants of the districts committed to their charge)—I do say, it appears to me reasonable and just, not to invite them, but to require them, in the discharge of an important duty, to give us the advantage of their experience and their assistance. (Applause.) I know, at the same time, that it is perfectly right to be jealous of all power held by such a tenure, and I trust I am prepared to discuss with perfect temper, and in the spirit in which they ought to be discussed, any objections which intelligent and honourable men might make to any regulation of this institution. I say, then, it is right to consider whether the power given is liable to be abused, and what are the checks and restrictions upon this regulation. Now, it is quite true that two ministers of religion, and those of the established church, are, by a fundamental rule of this society, placed upon the book committee; but remember that they accept their appointments, and perform their duties, subject to this preliminary and fundamental rule, that no works of controversial divinity shall enter into the library. (Applause.) They accept their offices and perform their duties subject to this other rule, that, in the formation of the library, and in the selection of the subjects for public lectures, every thing calculated to excite religious or political animosity shall be excluded. (Applause.) They accept their powers subject to this other rule,—that no discussion on matters connected with religion, politics, or local party differences be permitted to take place in the reading room. However highly respectable and highly esteemed individuals may be, and however entitled to confidence, yet I am perfectly willing to admit that it is legitimate and right to be jealous of power. I ask you, however, not to consider detached regulations, but to look to the whole scope and tenor of the rules. The result of the
regulations is, that two-thirds of the book committee are lay-men—that the committee of management is wholly composed of laymen; and if, in the almost inconceivable case, that these powers should be abused, an authority is reserved to the subscribers, by giving notice, of an alteration in the fundamental regulations. Three-fifths of the subscribers have the power to alter these fundamental regulations; and can I have a doubt that if the existing checks were not sufficient, that if the power were abused (as I hold it cannot be), the great body of the subscribers in this town would bring under consideration the propriety of altering the regulations? I do, therefore, hope, that when this subject is calmly considered, those who feel an objection (the force of which I have never seen) will not, on account of one single regulation, view that in a captious spirit, but look at the whole scope and tenor of these regulations, recollecting that we avow that in giving knowledge we wish to take every security against that knowledge being perverted to evil or immoral purposes.

We avow that as our great object; and, that being so, can any Dissenter from the establishment say that this is any interference with freedom of opinion, or that there is a chance, if this be the rule of the society, that his religious scruples can be invaded or be individually interfered with? My object has been to conciliate as much support as possible to an institution which I believe to be, if properly worked out, intimately connected with the rational amusement, recreation, and intellectual improvement of this neighbourhood. I have had objections to contend with of very opposite natures, and coming from very opposite directions. As far as I possibly could, consistently with my own convictions, I wished to pay every deference to those objections; all I ask in return is, that the whole scope of these regulations may be fairly and liberally considered, and that no one will refuse his sanction to this institution because there may be some one regulation which he thinks might possibly be omitted. (Applause.) The library that we shall form will, I trust, contain works not merely connected with abstract science, but treatises coming home to the daily business and daily interests of those who are concerned in the pursuits of active industry. Now, let me take two departments of knowledge, on which I think most useful information might be deposited in a library of this kind. Let me first speak of works connected with agricultural improvement, and let me make an earnest appeal to that most valuable and respectable class of society. I mean the farmers of this country, to whom we are so much indebted for their general deportment, and whose respectability and success are intimately connected with the best interests of this country. (Applause.) I am perfectly prepared to hear from them that they receive with great distrust the advice of persons who are not practically connected with farming. No one is more deeply satisfied than I am that it is much easier to talk of farming than to farm. I am not surprised that they (the farmers) distrust the theories of speculative farmers. I am not surprised that they listen with distrust to the result of experiments much more extensive than their capital enables them to engage in. I consider those feelings to be perfectly rational and perfectly natural; but, on the other hand, if the farmers of this neighbourhood (because they are practical farmers) think that their experience is all-sufficient—if they think that they have nothing to learn—if they think they can safely neglect the opportunities of acquiring knowledge connected with
their proper business, let me tell them that they labour under a greater and more dangerous delusion than the gentlemen who undertake to instruct them. (Applause.) If you are satisfied with the limited experience that your own farm affords—if you really believe that the farming in your particular parish admits of no improvement let me remind you, that these were the impressions entertained 50 years since, and 100 years since, by practical farmers, who then thought, I have no doubt, that there was nothing to be learned, and that there could be no advantage in attempting to benefit by the experience and experiments of others. Now, with respect to works on agriculture, which might be included in the library of this institution, let me ask any reasonable man, whatever might be his practical experience, whether he does not think it highly probable that advantages might be derived by his having access, on the payment of 1s. quarterly, to such information as may be deposited in this library? (The right hon. baronet referred to the information contained in treatises on agriculture, mentioning Remarks on Thorough Draining and Deep Ploughing, by Mr. James Smith.) Was it possible there could be any harm—not in a farmer being forced to adopt this system of farming—but in hearing what was the result of experiments? This little book was given to him (Sir R. Peel) by that eminent man, Dr. Buckland, the great geologist, on his return from Scotland, after having had an opportunity of witnessing the improvements on the farm of Mr. Smith. The right hon. baronet, in alluding to a treatise he had lately received. A Report on the Diseases to which the Wheat Plant is Liable, observed, that if the farmer told him that he had information on the subject already, he would inform him that Professor Henslow, the Professor of Botany at Cambridge, had stated, in reference to treatises written for a prize offered by the English Agricultural Society for the best essay on this subject, that it was evident to him (Professor Henslow) that the authors were ignorant of many facts well known to scientific men for many years, respecting the nature of those diseases, and the causes producing them; and that in point of fact no one treatise sent was deemed deserving of the prize.

It appeared to him (Sir R. Peel) that the farmer, whatever importance he might attach to practical experience, could not deny that he might derive great benefit from reading treatises on this and various other subjects—such as the proper time for laying manure on the ground, the chymical properties of that manure, and the liability of the volatile parts flying off into the atmosphere. It has also been suggested that popular lectures might be given on a subject of the greatest importance—upon the simplest method of keeping a clear account of profit and loss. (Applause.) Now, he was informed that nothing could be more imperfect than the accounts which were kept by a farmer of the daily outgoings of his farm and the profit returned from actual outlay. Nor could he doubt that if a farmer were instructed as to the most simple method of keeping such an account, and was supplied with a book containing the proper form, the greatest advantages might be derived from his having the opportunity of judging of such improvements as the one he (Sir R. Peel) had been referring to. The right hon. baronet next referred to the advantages which such a society might afford by containing within its library the most recent information upon the subject of colonization, as to the cost of emigration, the amount of capital required, and the comparative advantages held out in
different colonies. But (said Sir R. Peel) these are merely examples of the information which might be made easily accessible. Every newspaper teems with notices of publications, written upon popular principles, detailing all the recent discoveries in science and their connexion with improvements in arts and manufactures. Let me earnestly entreat you not to neglect the opportunity which we are now willing to afford you. It will not be our fault if the ample page of knowledge, rich with the spoils of time, is not unrolled to you. You will not be able to say that “chill penury” has “frozen the genial current” of your aspirations for knowledge and distinction. We tell you that here is access for you to that information which may at the same time facilitate your advance in your worldly occupations and lay the foundation for mental improvement. (Applause.)

Do not be deceived by the sneers that you hear against knowledge, which are uttered by men who want to depress you, and keep you depressed, to the level of their own contented ignorance. ( Renewed plaudits.) Do not believe that you have not time (that is what you will hear) for rational recreation. (Applause.) Now, believe me, that it is the idle man who wants time for everything. (Laughter and applause.) The industrious man, the man who is persevering in his pursuits, is the man who knows the value of the economy of time, and can find leisure for rational recreation as well as for his attention to his business. ( Continued applause.) Do not believe that the acquisition of knowledge, of such knowledge as we shall offer you, is inconsistent with the success of your worldly pursuits. Depend upon it you cannot exercise and sharpen your intellectual faculties in one branch of knowledge without becoming better men of business in consequence. (Applause.) Depend also upon this, that there is a spirit of inquiry afloat, and that there is a degree of competition requiring the utmost mental activity and exertion. Every steamboat, every railroad, all the facilities of intercourse, are operating as premiums upon skill and intelligence. (Applause.) They are shortening the distance between the producer and the consumer; it is not safe for you to remain behindhand; for, depend upon it, if you are inferior in point of skill, in point of intelligence, in point of general knowledge, to the manufacturers and producers of other districts, those increased facilities of intercourse to which I have been referring will transfer the demand from you to others; and you will be labouring under a fatal delusion if you place confidence in those sneers to which I have alluded, and if you believe that increased intelligence is incompatible with worldly success. On the contrary, I believe that society is now in the position that increased intelligence and increased knowledge are absolutely essential to success in your worldly pursuits. (Applause.) Again, do not believe that science is not a field which is perfectly open to you, whatever may be your occupations and conditions in life. I ask you to consider the names of those men who, at the present moment, or within your own memory, have acquired for themselves immortal fame by their eminence in the arts and sciences. I ask you to call to mind the names of Mr. Rennie, the great engineer, of Sir Humphry Davy, of Professor Faraday, of Sir Francis Chantry, of Mr. Wheatstone, the inventor of the electrical telegraphs, and of a hundred others I might name—to consider their first position in life, the difficulties which they had to struggle with and to search out in their early origin—not for the purpose of despising it, but of admiring the more the interval between their origin and the eminence to which they subsequently attained.

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(Applause.) I have made inquiry upon the subject, and I (530) cannot help reading to you one or two of the answers I have received on the subject of eminent men of the present day who acquired knowledge, and by the simple determination to overcome every difficulty that poverty or a low condition might oppose, and to raise themselves from it. (Applause.) (The right hon. baronet here read a letter, dated the 5th of January, stating that Mr. Grainger, the great architect, who had rebuilt the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, within a few years, in a style infinitely superior to Regent-street, and whom he (the writer) met at the Duke of Northumberland's a short time since, began his career as a poor mason's boy carrying a hod of mortar.)

In the interval between 1834 and 1838 he converted Newcastle from a black and thick cluster of brick to a condition exceeding anything he (the writer) had seen, except in the best parts of Edinburgh. In a postscript to the letter it was also stated, that the late Mr. Harvey, who died at an early age, a Professor at Woolwich, published an excellent work on meteorology: he worked for many years as a carpenter in the dockyard at Plymouth, afterwards became a teacher of mathematics, and was advanced to the professorship above-mentioned. The right hon. baronet observed, that he had in his possession a letter from the writer of this treatise on meteorology to one of the most eminent men of the present day. That letter was indeed to his (Sir R. Peel's) purpose, and he would not withhold from the meeting its contents. The author of it was cold in the grave, but it was a voice from the grave, and entitled on that account to the highest authority. Sir Robert Peel here read the letter, dated the 31st of March, 1834, of which the following is the substance:—“In forwarding these papers for acceptance to men bred and educated at Oxford, he (Mr. Harvey) confessed he felt much diffidence and fear; and nothing but the great and unexampled personal kindness he had experienced during the visits of the British Association, and the kind indulgence shown towards him, could have got the better of those feelings. He would, therefore, be pleased to regard the work as the production of one blessed at that time with nothing like unbroken leisure, and all whose early days were lost amidst vulgar associates in a carpenter's workshop, and whose education never reached beyond reading and writing. He wrote this in all the fullness of those feelings which beat high, and which looked back with the most poignant regret on the years that were spent in heartless labour, and without a friend to open to him a path which might have led to academical distinction, and by consequence to some higher and brighter prospects in the world.” Why (said the hon. baronet), if we should have some such kindred spirit in this town that should be drawn from these heartless associates, and, instead of spending his time among vulgar amusements, should have the means of procuring access to those treatises which this man wanted, and the absence of which he lamented, shall we not be tenfold repaid by the reflection that we have given such a man an opportunity of rescuing himself from such associations, and of enabling him to walk in early life in a path that leads to virtuous fame. (Applause.) But if you still want any additional proof that the heights of science are not closed to the humblest amongst you, look around, I say, at this neighbourhood. If you go to Lichfield, you see the statue of Dr. Johnson. If you go to Handsworth, you see the statue of Mr. Watt. Look in this very town, and who is the man that is now engaged in extensive works for the purpose of
Mr. Stephenson, I am assured, worked for three years as a boy in the meanest capacity in a colliery at Newcastle. He saved 1001. by mending the watches of his fellow-workmen for half-a-crown a piece; and he devoted that 1001. to provision for his indigent parents, and set out with a light heart and conscience for the purpose of accumulating more. The result has been that he presents a daily example of encouragement to our eyes, and brought within our immediate contemplation in this town. He presents another example, where, from the lowest origin, merit has been able to raise itself to high eminence and great respect. (Applause.) My appeal in my recent observations has been addressed chiefly to you who, compose the working classes, or to men engaged in the pursuits of active industry, to induce you to enroll yourselves as members of this institution. I now make an appeal to others in more prosperous circumstances, who probably have had an education which enables them fully to appreciate the advantages of knowledge, and who are enabled, if they will exercise their power out of their affluent means, to spare what may be sufficient to insure the perfect success of this institution. I hope they will not be deterred from it by any belief that they are risking injurious consequences, either to the moral or religious character of the people, by giving them the opportunity of acquiring such knowledge, and such only, as that which we profess to give. For myself, I cannot believe that we shall be interfering with any legitimate object of human policy; or that we shall be counteracting any of the purposes of that Almighty Being, who has intrusted us with faculties which (531) distinguish us from the beasts that perish, and who will demand from us a severe account of the manner in which those faculties have been employed.

I cannot think that we shall dissatisfy men with their lot, by providing to them that avenues of distinction are open to merit alone (whatever be the lot and condition of men) can secure access and gain the prize. I cannot help thinking that by bringing together, in an institution of this kind, intelligent men of all classes and all conditions in life, by uniting together, as we have united, in the committee of this institution the gentleman of ancient family and great landed possessions with the skilful mechanic and artificer of good character.—I cannot help thinking that we are all establishing a bond of social connexion that will derive more than common strength from the pure motives that influence us, and from the cause in which we are engaged. (Applause.) I cannot help believing that we are harmonizing the gradations of society, and binding men together by a new bond, which, as I said before, will have more than ordinary strength on account of the object which unites us. (Loud applause.) Nay, I am sanguine enough to believe that this very institution will afford the opportunity of honourable and appropriate reward to humble merit. In a society limited like this, small in point of numbers, it is very difficult to find any distinctions of an honourable nature; but I must say, that I was forcibly struck on Saturday last by a distinction which was paid, and which I cannot help thinking must have a powerful effect in encouraging men to honourable conduct, and also to intellectual improvement. The subscribers to this institution on Saturday last were called upon to give their votes in favour of those who should be placed upon the committee of management. There was one individual who united, without exception, every vote which
was given. There being 57 votes to give, those votes were given (in a single case only) unanimously in favour of one individual. I did think it was a remarkable and most honourable and encouraging compliment, on chancing to cast my eyes on the voting papers, to find that every man (whatever was his condition) had delivered in a paper which contained the name of “James Simmons” (applause): and I think you will agree with me, that that man must be dead to every impulse of honourable fame who did not envy the feelings of James Simmons, when, by the unanimous voice of every one entitled to vote, he was called upon to take his place on the committee of management of this institution. (Applause.) I cannot believe that there is any risk to religious impressions and religious belief by opening the avenues to literary acquirements. I agree with the Bishop of London in the opinions which he has delivered upon that subject in the sermon which he preached on the opening of King’s College. He expressed sentiments, in language worthy of the sentiments which it conveyed, and in which I for one cordially concur. (The right hon. baronet here read an extract from the sermon alluded to, in which the Bishop of London observed, that there was nothing in the revealed will of God which limited and restrained the inquiries and conclusions of man in any branch of knowledge properly so called, or which interfered with the freest exercise of his faculties; but that the very constitution of man, which led him to indefinite inquiry, and which was adapted to it, afforded a sufficient reason for believing that its Divine Author intended it for that purpose. The principle of curiosity was almost the first which manifested itself in the human mind. The sagacity of the elephant, though it might differ in different individuals of the same species, and although by some it might be differently exerted, was at all times a definite quality; whereas the faculties of man were sharpened and strengthened by exercise, the capacities of his mind were enlarged, and past experience was made the ground of future improvement. Under proper limitations, they might join in the praises lavished upon philosophy and science, and go forth with their votaries in the various paths of research by which the mind of man was enlightened and instructed. Such studies removed the veil which to the ignorant or careless observer obscured the traces of God’s glory in the works of his hands.) That (said the (532) hon. baronet) I firmly believe. I never can think it possible that a mind can be so constituted that, after being familiarized with the great truth of observing in every object of contemplation that nature presents the manifest proofs of a Divine intelligence—if you range even from the organization of the meanest weed you trample upon, or of the insect that lives but for an hour, up to the magnificent structure of the heavens, and the still more wonderful phenomena of the soul, and reason, and conscience of man—I cannot believe that any man accustomed to such contemplations can retire from them with any other feelings than those of enlarged conceptions of the Divine power, and greater reverence for the name of the Almighty Creator of the Universe.

We believe, on the contrary, that the man accustomed to such contemplations will feel the moral dignity of his own nature exalted; and, struck with awe by the manifold proofs of infinite power and infinite wisdom, will yield more ready and hearty assent —yes, the assent of the heart, and not only of the understanding—to the pious exclamation, “Oh, Lord, how glorious are Thy works; Thy thoughts are very deep. An unwise
man doth not consider, and a fool doth not understand.” (Applause.) It is the unwise man, and the fool, that form unworthy conceptions of the Divine nature and the Divine power. Far different were the impressions of those mighty spirits who have the most considered this, and have made the greatest (however imperfect) advances towards the understanding of it. These are the thoughts with which Sir Isaac Newton concludes his profound speculations into the material causes which produce and into the laws which regulate the motions of the heavens; he says, “This beautiful system of sun, planets, and comets, can have its origin in no other way than by the purpose and command of an intelligent and powerful Being. He governs all things not as the sovereign of this world, but as the Lord of the Universe. He is not only God but Lord or Governor. We know him only by his properties and attributes—by the wise and admirable structure of things around us. We admire Him on account of his perfections—we venerate and worship Him on account of His government.” These are the thoughts from which Sir Humphry Davy, in his last illness, derived according to his own expression, pleasure and consolation, when every other source of pleasure and consolation had failed him. He is speaking of the moral and intellectual qualities of the true scientific inquirer into natural philosophy. He says—”His mind should always be awake to devotional feeling; and in contemplating the variety and beauty of the external world, and developing its scientific wonder, he will always refer to that Infinite Wisdom through whose beneficence he is permitted to enjoy knowledge. In becoming wiser he will become better; he will rise at once in the scale of intellectual and moral existence; his increased sagacity will be subservient to a more exalted faith; and, in proportion as the veil becomes thinner through which he sees the causes of things, he will admire more the brightness of the Divine light by which they are rendered perceptible.” That (said the right hon. baronet) is my belief. My belief and hope are that an increased sagacity will administer to an exalted fame—that it will make men not merely believe in the cold doctrines of natural religion, but that it will so prepare and temper the spirit and understanding, that they will be better qualified to comprehend the great scheme of human redemption. (Loud applause.)

My firm belief is, that that superior sagacity which is most conversant with the course and constitution of nature, which sees the wonderful preparations that are made for the subsistence and enjoyment of the meanest animal, will be the first to believe that that Almighty Being who has made such preparation for mere physical enjoyments has not left in neglect and indifference the immortal soul of man. Knowing the difficulties that attend every object which we can see, observing the gradual system of progression and change, and that one course of existence is made preparatory for another, I am sanguine enough to believe that that superior sagacity will be the first to turn a deaf ear to objections and presumptions against revealed religion, will be the first to acknowledge the complete harmony of the Christian dispensation with all that reason, assisted by revelation, tells us of the course and constitution of nature. These are serious and solemn subjects, but I hope not unfitted for an occasion when we contemplate an institution of this nature. (Applause.) They contain at least an exposition of my views and hopes, with respect to the progress of knowledge, which alone could induce me to take a part in an establishment of this kind. I will now release you. I shall shortly leave you, for the
purpose of engaging in the scenes of warfare on the great arena of political contention; but if I can believe that before my departure I have laid the foundation stone of an edifice in which men of all political opinions and of all religious feelings may unite in the furtherance of knowledge without the asperities of party feeling—if I can entertain the hope that there will be the means afforded of useful occupation and rational recreation—that men will prefer the pleasures of knowledge above the indulgence of sensual appetite that there is a prospect of contributing to the intellectual and moral improvement of this town and neighbourhood, then I can safely say that I shall be repaid, with tenfold interest, for any time I have spent or any attention I have given to the formation of this institution. (The right hon. baronet resumed his seat amid loud and general plaudits.)

Sir F. LAWLEY, Bart., then rose and said, that high and elevated as must have been their gratification in listening to the speech which they had just heard, he was quite sure they could not depart to their homes with any degree of satisfaction if they had not an opportunity of expressing to Sir R. Peel their heartfelt acknowledgments for that address—an address distinguished by so much kindness, good feeling, and friendship, but above all, by that deeply religious feeling which he had instilled into all their hearts and minds upon the present interesting occasion. (Applause.) He now proposed to that meeting that they should all rise from their seats in token of thanks to Sir R. Peel. The company simultaneously rose, and expressed their approbation amid loud and general applause.

Sir R. PEEL said he was deeply grateful for the very kind manner in which they had received his humble exertions. Every effort of his life should be directed towards the improvement, in every sense, of that town and neighbourhood, with the welfare of which his own interests were immediately connected, and which, from every circumstance of neighbourhood, residence, of early association, and intimacy of kind friends, commanded his warmest and most affectionate attachment.

The meeting then broke up.
Newman’s Letters of Catholicus

THE TIMES, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1841
SIR ROBERT PEEL’S LATE ADDRESS AT TAMWORTH.

LETTER I.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir

Sir Robert Peel’s (534) position in the country and his high character render it impossible that his words and deeds should be other than public property (534). This alone would furnish an apology for my calling the attention of your readers to the startling language, which many of them doubtless have already observed, in the Address which this most excellent and distinguished man has lately delivered, upon the establishment of a Library and Reading-room at Tamworth: but he has superseded the need of apology altogether, by proceeding to present it to the public in the form of a pamphlet. His speech, then, becomes important, both from the name and the express act of its author. At the same time I must allow that he has not published it in the fulness in which it was spoken. Still it seems to me right and fair, or rather imperative, to animadvert upon it as it has appeared in your columns, since in that shape it will have the widest circulation. A public man must not claim to harangue the whole world in newspapers, and then to offer his second thoughts to such as choose to buy them at a bookseller’s.

I shall surprise no one who has carefully read Sir Robert’s Address, and perhaps all who have not, by stating my conviction, that, did a person take it up without looking at the title-page, he would to a certainty set it down to be a production of the years 1827 and 1828, the scene Gower-street, the speaker Mr. Brougham or Dr. Lushington, and the occasion, the laying the first stone or the inauguration of the then called London University. I profess myself quite unable to draw any satisfactory line of difference between the Gower-street and the Tamworth exhibition, except, of course, that Sir Robert’s personal religious feeling breaks out in his Address across his assumed philosophy. I say assumed; I might say affected—for I think too well of him to believe it genuine.

On the occasion in question Sir Robert gave expression to a theory of morals and religion, which of course, in a popular speech, was not put out in a very dogmatic form, but which, when analyzed and fitted together, reads some-what as follows:—Human nature, he seems to say, if left to itself, becomes sensual and degraded. Uneducated men live in the indulgence of their passions, or, if they are merely taught to read, they dissipate and debase their minds by trifling on vicious publications. Education is the cultivation of the intellect and heart, and useful knowledge is the great instrument of education. It is the parent of virtue, the nurse of religion; it exalts man to his highest perfection, and is the sufficient scope of his most earnest exertions.

Physical and moral science rouses, transports, exalts, enlarges, tranquillizes, and satisfies the mind. Its attractiveness obtains a hold over us; the excitement attending it
supersedes grosser excitements; it makes us know our duty, and thereby enables us to do it; by taking the mind off itself, it destroys anxiety; and by providing objects of admiration, it soothes and subdues us.

And, in addition, it is a kind of neutral ground, on which men of every shade of politics and religion may meet together, disabuse each other of their prejudices, form intimacies, and practise co-operation. This, it is almost needless to say, is the very theory, expressed temperately, in which Mr. Brougham once expatiated in the Glasgow and London Universities. Sir R. Peel, indeed, has spoken with somewhat of his characteristic moderation; but for his closeness in sentiment to the Brougham of other days, a few parallels from their respective discourses will be a sufficient voucher.

For instance, Mr. Brougham, in his Discourse upon Science, and his Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties, wrote about the “pure delight” of physical knowledge, of its “pure gratification,” of its tendency “to purify and elevate man’s nature,” of its “elevating and refining it,” of its “giving a dignity and importance to the enjoyment of life.” Sir Robert, pursuing the idea, shows us its importance even in death, observing, that physical knowledge supplies the thoughts from which “a great experimentalist professed in his last illness to derive some pleasure and some consolation, when most other sources of consolation and pleasure were closed to him.”

Mr. Brougham talked much and eloquently of “the sweetness of knowledge” and “the charms of philosophy,” of students “smitten with the love of knowledge,” of “wooing truth with the unwearying ardour of a lover,” of “keen and over-powering emotion,” of “exhaci,” of “the absorbing passion of knowledge,” of “the strength of the passion, and the exquisite pleasure of its gratification.” And Sir Robert, in less glowing language, but even in a more tender strain than Mr. Brougham, exclaims, “If I can only persuade you to enter upon that delightful path, I am sanguine enough to believe that there will be open to you gradual charms and temptations which will induce you to persevere.”

Mr. Brougham naturally went on to enlarge upon “bold and successful adventures in the pursuit,” such, perhaps, as in the story of “Paris and Helen,” or “Hero and Leander;” of “daring ambition in its course to greatness,” of “enterprising spirits,” and their “brilliant feats,” “adventures of the world of intellect,” and of “the illustrious vanquishers of fortune.” And Sir Robert, not to be outdone, echoes back “aspirations for knowledge and distinction,” “simple determination of overcoming difficulties,” “premiums on skill and intelligence,” “mental activity,” “steamboats and railroads,” “producer and consumer,” “spirit of inquiry afloat;” and he breaks out into almost conventicle eloquence—“Every newspaper teems with notices of publications written upon popular principles, detailing all the recent discoveries of science, and their connexion with improvements in arts and manufactures. Let me earnestly entreat you not to neglect the opportunity which we are now willing to afford you! It will not be our fault if the ample page of knowledge, rich with the spoils of time, is not unrolled to you! We tell you,” &c. &c.

Mr. Brougham pronounces that a man by “learning truths wholly new to him,” and by “satisfying himself of the grounds on which known truths rest,” “will enjoy a
proud consciousness of having, by his own exertions, become a wiser, and therefore a
more exalted, creature.” Sir Robert runs abreast of this great sentiment. He tells us, in
words which he adopts as his own, that a man “in becoming wiser will become better:”
he will “rise at once in the scale of intellectual and moral existence, and by being
accustomed to such contemplations, he will feel the moral dignity of his nature exalted.”

Mr. Brougham, on his Inauguration at Glasgow, spoke to the ingenuous youth
assembled on the occasion, of “the benefactors of man kind, when they rest from their
pious labours, looking down upon the blessings with which their toils and sufferings have
clothed the scene of their former existence;” and in his Discourse upon Science he
declared it to be “no mean reward of our labour to become acquainted with the
prodigious genius of those who have almost exalted the nature of man above his destined
sphere;” and who “hold a station apart, rising over all the great teachers of mankind, and
spoken of reverently,” as if Newton and La Place were not the names of mortal men. Sir
Robert cannot of course equal this sublime flight: but he succeeds in calling Newton and
others “those mighty spirits which have made the greatest (though imperfect) advances
towards the understanding” of “the divine nature and power.”

Mr. Brougham talked at Glasgow about putting to flight the “evil spirits of
tyanny and persecution which haunted the long night now gone down the sky,” and
about men “no longer suffering themselves to be led blindfold in ignorance;” and in his
Pursuit of Knowledge he speaks of Pascal having, “under the influence of certain
religious views, during a period of depression, conceived” scientific pursuits “to be little
better than abuse of his time and faculties.” Sir Robert, fainter in tone, but true to the
key, warns his hearers—“Do not be deceived by the sneers that you hear against
knowledge, which are uttered by men who want to depress you, and keep you depressed
to the level of their own contented ignorance.”

Mr. Brougham laid down at Glasgow the infidel principle, or, as he styles it, “the
great truth,” which “has gone forth to all the ends of the earth, that man shall no more
render account to man for his belief, over which he has himself no control.” And Dr.
Lushington applied it to Gower-street to the case of the college then and there rising, by
asking, “Will any one argue for establishing a monopoly to be enjoyed by the few who
are of one denomination of the Christian church only?” And he went on to speak of the
association and union of all without exclusion or restriction, of “friendships cementing
the bond of charity, and softening the asperities which (537) ignorance and separation
have fostered.” Long may it be before Sir Robert Peel professes the great principle itself!
even though, as the following passages show, he is inconsistent enough to think highly of
its application in the culture of the mind. For instance, he speaks of “this preliminary and
fundamental rule, that no work of controversial divinity shall enter into the
library (applause),”—of “the institution being open to all persons of all descriptions, without
reference to political opinions or religious creed,”—and of “an edifice in which men of
all political opinions and all religious feelings may unite in the furtherance of knowledge,
without the asperities of party feeling.” Now, that British society should consist of
persons of different religions, is this a positive standing evil, to be endured at best as
unavoidable, or a topic of exultation? Of exultation answers, Sir Robert; the greater
differences the better, the more the merrier. So we interpret his tone.

It is reserved for few to witness the triumph of their own opinions; much less to
witness it in the instance of their own direct and personal opponents. Whether the Lord
Brougham of this day feels all that satisfaction and inward peace which he attributes to
success of whatever kind in intellectual efforts, it is not for me to decide; but that he has
achieved, to speak in his own style, a mighty victory, and is leading in chains behind his
chariot-wheels a great captive, is a fact beyond question. Such is the reward in 1841 for
unpopularity in 1827.

What, however, is a boast to Lord Brougham, is in the same proportion a slur
upon the fair fame of Sir Robert Peel, at least in the judgment of those who have hitherto
been his friends. Were there no other reason against the doctrines propounded in the
Address which has been the subject of these remarks (but I hope to be allowed an
opportunity of assigning others), its parentage would be a grave primæ facie difficulty in
receiving it. It is, indeed, most melancholy to see so sober and experienced a thinker
practising the antics of one of the wildest performers of this wild age; and taking off the
tone, manner, and gesture of the versatile ex-Chancellor, with a versatility almost equal to
his own. Yet let him be assured that the task of rivalling him is hopeless as well as
unprofitable. No one can equal the great sophist. Lord Brougham is inimitable in his
own line.

THE TIMES, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1841
SIR R. PEEL’S ADDRESS AT TAMWORTH.
LETTER II.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir, —

A distinguished Conservative statesman (538)tells us from the Town-hall of
Tamworth, that “in becoming wiser a man will become better;” meaning by wiser, more
conversant with the facts and theories of physical science; and that such a man will “rise
at once into the scale of intellectual and moral existence.” “That,” he adds, “is my
belief.” He avows also, that the fortunate individual whom he is describing, by being
“accustomed to such contemplations, will feel the moral dignity of his nature exalted;”
which I suppose is intended to imply that it is exalted, as well as is felt to be. He speaks
also of physical knowledge as “being the means of useful occupation and rational
recreation;” of “the pleasures of knowledge” superseding “the indulgence of sensual
appetite,” and of its “contributing to the intellectual and moral improvement of the
community.”

Accordingly, he very consistently wishes it to be set before “the female as well as
the male portion of the population;” otherwise, as he truly observes, “great injustice
would be done to the well-educated and virtuous women” of the place. They, then, are to
“have equal power and equal influence with others.” It will be difficult to exhaust the reflections which rise in the mind on reading avowals of this nature.

The first question which obviously suggests itself, is how these wonderful moral effects are to be wrought under the instrumentality of the physical sciences. Can the process be analysed and drawn out, or does it act like a dose or a charm which comes into general use empirically? Does Sir Robert Peel mean to say, that whatever be the occult reasons for the result, so it is—you have but to drench the popular mind with physics, and moral and religious advancement follows on the whole, in spite of individual failures? Yet when has the experiment been tried on so large a scale as to justify such anticipations? Or rather, does he mean, that from the nature of the case, he who is imbued with science and literature, unless adverse influences interfere, cannot but be a better man? It is natural and becoming to seek for some clear idea of the meaning of so dark an oracle. To know is one thing, to do is another; the two things are altogether distinct. A man knows he should get up in the morning—he lies a-bed; he knows he should not lose his temper, yet he cannot keep it. A labouring man knows he should not go to the ale-house, and his wife knows she should not filch when she goes out charing; but, nevertheless, in these cases the consciousness of a duty is not all one with the performance of it. There are, then, large families of instances, to say the least, in which men may become wiser, without becoming better; what, then, is the meaning of this great maxim in the mouth of its promulgators?

Mr. Bentham would answer, that the knowledge which involves virtue is the knowledge how to take care of number one—a clear appreciation of what is pleasurable, what painful, and what promotes the one and averts the other. An uneducated man is ever mistaking his own interest, and standing in the way of his own enjoyments. Useful knowledge is that which tends to make us more useful to ourselves—a most definite and intelligible account of the matter, and needing no explanation. But it would be a great injustice, both to Lord Brougham and to Sir Robert, to suppose, when they talk of knowledge being virtue, that they are Benthamising. Bentham had not a spark of poetry in him; on the contrary, there is much of high aspiration, generous sentiment, and impassioned feeling, in the tone of Lord Brougham and Sir Robert. They speak of knowledge as something “pulchrum,” fair and glorious, exalted above the range of ordinary humanity, and so little connected with the personal interest of its votaries, that, though Sir Robert does obiter talk of improved modes of draining and the chymical properties of manure, yet he must not be supposed to come short of the lofty enthusiasm of Lord Brougham, who expressly panegyrises certain ancient philosophers who gave up riches, retired into solitude, or embraced a life of travel, smit with a sacred curiosity about physical or mathematical truth.

Here Mr. Bentham, did it fall to him to offer a criticism, doubtless would take leave to inquire whether such fine language was any better than a set of words representing nothing—flowers of rhetoric, which bloom, smell sweet, and die. But it is impossible to suspect so grave and practical a man as Sir Robert Peel of using words literally without any meaning at all; and though I think at best they have not a very profound meaning, yet, such as it is, we ought to attempt to draw it out.

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Now, without being exact in using theological language, we may surely take it for granted, from the experience of facts, that the human mind is at best in a very unformed or disordered state; passions and conscience, likings and reason, being in conflict, might against right, and the prospect of getting worse. Under these circumstances, what is it that the school of philosophy in which Sir Robert has enrolled himself proposes to accomplish? Not a victory of the mind over itself—not the supremacy of the law—not the education of the rebels—not the unity of our complex nature—not an harmonizing of the chaos—but the mere lulling of the passions by turning the course of thought; not a change of character, but a removal of temptation. This should be carefully observed. When a husband is gloomy, or an old woman peevish and fretful, persons about them do all they can to keep dangerous topics and causes of offence out of the way, and think themselves lucky if, by such careful management, they get through the day without an outbreak. When a child cries, the nurserymaid dances it about, or points out the pretty black horses out of window, or shows how ashamed poll parrot or poor puss is of its tantrums. Such is the sort of prescription which Sir Robert Peel offers to the good people of Tamworth. He makes no pretence of subduing the giant nature in which we were born, of smiting the loins of the domestic enemies of our peace, of overthrowing passion and fortifying reason; he does but offer to bribe the foe with gifts which will avail for the purpose just so long as they will avail and no longer. This was mainly the philosophy of the great Tully, except when he spoke as a stoic. Cicero handed the recipe to Brougham, and Brougham has passed it on (540) to Peel. If we examine the old Roman’s meaning in “O philosophia, vitae dux,” it was neither more nor less than this—that while we were thinking of philosophy, we were not thinking of anything else; we did not feel grief, or anxiety, or passion, or ambition, or hatred; and the only point was to keep thinking of it. How to keep thinking of it was extra artem. If a man was in grief, he was to be amused; if disappointed, to be excited; if in a rage, to be soothed; if in love, to be roused to the pursuit of glory. No inward change was contemplated, but a change of external objects; as if we were all White Ladies or Undines, our moral life being one of impulse and emotion, not subjected to laws, not consisting in habits, not capable of growth. When Cicero was outwitted by Caesar, he solaced himself with Plato; when he lost his daughter, he wrote a treatise on consolation. Such, too, was the philosophy of that Lydian city, mentioned by the historian, who in a famine played at dice to stay their stomachs. And such is the rule of life advocated by Lord Brougham; and though, of course, he protests that knowledge “must invigorate the mind as well as entertain it, and refine and elevate the character, while it gives listlessness and weariness their most agreeable excitement and relaxation,” yet his notions of vigour and elevation, when analyzed, will be found to resolve themselves into a mere preternatural excitement under the influence of some stimulating object, or the peace which is attained by there being nothing to quarrel with. He speaks of philosophers leaving the care of their estates, or declining public honours, from the greater desirableness of knowledge, envies the shelter enjoyed in the University of Glasgow from the noise and bustle of the world, and, apropos of Pascal and Cowper, “so mighty,” says he, “is the power of intellectual
occupation, to make the heart forget, for the time, its most prevailing griefs, and to change its deepest gloom to sunshine.”

Whether Sir Robert Peel meant all this, which others have meant before him, it is impossible to say; but I will be bound, if he did not mean this, he meant nothing else, and his words will certainly insinuate this meaning, wherever a reader is not content to go without any at all. They will countenance, with his high authority, what in one form or other is a chief error of the day, in very distinct schools of opinion—that our true excellence comes not from within, but from without; not wrought out through personal struggles and sufferings, but following upon a passive exposure to influences over which we have no control. They will countenance the theory that diversion is the instrument of improvement, and excitement the condition of right action; and whereas diversions cease to be diversions if they are constant, and excitement by their very nature have a crisis and run through a (541) course, they will tend to make novelty ever in request, and will set the great teachers of morals upon the incessant search after stimulants and sedatives, by which unruly nature may, pro re natâ, be kept in order. Hence, be it observed, Lord Brougham, in the last quoted sentence, tells us with much accuracy of statement, that “intellectual occupation made the heart” of Pascal or Cowper “for the time forget its griefs.” He frankly offers us a philosophy of expedients: he shows us how to live by medicine. Digestive pills half an hour before dinner, and a posset at bed-time at the best; and at the last, dram-drinking and opium—the very remedy against broken fortunes or remorse of conscience which is in request among the many in gin palaces not intellectual.

And if these remedies be but of temporary effect at the utmost, more commonly they will have none effect at all. Strong liquors do for a time succeed in their object; but who was ever consoled in real trouble, by the small beer of literature or science? “Sir,” said Rasselas, to the philosopher who had lost his daughter, “mortality is an event by which a wise man can never be surprised.” “Young man,” answered the mourner, “you speak like one that hath never felt the pangs of separation. What comfort can truth or reason afford me? Of what effect are they now but to tell me that my daughter will not be restored?” Or who was ever made more humble or more benevolent by being told, as the same practical moralist words it, “to concur with the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity, and co-operate with the general dispensation and tendency of the present system of things?” Or who was made to do any secret sort of self-denial, or was steeled against pain or peril, by all the lore of the infidel La Place, or those other “mighty spirits” which Lord Brougham and Sir Robert eulogize? Or when was a choleric temperament ever brought under by a scientific King Canute planting his professor’s chair before the rising waves? And as to the keen and ecstatic pleasures which Lord Brougham, not to say Sir Robert, ascribes to intellectual pursuit and conquest, I cannot help thinking that in that line they will find themselves outbid in the market by ratifications much closer at hand, and more level to the meanest capacity. Sir Robert makes it a boast that women are to be members of his institution; it is hardly necessary to remind so accomplished a classic, that Aspasia and other learned ladies of Greece are no very encouraging precedents in favour of the purifying effects of science. But the strangest and most painful topic which he urges, is one which Lord Brougham has had
the good taste altogether to avoid—the power, not of religion, but of scientific knowledge on a death bed; a subject which Sir Robert treats in language which it is far better to believe is mere oratory than has a meaning in it.

If anything were necessary in cumulum to complete the folly and nonsense of the whole affair, it is found in the circumstance that this new art of living is offered to the labouring classes—for instance, in a severe winter, snow on the ground, glass falling, bread rising, coal at 20d. the cwt., and no work (542).

It does not require many words, then, to determine, that taking human nature as it is actually found, and assuming that there is an art of life, to say that it consists, or in any essential manner is placed, in the cultivation of knowledge—that the mind is changed by a discovery, or saved by a diversion, or amused into immortality—that grief, anger, cowardice, self-conceit, pride, or passion, can be subdued by an examination of shells or grasses, or inhaling of gasses, or a chipping of rocks, or observing the barometer, or calculating the longitude, is the veriest pretence which sophist or mountebank ever professed to a gaping auditory. If virtue be a mastery over the mind, if its end be action, if its perfection be inward order, harmony, and peace, we must seek it in graver and holier places than libraries and reading rooms.

CATHOLICUS.

THE TIMES, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1841
SIR ROBERT PEEL’S ADDRESS AT TAMWORTH.

LETTER III.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,

There are (543) two schools of philosophy, flourishing at this day, as at others, neither of these accepting Christian principles as the guide of life, yet both of them unhappily patronized by persons whom it would be the worst and most cruel uncharitableness to suspect of unbelief.

Mr. Bentham is the master of the one; and Sir Robert Peel is a disciple of the other. Mr. Bentham’s system has nothing ideal about it; he is a stern realist, and he limits his realism to things which he can see, hear, taste, touch, and handle. He does not acknowledge the existence of anything which he cannot ascertain for himself. Exist it may nevertheless, but, till it make itself felt, to him it exists not; till it comes down to him, and he is very short-sighted, it is not recognized by him, as having a co-existence with himself, any more than the Emperor of China by the European family of Kings. With him a being out of sight is a being out of mind; nay, he allows not the claims of traces or glimpses to regard, but to know a little and not much is to know nothing at all. With him to speak truth is to speak with a meaning; and to imagine, to guess, to doubt, or to falter, is much the same as to lie. What opinion will such an iron thinker entertain of Cicero’s “glory,” or Lord Brougham’s “truth,” and Sir Robert's “scientific consolations,”
and all those other airy nothings which are my proper subject of remark, and which I have in view, when by way of contrast I make mention of the philosophy of Bentham?

And yet the doctrine of the three-eminent orators whom I have ventured to criticize has in it much that is far nobler than Benthamism, their misfortune being, not that they look for an excellence above the beaten path of life, but that whereas Christianity has told us what that excellence is, Cicero lived before it was given, and Lord Brougham and Sir Robert Peel prefer his involuntary error to their own inherited truth. Surely, there is something unearthly and superhuman in spite of Bentham; but it is not glory, or knowledge, or any abstract idea of virtue, but great and good tidings which need not here be particularly mentioned, and the pity is, that these Christian statesmen cannot be content with what is divine without hankering after what was heathen.

Now, independent of all other considerations, the great difference, in a practical light, between the objects of Christianity and of heathen belief, is this—that glory, science, knowledge, and whatever other fine names we use, never healed a wounded heart, nor changed a sinful one; but Christ's word is with power. The ideas which Christianity brings before us are in themselves full of influence, and they are endowed with a supernatural gift over and above, in order to meet the special exigencies of our nature. Knowledge is not “power,” nor is glory “the first and only fair;” but “grace,” or “the word,” by whichever name we call it, has been from the first a quickening, renovating, organizing principle. It has new-created the individual, and diffused and knit him into a social body, composed of members each similarly created. It has cleansed man of his moral diseases, raised him to hope and energy, given him to propagate a brotherhood among his fellowmen, to form a large family or rather kingdom of saints all over the earth, and with wonderful vigour prolonged its original impulse down to this day. Each one of us has lit his lamp from his neighbour, or received it from his fathers, and the lights thus kindled are to-day as strong and as clear as if 1,800 years had not passed since the original of the sacred flame. What has glory or knowledge done like this? Can it raise the dead? can it create a polity? can it do more than testify man’s need and typify God’s remedy?

And yet, in spite of this, when we have an instrument given us, capable of changing the heart, great orators and statesmen are busy, forsooth, with their heathen charms and nostrums, their sedatives, correctives, or restoratives; as preposterously as if we were to build our men of war, or conduct our iron works, on the principles approved in Cicero's day. The utmost that Lord Brougham seems to propose to himself in the education of the mind, is to keep out bad ideas by good—a great object, doubtless, but not so great in conception, as is the destruction of the appetency for bad in Christian fact. “Every one,” he says in his Discourse upon the Objects and Advantages of Science, “is amused with reading a story, a romance may please some, and a fairy tale may entertain others; but no benefit beyond the amusement is derived from this source; the imagination is gratified. Accidents, adventures, anecdotes, crimes, and a variety of other things amuse us, independent of the information respecting public affairs, in which we feel interested as citizens of the State, or as members of a particular body. Most persons who take delight in reading tales of ghosts, which they know to be false, and feel all the whole
to be silly in the extreme, are merely gratified, or rather occupied, with the strong emotions of horror excited by the momentary belief, for it can only last an instant. Such reading is a degrading waste of precious time, and has even bad effect on the feelings and the judgment. But true stories of horrid crimes, as murders, and pitiable misfortunes—as shipwrecks, are not much more instructive. It may be better to read these than to sit yawning and idle; much better than to sit drinking or gaming, which, when carried to the last excess, are crimes in themselves, and the fruitful parents of many more. But this is nearly as much as can be said of such vain and unprofitable reading. If it can be a pleasure to gratify curiosity, to know what we were ignorant of, to have our feelings of wonder called forth, how pure a delight of this very kind does natural science hold out to its students? ... Akin to this pleasure of contemplating new and extraordinary truths is the gratification of a more learned curiosity, by tracing resemblances and relations between things which to common apprehension seem widely different.” And in the same way Sir Robert tells us of a devout curiosity. In all cases curiosity is the means, diversion of mind the highest end; and though of course I will not assert that Lord Brougham, and certainly not that Sir Robert Peel, denies any higher kind of morality, yet when he rises above Benthamism, in which he often indulges, into what may be called Broughamism proper, he commonly grasps at nothing more real and substantial than these Ciceronian ethics (545).

In morals, as in physics, the spring cannot rise higher than its source. Christianity raises men from earth, for it comes from Heaven; but human morality creeps, struts, or frets upon the earth's level, without wings to rise. The Knowledge School does not contemplate raising man above himself; it merely aims at disposing of his existing powers and tastes, as is most convenient or practicable under circumstances. It finds him, like the victims of the French Tyrant, doubled up in a cage in which he can neither lie, stand, sit, nor kneel, and its highest desire is to find an attitude in which his unrest may be least. Or it finds him, like some musical instrument, of great power and compass, but imperfect; from its very structure some keys must ever be out of tune, and the object, when ambition is highest, is to throw the fault of its nature where least it will be observed. It leaves man where it found him—a sinner, not a saint; but it tries to make him look as much like what he is not as ever it can. The poor indulge in low pleasures; they use bad language, swear loudly and profanely, laugh at coarse jests, and are rude and boorish. Sir Robert would open on them a wider range of thought and more intellectual objects, by teaching them science; but what warrant will be given us that, if his object could be achieved, what they would gain in decency they would not lose in natural humility and awe? If so, he has exchanged a gross fault for a more subtle one. “Temperance topics” stop drinking; let us suppose it; but will much be gained, if those who give up spirits take to opium? Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret, is a heathen truth, though a Christian fable; and universities and libraries which recur to heathenism may reclaim it from the heathen for their motto. Nay, every where, so far as human nature remains hardly or partially Christianized, the heathen law remains in force; as is felt in a measure even in the most religious places and societies. Even there where Christianity has power, the venom of the old Adam is not subdued. Those who have to
do with our colleges give us their experience, that in the case of the young committed to
their care, external discipline can but change the fashionable sin, but cannot allay the
principle of sinning. Stop cigars, they will take to drinking parties; stop drinking, they
gamble; stop gambling, and a worse license follows. You do not get rid of vice by human
expedients; you can but use them according to circumstances, and in their place. You
must go to a higher source for renovation of heart and will. You do but play a sort of
“hunt the slipper” with the sin of our nature till you go to Christianity.

I say, you must use human methods in this place, and there they are useful; but
they are worse than useless out of their place. I have no fanatical wish to deny to any
subject of thought or method of reason a place altogether, if it chooses to claim it, in the
cultivation of the mind. Mr. Bentham may despise verse making, or Mr. Dugald Stewart
logic, but the great and true maxim is to sacrifice none—to combine, and therefore to
adjust all. All cannot be first, and therefore each has its place, and the problem is to find
it. It is at least not a lighter fault to make what is secondary first than to leave it out
altogether. Here then it is that the Knowledge (546) Society, Gower-street College,
Tamworth Reading-room, Lord Brougham, and Sir Robert Peel, are all so deplorably
mistaken. Christianity, and nothing short of it, must be made the element and principle
of all education. Where it has been laid as the first stone, and acknowledged as the
governing spirit, it will take up into itself, assimilate, and give a character to literature
and science. Where revealed truth has given the aim and direction to knowledge,
knowledge of all kinds will minister to revealed truth. The evidences of religion, natural
theology, metaphysics,—or, again, poetry, history, and the classics,—or physics and
mathematics, may all be grafted into the mind of a Christian, and give and take from the
grafting. But if in education we begin with nature before grace, with evidences before
faith, with science before conscience, with poetry before practice, we shall be doing
much the same as if we were to indulge the passions and turn a deaf ear to the reason. In
each case we misplace what in its place is a divine gift. If we attempt to effect a moral
improvement by means of poetry, we shall but mature into a mawkish, frivolous, and
fastidious sentimentalism—if by means of argument, into a dry unamiable
longheadedness—if by good society, into a polished outside, with hollowness within, in
which vice has lost its grossness, and perhaps increased its malignity—if by experimental
science, into an uppish supercilious temper, much inclined to scepticism. But reverse the
order of things; put faith first and knowledge second; let the university minister to the
church, and then classical poetry becomes the type of gospel truth, and physical science a
comment on Genesis or Job, and Aristotle changes into Butler, and Arcesilas into
Berkeley.

Far from recognizing this principle, the teachers of the knowledge school would
educate from natural theology up to Christianity, and would amend the heart through
literature and philosophy. Lord Brougham gives out that “henceforth nothing shall
prevail over us to praise or to blame any one for” his belief, “which he can no more
change than he can the hue of his skin or the height of his stature.” And Sir Robert,
whose profession and life give the lie to his philosophy, founds a library into which “no
works of controversial divinity shall enter,” that is, no doctrinal works at all; and he tells
us that ‘an increased sagacity will make men not merely believe in the cold doctrines of natural religion, but that it will so prepare and temper the spirit and understanding that they will be better qualified to comprehend the great scheme of human redemption.”

And again, Lord Brougham considers that “the pleasures of science tend not only to make our lives more agreeable but better;” and Sir Robert responds, that “he entertains the hope that there will be the means afforded of useful occupation and rational recreation; that men will prefer the pleasures of knowledge above the indulgence of sensual appetite, and that there is a prospect of contributing to the intellectual and moral improvement of the neighbourhood.”

Can the 19th century produce no more robust and creative philosophy than this?

CATHOLICUS.

THE TIMES, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1841

SIR R. PEEL’S ADDRESS AT TAMWORTH.

LETTER IV.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,

Human nature (547) wants recasting, but Lord Brougham is all for tinkering it. He does not despair of making something of it yet. He is not indeed of those who think that reason, passion, and whatever else is in us are made right and tight by the principle of self-interest. He understands that something more is necessary for man’s happiness than self-love; he feels that man has affections and aspirations which Bentham does not account of, and he looks about for their legitimate objects. Christianity has provided these; but, unhappily, he passes them by. He libels them with the name of dogmatism, and conjures up instead the phantoms of glory and knowledge; idola theatri, as his famous predecessor calls them. “There are idols,” says Lord Bacon, “which have got into the human mind, from the different tenets of philosophers, and the perverted laws of demonstration. And these we denominate idols of the theatre; because all the philosophies that have been hitherto invented or received are but so many stage plays, written or acted, as having shown nothing but fictitious and theatrical worlds. Idols of the theatre, or theories, are many, and will probably grow much more numerous; for if men had not, through many ages, been prepossessed with religion and theology, and if civil governments, but particularly monarchies,” and, I suppose, their ministers, counsellors, functionaries, inclusive, “had not been averse to innovations of this kind, though but intended, so as to make it dangerous and prejudicial to the private fortunes of such as take the bent of innovating, not only by depriving them of advantages, but also by exposing them to contempt and hatred, there would doubtless have been numerous other sects of philosophies and theories introduced, of kin to those that in great variety formerly
flourished among the Greeks. And these theatrical fables have this in common with
dramatic pieces, that the fictitious narrative is neater, more elegant and pleasing; than the
true history.”

I suppose we may readily grant that the science of the day is attended by more
lively interest, and issues in more entertaining knowledge, than the study of the New
Testament. Accordingly Lord Brougham fixes upon it as the great desideratum of human
nature, and puts aside faith under the nickname of opinion. I wish Sir Robert Peel had
not fallen into the snare—by insulting doctrine under the name of “controversial divinity.”
However, it will be said that Sir Robert, in spite of such forms of speech, differs
essentially from Lord Brougham; for he goes on in the latter part of the Address which
has occasioned these remarks to speak of science as leading to Christianity. “I can never
think it possible,” he says, “that a mind can be so constituted, that after being familiarized
with the great truth of observing in every object of contemplation that nature presents the
manifest proofs of a Divine Intelligence, if you range even from the organization of the
meanest weed you trample upon, or of the insect (548) that lives but for an hour, up to the
magnificent structure of the heavens, and the still more wonderful phenomena of the soul,
reason, and conscience of man; I cannot believe that any man, accustomed to such
contemplations, can return from them with any other feelings than those of enlarged
conceptions of the Divine Power, and greater reverence for the name of the Almighty
Creator of the universe.” A long and complicated sentence, and no unfitting emblem
of the demonstration it promises. It sets before us a process and deduction. Depend on it,
it is not so safe a road and so expeditious a journey from premiss and conclusion as Sir
Robert anticipates. The way is long, and there are not a few halfway houses and
travellers’ rests along it; and who is to warrant that the members of the reading-room and
library will go steadily on? and when at length they come to “Christianity,” pray how do
the roads lie between it and “controversial divinity?” Or, grant the Tamworth readers to
begin with “Christianity” as well as science, the same question suggests itself. What is

Most cheerfully do I render to so religious a man as Sir Robert Peel the justice of
disclaiming any insinuation on my part, that he has any intention at all to put aside
religion; yet his words either mean nothing, or they do, both on their surface and when
carried into effect, mean something very irreligious. And now for one plain proof of this.
It is certain, then, that the multitude of men have neither time nor capacity for attending
to many subjects. If they attend to one, they will not attend to the other; if they give their
leisure and curiosity to this world, they will have none left for the next. We cannot be
everything, as the poet says. We must make up our minds to be ignorant of much, if we
would know ought. And we must make our choice between risking science and risking
religion. Sir Robert indeed says, “Do not believe that you have not time for rational
recreation. It is the idle man who wants time for every thing.” However, this seems to
me rhetoric; and what I have said to be the matter of fact, for the truth of which I appeal,
not to argument but to the proper judges of facts,—common sense and practical
experience; and if they pronounce it to be a fact, then Sir Robert Peel, little as he means it, does unite with Lord Brougham in taking from Christianity what he gives to science.

I will make this fair offer to both of them. Every member of the church established shall be eligible to the Tamworth library on one condition—that he brings from the “public minister of religion,” to use Sir Robert's phrase, a ticket in witness of his proficiency in Christian knowledge. We will have no “controversial divinity” in the library, but a little out of it. If the gentlemen of the knowledge school will but agree to teach town and country religion first, they shall have a carte blanche from me to teach anything or everything else second. Not a word has been uttered or intended in these letters against science; I would treat it, as they do not treat “controversial divinity,” with respect and gratitude. They caricature doctrine under the (549) name of controversy. I do not call science infidelity. I call it by their own name, “useful and entertaining knowledge;” and I call doctrine “Christian knowledge;” and, as thinking Christianity something more than useful and entertaining, I want faith to come first, and utility and amusement to follow.

That persons indeed are found in all classes, high and low, busy and idle, capable of proceeding from sacred to profane knowledge, is undeniable; and it is desirable that they should do so. It is desirable that talent for particular departments in literature and science should be fostered and turned to account, wherever it is found. But what has this to do with this general canvass of “all persons of all descriptions, without reference to religious creed, who shall have attained the age of fourteen?” Why solicit “the working classes, without distinction of party, political opinion, or religious profession;” that is, whether they have heard of a God or no? Whence these cries rising on our ears, of “Let me entreat you!” “Neglect not the opportunity!” “It will not be our fault!” “Here is an access for you!”—very like the tones of a street preacher, or of the cad of an omnibus, little worthy of a great statesman and a religious philosopher?

However, the Tamworth reading-room admits one restriction, which is not a little curious, and has no very liberal sound. It seems that all “virtuous women” may be members of the library; that “great injustice would be done to the well educated and virtuous women of the town and neighbourhood,” had they been excluded. A very emphatic silence is maintained about women not virtuous. What does this mean? Does it mean to exclude them, while bad men are admitted? Is this accident, or design, sinister and insidious, against a portion of the community? What has virtue to do with a reading-room? It is to make its members virtuous; it is to “exalt the moral dignity of their nature.” It is to provide “charms and temptations” to allure them from sensuality and riot. To whom but to the vicious ought Sir Robert to discourse about “opportunities,” and “access,” and “moral improvement;” and who else would prove a fitter experiment, and a more glorious triumph of scientific influences? And yet he shuts out all but the well-educated and virtuous.

Alas, that bigotry should have left the mark of its hoof in the great “fundamental principle of the Tamworth Institution!” Sir Robert Peel is bound in consistency to attempt its obliteration. But if that is impossible, as many will anticipate, why, O why, while he is about it, why will he not give us just a little more of it? Cannot we prevail on
him to modify his principle, and to admit into his library none but “well-educated and virtuous” men?

CATHOLICUS

THE TIMES, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1841
SIR R. PEEL’S ADDRESS AT TAMWORTH

LETTER V.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,

Sir Robert Peel (550) proposes to establish a library which “shall be open to all persons of all descriptions, without reference to political opinions or to religious creed.” He invites those who are concerned in manufactories, or who have many workmen, “without distinction of party, political opinions, or religious profession.” He promises that “in the selection of subjects for public lectures everything calculated to excite religious or political animosity shall be excluded.” Nor is any “discussion on matters connected with religion, politics, or local party differences” to be permitted in the reading-room. And he congratulates himself that he has “laid the foundation of an edifice in which men of all political opinions and of all religious feelings may unite in furtherance of knowledge, without the asperities of party feeling.” In these statements religious differences are made synonymous with “party feeling,” and, whereas the tree is known by its fruit, their characteristic symptoms are felicitously described as “asperities,” and “animosities.” And, in order to teach us more precisely what these differences are worth, they are compared to differences between Whig and Tory—nay, even to “local party differences;” as, for instance, about a municipal election, or a hole-and-corner meeting, or a parish job, or a bill for a railway.

But, to give him the advantage of the more honourable parallel of the two, are religious principles to be put upon a level even with political? Is it as bad to be a republican as an unbeliever? Is it as magnanimous to humour a scoffer as to spare an opponent in the House? Is a difference about the Reform Bill all one with a difference about the Creed? Is it as polluting to hear arguments for Lord Melbourne as against the Apostles? To a statesman, indeed, like Sir Robert, to abandon one's party is a far greater sacrifice than to unpatriotic persons; and it would be uncandid to doubt that he is rather magnifying politics than degrading religion in throwing them together; but still, when he advocates concessions in theology and politics, he must be plainly told to make presents of things that belong to him, nor seek to be generous with other people's substance. There are entails in more matters than parks and old places. He made his politics for himself, but Another made theology.

Christianity is faith, faith implies a doctrine, a doctrine propositions, propositions yes or no, yes or no differences. Differences, then, are the natural attendants on Christianity, and you cannot have Christianity, and not have differences. When, then, Sir
Robert Peel calls such differences points of "party feeling," what is this but to insult Christianity? Yet so cautious, so correct a man, cannot have made such a sacrifice for nothing; nor does he long leave us in doubt what is his inducement. He tells us that his great aim is the peace and good order of the community, (551) and the easy working of the national machine. With this in view, any price is cheap, everything is marketable; all impediments are a nuisance. He does not undo for undoing's sake; he gains more than an equivalent. It is a mistake, too, to say that he considers all differences of opinion as equal in importance; no, they are only equally in the way. He only compares them together where they are comparable,—in their common inconvenience to a Minister of State. They may be as little homogeneous as chalk is to cheese, or Macedon to Monmouth, but they agree in interfering with social harmony; and, since that harmony is the first of goods and the end of life, what is left us but to discard all that disunites us, and to cultivate all that may amalgamate?

Could Sir Robert have set a more remarkable example of self-sacrifice than in becoming the disciple of his political foe, accepting from Lord Brougham his new principle of combination, rejecting faith for the fulcrum of society, and proceeding to rest it upon knowledge? "I cannot help thinking," he exclaims at Tamworth, "that by bringing together in an institution of this kind intelligent men of all classes and conditions of life, by uniting together, in the committee of this institution, the gentleman of ancient family and great landed possessions with the skilful mechanic and artificer of good character, I cannot help believing that we are harmonizing the gradations of society, and binding men together by a new bond, which will have more than ordinary strength on account of the object which unites us." The old and ordinary bond, he seems to say, was religion; Lord Brougham’s, and at length I agree with him, is knowledge. Faith, once the soul of social union, is now but the spirit of division. Not a single doctrine but is "controversial divinity," not an abstraction can be imagined (could abstractions constrain), not a comprehension projected (could comprehensions connect), but will leave out one or other portion or element of the social fabric. We must abandon religion, if we aspire to be statesmen. Once, indeed, it was a living power, kindling hearts, leavening them with one idea, moulding them on one model, developing them into one polity. Ere now it has been the life of morality; it has given birth to heroes; it has wielded empire. But another age has come in, and faith is effete; let us submit to what we cannot change; let us not hang over our dead, but bury it out of sight. Seek we out some young and vigorous principle, rich in sap, and fierce in life, to give form to elements which are fast resolving into their unorganic chaos; and where shall we find such a principle but in knowledge?

Accordingly, though Sir Robert somewhat chivalrously battles for the appointment upon the Book Committee of what he calls two 'public ministers of religion, holding prominent and responsible offices, endowed by the State,' and that ex officio, yet he is untrue to his new principle only in appearance: for he couples his concession with explanations and restrictions quite sufficient to prevent old faith becoming insurgent against young knowledge. First he takes his Vicar and Curate as "conversant with literary subjects and with literary works," and then as having duties "immediately
connected with the moral condition and improvement’ of the place. Further he admits “it is perfectly right to be jealous of all power held by such a tenure;” and he insists on the “fundamental” condition that these sacred (552) functionaries shall permit no doctrinal works to be introduced or lectures to be delivered.

Lastly, he reserves in the general body the power of withdrawing this indulgence “if the existing checks be not sufficient, and the power be abused;” and apropos of “abuse,” he desires “to take every security in giving knowledge against that knowledge being perverted to evil or immoral purposes;” for instance, any contraband introduction of the doctrines of faith. Lord Brougham will make all this clearer to us. A work of high interest and varied information is attributed to him, to which I have in former letters alluded, and in which the ingenious author shows how knowledge can do for society what has hitherto been supposed the prerogative of faith. As to faith and its preachers, he had already complimented them at Glasgow, as “the evil spirits of tyranny and persecution,” and had bid them good day as the scared and dazzled creatures of the “long night now gone down the sky.” “The great truth,” he proclaimed in language borrowed from the records of faith (for after parsons no men quote Scripture more familiarly than Liberals and Whigs), “has finally gone forth to all the ends of the earth, that man shall no more render account to man for his belief, over which he has himself no control. Henceforth nothing shall prevail upon us to praise or to blame any one for that which he can no more change than he can the hue of his skin or the height of his stature.” And then he proceeds to his new Vitae Sanctorum, or, as he calls it, “Illustrations of the Pursuit of Knowledge;” and, whereas the badge of Christian saintliness is conflict, he writes of the “pursuit of knowledge under difficulties;” and, whereas this knowledge is to stand in the place of religion, he assumes a hortatory tone, in which decidedly he has no equal but Sir Robert. “Knowledge,” he says, “is happiness, as well as power and virtue;” and he demands “the dedication of our faculties” to it. “The struggle,” he gravely observes, which its disciple “has to wage may be a protracted, but it ought not to be a cheerless one; for, if he do not relax his exertions, every movement he makes is necessarily a step forward, if not towards that distinction which intellectual attainments sometimes confer, at least to that inward satisfaction and enjoyment which is always their reward. No one stands in the way of another, or can deprive him of any part of his chance, we should rather say of his certainty, of success; on the contrary, they are all fellow-workers, and may materially help each other forward.” And he enumerates in various places the virtues which adorn the children of knowledge—ardour united to humility, child-like alacrity, teachableness, truthfulness, patience, concentration of attention, husbandry of time, self-denial, self-command, and heroism.

Faith, viewed in its history through past ages, presents us with the fulfilment of one great idea in particular—that, namely, of an aristocracy of exalted spirits, drawn together out of all countries, ranks, and ages, raised above the condition of humanity, specimens of the capabilities of our race, incentives to rivalry and patterns for imitation. This Christian idea Lord Brougham has borrowed for his new pantheon, which is equally various in all attributes and appendages of mind, with the one characteristic in all its specimens—the pursuit of knowledge. Some of his worthies are low born, others of high
degree; some are in Europe, others in the Antipodes; some in the dark ages, others in the
ages of light; some exercise a (553) voluntary, others an involuntary toil; some give up
riches, and others gain them; some are fixtures, and others in adventure; some are
profligate, and others ascetic; and some are believers, and others infidels.

Alfred, severely good and Christian, takes his place in this new canon beside the
gay and graceful Lorenzo de Medicis; for did not the one “import civilization into
England,” and was not the other “the wealthy and munificent patron of all the liberal
arts?” Edward VI and Haroun al Raschid, Dr. Johnson and Dr. Franklin, Newton and
Protagoras, Pascal and Julian the apostate, Joseph Milner and Lord Byron, Cromwell and
Ovid, Bayle and Boyle, Adrian pope and Adrian emperor, Lady Jane Grey and Madame
Roland, human beings who agreed in nothing but in their humanity and their love of
knowledge, are all admitted by Lord Brougham to one beatification, in proof of the
Catholic character of his substitute for faith.

The persecuting Marcus is a “good and enlightened emperor,” and a “delightful”
spectacle when “mixing in the religious processions and ceremonies” of Athens, and “re-
building and re-endowing the schools,” whence St. Paul was driven in derision. The royal
Alphery on the contrary “preferred his humble parsonage” to the throne of the Czars.
West was “nurtured among the quiet and gentle affections of a Quaker family.” Kirk
White’s “feelings became ardently devotional, and he determined to give up his life to the
preaching of Christianity.” Roger Bacon was “a brother of the Franciscan Order, at that
time the great support and ornament of both Universities.” Belzoni seized “the
opportunity” of Buonaparte’s arrival in Italy to “throw off his monastic habit,” its
“idleness and obscurity,” and engaged himself as a performer at Astley’s. Duval, “a very
able antiquarian of the last century,” began his studies as a peasant boy, and finished
them in a Jesuit’s College. Mr. Davy, “having written a system of divinity,” effected the
printing of it in thirteen years “with a press of his own construction,” and the assistance
of his female servant, working off page by page for twenty-six volumes 8 vo. of nearly
500 pages each. Raleigh, in spite of an “immoderate ambition,” was “one of the very
chief glories of an age crowded with towering spirits.”

Nothing comes amiss to this author; saints and sinners, the precious and the vile,
are torn from their proper homes and recklessly thrown together under the category of
knowledge, ‘Tis a pity he did not extend his view, as Christianity has done, to beings out
of sight of man. Milton could have helped him to some angelic personages, as patrons
and guardians of his intellectual temple, who of old time, before faith had birth,
“reasoned high
“Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
“Passion and apathy, and glory, and shame,—
“Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy.”

And, indeed, he does make some guesses that way, speaking most catholically of being
“admitted to a fellowship with those loftier minds” who “by universal consent held (554)
a station apart,” and are “spoken of reverently,” as if their names were not those “of
mortal men;” and he speaks of these “benefactors of mankind, when they rest from their
pious labours,” looking down “upon the blessings with which their “toils and sufferings have clothed the scene of their former existence.”

Such is the oratory which has fascinated Sir Robert; yet we must recollect that in the year 1832, even the venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge herself, catching its sounds and hearing something about sublimity, and universality, and brotherhood, and effort, and felicity, was beguiled into an admission of this singularly irreligious work into the list of publications which she had delegated to a committee to select in usum laicorum.

That a venerable society should be caught by the vision of a Church Catholic is not wonderful; but what could possess philosophers and statesmen to dazzle her with it, but man’s need of some such support, and the divine excellence and sovereign virtue of that which faith once created?

CATHOLICUS

THE TIMES, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1841

SIR R. PEEL’S ADDRESS AT TAMWORTH

LETTER VI.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,

People (555) say to me, that it is but a dream to suppose that Christianity should regain the organic power in human society which once it possessed. I cannot help that; I never said it could. I am not a politician; I am proposing no measures, but exposing a fallacy, and resisting a pretence. Let Benthamism reign if men have no aspirations; but do not tell them to be romantic, and then solace them with glory; do not attempt by philosophy what once was done by religion. The ascendancy of faith may be impracticable, but the reign of knowledge is impossible. The problem for statesmen of this age is how to educate the masses, and literature and science cannot give the solution.

Not so deems Sir Robert Peel; his firm belief and hope is, “that an increased sagacity will administer to an exalted faith; that it will make men not merely believe in the cold doctrines of natural religion, but that it will so prepare and temper the spirit and understanding, that they will be better qualified to comprehend the great scheme of human redemption.” He certainly thinks that scientific pursuits have some considerable power of impressing religion upon the mind of the multitude. I think not, and will now say why.

Science gives us the grounds or premises from which religious truths are to be inferred; but it does not set about inferring, much less does it reach the inference—that is, not its province. It brings before us phenomena, and it leaves us, if we will, to call them works of design, wisdom, or benevolence; and further still, if we will, to proceed to confess an Intelligent Creator. We have to take its facts, and to give them a meaning, and to draw our conclusions from them. First comes knowledge, then a view, then reasoning, and then belief.
This is why science has so little of a religious tendency; deductions have no power or persuasion. The heart is commonly reached, not through the reason, but through the imagination, by means of direct impressions, by the testimony of facts and events, by history, by description. Persons influence us, voices melt us, looks subdue us, deeds inflame us. Many a man will live and die upon a dogma; no one will be a martyr for a conclusion. A conclusion is but an opinion; it is not a thing which is, but which we are certain about; and it has often been observed, that we never say that we are certain, without implying that we doubt. To say that a thing must be, is to admit that it may not be. No one, I say, will die for his own calculations; he dies for realities. This is why a literary religion is so little to be depended upon; it looks well in fair weather; but its doctrines are opinions, and when called to suffer for them, it slips them between its folios, or burns them at its hearth. And this again is the secret of the distrust and the raillery with which moralists have been so commonly visited. They say, and do not: why? Because they are contemplating the fitness of things, and they live by the square, when they should be realizing their high maxims in the concrete. Now Sir Robert thinks better of natural history, chemistry, and astronomy, but what are (556) they too, but divinity in posse? He protests against “controversial divinity;” is inferential much better?

I have no confidence then in philosophers who cannot help having religion, and are Christian by implication. They sit at home, and reach forward to distances which astonish us; but they hit without grasping, and are sometimes as confident about shadows as about realities. They have worked out by a calculation the lie of a country which they never saw, and mapped it by a gazetteer; and like blind men, though they can put a stranger on his way, they cannot walk straight, and do not feel it quite their business to walk at all.

Logic makes but a sorry rhetoric with the multitude; first shoot round corners, and you may not despair of converting by a syllogism. Tell men to gain notions of a Creator from His works, and if they were to set about it (which nobody does), they would be jaded and wearied by the labyrinth they were tracing. Their minds would be gorged and surfeited by the logical operation. Logicians are more set on concluding rightly than on drawing right conclusions.

They cannot see the end for the process. Few men have that power of mind which may hold fast and firmly a variety of thoughts. We ridicule “men for one idea,” but a great many of us are born to be such, and we should be happier if we knew it. To most men argument makes the point in hand only more doubtful, and considerably less impressive. After all, man is not a reasoning animal; he is a seeing, feeling, contemplating, acting animal. He is influenced by what is direct and precise. It is very well to freshen our impressions and convictions from physics, but to create them we must go elsewhere. Sir Robert Peel “never can think it possible that a mind can be so constituted that after being familiarized with the wonderful discoveries which have been made in every part of experimental science, it can retire from such contemplations without more enlarged conceptions of God's providence and a higher reverence for His
If he speaks of religious minds, he perpetrates a truism; if of irreligious, he insinuates a paradox.

Life is not long enough for a religion of inferences; we shall never have done beginning if we determine to begin with proof. We shall ever be laying our foundations, we shall turn theology into evidences, and divines into textuaries. We shall never get at our first principles. Resolve to believe nothing, and you must prove your proof and analyze your elements, sinking further and further, and finding “in the lowest deep a lower deep,” till you come to the broad bosom of scepticism. I would rather be bound to defend the assumption that Christianity is true, than to prove a moral governance from the physical world. Life is for action. If we insist on proof for everything, we shall never come to action; to act you must assume, and that assumption is faith.

Let no one suppose that in saying this I am maintaining that all proofs are equally difficult, and all propositions equally debatable. Some assumptions are greater than others, and some doctrines involve postulates larger than others, and more numerous. I only say that impressions lead to action, and that reasonings lead from it. Knowledge of premises, and inferences upon them,—this is not to live. It is very well as a matter of liberal curiosity and of philosophy to analyze our modes of thought; but let this come second, and where there is leisure for it, and then our examinations will in many ways even be subservient to action. But if we commence with scientific knowledge and argumentative proof, or lay any great stress on it as the basis of personal Christianity, or attempt to make men moral and religious by libraries and museums, let us in consistency take chemists for our cooks, and mineralogists for our masons.

Now I wish to state all this as matter of fact, to be judged by the candid testimony of any persons whatever. Why we are so constituted that faith not knowledge or argument is our principle of action, is a question with which I have nothing to do; but I think it is a fact, and if it be such, we must resign ourselves to it as we best may, unless we take refuge in the intolerable paradox, that the mass of men are created for nothing, and are meant to leave life as they entered it.

So well has this practically been understood in all ages of the world, that no religion yet has been a religion of physics or philosophy. It has ever been synonymous with revelation. It never has been a deduction from what we know; it has ever been an assertion of something to be believed. It has never lived in a conclusion; it has ever been a message, a history, or a vision. No legislator or priest ever dreamed of educating our moral nature by science or by argument. There is no difference here between true religions and pretended. Moses was instructed not to reason from the creation, but to work miracles. Christianity is a history supernatural and almost scenic; it tells us what its Author is, by telling us what He has done.

I have no wish at all to speak otherwise than respectfully of conscientious Dissenters; but I have heard it said by those who were not their enemies, and who had known much of their preaching, that they had often heard narrow-minded and bigotted clergymen, and often dissenting ministers of a far more intellectual cast, but that dissenting teaching came to nothing that it was dissipated in thoughts which had no point, and inquiries which converged to no centre; that it ended as it began, and sent away its
hearers as it found them. Whereas, the instruction in the church, with all its defects and mistakes, came to some end, for it started from some beginning.

Nay, Lord Brougham himself, as we have already seen, has recognized the force of the principle. He has not left his philosophical religion to argument, but committed it to the keeping of the imagination. Why should he depict a great republic of letters and an intellectual pantheon, but that he feels instances and patterns to be the living conclusions which alone have a hold over the affections and can form the character?

CATHOLICUS

THE TIMES, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1841
SIR R. PEEL’S ADDRESS AT TAMWORTH

LETTER VII.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,

When (558) Sir Robert Peel assures us from the Town-hall at Tamworth that physical science must lead to religion, it is no bad compliment to him to say that he is unreal. He speaks of what he knows nothing about. To a religious man like him, science has ever suggested religious thoughts; he colours the phenomena of physics with the hues of his own mind, and mistakes an interpretation for a deduction. “I am sanguine enough to believe,” he says, “that that superior sagacity which is most conversant with the course and constitution of nature will be first to turn a deaf ear to objections and presumptions against revealed religion, and to acknowledge the complete harmony of the Christian dispensation with all that reason, assisted by revelation, tells us of the course and constitution of nature.” Now, considering that we are all of us educated as Christians from infancy, it is not easy to decide at this day whether science creates faith, or only confirms it; but we have this remarkable fact in the history of heathen Greece against the former supposition, that her most eminent experimentalists were atheists, and that it was their atheism which was the cause of their eminence. “The natural philosophies of Democritus and others,” says Lord Bacon, “who allow no God or mind in the frame of things, but attribute the structure of the universe to infinite essays and trials of nature, or what they call fate or fortune, and assigned the causes of particular things to the necessity of matter, without any intermixture of final causes, seem, as far as we can judge from the remains of their philosophy, much more solid, and to have gone deeper into nature, with regard to physical causes, than the philosophies of Aristotle or Plato: and this only because they never meddled with final causes, which the others were perpetually inculcating.”

Lord Bacon gives us both the fact and the reason of it. Physical philosophers are ever inquiring whence things are, not why; referring them to nature, not to mind; and thus they tend to make a system a substitute for a God. Each pursuit or calling has its own dangers, and each numbers among its professors men who rise superior to them. As the soldier is tempted to dissipation, and the merchant to acquisitiveness, and the lawyer to
the unreal, and the statesman to the expedient, and the clergyman to ease, yet there are good clergymen, statesmen, lawyers, merchants, and soldiers, notwithstanding; so there are religious experimentalists, yet physics tend to infidelity; and to have recourse to physics to make men religious is like recommending a canonry as a cure for the gout, or giving a youngster a commission as a penance for irregularities.

The whole framework of nature is confessedly a tissue of antecedents and consequents; we may refer all things forwards to design, or backwards on some physical cause. La Place is said to have considered he had a formula which solved all the motions of the solar system; shall we say that those motions were from this (559) formula or from a divine fiat? Shall we have recourse for our theory to physics or to theology?

Shall we assume matter and its necessary properties to be eternal, or mind with its divine attributes? Does the sun shine to warm the earth, or is the earth warmed because the sun shines? The one hypothesis will solve the phenomena as well as the other. Say not it is but a puzzle in argument, and that no one ever felt it in fact. So far from it, I believe that the study of nature, when religious feeling is away, leads the mind, rightly or wrongly, to acquiesce in the atheistic theory, as the simplest and easiest. It is but parallel to that tendency in anatomical studies, which no one will deny, to solve all the phenomena of the human frame into material elements and powers, and to dispense with the soul. To those who are conscious of matter, but not conscious of mind, it seems more rational to refer all things to one origin, such as they know, than to assume the existence of a second origin such as they know not. It is religion, then, which suggests to science its true conclusions; the facts come from knowledge, but the principles come of faith.

There are two ways, then, of reading nature—as a machine and as a work; if we come to it with the assumption that it is a creation, we shall study it with awe; if assuming it to be a system, with mere curiosity. Sir Robert does not make this distinction. He subscribes to the belief that the man “accustomed to such contemplations, struck with awe by the manifold proofs of infinite power and infinite wisdom, will yield more ready and hearty assent—yes, the assent of the heart, and not only of the understanding, to the pious exclamation, ‘O, Lord, how glorious are they works!’” He considers that greater insight into nature will lead a man to say, ‘How great and wise is the Creator, who has done this!’ True; but it is possible that his thoughts may take the form of “How clever is the creature who has discovered it!” and self-conceit may stand proxy for adoration. This is no idle apprehension. Sir Robert himself, religious as he is, gives cause for it; for the first reflection that rises in his mind, as expressed in the above passage, before his notice of divine power and wisdom, is, that “the man accustomed to such contemplations will feel the moral dignity of his nature exalted.” But Lord Brougham speaks out. “The delight,” he says, “is inexpressible of being able to follow, as it were, with our eyes, the marvellous works of the Great Architect of Nature.” And more clearly still: “One of the most gratifying treats which science affords us is the knowledge of the extraordinary powers with which the human mind is endowed. No man, until he has studied philosophy, can have a just idea of the great things for which Providence has fitted his understanding, the extraordinary disproportion which there is between his natural strength and the powers of his mind, and the force which he derives
from these powers. When we survey the marvellous truths of astronomy, we are first of all lost in the feeling of immense space, and of the comparative insignificance of this globe and its inhabitants. But there soon arises a sense of gratification and of new wonder at perceiving how so insignificant a creature has been able to reach such a knowledge of the unbounded system of the universe.” So, this is the religion we are to gain from the study of nature; how miserable! The god we attain is our own mind; our veneration is even professedly the worship of self.

The truth is, that the system of nature is just as much connected with religion, (560) where minds are not religious, as a watch or a steam-carriage. The material world, indeed, is infinitely more wonderful than any human contrivance; but wonder is not religion, or we should be worshipping our railroads. What the physical creation presents to us in itself is a piece of machinery, and when men speak of a Divine Intelligence as its author, this God of theirs is not the Living and True, unless the spring is the god of a watch, or steam the creator of the engine. Their idol, taken at advantage (though it is not an idol, for they do not worship it), is the animating principle of a vast and complicated system; it is subjected to laws, and it is connatural and coextensive with matter. Well does Lord Brougham call it “the great architect of nature;” it is an instinct, or a soul of the world, or a vital power: it is not the Almighty God.

It is observable that Lord Brougham does not allude to any relations as existing between his God and ourselves. He is filled with awe, it seems, at the powers of the human mind, as displayed in their analysis of the vast creation. Is not this a fitting time to say a word about gratitude towards Him who gave them? Not a syllable. What we gain from his contemplation of nature is “a gratifying treat,” the knowledge of the “great things for which Providence has fitted man's understanding;” our admiration terminates in man; it passes on to no prototype. I am not quarrelling with his result as illogical or unfair; it is but consistent with the principles with which he started. Take the system of nature by itself, detached from religion, and I am willing to confess—nay, I have been expressly urging, that it does not force us to take it for more than a system; but why, then, persist in calling the study of it religious, when it can be treated, and is treated, thus atheistically? Say that religion hallows the study, not that the study is a true ground of religion. The essence of religion is the idea of a Moral Governor; now let me ask, is the doctrine of moral governance conveyed to us through the physical sciences at all? Would they be physical sciences if they treated of morals? Can physics teach moral matters without ceasing to be physics? But are not virtue and vice, and responsibility, and reward and punishment, nothing else than moral matters, and are they not of the essence of religion? In what department, then, of physics are they to be found? Can the problems and principles they involve be expressed in the differential calculus? Is the galvanic battery a whit more akin to conscience and will, than the mechanical powers? What we seek is what concerns us, the traces of a Moral Governor; even religious minds cannot discern these in the physical sciences; astronomy witnesses divine power, and physiology divine skill; and all of them divine beneficence; but which teaches of divine holiness, truth, justice, or mercy? Is that much of a religion which is silent about duty, sin, and its remedies? Was there ever a religion which was without the idea of an expiation?
Sir Robert Peel tells us, that physical science imparts “pleasure and consolation” on a deathbed. Lord Brougham confines himself to the “gratifying treat;” but Sir Robert ventures to speak of “consolation.” Now, if we are on trial in this life, and if death be the time when our account is gathered in, is it at all real or serious to be talking of “consoling” ourselves at such a time with scientific subjects? Are these topics to suggest to us the thought of the Creator or not? If not, are they better (561) than story books, to beguile the mind from what lies before it? But, if they are to speak of Him, can a dying man find rest in the mere notion of his Creator, when he knows Him also so awfully as his Moral Governor and his Judge? Meditate indeed on the wonders of nature on a deathbed! rather stay your hunger with corn grown in Jupiter, and warm yourself by the Moon.

But enough on this most painful portion of Sir Robert's address. As I am coming to an end, I suppose I ought to sum up in a few words what I have been saying. I consider, then, that intrinsically excellent and noble as are scientific pursuits, and worthy of a place in a liberal education, and fruitful in temporal benefits to the community; still they are not, and cannot be, the instrument of education; that physics do not supply a basis, but only materials for religious feeling; that knowledge does but occupy, instead of forming the mind; that faith is the only known principle capable of subduing moral evil, educating the multitude, and organizing society; and that whereas man is born for action, action flows not from inferences, but from impressions; not from reasonings, but from faith.

That Sir Robert would deny these propositions I am far from contending. I do not even contend that he has asserted the contrary at Tamworth. It matters little to me whether he spoke boldly and intelligibly as the newspapers represent, or guarded his strong sayings with the contradictory matter with which they are intercalated in his own report. In either case the drift and the effect of his address are the same. He has given his respected name to a sophistical school, and condescended to mimic the gestures and tones of Lord Brougham. How melancholy it is that a man of such exemplary life, such cultivated tastes, such political distinction, such Parliamentary tact, and such varied experience, should have so little confidence in himself, so little faith in his own principles, so little hope of sympathy in others, so little heart for a great venture, so little of romantic aspiration, and of firm resolve, and stern dutifulness to the unseen! How sad that he who might have had the affections of many, should have thought in a day like this that a statesman's praise lay in preserving the mean, not in aiming at the high; that to be safe was his first merit, and to kindle enthusiasm his most disgraceful blunder! How pitiable that such a man should not have understood that a body without a soul has no life, and a political party without an idea no unity!

CATHOLICUS
Appendix II - Biographical Entries

Sigla:  
LD = Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman  
DNB = Dictionary of National Biography  
SMB = The Shaping of Modern Britain (Evans)

George Berkeley (1685-1753), Anglican Bishop of Cloyne (Ireland), was a proponent of a philosophical movement that has been labeled “subjective idealism”; the city where the University of California is located was named after him.

Napoléon Bonaparte (15 August 1769, Ajaccio, Corsica- 5 May 1821, Saint Helena), Emperor of the French (20 March 1804-6 April 1814; Exile on Island of Elba’ “One Hundred Days”: 1 March 1815-22 June 1815).

Samuel Bosanquet (1800-1882) “educated at Eton and Christ Church, B.A. 1822. He was called to the bar at the Inner Temple in 1826 and he was one of the revising barristers appointed on the passing of the Reform Act of 1832. He contributed many leading articles to the Times and three articles to Brit. Crit., two of which he worked up into his volume on The Rights of the Poor and Christian Almsgiving vindicated, London 1841, in which he showed a strong sympathy for the poor and disillusionment with the Poor Laws. He published a number of miscellaneous works during his life, and was for thirty five years Chairman of the Monmouthshire Quarter Sessions.” (DNB) (LD, 7:510).

John William Bowden (1798-1844), Newman’s close friend at Trinity College. (LD, 1:328)

Henry Peter Brougham (1778-1868), First Baron Brougham and Vaux, a British writer, scientist, lawyer, abolitionist, educational reformer, and Whig politician, was also a found of the Edinburgh Review, the University of London, and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (DNB).

William Buckland (1784-1856), Waynflete Professor Mineralogy and Professor of Geology at Oxford (LD 1:329).

Bishop Joseph Butler (1692-1752), Anglican Bishop of Bristol (1738-50) and Durham (1750-52), influenced Newman through his Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed (1736).

George Canning (1770-1827) a follower of the younger Pitt and staunch Tory, served briefly as Prime Minister (1827) but died four months into his tenure (SMB, 188).

John Moore Capes (1812-1889) became a Roman Catholic in 1845, founded the Rambler in 1848, but rejoined the Church of England in 1870 and criticized Newman for accepting
the definition of infallibility; Capes returned to the Roman Catholic Church a dozen years later \((LD, 11:336)\).

Thomas \textbf{Carlyle} (1795-1881) was a leading essayist, historian, satirist and social critic in the Victorian era \((\text{http://www.dumfries-and-galloway.co.uk/people/carlyle.htm})\).

John Frederick \textbf{Christie} (1808-1860), student and fellow of Oriel (1829-1848), was rector of Ufton-Nervo, Berkshire (1847-1860). \((LD 2:403)\)

Richard William \textbf{Church} (1815-1890), fellow of Oriel, junior proctor who vetoed the condemnation of \textit{Tract XC}, later Dean of St. Paul’s (London).

Samuel Taylor \textbf{Coleridge} (1772-1834), philosopher and poet (“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” and “Kubla Khan”).

William \textbf{Cowper} (1731-1800) poet and hymnodist.

Paul Cardinal \textbf{Cullen} (1803-1878) was Rector of the Irish College in Rome (1832-1850) before being named Archbishop of Armagh in 1850 and Archbishop of Dublin in 1852 and in 1866 was the first Irish bishop to be named a cardinal.

Charles \textbf{Darwin} (1809-1882), a geologist and naturalist, whose \textit{On the Origins of Species} (1859) explained the diversity of in nature by the evolution of species through natural selection.

Thomas \textbf{Erastus} (1524-1583), a Swiss physician and theologian, provided his name for “Erastianism”—the doctrine that the state is supreme in religious matters.

Frederick William \textbf{Faber} (1814-1863), a graduate of Balliol College, Oxford, and later a Scholar (1835) and Fellow (1837) of University College, won the Newdigate Poetry Prize (1836); an Anglican deacon (1837) and priest (1839), he entered the Roman Catholic Church (November 1845) and was ordained a priest in 1847; he established the Wilfridians, who soon merged with the Oratorians; when an Oratorian house was founded in London (1849), first at King William Street and later in Brompton Road, Faber was superior, as well as being an indefatigable preacher, prolific Author and Hymn-Writer.

\textbf{Godfrey Fausset} (1780 or 81-1853), entered Corpus Christi College in 1797, B.A. 1801, and gained a Fellowship at Magdalen in 1802. He was appointed Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in 1827, and a Canon of Christ Church in 1840.

James Anthony \textbf{Froude} (1818-1894), son of Robert Hurrell Froude, was educated at Westminster School and Oriel College, Oxford; his publication of \textit{Nemesis of Faith} led to his resignation of his fellowship at Exeter College; subsequently, he was editor of
Fraser’s Magazine, rector of St. Andrew’s University and Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford.

Richard Hurrell Froude (1803-1836), son of Robert Hurrell Froude, was like Newman a fellow of Oriel and one of the leaders of the Oxford Movement until his early death (LD, 11: 340).

William Froude (1810-1879), son of Robert Hurrell Froude, graduated from Oxford with a first in mathematics and then worked for the South Eastern Railway before becoming a naval architect; his correspondence with Newman is reflected in the Grammar of Assent.

William Ewart Gladstone (1809-1898) was Chancellor of the Exchequer (1852-55, 1859-66, 1873-74, 1880-82) and Prime Minister (December 1868-February 1874; April 1880-June 1885; February-July 1886; August 1892-March 1894).

Edward Hawkins (1789-1882), a student at St. John’s, who graduated with a double first in 1811, was Newman’s predecessor as Vicar of St. Mary’s (1823-1828) and Provost of Oriel College (1828-1882). (LD 1:334).

David Hume (1711-1776), Scottish philosopher and skeptic, author of Essays Moral and Political and Philosophical Essays.

William Huskisson (1770-1830) an Tory MP and supporter of the younger Pitt, was a leader in the Liverpool administration regarding economic policies such as a return the gold standard and free trade (SMB, 164).


Sir Robert Inglis (1786-1855), Member of Parliament for Dundalk (1824-1826) and ripon (1828-1829) with the support of Newman, defeated Sir Robert Peel in the Oxford University by-election of 1829, and represented Oxford for the rest of his life. (LD 2:408)

Robert Banks Jenkinson, second Earl of Liverpool (1770-1828), a politician and Prime Minister during the rise of ‘liberal Toryism’ in the 1820’s (SMB, 153-154).

John Keble (1792-1866), Professor of Poetry at Oxford (1831-1841) and like Newman a fellow of Oriel College, gave the Assize Sermon on 14 July 1833, which Newman considered the beginning of the Oxford Movement; in 1836, Keble became Vicar of Hursley, a post that he would hold for the rest of his life (LD, 11:343).
Charles Kingsley (1819-1875), educated at Magdalene College, Cambridge.... He had religious doubts, resolved by reading the works of F. D. Maurice and others, reacted strongly against the Oxford Movement, and took Orders in 1842. In 1844 he married Fanny Grenfell, and was made Rector of Eversley, Hampshire. He became one of the Christian Socialists in 1848, and his first novels [e.g., Westward Ho!] were written under their influence. Later he developed a xenophobic patriotism and became an advocate of muscular Christianity.... After his death Newman wrote that he could not feel resentment towards Kingsley who had accidentally given him the opportunity to vindicate his career. He had hoped they might have met, and felt sure that he, Newman, would have felt no embarrassment (LD, 21:550).

William Lamb Viscount Melbourne (1779-1848) A Whig politician who was Prime Minister (1834-1835; 1835-1841), at other times represented loyal opposition to the Conservative party, and was an important advisor to the young Queen Victoria (SMB, 226).

Pierre-Simone Laplace (1749-1827), a French mathematician and astronomer, was a leading intellectual during the French Enlightenment.

Felicié Robert de Lamennais (1782-1854), a Roman Catholic priest who felt that the Church in France could have no real liberty under a royal government, was a co-founder of L'Avenir; after his views were rejected by Pope Gregory XVI (1765-1831-1846), he left the Church and died excommunicated.

Charles Lloyd (1784-1829). Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, was appointed Bishop of Oxford in 1827 (LD, 1:337)

John Locke (1632-1704), a philosopher, who is considered the first of the British Empiricists.

Stephen Lushington (1782-1873) A prominent judge and MP, was a liberal political and social reformer who was a founder of the S. D. U. K and spoke at the inauguration of London University (DNB).

Thomas Babington Macaulay, First Baron Macaulay, (1800-1859) was a poet, prominent historian, essayist, and Whig politician (DNB).

Henry Edward Manning (1808-1892), graduate of Balliol, Fellow of Merton, Rector of Wool Lavington and then of Graffham, Sussex, became a Roman Catholic and later Archbishop of Westminster (1865) and a Cardinal (1875). (LD, 2:409)

Walter Mayers (1790-1828), an Evangelical Anglican clergyman, was Senior Classical Master at Ealing School (1814-1822), while Newman was a student there; in his Apologia (4), Newman described Mayers as “the human means of the beginning of divine faith”
LD, 1:337); Mayers later became curate of Over Worton, where Newman preached his first sermon on 23 June 1824; four years later, Newman would preach the sermon at Mayers’ funeral.

James Mill (1773-1836) a utilitarian philosopher and political economist, and member of the “Philosophical Radicals” who promoted widespread social and political change in England (SMB, 20)

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), British philosopher, political economist, civil servant and Member of Parliament, was an influential liberal thinker of the 19th century

Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868), an Anglican cleric, professor of poetry (1821) and Bampton lecturer (1827) at Oxford, was the author of many historical works, including History of Christianity to the Abolition of Paganism in the Roman Empire (1840) and History of Latin Christianity (1855).

Anne Mozley (1809-1891), sister-in-law of Newman’s sisters, was asked by Newman to edit the letters of his Anglican years—a project which she was able to complete within a few weeks of his death: Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman during his Life in the English Church with a Brief Autobiography (LD, 25:488).

Thomas Mozley (1806-1893), a pupil of Newman and later fellow of Oriel, married Newman’s sister Harriet in 1836 and became a writer for The Times in 1844; his Reminiscences, Chiefly of Oriel College and Oxford Movement (1882) was severely criticized by Newman. (LD, 1:338)

Horatio Nelson (1758-1805), a British Admiral and Duke of Bronté, was victor over the French Fleet at the Battle of Cape Trafalgar, Spain (SMB, 130).

Isaac Newton (1643-1727), English philosopher, mathematician, scientist, published Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica (1687).

Charles Robert Newman (1802-1884), Newman’s younger brother, after working for the Bank of England (1825-1832) was supported by his family and lived in seclusion the last decades of his life in Tenby. (LD, 1:338)

Francis William Newman (1805-1897), Newman’s youngest brother, attended Worcester College and obtained a double first and was elected fellow of Balliol; from 1830 to 1833, he was a missionary in Persia; he was later Professor of Classical Literature at Manchester (1840-1846) and Professor of Latin at London (1846-1869); his Early History of Cardinal Newman (1891) was an indignant account of his older brother. (LD, 1:339)
Harriet Newman (1803-1852), Newman’s oldest sister, married Thomas Mozley in 1836 and broke off relations with her brother before his entrance into the Roman Catholic Church. (LD, 1:339)

Jemima Newman (1808-1879), Newman’s second sister, married John Mozley, a printer and publisher at Derby; while disapproving of Newman’s entrance into the Roman Catholic Church, she remained on relatively friendly terms with him. (LD, 1:339)


Mary Newman (1809-1828) was Newman’s youngest sister. (LD, 1:339)

Daniel O’Connell / Dónal Ó Conaill (1775-1847), aka “The Liberator” and “The Emancipator”; his election to the Parliament of the United Kingdom led to the “Emancipation Act” (1829).

Thomas Paine (1737-1809), deist and pamphleteer, author of The Age of Reason (SMB, 109).

William Paley (1743-1805), Christian utilitarian, author of Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy (1785) as well as Natural Theology (1802). This latter book provided an inferential method of correlation between new scientific theories and deist principles. The premise of the book rested heavily on the argument from design. Paley’s utilitarian and inferential approach was attacked by Newman (See Fletcher, “Newman and Natural Theology”, 28-29).

Roundell Palmer (1812-1896), brother of William Palmer of Magdalen, served as Solicitor General (1861-63), Attorney General (1863-66) and Lord Chancellor (1872-74, 1880-85); created Baron Selborne (1872), he was later named Earl of Selborne and Viscount Wolmer.

James Laird Patterson (1822-1902), a student at Trinity College, Oxford, who became a Roman Catholic in 1850; he was president of St. Edmund’s College, Ware (1870-1880) and then auxiliary bishop of Westminster (1880-1901). LD 21: 560

Dionysius Petavius, the Latinized name of Denis Pétau, S.J. (1583-1652), was a professor at various French universities and author of De theolgicis dogmatibus and Opus de doctrina temporum; a crater on the Moon named in his honor.
Henry **Phillpotts** (1778-1869) was the Bishop of Exeter and a staunch High Church Tory.

Edward Bouverie **Pusey** (1800-1882), like Newman a fellow of Oriel College and a leader of the Oxford Movement, was appointed Regius Professor of Hebrew and a Canon of Christ Church in 1828 (*LD*, 11:353).

David **Ricardo** (1772-1823) British economist who followed Adam Smith. He provided persuasive arguments for free trade that were implemented by the liberal Tories in the 1820’s ([http://www.policonomics.com/david-ricardo/](http://www.policonomics.com/david-ricardo/); *SMB*, 176).

Frederic **Rogers** (1811-1889), a pupil of Newman, who took a double first and was a Fellow of Oriel (1833-45), served in the government and was created Lord Blachford; after a falling out with Newman (1843-63), they were reconciled. (*LD*, 2:413)


Thomas **Scott** (1747-1821), rector of Aston Sandford and a founder of the Church Missionary Society, was famous for his *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (1788-1792); Scott was described by Newman in his *Apologia* as the person “to whom (humanly speaking), I almost owe my sole” (*LD*, 1:342)

Thomas **Short** (1789-1879), formerly a tutor at Rugby, became a fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, in 1816, where he served as tutor for four decades (1816-1856) and lived to see Newman named Trinity’s first honorary fellow (1878). (*LD*, 1:342-343.)

Charles **Simeon** (1759-1836), vicar of Holy Trinity, Cambridge, and one of the founders of the Church Missionary Society, has been considered one of the founds of the Evangelical movement.

Queen **Victoria** (1819-1901) arguably the most powerful politician of the nineteenth century, she helped shape and direct England throughout her reign (*SMB*, 341-342).

Arthur **Wellesley** (1769-1852), Duke of **Wellington**, was victor over Napoléon at the Battle of Waterloo (1815) and served as Prime Minister (1828-1830, 1834).

Richard **Whately** (1787-1863), fellow of Oriel and Principal of St. Alban Hall, where Newman was Vice Principal, was appointed Anglican Archbishop of Dublin in 1831 (*LD*, 1:345).

Henry William **Wilberforce** (1807-1873), fourth and youngest son of William Wilberforce, was Newman’s pupil at Oriel and graduated with a first in classics and a second in mathematics; married to a daughter of John Sargent, he became a Roman
Catholic in 1850; after serving as secretary of the Catholic Defence Association in Dublin he became proprietor and editor of the *Catholic Standard*. (*LD*, 2:415)

Samuel Wilberforce (1805-1873), third son of William Wilberforce, went up to Oriel in 1823; married to the oldest daughter of John Sargent, he was appointed Bishop of Oxford in 1845 and Bishop of Winchester in 1869 (*LD*, 2:415).

Nicholas Wiseman (1802-1865), rector of the English College in Rome (1828-40), president of Oscott College and coadjutor bishop of the Midland district (1840-47), bishop the London district (1847-50), was named cardinal and Archbishop of Westminster in 1850 (*LD*, 3:344).

Henry Arthur Woodgate (1801-1874), a student and fellow of St. John’s with a first in classics, who dedicated his Bampton lectures (*The Authoritative Teaching of the Church*) to Newman in 1839; the *Apologia* brought them together again (*LD*, 1:345-346).
Appendix III - Material relevant to the *Tamworth Reading Room*

1. Newman’s letter to his mother in the wake of Catholic Emancipation

[[To my Mother]]

March 1, 1829

We have achieved a glorious Victory. It is the first public event I have been concerned in, and I thank God from my heart both for my cause and its success. We have proved the independence of the Church and of Oxford. So rarely is either of the two in opposition to Government, that not once in fifty years can independent principle be shown; yet in these times, when its existence has been generally doubted, the moral power we shall gain by it cannot be overestimated. We had the influence of government in unrelenting activity against us—the ‘talent’ so called of the University, the Town Lawyers, who care little for our credit, the distance off and the slender means of our voters…. The ‘rank and talent’ of London came down superciliously to remove any impediment to the quiet passing of the Great Duke’s bill, confessing at the same time that of course the University would lose credit by turning about, whatever the Government might gain by it. They would make use of their suffrage, as members of the University to degrade the University. No wonder that such as I, who have not, and others who have, definite opinions in favour of Catholic Emancipation, should feel we have a much nearer and holier interest than the pacification of Ireland, and should with all our might resist the attempt to put us under the feet of the Duke and Mr Brougham.

Their insolence has been intolerable; not that we have done more than laugh at it. They have every where styled themselves the ‘talent’ of the University—that they have rank and station on their side, I know; and that we have the inferior Colleges and the humbler style of men; but as to talent, Whately with perhaps Hawkins is the only man of talent among the—as to the rest, any one of us in the Oriel Common Room will fight a dozen of them apiece—and Keble is a host—Balliol too gives us a tough set—and we have all the practical talent, for they have shown they are mere sucking pigs in their canvass and their calculations. Their excessive confidence amounted to infatuation. Several days since their London chairman wrote to Mr Peel assuring him of complete and certain success. They strutted about (peacocks!) telling our men who passed through London that they should beat by eight to one, and they wondered we should bring the matter to a poll. We endured all this, scarcely hoping for success, but determining, as good Churchmen and true, to fight for the principle, not consenting to our own degradation. I am sure I would have opposed Mr Peel, had there been only just enough with me to take off the appearance of egotism and ostentation, and we seriously contemplated, about ten days since, when we seemed to have too slight hopes of victory to put men to the expense of coming up, we, the residents seventy, simply and solemnly to vote against Mr Peel, though the majority against us might be many hundreds. How much of the Church's credit depended on us residents! and how
inexcusable we should have been, if by drawing back we had deprived our country friends of the opportunity of voting, and had thus in some sort betrayed them!

Well, the poor defenceless Church has borne the brunt of it -- and I see in it the strength and unity of Churchmen -- An hostile account in one of the Papers says, 'High and Low Church have joined, being set on ejecting Mr Peel. I am glad to say I have seen no ill humour anywhere. We have been merry all through it.'

Oriel College. Mar 4. 1829

My dear no, I will send this to you Jemima, and another to my Mother soon, for you have not had one on this grave business. However, since this is to be my famous ‘reason’ letter, you must be kind enough to read it to her, thanking her withal for her letter received yesterday morning.

1. Well then—take the case—Mr Peel changes his mind on the Catholic Question, resigns his seat—and is not re-proposed by his Society. Meddling individuals put him up again, the Anti Catholic leaders (old Die-in-the-breach and others) shrink back, the Town lawyers say it will be a bad thing for the success of their Political Schemes if he is not re-elected acknowledging the while Oxford will lose credit by his re-election, and all the influence of Government and the Aristocracy is brought into play. Now is not it hard that because a Minister chooses deliberately to change his opinion, that Oxford must suddenly in a few days change too?—And changing with a Minister incur the imputation of changing from interested motives? It is rather too much that MP’s change is to be sheltered by our change and that we are to whitewash him by our own disgrace. What is the reputation of the whole cabinet, great Captain and all, put together, compared with that of Oxford, built up (as it is) in the lapse of centuries. Oxford has never turned with the turn of fortune. Mistaken we may have been, but never inconstant. We kept to the Stuarts in misfortune. Better be bigoted than time-serving.—Our opinion of the Catholic Question is a fact of times gone by—it is a thing done—if a bigoted opinion, it remains so — we do not undo it, by now changing—we do no good—we only get the blame of worldly-mindedness. I am in the condition of one who opposes a measure (e.g.) when under deliberation, but resolves to act on it vigorously when determined on. While the petition was under debate, (we will say) I oppose it—but when it is carried and presented to the House, to reject Mr Peel is the step which necessarily follows. And I take it. But the truth is I am not for Catholic Emancipation—and I did not (128) oppose the Petition. I am in principal Anti Catholic—i.e. I think there is a grand attack on the Church in progress from the Utilitarians and Schismatics—and the first step in a long train of events is accidentally the granting these claims. Thus it is to me a matter of subordinate consequence whether they are granted or not—if granted, something fresh will be asked; say, the unestablishing of the Irish Protestant Church. If then I am for Catholic Emancipation it is not because I expect a ‘settling of the Question’, but because I think

2 LD, 2:125-126
that when the claims are granted, I shall fight the enemy on better ground and to more advantage. While then, on the one hand, my view of the Question enables me without much or even any repugnance to imply that opposition to the Claims which an opposition to Mr Peel seemed to intimated, on the other observe how vastly important is the maintenance of the credit of the University. In these perilous times the influence of the Church depends on its Character. It is not once in a Century that Oxford and the Church are in opposition to Government. I would not have lost this opportunity of showing our independence for the world. I look upon that opportunity as providential, and intended (probably) to bear upon times to come and events as yet undislosed. Even had I a strong opinion of the political advantage resulting for the Emancipation, yet the mere political advantage resulting from a display of integrity such as this is infinitely greater. And when we further think that we are appointed Guardians and Guides of Christ's Church, I am sure I cannot understand how any one soul (viewing things as we do) could do otherwise than reject Mr Peel even though the political evil were very great. In such cases we have no right to look to consequences. We must do our duty straightforward, and be faithful Servants to the Church, even could it be proved that commotions would arise in Ireland from our conduct; tho' such a prospect, if probable (which it is not at all) should of course make us more circumspect and wary before we decided on our line of conduct.

Dear me, when shall I get through my ‘reasons’—I have barely finished No 1 now. I hope you all are well....

3. Newman’s Letter to His Mother Concerning “Universal Education”

March 13, 1829

[[To my Mother]]

What a scribler I am become! but the fact is, my mind is so full of ideas [[in consequence of this important event]], and my views have so much enlarged and expanded...

We live in a novel era—one in which there is an advance towards universal education. Men have hitherto depended on others, and especially on the Clergy, for religious truth; now each man attempts to judge for himself. Now, without meaning of course that Christianity is in itself opposed to free inquiry, still I think it in fact at the present time opposed to the particular form which that liberty of thought has now assumed. Christianity is of faith, modesty, lowliness, subordination; but the spirit at work against it is one of (130) latitudinarianism, indifferentism, republicanism, and schism, a spirit which tends to overthrow doctrine, as if the fruit of bigotry, and discipline as if the instrument of priestcraft. All parties seem to acknowledge that the stream of opinion is setting against the Church. I do believe it will ultimately be separated from the State, and at this prospect I look with apprehension, 1. because all revolutions are awful things, and the effect of this revolution is unknown. 2. because the upper classes will be left almost religionless. 3 because there will not be that security for sound doctrine without change which is given by an Act of Parliament. 4 because the Clergy will be thrown on their

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3 LD, 2:127
Congregations for voluntary contributions. It is no reply to say that the majesty of Truth will triumph, for man's nature is corrupt; also, even should it triumph, still this will only be ultimately, and the meanwhile may last for centuries. Yet I do still think there is a promise of preservation to the Church, and, in its sacraments preceding and attending religious education, there are such means of heavenly grace, that I do not doubt it will live on in the most irreligious and atheistical times.

Its enemies at present are 1. the uneducated or partially educated mass in towns, whose organs are Wooler's, Carlisle's publications etc. They are almost professedly deistical or worse. 2 The Utilitarians, political economists, useful knowledge people -- their organs the Westminster Review, the London University, etc. 3 The schismatics, in and out of the Church, whose organs are the E[c]lectic Review, the Christian Guardian, etc. 4. The Baptists, whose system is consistent Calvinism, for, as far as I can see, Thomas Scott†1 etc are inconsistent, and such inconsistent men would in times of commotion split, and go over to this side or that. 5 the high circles in London. 6. I might add the political indifferentists, but I do not know enough to speak, like men who join Roman Catholics on one hand and Socinians on the other. Now you must not understand me as speaking harshly of individuals; I am speaking of bodies and principles.

And now I come to another phenomenon; the talent of the day is against the Church. The Church party, (visibly at least, for there may be latent talent, and great times give birth to great men,) is poor in mental endowments. It has not activity, shrewdness, dexterity, eloquence, practical powers. On what then does it depend? on prejudice and bigotry. This is hardly an exaggeration; yet I have good meaning and one honorable to the Church. Listen to my theory. As each individual has certain instincts of right and wrong, antecedently to reasoning, on which he acts and rightly so, which perverse reasoning may supplant, which then can hardly be regained, but, if regained, will be regained from a different source, from reasoning, not from nature, so, I think, has the world of men collectively. God gave them truths in His miraculous revelations, and other truths, in the unsophisticated infancy of notions, scarcely less necessary and divine. These are transmitted as ‘the wisdom of our ancestors’, through men, many of whom (131) cannot enter into them, or receive them themselves, still on, on, from age to age, not the less truths, because many of the generations, through which they are transmitted, are unable to prove them, but hold them either from pious and honest feeling (it may be) or from bigotry or from prejudice. That they are truths, it is most difficult to prove; for great men alone can prove great ideas or grasp them -- Such a mind was Hooker's, such Butler's; and, as moral evil triumphs over good on a small field of action, so in the argument of an hour, or the compass of a volume would men like Brougham, or again Wesley show to far greater advantage than Hooker or Butler—Moral truth is gained by patient study, by calm reflection, silently as the dew falls, unless miraculously given, and, when gained, it is transmitted by faith and by ‘prejudice.’ Keble’s book is full of such truths; which any Cambridge man might refute with the greatest ease.4

4 LD, 2:129
4. Excerpt of Henry Brougham’s Speech at the University of Glasgow

To those, too, who feel alarmed as statesmen, and friends of existing establishments, I would address a few words of comfort. Real knowledge never promoted either turbulence or unbelief; but its progress is the forerunner of liberality and enlightened toleration. Whoso dreads these, let him tremble; for he may be well assured that their day is at length come and must put to sudden flight the evil spirits of tyranny and persecution, which haunted the long night now gone down the sky. As men will no longer suffer themselves to be led blindfold in ignorance, so will they no more yield to the vile principle of judging and treating their fellow creatures, not according to the intrinsic merit of their actions, but according to the accidental and involuntary coincidence of their opinions. The Great Truth has finally gone forth to all the ends of the earth, THAT MAN SHALL NO MORE RENDER ACCOUNT TO MAN FOR HIS BELIEF, OVER WHICH HE HAS HIMSELF NO CONTROL. Henceforward, nothing shall prevail upon us to praise or to blame any one for that which he can no more change than he can the hue of his skin or the height of his stature. Henceforward, treating with entire respect those who conscientiously differ from ourselves, the only practical effect of the difference will be, to make us enlighten the ignorance on one side or the other from which it springs, by instructing them, if it be theirs; ourselves, if it be our own, to the end that the only kind of unanimity may be produced which is desirable among rational beings the agreement proceeding from full conviction after the freest discussion.

5. Excerpt of Lushington’s Speech at the Opening of the University of London

Though the Metropolis of almost every country in Europe, has enjoyed and appreciated the benefits of an University she [London], the queen of cities, the emporium of the world…has had to lament the want of an establishment, where her sons might obtain that liberal acquaintance with learning and science, which is the best guide to the honourable acquisition of wealth, contributes most to its due enjoyment, and is its proudest ornament when attained.

England has indeed to boast of those venerable seats of learning the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, which the munificence of our forefathers prepared for us: but the demand for public instruction, the desire, nay, I may add the necessity of obtaining knowledge, classical and scientific, have increased so rapidly, that Oxford and Cambridge are utterly inadequate to supply the wants of the nation. The great expense attending education in those Universities, the distance from the home of the parent, the exclusion of all who do not conform to the Established Church, necessarily prevent a large proportion of the youth of this kingdom from resorting thither. Can any man contend that an Institution which diminishes the expense, which brings the means of acquiring knowledge closer to the home of the parent, which expands its portals with equal hospitality to all without distinction, will not confer an inestimable boon on learning and science? Have we not with one common consent of all parties and

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5 Brougham, Speeches, 128.
denominations agreed to educate the whole population of the country? Are we to stop short in this splendid career? Will any one argue for limiting the degree of cultivation which the human intellect shall receive, or establishing a monopoly to be enjoyed only by the few, whose wealth renders expense undeserving of consideration, and who are of one denomination of the Christian Church only? . . . Amongst the many benefits likely to arise, my mind dwells with peculiar satisfaction on the expectation, that in this place, by the association and union of all, without exclusion or restriction, friendships will be formed in early days, which long remembered, as our youth are embarked on the ocean of life, will cement the bond of charity, and soften those asperities which ignorance and separation have fostered.\(^6\)


Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.) Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of

\(^6\) Lushington, *Statement by the Council of the University of London*, 52-54.
this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among them which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

7. Text of the Morning Chronicle’s review of the Catholicus Letters

The growing spirit of Puseyism in the Church appears thus far to have worked tolerably well in harness with Toryism. But the symptoms of restiveness are beginning to show themselves, which plainly indicate that such will not be the case long. Nor is it difficult to foresee that eventually this Popish heresy in a Protestant Establishment will split the Tory faction into fragments incapable of any further re-union.

With the Toryism of two centuries ago, Puseyism might have permanently amalgamated. But it has come too late into the world. Modern Toryism is quite a different affair from the absolutism and Jacobitism to which it has succeeded. The vitality of principle is gone; and the carcass is only animated by the demon of expediency. The professed attachment of Toryism to national institutions never regards the idea and final cause of those institutions, but some sinister class interest which, in them it would conserve. In Democracy, it only beholds the materials for corruption. In Sovereignty, not the personified unity of the state, but an agency for securing the ascendancy of a party. And its church is a fat provision for the juniors of great families and their toadeaters; or a useful organization for electioneering and other influences, but not an institution for the spiritual culture of the community. The party wants the middle classes, and has occasional need of the multitude. It coquets with all popular notions. It temporizes and accommodates. It dabbles and traffics in reforms and emancipations. It is great in tricks and tactics. It is a thing of shreds and patches.

Not so Puseyism. That is earnest and uncompromising. It disclaims and disdains expediency. The vigour of old Papal Rome is in the cohesion and boldness of its pretensions. Whatever is incongruous with itself it smites and spares not. It claims to be god upon earth, and commands intelligence like a slave. It heeds not interests. Its moralists tell us that men are born slaves; that slavery is the necessity of their nature. The one duty of its education is obedience; first to the parent, then to the State; above all to the Church. Such is its Jacob’s ladder up to the heights of its own supremacy. The union of Puseyism and Toryism is that of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza rolled into one fat single gentleman. The particles must fly off. Else there is no such power in the nature of things as repulsion.

Were the Tories reinstated, they could never get through the work of office with Puseyism on their backs. Their appointments in the Church, dictated by worldly policy; their tampering with Dissenters and their concessions on such points as education would all be sacrilege to the Puseyites. And they would be annoyed, on the other hand, with more propositions for depopulating the large towns, for enforcing the observance of fast days and saints’ days, and for the revival of obsolete ceremonies to the unbounded horror and alarm of all the evangelical population. But Puseyism is an iron mace; Toryism, a rope of sand....
The columns of the *Times* itself are thrown open to this sect for attacks upon Sir Robert Peel. We do not say the attacks are not well founded. His sincerity of speech is impeached in the form of a compliment to his understanding. His philosophy is shown to be superficial. The low-toned character of his morality is exposed. His shiftings, turnings, and inconsistencies, to catch this or that class, are laid bare unmercifully. The conviction of his thorough want of mental honesty is enforced. Now this is all very sound and true. We have not now to learn what sort of person it pleases the Tories to follow, or rather to drive before them, as their leader. The instructive part of the matter is in such an exhibition of the portrait-painting power of Puseyism. The sect speaks out; while other Tories conceal their lack of respect, because they think Peel convenient. Puseyism is insurgent against the first law of Tory union and co-operation. It forbids the use of plausibilities to the man who lives by plausibilities; who is himself only one great plausibility. Will not doings like this make havoc in the camp? Another of the stern fraternity was yesterday introduced by the *Times* with a flourish of trumpets, to make proclamation to the House of Lords against duelling. The Puseyites work out their morality into politics and practice. They do not play at religion and righteousness according to the good old conventional ways of the Church. They are all for realities. We like their spirit. But it will never do with the Tories...

[We] are mistaken in the Puseyites if they will either put up with a rebuff or consent to a compromise. With the exception of their dishonest participation in the moneys of the National Church—and they, doubtless, make that out, somehow, to their own consciences—they have all the marks of the most right-down earnestness that the world has seen, in religion, since the times of the Puritans and the Reformers. The genuine ecclesiastical spirit is strong in them. They are as obstinate as Thomas à Beckett. The soft, slimy substance is already squashing beneath their feet. They are the iron of the composite image, and woe betide its clay.

But for the entire party, as a party, the position is rather a ridiculous one. Its own principle is at war with its own policy. By its unprincipledness it has fished for the alliance of Puseyism and Puseyism comes into the alliance to denounce its unprincipledness. The incongruous compound cannot long hold together; but its momentary existence is one of the strangest novelties of the nineteenth century.7

8. Excerpt on *The Catholicus Letters in The Rambler*

We have now reached the year of hottest warfare, when the movement suddenly shewed itself before the world in its true colours... How strange and unexpected had been its progress up to 1841, was proved by a singular step taken in its regard by a no less acute observer than the proprietor of the *Times* newspaper. Another acute observer of the signs of the age, the late Sir Robert Peel, had just issued a manifesto of his opinions on the influence of secular knowledge on the wellbeing of man. The “Address”... exhibited the great baronet as a patron of principles hitherto supposed peculiar to the

7 *The Morning Chronicle*, 12 February 1841.
school of Brougham, of the Whigs and the Radicals. With all his characteristic complacency, Sir Robert announced his adhesion to the system which advocates mental cultivation apart from religion; or, as he would have stated it, in connexion with such comprehensive ideas on religion as would embrace alike the Catholic and the Socinian, the Anglican and the Quaker. The liberal press of the day was fairly thrown into ecstasy at the conversion of so illustrious an individual; Tories and High Churchmen looked askance, or frowned severe; and the Address was read and commented on with no little marvel as to the ultimate development of its authors’ views.

Among other journalists, the late Mr. Walter, chief proprietor and manager of the Times considered that the time was come for “taking up” Puseyism, and for striking a heavy blow at the latitudinarian Peel in the columns of his paper. Little foreseeing what a manifestation of the tendencies of the movement was on the eve of appearing, and still less anticipating that a day was at hand when he would treat the outward marks and works of Puseyism as a personal insult to himself, Mr. Walter visited Mr. Newman at Oriel College, and urged him again and again to write against Peel's Address in the Times newspaper. This was in the month of February, and but one month before the publication of Tract 90, and supplies perhaps as curious an instance as could be named of the miscalculations into which the most accomplished watchers of public opinion are frequently betrayed. At length Mr. Newman consented to the request, and a series of letters speedily appeared, with the signature of “Catholicus,” which set the quidnuncs gossiping throughout the kingdom, and handled Sir Robert with a delicacy and severity of satire and argumentative dissection, compared to which the ruder attacks of which he had been the frequent subject in the House of Commons were as a game of play. Some few knew the authorship of the letters; others guessed it, for it was difficult indeed not to detect the well-known style; but of the innumerable readers of the Times, on the whole, comparatively few ever learnt whose was the hand that inflicted the scourging.⁸

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⁸ Capes, “The Rise, Progress, and Results of Puseyism,” 81-82.
## Appendix IV – Press Reception of Peel’s Address and the *Catholicus* Letters

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