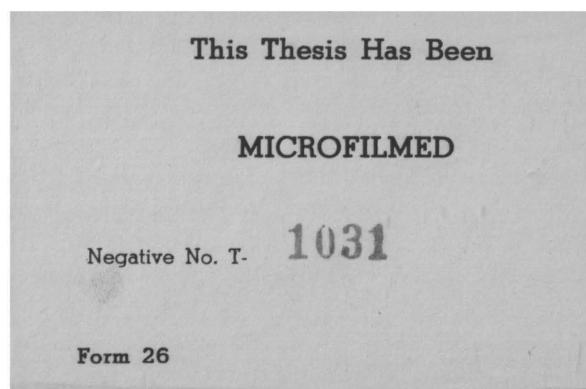
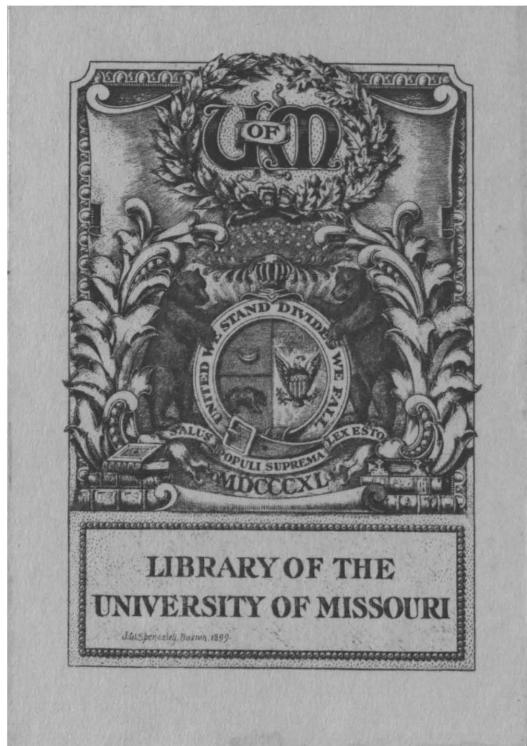


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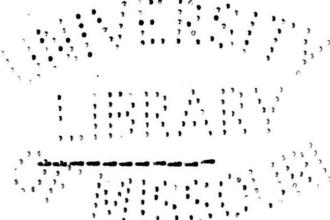


T H E   P R A G M A T I S M   I N

JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN .

by

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N .



## INTRODUCTION.

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The purpose of this essay is to discuss the pragmatic implications of Newman's Philosophy. We propose to deal first with the point of antagonism found for Newman and the Pragmatists in 'Rationalism'; second, to analyze the grounds for the revolt; third, to discuss Newman's relation to the Pragmatic test of truth, using his 'Development of Doctrine' as the basis for our comparison; fourth, to discuss Newman's theory of belief and the Pragmatic 'Will to believe'; fifth, to analyze and define this faith relation and discuss the identity of the two doctrines; sixth, we shall give a general discussion, dealing with the 'Illative Sense' and the relation of Newman and James in their doctrines of 'certitude'.

There is no doubt that were Newman here to be called a Pragmatist, he would resent it as much as he did the charge of Principal Fairbairn, who called him a philosophical sceptic. Newman would be the last one to countenance the drift of the Modernists in the Catholic Church; yet he seems to be their historical and logical father. He was a Catholic by nature, as well as a rigid logician; and he tried to find a consistent logical system to give himself logical justification before the world. He failed in this. His personality has attracted many to the

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Roman Catholic Church, but his logic is fatal alike to the Protestantism of an infallible book, and to the Catholicism of an infallible Church. The logical application of Newman's own reasoning to his conclusions is always disastrous. The illative sense has no authority outside of the mind of the individual; it is but the activity of the "living mind" which is personal in all of its judgment. And Newman distinctly states that there is no common measure between minds.<sup>1</sup> All Newman has done is to give an account of why he himself became a Catholic. He never really and seriously argues for Roman Catholicism; the one and only thing he does is to show why he himself became a Roman Catholic. Almost incidentally, one might say, he lays down as an hypothesis, the unifying power of the authority of the Catholic Church, but his overt reasonings run along a different course. His doctrine of development is set forth as a universal principle, and then argumentatively applied to the development of the church. The illative sense is but an explanation of how the "living mind" actually works in coming to any and all conclusions. If a man reaches a wrong conclusion, or a false certitude by the exercise of his Illative Sense, he has exercised it on wrong material, "on mistaken elements of thought".<sup>2</sup>

Although many of Newman's devotees would repudiate his being called a pragmatist, Schiller and James saw in him one of their own kind. James refers to him in his various discussions, and Schiller declares his sympathy with his main work, "The Grammar of Assent". Not only does

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1. Grammar of Assent, p345  
2. ibid p380



Schiller openly ally himself with Newman's theory of belief, but he also identifies William James's teaching with his own and Newman's in this particular.<sup>1</sup> Henri Bremond in his "The Mystery of Newman" sets Newman up as a precursor of the pragmatic doctrine of "action". These, however, few instances will serve as a sufficient justification <sup>for</sup> attempting a thesis on the "Pragmatism in Cardinal Newman".

We wish to fortify ourself against the charge of using a text-proof method. We have not used this method. We have related the drift of the arguments to the confessed purposes of each writer, giving, as will be noticed, the overt purpose of each writer in his own words, and then following out the line of reasoning intended by him.

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1. James, "Will to Believe", pp. 10, 204. Varieties of Religious Experiences, pp. 434, 442, 459. Schiller, Studies in Humanism, pp. 136, 353; Formal Logic, p207.



C H A P T E R I.

T H E R E A C T I O N A G A I N S T R A T I O N A L I S M A N D F O R M A L L O G I C .



## I

## THE REACTION AGAINST RATIONALISM AND FORMAL LOGIC.

To rightly understand any philosophy one has to understand in a large measure that which it seeks to replace or overthrow. To understand the point of contact between Newman and the Pragmatists, we must find the common point of antagonism. This antagonism is to be found in the 'absolute', intellectualistic systems, for James and Schiller; who, I am assuming, are fair representatives of the pragmatic movement. Hegel is a representative of the type of philosophy which the Pragmatists are combating. It is his pure thought categories, and intellectual abstractions, which offend the Pragmatists. Newman's point of antagonism is in the philosophies of such men as Locke and Hume. Hume's critical philosophy to Newman was nothing but scepticism. Locke's philosophy based belief upon the logical process of inference, while Newman contended that belief, or assent, is a distinct act of the mind apart from inference. Locke argued that belief was proportionate to the evidence; that is, that there are degrees in assent. Newman said that assent is an unconditional act of the mind, and is indivisible. The common point of agreement with James, Schiller and Newman is their empirical conception of truth. All knowledge for the Pragmatists is empirical; "the senses" are no "organs of wavering allusion that stand in the way of 'knowledge'". The discussion in this essay will bring out



the fact that Newman was very largely empirical in his method.

The intellectualist creed, as James understood it, is given by him in these words of Malbranche:- "Your sensational modalities are but darkness, remember that. Mount higher, up to reason, and you will see light. Impose silence on your senses, your imagination, and your passions, and you will hear the pure voice of interior truth, the clear and evident replies of our common mistress-(reason). Never confound that evidence which results from the comparison of ideas with the vivacity of those feelings which move and touch you...We must follow reason despite the caresses, the threats and insults of the body to which we are conjoined, despite the action of the objects which surround us..". I exhort you to recognize the difference between knowing and feeling, between our clear ideas, and our sensations always obscure and confused<sup>1</sup>. He puts it thus in his own words, "For rationalistic writers conceptual knowledge was not only more noble knowledge, but it originated independently of all perceptual particulars. Such concepts as God, perfection, eternity, infinity, immutability, identity, absolute beauty, truth, justice, necessity, freedom, duty, worth, etc., and the part they play in the mind, are, it was supposed, impossible to explain as results of practical experience"<sup>2</sup>!

It is this supremacy which the intellect was given during the nineteenth century that the Pragmatists and Newman were challenging. With the intellect crowned supreme, the thought of a real human impulse as a

1. Some Problems in Philosophy, p76  
2. ibid p55



determining factor in, or medium of, knowledge was tabooed.

In the critical philosophy of the rationalists we find that the tendency was to suspend judgment and action until a consistent logical basis could be found. Personal venture was discountenanced. Everything was thought of in universal categories. Locke advanced the philosophy of Berkeley enough to get away from the undue emphasis laid upon the philosophic truth hidden in the theory of 'innate ideas', but his a priori demands on belief did not give Newman enough room for his moral interests. Newman felt that Locke's philosophy confined religious belief to the few choice souls who might have the leisure and culture to work out a consistent and substantiated theory of belief. These could smother their "enthusiasm", to use Locke's own phrase. But Newman contended that we should make a psychological analysis of our minds, and accept the inductive results. How the mind really acts is right; not how it should act according to any conceptual theory brought to it. Newman says, "He(Locke) takes a view of the human mind, in relation to inference and assent, which to me seems theoretical and unreal. Reasonings and convictions which I deem natural and legitimate, he apparently would call irrational, enthusiastic, perverse and immoral; and that, as I think, because he consults his own ideal of how the mind ought to act, instead of interrogating human nature, as an existing thing, as it is



found in the world. Instead of going to the psychological facts, and thereby determining our constitutive faculties and our proper condition, and being content with the mind as God made it, he would form men as he thinks they ought to be formed, into something better and higher, and calls them irrational and indefensible, if (so to speak) they take to water, instead of remaining under the wings of his own arbitrary theory".<sup>1</sup>

Schiller attacks the absolutists for "etherealizing" and "depersonalizing" truth, which together effect "the complete dehumanizing<sup>2</sup> of knowledge". He explains what he means by "etherealizing" truth thus: "By the etherealizing of truth is meant the abstraction from actual use and verification of an assertion, which is made in assuming that its truth is independent of its application. This really destroys its whole significance although at first it seems to leave its 'truth' a matter of self-consistency and intrinsic 'coherence'. But if we try to take truth in a purely formal way, we identify truth with claim to truth, and render the testing of claims extra-logical".<sup>3</sup> And Schiller goes on to comment upon logic, which is the great weapon of the intellectualists, thus: "It is difficult to suppose...that when the intellectualistic Logic fully realizes the situation to which its abstractions lead, it will continue to presume without trial that the full concreteness of the psychic process is logical irrelevance, and that man is a negligible quantity in the

- . 1. Grammar of Assent, p164, p216
- 2. Studies in Humanism, pl11
- 3. ibid pl11



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formation of truth".



C H A P T E R   II.

BASIS OF REACTION AGAINST THE RATIONALISTS.



## II.

## BASIS OF REACTION AGAINST THE RATIONALISTS.

Let us analyze the ground of protest on which Newman and the Pragmatists stand and find out what are the specific factors they have in common.

They all agree in holding that knowledge is extra-logical; that logic has been exalted to a place which it cannot fill; that logic cannot reveal to us the nature of the universe, but that it can only help us to order and systematize what is known.

William James says "Conceptual knowledge is forever inadequate to the fullness of the reality to be known. Reality consists of existential particulars as well as essences and universals and class-names, and of existential particulars we become aware only in the perceptual flux".<sup>1</sup> He further states that concepts are secondary formations,<sup>2</sup> inadequate, and only ministerial. He contends in his "Pluralistic Universe" that philosophy is a passionate vision rather than a matter of logic,<sup>3</sup> "logic only finding reasons for the vision afterwards". And again in the same work he says "that secret of a continuous life which the universe knows by heart and acts on every instant cannot be a contradiction incarnate. If logic says so, so much the worse for logic. Logic being the lesser thing, the static incomplete, must succumb to

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1. Some Problems in Philosophy, p78
  2. ibid p79
  3. Pluralistic Universe, p176



reality, not reality to logic." "The essence of life is its continuously changing character; but our concepts are all discontinuous and fixed, and the only mode of making them coincide with life is by arbitrarily supposing positions of arrest therein. With such arrests our concepts may become congruent. But these concepts are not parts of reality, not real positions taken by it, but suppositions rather, notes taken by ourselves, and you can no more dip up the substance of reality with them than you can dip up water with a net, however finely meshed."<sup>1</sup> "Logic has an imperishable use in human life, but it is not to make us acquainted with the essential nature of reality....Reality, life, experience, concreteness, immediacy, use what word you will, exceeds our logic, overflows and surrounds it. If you like to use words eulogistically, and so encourage confusion, you may say that reality obeys a higher logic or enjoys a higher rationality".<sup>2</sup> These quotations bear out the contention that James considers pure reason and formal logic inadequate to inform us as to the essential nature of reality.

Schiller adopts the same attitude toward logic as James does. He delivers a rather slashing criticism on 'formal logic' in his book by that title, a criticism probably more eloquent than judicial. He sums up his contention against formal logic in words that will find a fuller meaning in relation to this essay as the discussion grows. He sums up thus, "it has resulted from the formal interpretation of its

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1. Pluralistic Universe, p207

2. ibid p212



function (1) that the Syllogism could not itself secure the truth of its premises, but could only demand them, and that the truth of all its conclusions was in consequence conditional. (2) The 'necessity of thought' which it professed to display, lay merely in an ex post facto reflection upon the completed form, and did not exist in the actual reasoning. (3) The actual construction of the syllogism had to be declared extra-logical, because, (4) the notion of valid inference was void and Inference as such was extra-logical. (5) Even intrinsically, no conclusion of a syllogism need be admitted as a matter of form, because it was possible to accuse its Middle of ambiguity, and to this charge no formal answer could be given. (6) Formally the Syllogism was either a petitio Principii or a tautology, according as it did, or did not, claim novelty for its conclusion. (7) The non-syllogistic forms were no better than the syllogism. (8) Neither the passage through a universal rule nor the appeal to universal dicta added anything to the real force of the argument". In almost the same connection he continues his criticism of the Syllogism, which is to him professedly the representative of formal logic. Quoting further, "...the syllogism, in order to acquire real meaning, has to sacrifice many ancient claims. It cannot no longer pretend (1) to yield absolute certainty and to relieve the mind from further questionings; or (2) to compel assent; or (3) to account for the course of thought; or (4) to 'demonstrate' conclusions with 'absolute' certainty; or (5) to



be undeniable in virtue of its mere form; or (6) to be the only form in actual use; or (7) that the use of forms makes an argument ipso facto valid, because (8) it is no longer tenable to think that mere forms have any meaning.<sup>1</sup> These two paragraphs are a good summary of the position taken by the three men in opposition to conceptualism and intellectualism. The old schools of logic fall beneath the displeasure of the Pragmatists and Newman alike.

Newman's "Grammar of Assent" and also his "Oxford Sermons" deal with very much the same subject matter as does James's "Pluralistic Universe", and Schiller's "Formal Logic". And for Newman, the same as for Schiller, the syllogism is the rock of offense. Newman uses the terms 'inference' and 'reason' many times interchangably and often with confusion. In the first of Newman's works mentioned in this paragraph he says "As to logic, its chain of conclusions hang loose at both ends; both the point from which it starts, and the points at which it should arrive, are beyond its reach; it comes short both of first principles and concrete issues. Even its most elaborate exhibitions fail to represent adequately the sum total of considerations by which the individual mind is determined in its judgment of things; even the most careful combinations made to bear on a conclusion want that steadiness of aim which is necessary for hitting it...thought is too keen and manifold, its sources are too remote and hidden, its path too personal,



delicate, and circuitous, its subject matter too various and intricate, to admit of the trammels of any language, of whatever subtlety and of  
<sup>1</sup>  
whatever compass". "Common sense, chance, moral perception, genius, the great discoverers of principles do not reason. They have no arguments, no grounds, they see truth, but they do not know how they see it. And if at any time they attempt to prove it, it is as much a matter of experiment with them, as if they had to find a road to a distant mountain, which they see with the eye, and they get entangled, embarrassed,  
<sup>2</sup>  
and perchance overthrown in the superfluous endeavor." "What logic cannot do, my living personal reasoning, my good sense, which is the healthy condition of such personal reasoning, but which cannot adequately express itself in words, does for me!".. "The processes of reasoning which lead to assent, to action to certitude, are in fact too multi-form, subtle, omnigenous, too implicit, to allow of being measured by rule,...they are after all personal, - verbal argumentation being useful only in subordination to a higher logic". Logic cannot take cognizance of the workings of reality. Man gains certitude, "as is plain, not by any possible enumeration of all the considerations, minute but abundant, delicate but effective, which bring him to it; but by a mental comprehension of the whole case, and a discernment of its upshot, sometimes after much deliberation, but, it may be, by a clear and rapid act of the intellect, always, however, by an unwritten summing-up, some-

1. Grammar of Assent, p284
2. ibid p380
3. ibid p300
4. ibid p302-3



thing like the summation of the terms, plus and minus of an algebraical  
 1 series." "Inference, considered in the sense of verbal argumentation,  
 determines neither our principles, nor our ultimate judgments,... it is  
 2 neither the test of truth, nor the adequate basis of assent".

As a parallel to Jame's statement that philosophy is a matter of passionate vision rather than of logic, logic only finding reasons for the vision afterwards, I wish to quote a passage from the "Development of Doctrine". Newman says that man is led to "regard as consequences, and to trace to principles, what hitherto he has discerned by a moral perception, and adopted on sympathy; and logic ~~is~~ brought in to  
 3 arrange and inculcate what no science was employed in gaining." In this connection we are led to see that there is sympathy between Newman's philosophy and the subconscious teaching of the Pragmatists. He seems to have the same idea of a spontaneous process going on in the mind of the individual; accepting the position that ideas well up out of a vague feeling background. He continues to write on this same principle, saying, "And so in the same way, such intellectual processes, as are carried on silently and spontaneously in the mind of a party of a school, of necessity come to light at a later date and are recognized, and their issues are scientifically arranged. And then logic has the further function of propagation; analogy, the nature of the case, antecedent probability, application of principles, congruity,

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1. Grammar of Assent, p291-292
  2. ibid p287
  3. p190



expediency, being some of the methods of proof by which the development is continued from individual to mind and established in the faith in the community".<sup>1</sup>

We are now enabled to draw a few definite conclusions about the positions of Newman, James, and Schiller toward the old rationalistic philosophy. First, they agree in rejecting the authority of 'pure reason'; second, they agree that the method of approach is of a practical nature; third, they agree that logic is but a means of organizing what we already know; and fourth, they alike make their appeal to the psychological facts of experience.

The main ground of protest against the old philosophy is that it is static. Newman's attitude toward the Greek Church is somewhat like the Pragmatist's attitude against the intellectualistic philosophy of such men as Hegel. The Pragmatists want a method of approach which is consistent with the facts of experience, and which will serve the interests of men, not one into which man must force himself according to some artificial conception. James's great plea is for a universe still in the making. Newman wanted a church which was ever interpreting the developing life of Christianity. The Protestants stood for a book in which God's revelation was completed and interpreted; but Newman wanted something more consistent with the actual facts of history. He wanted a method which would keep time

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with the unfolding meaning of Christianity; hence he wrote his "Development of Christian Doctrine". While he is primarily concerned with establishing the historical genuineness of the Roman Catholic Church and the validity of its doctrines, he nevertheless lays down a test for truth which has a vital philosophic meaning for us in comparing him with the Pragmatists. His metaphysical attitude towards the nature of reality does not concern us here, nor does it affect the philosophic implications of his principles of epistemology. His absolute and dualistic conceptions are not made valid by his method of knowledge. He postulates a world made in the wisdom of God, and makes man a mere incident in it as much as Calvin does, who might be looked upon as a religious precursor of such teaching as is found in a system of philosophy of Idealistic Monism, or the Critical Idealism of Royce. The real point of interest for us is, the method by which we come to know the universe. An idea gets itself recognized by social interaction; its history is in experience, a progressive or growing process. It is dependent upon its environment for its meaning and its life. <sup>1</sup> The test of a true idea or development is the burden of the "Development of Doctrine"; and it is in comparison with the pragmatic test of truth that we next wish to discuss Newman's philosophy.



C H A P T E R      III.

NEWMAN AND THE PRAGMATIC TEST OF TRUTH.



## III.

## NEWMAN AND THE PRAGMATIC TEST OF TRUTH.

We said in the last chapter that it is Newman's principle of method in which we are pragmatically interested, not to show that he found 'absolute' truth, but to show that he laid down a method by which man learns to know what is true. We are not especially interested in Newman's conclusions, nor in the fact that his theory of 'probability', a Lockian doctrine, and his theory of 'conscience', taken from Bishop Butler, are incompatible, but we are interested in finding the pragmatic tendencies in Newman and in setting them forth in comparison with the doctrines of the leading Pragmatists.

The Pragmatists' test of truth as given by James in interpreting Dewey, Schiller, and himself in agreement, is as follows: "A new opinion counts as 'true' just in proportion as it gratifies the individual's desire to assimilate the novel in his experience to his beliefs in stock. It must both lean on old truth and grasp new fact; and its success...in doing this, is a matter for the individual appreciation. When old truth grows, then, by new truths addition, it is for subjective reasons. We are in the process and obey the reasons. That new idea is truest which performs most felicitously its function of satisfying our double urgency. It makes itself true, gets itself classed as true, by the way it works; grafting itself then upon the ancient



body of truth, which thus grows much as a tree grows by the activity of  
<sup>1</sup>  
a new layer of cambium". "True ideas are those that we can assimilate, corroborate, and verify. False ideas are those we cannot. That is the practical difference it makes to us to have true ideas; that therefore  
<sup>2</sup>  
is the meaning of truth, for it is all that truth is known as". "Knowledge grows in extent and in trustworthiness by successful functioning, by the assimilation and incorporation of fresh material by the previously existing bodies of knowledge. These 'systems' are continually verifying themselves, proving themselves true by their 'consequences',  
<sup>3</sup>  
by their power to assimilate, predict and control fresh 'fact'.

In analysing the foregoing citations we find (1) that the question of truth arises out of a situation of need, of difficulty; (2) that which helps one satisfactorily to solve the problem is true; (3) that the criterion of this situation is in the desire and appreciation of the individual; (4) that the true idea marries the old beliefs to the new facts; (5) that this situation is in a process of flux of experience; and (6) that true ideas are those which can predict, control, assimilate and incorporate fresh fact and be verified.

It will be well for us to remember the essential difference in the conventional metaphysics of Newman and the empirical philosophy of the Pragmatists. Newman assumes that God makes the ideas and gives them to the world for man to learn through experience. That is, the

1. Pragmatism, p63,64
2. Meaning of Truth, pVII
3. Studies in Humanism, p194,195



idea is germinal with all that grows out of it. And let us remember that his theory of development is a method by which he tries to prove that the Church of Rome is the true Church. He does not try to prove his theory of development by the postulate of the Church's authority, although his loose thinking and complex argument might lay him open to such a criticism.

With the Pragmatists all that is postulated is a world of experience, which is transformed by the purposes of the persons who are in and of this flux. The fact that an idea is verified proves that it was verifiable; it proves that that fact of experience was potential with the truth verified. Reality is the flux of our sensations; sensations forced upon us, coming we know not whence. Over their nature and quantity we have no control. "They are neither false nor true; they simply are". Newman expresses about the same conception when he says, "All that we know, strictly speaking, is the existence of the <sup>1</sup>impressions our senses make upon us." Hence the problem set by Newman and the Pragmatists is the same. They want to find out what the universe means in the terms of the 'purposes' or 'meanings' imposed upon this world of sensation and experience. In both cases this is an evolutionary process, in which a fact is evaluated as true according to its functioning power.

There is a common recognition of the dualism of common sense

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by these men. James says, "My statement of truth is realistic, and follows the epistemology of common sense".<sup>1</sup> This same position is taken by Newman in his "Grammar of Assent" when he is discussing 'first principles'.<sup>2</sup>

It will be necessary to get a general idea of what Newman means by development of ideas. He says progress is a living growth, not a mechanism, and its instruments are mental acts, not formulas and contrivances of language. There are true and false developments; the true developments are those which work, which are verified in experience, and the false are those which die, or which cannot be verified. A true development is one that is faithful to the idea from which it started.<sup>3</sup> A development unfaithful to the idea from which it started is false - is a 'corruption'.

Our minds are ever passing judgment on the things that come before us. "No sooner do we apprehend than we judge: we allow nothing to stand by itself; we compare, contrast, abstract, generalize, connect, adjust, classify: and we view all our knowledge in the associations with which these processes have invested." These judgments, becoming aspects of the mind, are of two kinds; those which are temporary, and those which remain fixed. The temporary are false, being merely subjective, the permanent are true, finding objective verification. "The idea which represents an object or a suppose object is commensurate with the sum total of its possible aspects, however they may vary in the separate conscious-

1. Meaning of Truth, p217

2. p61 ff.

3. Development of Doctrine, p41



ness of individuals; and in proportion to the variety of aspects under which it presents itself to the various minds is its force and depth, and the argument for its reality. Ordinarily an idea is not brought home to the intellect as objective except through this variety; like bodily substances, which are not apprehended except under the clothing of their properties and results, and which admit of being walked around, and surveyed on opposite sides, and in different perspectives, and in contrary lights, in evidence of their reality". No one term or formula will exhaust or fully define a real idea. An idea, whether real or not, is living which can arrest and possess the mind. This does not mean mathematical ideas, but a great enunciation, whether true or false, about human nature; present good, government, duty or religion. Such an idea gets itself into society, is born out of social experience. At first men do not know what it is that moves them. But according to its power it will transform society and become a code of ethics or a system of government. Its power to fit into the old doctrines will be its power to find verification. The system or code in which such a living idea becomes central, will be "little more than the proper representative of one idea, being in substance what the idea meant from the first, its complete image as seen in a combination of diversified aspects, with the suggestions and corrections of many minds and the illustration of many experiences. Such a process is an ideal development, its taking "form and

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consistency". It will not be a true development if its ultimate shape does not really belong to the idea from which it started. An idea "grows when it incorporates, and its identity is found...in continuity and sovereignty", "according as it acts upon the faith, the prejudices, or interests of parties or classes."

An idea at first merely is, it is neither true nor false. That is, "no one knows what it is, or what it is worth. It remains for a time quiescent; it tries, as it were, its limbs, and proves the ground under it and feels its way. From time to time it makes essays which fail, and are in consequence abandoned. It seems in suspense which way to go; it wavers, and at length strikes out in a definite direction. In time it enters upon strange territory; points of controversy alter their bearing; parties rise and fall around it; dangers and hopes appear; and old principles appear under new forms. It changes with them in order to remain the same. In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often". It is the process of readjustment in new conditions; the assimilating power of ideas, the way they interpenetrate with new beliefs in stock, it is their test of truth. This Newman recognizes when he says, "but doctrines and views which relate to man are not placed in a void, but in the crowded world, and make way for themselves by interpenetration, and develop by absorption. Facts and opinions, which have hitherto been regarded as

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1. The discussion of ideas by Newman is found in his "Development of Christian Doctrine" pp33-40. Note. Newman is not discussing what is development in a 'higher world', but is talking of the history of knowledge in the tissue of actual experience.



other relations and grouped around other centers, henceforth are gradually attracted to a new influence and subjected to a new sovereign. They are modified, laid down afresh, thrust aside, as the case may be. A new element of order and composition has come among them; and its life is proved by this capacity of expansion, without disarrangement or dissolution. An eclectic, conservative, healing, moulding process, a unitive power, is its essence, and a third test of its development<sup>1</sup>. The italicized part of this quotation reads very much like the pragmatic test of truth - the ability to assimilate the new in experience to the beliefs in stock, etc.

It is very evident from the foregoing exposition of Newman's theory of development of ideas that the test applied to see if an idea is true or living is its power to help us to assimilate the novel in our experience to our beliefs in stock. Ideas are true, doctrines are true, which work, which can be verified, or are verified. Ideas come up for judgment, and we evaluate them by their power of personal worth for the difficulty of the immediate situation; the false "are ejected by the growth of the stronger". The origin of new ideas and new truth is to be found in the needs of the organism in a changing environment. "Men first come to their conclusions by the external pressure of events or the force of principles, they do not know how; they ~~they~~<sup>2</sup> have to speak and they look around for arguments". This is in principle the 'problem

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1. Doctrine of Development, p186  
2. ibid p45



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situation<sup>1</sup> of the Pragmatists, most clearly put forth by Dewey. And the success or failure of Newman's reasoning in his "Development of Doctrine" is bound up in its consistency with the criterion laid down in the analysis of the development of ideas. Sarolea says "this theory appears to us as an anticipated application of Darwinism to religious philosophy". It is the historical method which has become so popular today, but which is disastrous to Cardinal Newman's cherished interests, and which has taken such a hold of the Modernists in the present day Roman Catholic Church.

Newman analyzes his principle of testing truth into seven "notes". They are (1) Preservation of type; (2) Continuity of its principles; (3) Power of assimilation; (4) Logical sequence; (5) Anticipation of its future; (6) Conservative action on its past, and (7) Chronic vigor. Such are the criteria of the development of true ideas and doctrines. And it is only by applying those criteria to a given doctrine that we can rest satisfied in its truth. The point to be ascertained is the unity and identity of the idea with itself throughout all stages of its development from first to last. Newman does not mean that these "seven notes" exhaust this list, but they are sufficient to aid one in testing the fidelity of the development of an idea.

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Newman virtually lays down the pragmatic test of truth as his

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- 1.Influence of Darwin on Philosophy,etc. p78
  - 2.Cardinal Newman, p316
  - 3.Development of Doctrine
  - 4.Grammar of Assent, p205,206



discussion of the indefectibility of certitude. He writes thus :- "It seems to me that on the whole there are three conditions of certitude: that it follows on investigation and proof, that it is accompanied by a specific sense of intellectual satisfaction and repose, and that it is irreversible."<sup>1</sup>

There is still one other factor in the pragmatic test that has not been noticed in comparing Newman's philosophy with that of the Pragmatists; it is the 'personal' element. I mean that we need to show that there is something in Newman which corresponds to what James called the "individual's appreciation" in the passages I quoted, illustrating the Pragmatists' theory of truth. It is the recognition of the personal equation. Newman says "in all these actions of the intellect, the individual is supreme, and responsible to himself;...every one who reasons, is his own centre; and no expedient for attaining a common measure of minds can reverse this truth:...and the final judgment of the validity of an inference in concrete matter is committed to the personal action of the ratiocinative faculty."<sup>2</sup> There is no other criterion for accuracy in inference. It is in this personal aspect of ratiocination that the Illative Sense has its largest meaning. He says in another place that "real assent, then, as the experience which it presupposes, is proper to the individual, and, as such, thwarts rather than promotes the intercourse of man with man".<sup>3</sup>

1. Grammar of Assent, p258
2. ibid p345
3. ibid p83



The particular point we have been establishing in this chapter is, that the pragmatic test of truth is logically implied in Newman's theory of development: namely, the test of 'workability'. The idea is true which leads to a successful solution of the particular problem. It was according to this test that he argued that the Church of Rome was the true development of the conception of the Christian <sup>ity</sup> implied in its origin in the first century. It was to the judgment of "universal Consent" that he appealed for the right application of this test, as well as to the "slow processes of time". The ultimate test of a doctrine is its vitality; it proves its right by exercising its power. Newman made much of the phrase, securus judicat orbis terrarum, The whole earth however, to him was Western Europe, in the discussion of the development <sup>1</sup> of doctrine. Newman foreshadowed the 'evolutionary ethics' of the Pragmatists. He implies it in all of his writing, and speaks very plainly of it in his "Apologia". He says it is our safest way without looking at the consequences, to do simply what we think right day by day, for we are likely to go wrong by trying to project the course of the future. This conception has its counterpart in Dewey's treatment of moral questions. And I believe it is true of the Pragmatists in general. A scriptural phrase sums up the test Newman applied to truth; "if any man wills to do his will, he shall know of the teaching", whether it be true or false. Newman's test is purely empirical. There is no ab extra method to be applied.

1. Note. I quote Professor Dewey in the matter of ethics on the basis of his class lectures in Moral Philosophy, which I have taken. See Also, Dewey: "Influence of Darwin on Philosophy" p 46ff.



Truth is sui generis; it gets itself recognized as true by the way it fits into the purposes and meanings growing out of man's reaction to his environment. The philosophy of Newman and the Pragmatists is 'teleological'. The religious interest underlies all of their reasoning. It is in a certain "wish to believe" or "right to believe", that these thinkers are brought into closest relationship.

We conclude this chapter by summarizing the previous discussion. We have shown that the philosophy of these men had its rise in a revolt against the "closed systems" of rationalism. From arbitrarily imposed criterions of truth, they appealed to the empirical facts of experience. All that both philosophies need as a postulate for their methods is a "world of experience". Although Newman did postulate God as a guiding factor, he recognized that God's will was expressed in the terms of <sup>that</sup> experience, -that is ultimate with the Pragmatists. This fact in Newman's teaching is brought out by his recognition that God's dealing with Israel was such that its history had a "natural" appearance. His words are, "Can any history wear a more human appearance than that of the rise and growth of the chosen people...?". That is, Newman does not need the postulate of God to logically make valid his test of truth. And all that is proved by his method is the development of the great Catholic system is the "result of the spontaneous co-operation of many minds, guided by



that implicit and unconscious logic which results from a unity of fundamental conceptions".<sup>1</sup>

We have shown that the philosophic method of these men is "extra-logical". We have shown that the test of truth grows out of some particular problem, and that the 'true' is what we call that which helps one to solve this problem in the outlook of past experience; that is, what helps one "to assimilate the novel in his experience to his beliefs in stock". The 'true' idea is that which has the vitality to survive, the "chronic vigor" to endure. We have shown that the success of an idea or opinion to "grasp new truth and lean on old fact", is a "matter for the individual's appreciation". We have shown that 'truth' grows "much as a tree grows by the activity of a new layer of cambium". And we have predicted that "social interaction" is the final test of a truth's validity. But this we have left to be discussed at the close of the next chapter.



C H A P T E R      IV.

NEWMAN'S THEORY OF BELIEF AND THE PRAGMATISTS'  
WILL TO BELIEVE .



## IV.

NEWMAN'S THEORY OF BELIEF AND  
THE PRAGMATISTS' WILL TO BELIEVE .

We have seen that the 'personal element' is prominent in Newman's and the Pragmatists' approach to knowledge. In fact the 'will' element lies at the foundation of their theories of knowledge, and the moral and religious interest seems to be the very heart of both philosophies. This being so, it is natural that faith should occupy a large place in their discussions. Newman's "Grammar of Assent" is an essay on religious belief. It is written to prove that belief is legitimate in one who has not the technical training for academic analysis. Its avowed object was to "show that simple and uneducated minds could have rational grounds for belief in Christianity without knowledge of its scientific evidences;"<sup>1</sup> and to "show that a right moral state of mind germinates or even generates good intellectual principles".<sup>2</sup> With Newman the same as with Humes, a man got his beliefs not through the intellect, but out of his total reaction ~~to~~<sup>1</sup> life; the whole man believed, the 'will' giving the casting vote for or against the proposition. James speaks of his "Will to Believe" on this wise: "I have brought with me...something like a sermon on justification by faith to read to you, - I mean an essay in justification of faith, a defence of our right to adopt a believing attitude in religious matters, in spite

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1. W. Ward; Life of Newman, Vol II, p243,247

2. ibid p270



of the fact that our merely logical intellect may not have been coerced<sup>1</sup>. Newman expressed the same principle when he said "Unless we had the right, when we pleased, of ruling that propositions were irrelevant or absurd, I do not see how we could conduct an argument at all; our way would simply be blocked up by extravagant principles and theories, gratuitous hypotheses, false issues, unsupported statements, and incredible facts".<sup>2</sup> Newman further says, "Life is not long enough for a religion of inferences; we shall never have done beginning, if we determine to begin with a proof. We shall ever be laying foundations; we shall turn theology into evidences, and divines into textuaries. We shall never get at first principles. Resolve to believe nothing, and you must prove your proofs and analyze your elements, sinking farther and farther, and finding 'in the lowest depth a lower deep', 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 demonstrate a moral governance from the physical world. Life is for action. We if we insist on proof for everything, we shall never come to action: to act you must assume, and that assumption is faith".<sup>3</sup>

It will be well, now, for us to examine the grounds taken by these men in justification of this extra-logical faith; to ask, "Why do we have the right to believe?"

We have the right to believe any inviting proposition without

- 1. Will to Believe, pl-2
- 2. Grammar of Assent, p376
- 3. ibid p95



logical coercion, (1) because there is no such thing as a perfectly logical demonstration, (2) because an analysis of faith shows that we actually do exercise our wills in believing - we take things on truth and try them, and (3) because faith is a factor in its own verification. Schiller puts it in some one of his essays something like this, "Religion now claims what science has all along taken for granted, the right to adopt hypotheses which help us to unify our experience.

Newman says, "I consider there is no such thing as a perfect logical demonstration; that there is always a margin of objection even in mathematics... Yet on the other hand it is a paradox to say that there is no such a state of mind as certitude. It is as well ascertained a state of mind, as doubt -- to say that such a phenomenon in the human mind is a mere extravagance or weakness is a monstrous assertion which I cannot swallow".<sup>1</sup> He further argued that we were not justified, "in the case of concrete reasoning and especially in religious enquiry, in waiting until ...logical demonstration is ours, but on the contrary we are bound in conscience to seek truth and to look for certainty by modes of proof, which, when reduced to the shape of formal propositions, fail to satisfy the severe requisitions of science."<sup>2</sup> James says, "Objective evidence and certitude are doubtless very fine ideals to play with, but where on this moonlit and dream-visited planet are they to be found"?<sup>3</sup> "No concrete test of what is really true has ever been agreed upon".

1. Quoted in Ward's "Life of Newman", p248

2. Grammar of Assent, p412

3. Will to Believe, p14,15



On page ten in the same volume he says that logic can find no reasons for belief. And again on page one hundred seventy six, in referring to belief in freewill, he writes, "But you will remember that I expressly repudiated awhile ago the pretensions to offer any arguments which could be coercive in a so-called scientific fashion in this matter." These men argue that the 'will' lies at the basis of our beliefs; although they do not leave themselves open to the criticism that a man can believe anything he wishes.

It is only when a "forced option" is presented in the form of a "living hypothesis" that the will is exercised.

Our second ground in justification of belief is that the facts of life show that we actually do believe without inferential, logical conclusiveness, and by using our wills. Indeed, we must use our will, says James. For life will have no neutrals. Whether we wait for logical proof, or act without it, we act. "Indeed we may wait if we will,... but if we do so, we do so at our peril as much as if we believed. In either case we act, taking our life in our hands".<sup>1</sup> "When the Cliffords tell us how sinful it is to be Christians on 'insufficient evidence', insufficient is really the last thing they have in mind. For them the evidence is absolutely sufficient, only it makes the other way. They believe so completely in an anti-christian order of the universe that there is no living option: Christianity is a dead hypothesis from the start".<sup>2</sup> "Scepticism in moral matters is an active ally of immorality. Who is not for

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1. Will to Believe, p30  
2. ibid pl4



is against. The universe will have no neutrals in these questions. In theory as in practice, dodge or hedge, or talk as we like about wise scepticism, we are really doing volunteer military service for one side or the other".  
<sup>1</sup>

Cardinal Newman contends that doubt is only assent to a proposition at variance with the thesis. The very assertion that we should doubt everything to begin with, is an assumption of faith. He says that some writers go far beyond reasonable scepticism, "laying down as a general proposition that we have no right in philosophy to make any assumption whatever, that we ought to begin with universal doubt. This, however, is of all assumptions the greatest, and to forbid assumptions universally is to forbid this one in particular. Doubt itself is a positive state, and implies a definite habit of mind, and thereby necessarily involves a system of principles and doctrines all its own. Again, if nothing is to be assumed, what is our very method of reasoning but an assumption? And what our nature itself?" "If our nature has any constitution , any laws, one of them is this absolute reception of propositions as true, which lie outside the narrow range of conclusions to which logic, formal or virtual, is tethered; nor has any philosophical theory the power to force on us a rule which will not work for a day". If a belief works,  
<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>3</sup> it has more or less justified itself.

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1. Will to Believe, p109
  2. Grammar of Assent, p377
  3. ibid p179



In writing of the "method of proof" in religious matters , and of how we should treat the facts of religion, Newman says, "It is very little to say that we should treat them as we are accustomed to treat other alleged facts and truths and the evidence for them, such as come to us with a fair presumption in their favor. Such are of every day's occurrence; and what is our behaviour towards them? We meet them, not with suspicion and criticism, but with frank confidence. We do not in the first instance exercise our reason upon opinions which are received, but our faith. We do not begin with doubting; we take them on trust, and we put them on trial, and that not of set purpose, but spontaneously. We prove them by using them, by applying them to the subject-matter, or evidence, or the body of circumstances, to which they belong, as if they gave it its interpretation or its colour as a matter of course; and only when they fail, in the event, in illustrating phenomena or harmonizing facts, do we discover that we must reject the doctrines or statements we had in the first instance taken for granted. Again, we take the evidence for them, whatever it be, as a whole, as forming a combined proof; and we interpret what is obscure in separate portions by such portions as are clear".<sup>1</sup>

Thirdly, we are to notice that faith is a factor in its own verification. James says "there are...cases where faith creates its own verification. Believe and you shall be right, for you shall save yourself;

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1. Development of Doctrine, p101; On this point also cf. Grammar of Assent, p377 and Studies in Humanism p367



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doubt and you shall again be right, for you shall perish\*. He gives an illustration of how a man who is out Alpine climbing, and who has had the ill-luck to work ~~himself~~<sup>2</sup> into an entirely new situation; a situation of danger, which necessitates a tremendous jump. If the man leaps with hope and confidence he will verify his belief that he could make the leap-- if the leap is at all possible-- while doubt of his ability, or waiting for concrete evidence might leave him exhausted and undone. His subjective attitude is a factor in verifying his belief. Newman implies that his motto is Credo ut intelligam, in all ~~hf~~<sup>2</sup> of his writings, and says, "belief generates belief". In the last of his lectures on the "Prophetic Office" he writes, "How much must be taken on trust, in order to be possessed; how little can be realized except by an effort of the will<sup>3</sup>". He implies in many places that to really believe is to act. He writes, "I do not say that faith and obedience do not stand for separate ideas in the mind, ~~but~~ they stand for nothing more; they are not divided from each other in fact. They are but one thing viewed differently".

The relation between our hypotheses and our practices in the realms of science have been boldly applied in the realms of religion. These men are only claiming for religion what science has all along claimed for itself,-- the right to lay down inviting hypotheses. Or,

1. Will to Believe, p97
2. Grammar of Assent, p413
3. P400
4. Parochial and Plain Sermons, Vol VI, p79, 81



as James puts it, "I wish to make you feel, if I can...that we have the right to believe the physical order to be only a partial order; that we have the right to supplement it by an unseen spiritual order which we assume on trust, if only thereby life may seem to us better worth living".<sup>1</sup> While Schiller says "The new philosophy, moreover...has been taught by the sceptical results to which the old abstractions led, that knowledge cannot be depersonalized, and that the full concreteness of personal interest is indispensable for the attainment of truth".<sup>2</sup> The underlying principle involved in the philosophies of these men is, that religion and philosophy have to do with 'values', 'worths', 'meanings'<sup>3</sup> and 'purposes'.

So we are led to see that the great bond of sympathy between Newman and the Pragmatists is the principle of 'will-faith', a certain 'wish' or 'will-to-believe'. The intellectualist has ever sapped the life out of religion, and has left us nothing but the mere rind. His insistence upon intellectual perfection and finality in our philosophic thinking has robbed religion of that which is its very life. "If ratiocination could lead us to faith, faith would be the monopoly of the intellectual elite, the possession of the most subtle dialecticians. A certain amount of leisure and the highest culture would be the antecedent conditions of the most perfect faith. The enormous majority of mankind - the simple, the ignorant, the poor - would be doomed to unbelief.

1. Will to Believe, p52
2. Studies in Humanism, p353

Note: Newman adopts this line of argument in his discussion of "Informal Inference" in "Grammar of Assent" p322ff.

3.James, Psychology, Vol.II, Ch 22. Newman, His Life, By Ward, Vol.II p587, Schiller, Studies in Humanism, Chap. 1 and 2.



It is the very opposite which is the fact. It is the universal experience that the largest number of sceptics are found amongst 'intellectuals'; that the intellectual temperament, if not incompatible with faith, is, to say the least, unfavorable to it". James is right in maintaining that "we have a right to believe at our own risk any hypothesis that is live enough to tempt our will".



C H A P T E R    V.

DEFINITION AND ANALYSIS OF THE TWO THEORIES OF FAITH.



## V.

## DEFINITION AND ANALYSIS OF THE TWO THEORIES OF FAITH.

It seems appropriate at this place, to give a definition and an analysis of the philosophic faith for which Newman and the Pragmatists contend.

Schiller defines faith thus: "...it would seem preferable to define it -(faith)- as a mental attitude which, for the purposes of action, is willing to take upon trust valuable and desirable beliefs, before they have been proved 'true', but in hope that this attitude may promote <sup>1</sup> their verification". And again he writes, "It is useless.... to close our eyes to the fact that faith is essentially a personal affair, and adventure, if you please, which originates in individual options, in choices on which men set their hearts and stake their lives. If these assumptions prosper, and if so by faith we live, then it may come about that by faith <sup>2</sup> we also know".

James defines faith as "belief in something concerning which doubt is still theoretically possible; and as the test of belief is willingness to act, one may say that faith is readiness to act in a cause the prosperous issue of which is not certified to us in advance. It is <sup>3</sup> in fact the same moral quality which we call courage in practical affairs".

Newman defines <sup>it</sup> as "the reasoning of a religious mind, or what Scripture calls a right or renewed heart, which acts upon presumptions

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1. Studies in Humanism, p357
  2. Ibid p361
  3. Will to Believe p90



rather than evidences, which speculates and ventures on the future when  
 it cannot make sure of it".<sup>1</sup> In another place he says "faith is the act  
 of a mind feeling that it is its duty any how, under its circumstances,  
 to judge and act, whether its light be greater or less, and wishing to  
 make the most of that light and acting for the best. Its knowledge,..  
 though defective, is not insufficient for the purposes for which it uses  
 it, for this plain reason, because(...)<sup>2</sup>it has no more". And again he  
 says faith "is in its very essence the making present what is unseen;  
 the acting upon the mere prospect of it, as if it really were possessed;  
 the venturing upon it, the staking present ease, happiness, or other  
 good, upon the chance of the future".<sup>3</sup>

Although there is prima facie evidence of a vital relation between these men in their conceptions of faith, it will be well to analyze these definitions further, and to find out what are the particular qualities which mark the principles in common. Schiller makes the following deductions from his own definition of faith, which we shall use as the basis of our analyses. He draws four conclusions: (1) that it renders faith pre-eminently an attitude of will, and affair of the whole personality and not of the (abstract) intellect. (2) That it is expressly concerned with values, and that the worthless and unimportant is not fitted to evoke our faith. (3) That it involves risks, real stakes, and serious

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- 1.Oxford Sermons, p203
  2. Ibid p298
  - 3.Parochial and Plain Sermons, p297



dangers, and it emphatically is not a game which can be played in a casual and half-hearted way. (4) That a reference to verification is essential to it, and that therefore it is as little to be identified with, <sup>1</sup> as to be divorced from, knowledge.

He says that "verification must come about by the results of its practical working, by 'presuming' the truth of our faith and by acting upon its postulates; whence it would appear that those theologians <sup>2</sup> are right who contend that real faith must justify itself by works."

We shall now compare Newman's conception of faith with this analysis, which represents very well the general pragmatic point of view.

Faith is pre-eminently an attitude of will, an affair of the whole personality and not of the (abstract) intellect. In a letter to a friend who wrote him about another's faith, who was seeking an intellectual basis for it, he wrote, "She says there are persons who are certain of the Christian religion because they have strictly proved it - no one can be certain for this reason. Every one believes by an act of will, more or less ruling his intellect...to believe absolutely beyond <sup>3</sup> the evidence". "She confuses the conclusion from evidence, with the act of assent which depends on the will". This passage illustrates Newman's attitude toward faith; it is not a matter of the intellect, but an act of will. He says, speaking of logic, "For myself, it was not logic

1. Studies in Humanism, p357, 358

2. ibid p358

3. Ward: Life of Newman, Vol II, p276



that carried me on; as well might one say that the quicksilver in the barometer changed the weather; pass a number of years, and I find my mind in a new place; how? the whole man moves; paper logic is but the record of it".<sup>1</sup>

Belief is always a personal matter with Newman. It is the 'illative sense' which guides him to his conclusions. It is the final test. He writes in one place, "proof, except in abstract demonstration has always in it, more or less, an element of the personal, because 'prudence' is not a constituent part of our nature, but a personal endowment."<sup>2</sup> Newman's whole philosophy is the same as the Pragmatists' in that they alike make knowledge and religion a matter of the reaction of the whole man upon life. Newman says, "in concrete reasonings we are in great measure thrown back into that condition, from which logic proposed to rescue us. We judge for ourselves, by our own lights, and on our own principles; and our criterion of truth is not so much the manipulation of propositions, as the intellectual and moral character of the person maintaining them, and the ultimate silent effect of his argument or conclusions upon our minds". The Illative Sense seems to be the name which Newman gives to a man's total reaction to a vital issue or to a proposition. It is like the insight that an artist has into things of art - a total reaction, which represents the whole man's experience, but which can not be judged by any rule or canon. Such, for instance,

- 2. Grammar of Assent, p317
- 2. ibid p302
- 1. Apologia, p169 (Italics mine)



is the way in which an able general takes in his whole situation in a glance. And Newman thinks that this is the way of faith. He says, "to maintain that Faith is a judgment about facts in matters of conduct, such as to be formed, not so much from the impression legitimately made upon the mind by those facts, as from the reaching forward of the mind itself towards them, - that it is a presumption, not a proving,- may sound paradoxical, yet surely is borne out by actual state of things as they come before us every day."<sup>1</sup> So then, with Newman, as with Schiller and James, "Faith is not a conclusion from premises, but a result of an act of the will, following upon the conviction that to believe is a duty."<sup>2</sup>

Faith is expressly concerned with values, and that the worthless and unimportant is not fitted to evoke our faith. Newman gets at the question of value and worth in his discussions, from the actual facts of social life. He is ever showing that our faith is drawn out to propositions held by men of moral fiber. The character of the man who is presenting a theory is a very strong determining factor in what our attitude will be. And the person's character about whom a thing is asserted should modify our judgment. For instance Newman says, "I have not absolute demonstration that my father was not a murderer, or my intimate friend a sharper, but it would not only be heartless, but irrational, not to disbelieve ~~these~~<sup>3</sup> hypotheses or possibilities utterly". He says "good character goes far in destroying the force even of plausible charges".

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1. Oxford Sermons, p224, 225

2. Life of Newman, Vol I p242

3. ibid Vol II, p276



In distinguishing belief from Inference, Newman says that belief is concerned with concrete things, which variously excite the mind from their moral and imaginative qualities. And it "has for its objects, not only directly what is true, but inclusively what is beautiful, useful, admirable, heroic; objects which kindly devotion, rouse the passions, and attach the affections; and thus it leads the way to actions of every kind, to the establishment of principles, and the formation of character, and is thus again intimately connected with what is individual and personal".<sup>1</sup> Newman is essentially concerned with values; it is because of value and worth that he argues against logic. It threatened his values, his religious values, and hence he found other grounds on which to conserve them.

Faith involves risks, real stakes, and serious dangers, and is emphatically not a game which can be played in a casual and half-hearted way. As we discuss Newman from this standpoint, we shall see that he is very much a pragmatist. The element of chance, and the spice of uncertainty is always to be found in Newman, especially when he is looking at a thing from a philosophic point of view. He is often so taken up with his appreciation of the risk in faith, that he writes about it in such a natural and seemingly unguarded manner as to present it in a way that is not always in keeping with the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

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1. Grammar of Assent, p91



He says "faith ventures and hazards deliberately, seriously, piously and humbly, counting the cost and delighting in the sacrifice". "If we are intended for great ends, we are called to great hazards; and whereas we are given absolute certainty in nothing, we must in all things choose between doubt and inactivity". "No one among us knows for certain that he himself will persevere; yet everyone among us, to give himself a chance ~~for~~<sup>1</sup> success at all, must make a venture. As regards individuals, then, it is quite true, that all of us must for certain make ventures for heaven, yet without the certainty of success through them. This, indeed, is the very meaning of the word 'venture'; for that is a strange venture which has nothing in it of fear, risk, danger, anxiety, uncertainty. Yes; so it certainly is; and in this consists the excellency and nobleness of faith; this is the very reason why faith is singled out from other graces, and honored as the special means of our justification, because its presence implies that we have the heart to make a venture". "In matters of daily life, we have no time for fastidious and perverse fancies about the minute chances of our being deceived. We are obliged to act at once, or we should cease to live. There is a chance(it cannot be denied)... .<sup>3</sup> we cannot be quite certain". All this reminds one of James' saying, "if this life be not a real fight...it feels like one". With both the Pragmatists and Newman faith is a live wire, an active, aggressive thing.

1. Oxford Sermons, p229
2. ibid p215
3. Parochial and Plain Sermons, p296
4. ibid p196



It is a "presumption, yet not a mere chance conjecture, - a teaching forward, yet not of excitement or of passion, -a moving forward in the twilight, yet not without a clue or direction; -a movement from something unknown to something known."<sup>1</sup> And James further says, "things reveal themselves soonest to those who passionately want them, for our needs sharpen our wits. To a man content with little, the much in the universe must remain hidden."<sup>2</sup>

Newman puts great emphasis upon taking a fighting chance. He believes there is virtue even in faith itself.<sup>3</sup> He thinks that God is pleased with the man who is aggressive to know and to lay a hold of things eternal, although he makes mistakes in his venturesome efforts. He agrees with James in this, who thinks it is better to take a chance of knowing truth, and of gaining knowledge, rather than to merely seek to avoid being duped or making errors.<sup>4</sup> He says that "he who fails nine times and succeeds the tenth, is a more honourable man than he who hides his talent in the napkin; and so, even though the feelings which prompt us to see God in all things, and to recognize supernatural works in matters of the world, mislead us at times, though they make us trust in evidence which we ought not to admit, and partly incur with justice the imputation of credulity, yet faith which generously apprehends Eternal Truth, though at times it generates into superstition, is far better than that cold, sceptical, critical tone of mind, which has no sense of the overruling,

1. Oxford Sermons, p249
2. Pluralistic Universe, p176
3. See Development of Doctrine, p327, Grammar of Assent, p377  
Lectures on Justification p364
4. Will to Believe, p18ff, 27



ever-present Providence, no desire to approach its God, but sits at home for the fearful clearness of his visible coming, whom it might seek and find in due measure and the twilight of this present world".<sup>1</sup>

A reference to verification is necessary to faith, and therefore it is as little to be identified with, as to be divorced from, knowledge. This aspect of the pragmatic faith, both as it appeared in Newman and the Pragmatists, has been very much misunderstood. Newman's change to the Roman Catholic Church was looked upon as if he had given blind allegiance to an arbitrary authority. The 'will to believe' of the Pragmatists has been regarded in much the same light. Many have considered that it offered an opportunity for any man to believe anything, and this without reference to verification. Schiller says that the common charge against the Pragmatists has been that their doctrines pander to all the crudest superstitions of the vulgar.<sup>2</sup> He answers this charge by saying that "whether it is applied to knowledge or faith, the pragmatic test is a severe one. It allows indeed, the widest liberty to experiment; but it inexorably judges such experiments by the value of their actual achievements, and sternly withholds its sanction from insincere phrase-mongering, from ineffectual aspiration, from unworkable conceptions,<sup>3</sup> from verbal quibblings and dead formulas." Schiller argues that we treat religious postulates on the same principle as we treat those of

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1. Oxford Sermons, p220-221

2. Studies in Humanism, p136

3. ibid p358, 359



science. "The assumptions which work, i.e. which approve themselves by ministering to human interests, purposes, and objects of desire, are 'verified'<sup>1</sup> and accepted as 'true'". Newman adopts substantially the same attitude, as is suggested by this passage in defence of adopting a believing attitude towards the facts of life. In this case he says "we soon discover and discard what is contradictory to itself; and error always having some portion of truth in it, and the truth having a reality which error has not, we may expect that when there is an honest purpose and fair talents, we shall somehow make our forward, the error falling off from the mind, and the truth developing and occupying it".<sup>2</sup> James says that "faith is synonymous with a working hypothesis", and that a man "acts as if it were true, and expects the results to disappoint him if his assumption is false. The longer disappointment is delayed, the stronger grows his faith in his theory".<sup>3</sup> Such an attitude obviously refers faith to verification. Such a faith is true if it 'works'.

One might be led to think that this pragmatic faith is a matter for individual verification. Many of its critics have thought of it as forming a principle "of unbridled individualism which abrogates all distinctions between the subjective fancy and objective reality". But such is not the case. After discussing at some length the process whereby faith is verified, James, explains himself on this point. He shows that he adopts the principle of "universal consent", securus

1. Studies in Humanism, p362
2. Grammar of Assent, p377
3. Will to Believe, p95



" the  
judicat orbis terrarum. He writes for sake of simplicity I have written  
as if the verification might occur in the life of a single philosopher,-  
which is manifestly untrue, since theories still face each other, and  
the facts of the world give countenance to both. Rather should we ex-  
pect, that, in a question of this scope, the experience of the entire  
human race must make the verification, and that all the evidence will  
not be<sup>in</sup> till the final integration of things, when the last man has  
had his say and contributed his share to the still unfinished X."<sup>1</sup> This  
is akin to Newman's argument that such decisions are left "to time, to  
the slow process of thought, to the influence of mind upon mind, the is-  
sues of controversy, and the growth of opinion."<sup>2</sup> Newman's argument in  
broad outline is, that the development of doctrine is the historical veri-  
fication of the Catholic belief, which he has set forth in his "Grammar of  
Assent". His belief in the Catholic is an indefectible certitude, a true  
belief, and this is how he discusses certitude. He says "It seems then  
on  
that the<sup>whole</sup> there are three conditions of certitude: that it follows  
on investigation and proof, that it is accompanied by a specific sense  
of intellectual satisfaction and repose, and that it is irreversible. If  
assent is made without rational grounds - (not logical grounds)-, it is  
a rash judgment, a fancy, or a prejudice; if without the sense of finality,  
it is scarcely more than an inference; if without permanence, it is a  
mere conviction".<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless Newman is no where clear as to what  
the test of belief and knowledge really is. I mean by that, it is hard

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- 1.Will to Believe, p107
  - 2.Development of Doctrine, p60
  - 3.Grammar of Assent, p258



to unify the various statements which he makes. Sometimes he seems to make the test of truth depend upon the judgment of the relatively competent, another time upon conscience, and another time upon universal consent. But, however, he leaves no doubt in your mind that our beliefs must be referred to some process of verification. His most definite statement about the test of our beliefs, is found in his "Grammar of Assent".<sup>1</sup> There are three tests; our own minds, the voice of mankind, and the course of human affairs - this latter phrase he explains to mean, "the course of the world and of human life".

So we are led to see that the pragmatic beliefs of such men as Newman, Schiller, and James are not held without verification, and that this verification is not only by the individual, but of society. The full scope of this will-to-believe attitude is only found where we look for verification by the social inter-action of many minds. That is, a belief to be true, to be valuable, must be socially verified; socially workable.

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C H A P T E R      VI.

THE ILLATIVE SENSE: JAMES AND NEWMAN ON CERTITUDE.



## VI.

## THE ILLATIVE SENSE:

## JAMES AND NEWMAN ON CERTITUDE.

It would not be fitting to close this discussion without some reference to the doctrine of certitude as held by Newman, and to say a word about James's idea of that doctrine. Indeed, all philosophic thinking has for its ultimate aim the attainment of certitude. Even the sceptic's attitude is a matter of great certainty. He is certain that he cannot know. His dogmatism is summed up thus; "He knows that he cannot know!" It may be well, too, to say just a word or two about Newman's illative sense. For the fact that we have not dealt with it formally, and have not shown its bearing upon Newman's philosophy, might lead the reader to think that we have either neglected it, or, worse, avoided it.

Taking up the Illative Sense first we find that it is the name which Newman gives to a man's total reaction to a definite issue, person, or situation. He says it is attached to definite subject-matters; and that in coming to its conclusion, it proceeds always in the same way, by a method of reasoning, which is the elementary principle of the mathematical calculus of modern times.<sup>1</sup> Newman is very unsatisfactory in his description and definition of the Illative Sense. The most that can be

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1. Grammar of Assent, pp 358, 359.



definitely and consistently predicated of it is, that it is the personal appreciation which one has for those things that are one's own peculiar province; e.g., a general on a battlefield by his Illative Sense comprehends the full significance of the whole situation at a glance; a mathematical prodigy grasps <sup>the</sup> far-reaching implications of a given problem; a man of science senses the drift of his particular interest; and the historian has a peculiar appreciation of the worth of data that is presented to him. Newman gets his idea of the Illative Sense from Aristotle's phronesis. The Illative Sense may belong to man in one department of life, and he be totally incompetent of other departments. That is, a man may be a good man and yet be a bad kind; and "profiliates have made great statesmen".<sup>1</sup> The Illative Sense seems to partake of a mystical element; it is "a perception of facts without any assignable media of perceiving."<sup>2</sup> He calls it "natural inference", and the "power of looking at things in some particular aspect, and of determining their internal and external relations thereby".<sup>3</sup> With some he speaks of it as a gift, and says, "And according to the subtlety and versatility of their gift, are men able to read what comes before them justly, variously, and fruitfully". His most clearcut definition seems to be this, that the Illative Sense is the personal ratiocinative faculty of the living mind-- it is the living mind in action. "It determines what science cannot determine, ~~the~~ limit of.

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1. Grammar of Assent, p257,

2        ibid              p334

3        ibid              p337-8



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converging probabilities and the reasons sufficient for proof". And "It is to the living mind that we must look for the means of using correctly principles of whatever kind, facts or doctrines, experiences or testimonies, true or probable, and of discerning what conclusion from these is necessary, suitable, or expedient, when they are taken for granted; and this, either by means of a natural gift, or from mental formation 2 and practice and a long familiarity with those various starting-points."

"It is a rule unto itself, and appeals to no judgment but its own; and attends upon the whole course of thought from antecedents to consequents, with minute diligence and unwearied presence, which is impossible to a cumbrous apparatus of verbal reasoning, though, in communicating with others, words are the only instruments we possess, a serviceable, though 3 imperfect instrument". All this has a mystical tang to it, and reminds one of Dewey, when he wrote, "mysticism is the heart of all positive empiricism, of all empiricism which is not more interested in denying 4 rationalism than in asserting itself". But the Illative Sense has no immediate interest to us in this essay. We have given this brief analysis for reasons stated at the beginning of this section. Yet, we must not forget that it is this mystical quality of the Illative Sense which enters into the test of certitude. It partakes of the sui generis appeal that the Catholic Church made to Newman, which, of course, gave coloring to all his thinking.

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1. Grammar of Assent, p360
2. ibid p360-1
3. ibid p361-2
4. The Influence of Darwin, etc. p39



In writing about certitude, Newman is but trying to find good grounds for his own personal experience, and to describe this personal experience in social terms. As Principle Fairbairn says, in reviewing Newman, his works are intensely autohiographical. Newman was a man who dealt very much<sup>1</sup> in personalities. His relation to many of his contemporaries brings this out; especially is this true of his relation to Charles Kingsley, who never has been answered in the terms of real argument by any defender of the Catholic persuasion. And it is out of this intensely personal attitude that the obscurity in Newman's writing arises. For Newman is obscure; there is no agreement about his teaching except in the broadest outlines. Fairbairn of all his critics seems to be the only man that has really shown evidence of successful analysis. Newman's personality has, and will always meet with sympathetic appreciation, but his doctrines will need a more satisfactory analysis than has hitherto been made, before Newman's importance in the world of thought can be intelligently gauged.

It is beyond our power to question whether Newman enjoyed absolute certitude, or certainty in his thinking. However, for the purposes of discussion we seem justified by the facts of life to say that "absolute certainty is, for beings constituted as we are, simply a meaningless phrase,- a phrase which expresses no human ideal, which represents nothing we cherish and nothing that we suffer by giving up."<sup>2</sup> The

1. Contemporary Rev. Vol 47, p667-674
2. Apologia, Everyman Ed. pX
3. Quest for Absolute Certainty, L.P.Jacks,  
Harv. Theo. Rev. Vol VI, p285



very recognition of the fact that questions are debatable is a confession that we have not yet gotten absolute certainty. But our task is to discuss what Newman teaches 'certitude' to mean, and to this part of his philosophy, in comparison with William James, we shall now turn.

It will be well for us to get a general idea of what certitude might be understood to mean in philosophy. This James gives us in terms that cannot be very well improved upon. He says, "...the faith that truth exists, and that our minds are made for it, may be held in two ways, We may talk of the empiricist way and the absolutist way of believing in truth. The absolutists in this matter say that we not only can attain to knowing truth, but that we can know when we have attained to knowing it; while the empiricists think that although we may attain it, we cannot infallibly know when. To know is one thing, and to know for certain that we know is another. One may hold to the first being possible without the second; hence the empiricists and the absolutists, although neither is a sceptic in the usual philosophic sense of that term,<sup>1</sup> show very different degrees of dogmatism in their lives."<sup>2</sup> A study of Newman's conception of certitude will show us that he can be considered certain only in the empiricist's sense of certitude. For certitude to him is only a "mental state". And he confesses that "moral evidence and moral certitude is all we can attain, not only in the case of ethical

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1. The Will to Believe, p12  
2. Grammar of Assent, ~~pp22~~ p344.



and spiritual subjects, such as religion, but of terrestrial and cos-  
<sup>1</sup>mical questions also." In fact his most ultimate interest was in prov-  
ing the social certitude was not possible without divine illumination.  
He was very willing to admit that an individual can be sure, but that  
there is no common measure between minds. He says "I do not say that  
there are no eternal truths...which all acknowledge, but there are none  
<sup>2</sup>sufficiently commanding to be the basis of public union and action". It  
is at this point that Newman has been so bitterly criticised for his  
philosophical scepticism; for to him we cannot know truth in the larger  
and objective sense, without an infallible expounder. This is brought  
out in his remarks which follow the citation above, that the "only gen-  
eral persuasive in matters of conduct is authority; that is, (when truth  
is in question,) a judgment which we feel to be superior to our own. If  
Christianity is both social and dogmatic, and intended for all ages, it  
<sup>3</sup>must humanly speaking have an infallible expounder". (This, however, is  
put forth by Newman, only as the most inviting hypothesis.) A judgment  
superior to our own can be gotten by an appeal to the social interaction  
inconsistently advocated by Newman in his "Grammar of Assent", before  
<sup>4</sup>quoted. But he contends, "it follows that what to one intellect is a  
proof is not so to another, and that the certainty of a proposition does  
<sup>5</sup>properly consist in the attitude of the mind which contemplates it".

1. Grammar of Assent, p318
2. Development of Doctrine, p90
3. ibid p90
4. ibid p389
5. Grammar of Assent, p293
5. ibid p293



Certitude is a quality native to the human mind. It is a quality which may be experienced toward both true and false propositions. And the fact that a man is betrayed into a false certitude does not prohibit the exercise of the act upon a true proposition. It has, as we have seen, one pre-requisite, one indispensable native quality, and one objective sine qua non condition. That is, it follows on investigation; it is accompanied by a peculiar feeling -sui generis- of intellectual satisfaction; and it persists. The first of these conditions of certitude needs no comment. The second condition of certitude is described thus: "When a man says he is certain, he means he is conscious to himself of having this specific feeling. It is a feeling of satisfaction and self-gratulation, of intellectual security, arising out of a sense of success, attainment, possession, finality, as regards the matter which has been in question. As a conscientious deed is attended by a self-approval which nothing but itself can create, so certitude is united to a sentiment sui generis in which it lives and is manifested".<sup>1</sup> "Certitude,...,it a perception of a truth, with the perception that it is the truth, or the consciousness of knowing, as expressed<sup>2</sup> in the phrase, 'I know that I know!'. It is "the triumphant repose of the mind after a struggle". This all sounds very much like Dewey's "satisfaction" theory; and it is vitally descriptive of the general pragmatic tendencies. The whole thing has a rather dogmatic mystical tang

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1. Grammar of Assent, p204  
2. ibid p197



to it. It sounds like James when he said, "Of some things we feel that we are certain: we know, and we know that we know. There is something that gives a click inside of us, a bell that strikes twelve, when the hours of our mental clock have swept the dial and meet at the meridian hour. The great empiricists among us are only empiricists on reflection: when left to their instincts, they dogmatize like infallible popes."<sup>1</sup> This is enough like Newman to have been copied in paraphrase from the following citation from his "Grammar of Assent"; "I have spoken of certitude as being assigned a definite place among our mental acts; it follows upon examination and proof, as a bell sounds the hour, when the hands reach it, - so that no act or state of the intellect is certitude, however much it may resemble it, which does not observe this appointed law".<sup>2</sup> And the third condition of certitude is "persistence".<sup>3</sup> This persistence is, of course, a matter for personal appreciation; there is no common standard to register the congruity of mental states in different minds. The question naturally suggests itself, what then, does Newman mean by "persistence", or indefectibility and endurance in certitude? He means that certitude persists which is congruent with one's total experience. For instance, he gives illustrations of a man verifying his certitude under two different, yet concrete situations. He writes: "Suppose I am walking out in the moonlight, and see dimly the outlines of some figure among the trees; -it is a man. I draw nearer, - it still is a man;

1. The Will to Believe, p13
2. Grammar of Assent, p236
3. ibid p220



nearer still, and all hesitation is at an end, - I am certain it is a man. But he neither moves, nor speaks when I address him; and then I ask myself what can be his purpose in hiding among the trees at such an hour. I come quite close to him, and put out my arm. Then I find for certain that what I took for a man is but a singular shadow, formed by the falling of the moonlight on the interstices of some branches or their foliage. Am I not to indulge my second certitude, because I was wrong in my first? does not any objection, which lies against my second from the failure of my first, fade away before the evidence on which my second is based?"<sup>1</sup> In the second case it is of a man whom one is supposed to have seen die, and seen come to life again. Newman contends that the indefectibility of certitude is not discredited by the sight of a dead man come to life again; but in such case we have two certitudes, one of his death, and the other of his return to life. "Whatever came of it, we should never cease to know and to confess to ourselves both of the contrary facts, that we saw him die, and that after dying we saw him alive again. The overpowering strangeness of our experience would have no power to shake our certitude in the facts which had created it.<sup>2</sup>" The conditions which prompt us to exercise assent to certitude may change, but certitude never changes, says Newman; that is, our reasoning may be at fault, we may have started with false premises, but the exercise of certitude is right and legitimate.<sup>3</sup>

1 Grammar of Assent, p231

2. ibid p256

3 ibid p229, 230



James seems to take this position in his "Will to Believe", where he says, "that is to be called good which is destined to prevail or survive" <sup>1</sup>, adding the qualification that the individual's desire or purpose is a controlling element. And earlier in the same volume he says that if the "total drift of thinking continues to confirm it --(an hypothesis)---, that is what he means by its being true". <sup>2</sup> The whole drift <sup>3</sup> of two essays in this volume is that the ideal which prevails in the terms of actual experience is the true ideal.

It follows from what we have set forth in this section that certitude is of a mystical character; it does not consist in logical perfection, but in a certain personal appreciation of the situation as a whole, a sensing of the implications by a non-logical method; it is the reaction of the whole man upon an issue, all this in contradistinction to intellectual reasoning per se. With Newman it is essentially 'conscience' verification. This teaching is put forth against formal logic, the original assumption of which is false, namely, "that whatever can be thought can be adequately expressed in language". <sup>#4</sup> The whole method of proof from the standpoint of the individual is informal; you cannot put it into the symbols of language, it is, as we have several times suggested, mystical insight. James styles himself a "Pluralistic Mystic", and Newman says, "as true poetry is a spontaneous outpouring of thought, and therefore belongs to the rude as well as to gifted minds,

1. ~~THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY~~ p98ff
2. p17 The
3. "The Sentiment of Rationality" and "Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life".
4. Grammar of Assent, p264.



whereas no one becomes a poet merely by canons of criticism, so this unscientific reasoning, being sometimes a natural, uncultivated faculty, sometimes approaching a gift, sometimes an acquired habit and second nature, has a higher source than logical rule,-- 'nascitur non fit'.

\*...this divination comes by nature, and belongs to us all in a measure, to women more than to men, hitting and missing, as the case may be, but with a success on the whole sufficient to show that there is a method in it, though it be implicit".<sup>1</sup>

We shall now briefly sum up what we consider that we have accomplished. First, we have shown the common point from which the philosophies of Newman and the Pragmatists started,- a revolt against the intellectualism of the nineteenth century. Second, we have shown that they adopted an extra-logical method. Third, we have shown what they set forth as the test of the true; that which works; that which fits into the needs of man in specific concrete situations. Fourth, we have shown what they have considered to be the basis of such extra-logical philosophy; the right to believe. Fifth, we have defined and analyzed what they meant by faith. Sixth, we have discussed their respective attitudes toward 'certitude'. And, seventh, we have shown that in these points Newman and the Pragmatists are vitally related in principle;



realizing, of course, that Newman did not consciously mean and suppose to lay down a philosophy that he saw would issue in such a position that the Pragmatists take toward such religious questions which he held in practice altogether different from what they hold. And, too, asserting and showing that Newman's conclusions are not of vital interest to us; in that his method makes it possible for us to reach conclusions the opposite of his.





C H A P T E R   VII.

P E R S O N A L   R E A C T I O N .



## VII.

## PERSONAL REACTION.

The situation out of which the philosophy represented by the subjects of this essay was born, is one in which there is a disparity between the standard of judgment and the actual facts of experience. These men saw that not only were values evolving, but that the standards of judgment were also evolving. And to meet this situation of changing standards and values they have sought for a method which they believe to be more in keeping with the actual facts of experience. To the Pragmatists the world is still in the making. And whether we adopt Newman's metaphysics or the Pragmatists', the meaning of the world, at least, has not fully arrived. In the tissue of experience there is always something new arriving; this is recognized both by Newman and <sup>1</sup> the Pragmatists. James says, "there can be no final truth in ethics any more than in physics, until the last man has had his experience and <sup>2</sup> had his say." So whether it be the real universe arriving in the terms of self-realization, man's will a determining factor in the process, or whether man is only progressively learning what God's ready-made universe is, man is still a factor in the epistemological method. Newman and the Pragmatists are akin in method, both are empirical.

The general philosophic implications appeal to me as compatible with the facts of experience, Professor McGiffert expresses my attitude toward this philosophy when he referred thus to Christianity:-

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1. Development of Doctrine, p173
  2. Will to Believe, p184



"Christianity has not come ready made from the hand either of God or man. It has ~~haen~~ a long development. And development never means the mere unfolding of an original germ, a process in which the end is given from the beginning. It involves a play of new forces, the addition of something original and unforeseeable. Creation always has a part in it as well as conservation. Much is truly Christian which in its origin had nothing to do with Christ, as much is truly Jewish which in its origin had nothing to do with Moses."<sup>1</sup> The test of the past must be the present, and the test of the present must be the future. To say that we know a priori seems to be nothing but assertion, accounting less satisfactorily for the totality of experience than the Pragmatists' empirical method. If we do know apriori it is only as a personal preference; as a man asking for a tie says, I can not tell what kind of tie I want, but I will know it when I see it. We have to wait for the tie to appear before the man's expressed preference can be verified, until that particular tie is made for him. All that we do in postulating, or prophesying about the future is, to take that part out of our present conscious experience, measuring it in the terms of reflective personal appreciation, and to seek to have this preference prevail. Surely Marconi could not lay claim to validity for his hypothesis before he had verified them and made them 'true'. Because a thing has happened thus and so for a thousand years is no proof per se that it will always happen thus and so. Kant's



categories of the mind, as a postulate for knowledge, doenct take into consideration the fact that the mind itself in the process changes. As Newman says, "There is also a growth in the use of those faculties by <sup>1</sup> which knowledge is acquired. The intellect admits of an education; man is a being of progress; he has to learn how to fulfil his end, and to be what the facts show that he is intended to be. His mind is in the first instance in disorder, and runs wild; his faculties have their rudimental and inchoate state, and are gradually carried on by practice and exper-  
<sup>1</sup> ience to their perfection".

Each man, it seems as a matter of fact, is his own sufficient starting point, and his perception of reality occurs only in definite, personal situations and experiences. His standards evolve with his accumulating stock of experiences. He hopes that his experiences, yea, he faithfully believes that his experiences are akin to his fellows. He acts on this assumption, and trusts for social interaction to verify the assumption. "Each of us can speak only for himself, and for himself he has a right to speak. His own experiences are enough for himself, but he cannot speak for others; he cannot lay down the law; he can only bring his own experiences to the common stock of psychological facts. He knows what has satisfied and satisfies himself; if it satisfies him, it is likely to satisfy others; if, as he believes and is sure, it is true, it will approve itself to others also, for there is but one truth.

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And doubtless he does find in fact, that allowing for differences of minds  
 and of modes of speech, what convinces him, does convince others also".  
 James put this thought in a little different language when he said' "The  
 ethical philosopher,... ,whenever he ventures to say what course of ac-  
 tion is best, is on no essentially different level from the common man.  
 'See I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;  
 therefore choose life that thou and thy seed may live,' --when this chal-  
 lenge comes to us, it is simply our total character and personal genius  
 that are on trial; if we invoke any so-called philosophy, our choice and  
 use of that also are but revelations of our personal aptitude or incapaci-  
 ty for moral life. From this unsparing practical ordeal no professor's  
 lectures and no array of books can save us. The solving word, for the  
 learned and unlearned man alike, lies in the last resort in the dumb will-  
 ingness ~~and~~<sup>2</sup> unwillingness of their internal characters, and nowhere else.  
 It is not in heaven, neither is it beyond the sea; but the word is very  
 nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it".

Man does not consciously see his destiny from his first conscious-  
 ness. He struggles for the knowledge of what he is, and what he ought to  
 be, just as much as he does to be what he progressively thinks he ought  
 to be. He continues to roll up his experiences in a systematic way, and  
 to think. The desires and emotions of our subjective life change; in  
 these we are all more or less capricious. Man begins with nothing realized,

1. Grammar of Assent, p385  
 2. Will to Believe, p214, 215



not even a definite ideal of what he is and ought to be. "He has to make capital for himself by the exercise of those faculties which are his natural inheritance. Thus he gradually advances to the fulness of his original destiny. Nor is this progress mechanical, nor is it of necessity; it is committed to the personal efforts of each individual of the species; each man has the prerogative of completing his inchoate and rudimentary nature, and of developing his own perfection out of the living elements with which his mind began. It is his gift to be the creator of his own sufficiency; and to be emphatically self-made. This is the law of his being, which he cannot escape; and whatever is involved in that law he is bound, or rather he is carried on, to fulfil".<sup>1</sup> By reflexive action we respond to the stimuli of our environment, and by degrees consciousness seems to break through in a way that we have certain preferences in response to these stimuli. This preference becomes the transformer of our world of experience into a totally different world, "the world of our conception; and the transformation is affected in the interests of our volitional nature, and for no other purpose whatsoever. Destroy the willing nature, the definite subjective purposes, preferences, fondnesses for certain effects, forms, orders, and not the slightest motive would remain for the brute order of our experience to be remodelled at all. But, as we have the elaborate volitional constitution we do have, the remodelling must be effected; there is no escape. The world's contents



are given to us in an order so foreign to our subjective interests that we can hardly by an effort of the imagination picture to ourselves what it is like. We have to break the order altogether,--and by picking out from it the items which concern us, and connecting them with others far away, which we say "belong" with them, we are able to make out definite threads of sequence and tendency; to foresee particular liabilities and get ready for them; and to enjoy simplicity and harmony in place of  
what was chaos.<sup>1.</sup>

That there is truth, and that our minds are made for it, are assumptions for which there can be no grounds to debate. The great question is of method; how do we learn truth; how can we test the true ideas and principles ? what is the criterion for evaluation? The empirical solution for these problems seems to me to be the most satisfactory. Because we must realize that the a priori gods have changed substance and image many times in the history of philosophy. The gods of philosophy and science have not had a history that we can justly call more honorable than the history of religion's gods, and we now realize that our conception, at least, of the God of religion has changed face and substance. Hence I see nothing better than that a man start in with his own experience, interpreting them in the terms of the best meaning he feels he can impose upon them, altering and readjusting himself to his own reactions, and to the reactions he experiences from others. Trusting

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1. Will to Believe, p117,118



that social interaction and verification will bring about the best kind of world, or, teach him to know the world as it is; if not to be actually made, 'to be known as'. Believing that in him "who is faithful to his own...nature, the faint light of Truth dawns continually brighter; the shadows which at first troubled it, the unreal shapes created by its own twilight, vanish; what was uncertain as mere feeling, and could not be distinguished from mere fancy except by the compelling urgency of its voice, becomes fixed and definite, and strengthening into principle, it at the same time develops into habit. As fresh and fresh duties -(Problems)- arise, or fresh and fresh faculties are brought into action, they are at once absorbed into the existing inward system, and take their appropriate place in it".



**B I B L I O G R A P H Y .**



## B I B L I O G R A P H Y .

### PRIMARY SOURCES:

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