

The Autonomy of Faith and Reason in John Henry Newman

Kingsley Mbamarra

Abstract

Newman's philosophical merits continue to generate interest due to their relevance to the contemporary discussion. However, in this article, the author articulates one of Newman's important contribution in the field of epistemology through the explication of his understanding of the relationship of faith and reason. The explication in some details of Newman's point of view aims to bring out the relevance of his ideas to contemporary discussion especially concerning the epistemology of religion. Therefore, the article highlights and discusses the meaning and consequences of Newman's views contemporary times. Based on Newman's notion of faith and reason, the article argues that Newman proposes an objective understanding of person and society that implies the integration of all dimensions of human existence and endeavour for progressive and harmonious living.

Keywords: Faith, Reason, Trust, Belief, Action, Truth.

Introduction

An essential dimension of Newman's contemporary relevance lies in the significant articulation of the relationship between faith and culture. Our contemporary culture is characteristically scientific, technical, naturalistic, and mechanistic in many respects. However, the most notable aspect of modern science is its methodology, which has helped to ensure enormous successes in the field of science. Consequently, this has influenced the adoption of scientific methods across other disciplines and resulted in the complete reduction of all reasoning to the model employed by natural science. In the above context, the relationship between faith and reason becomes scientific knowledge versus belief. Newman challenged the general reduction of rationality to a single approach and articulated a relationship of interdependence between reason and faith as his most significant contribution to the issue.

He rejects the narrow epistemology of the rationalists/empiricists, and he argues for a multiplicity of non-reducible cognitive habits which work in their own way in moving from grounds/evidence to beliefs. He cautions against the “usurpations of reason,” in other words, the mistake of taking characteristics of one cognitive habit to be the standard or the norm for others (*US*, 55-74). He maintains that reason proceeds by direct and definite demonstration. It is limited to acquiring knowledge about man and the physical world. Antecedent considerations influence faith, on the other hand, enabling us to attain knowledge about the invisible and God. Kłos (2014, 118) explains that “[i]n reason we say that we know, and we are ready to present arguments on behalf of our knowledge; in faith, we also say we know, but do not feel it necessary to give reasons why.” In maintaining this distinction, Newman accepts the rationalist-empiricist position. Nevertheless, he is open to adding other forms of reasoning. The concrete human person reasons and involves all his faculties (cf. Kłos 2014, 118). Hence, Newman includes the empirical, psychological experiences and the idiosyncrasies of the person in his considerations. Newman's first point of consideration is the moral state of the inquiring person, which he argues functions as an antecedent probability regarding faith.

On the Autonomy of Faith and Reason

Scientific knowledge is founded on demonstrable facts and follows a strict application of the methodology or principles of science. These principles are known and applied intuitively by the mind. The conclusions reached or results obtained through demonstration are also known intuitively and can be repeated to obtain the same results. The results can even be accurately predicted. We do not doubt our knowledge of the objects in our surroundings, and we apprehend self-evident truths, such as one plus one equals two or that a triangle has three angles. We know all that because such knowledge proceeds from either sense perception or intuition and the shared power of demonstrating the facts. In this way, Newman makes a clear distinction between the things dealt with by science that fall within the domain of reason and those that can only be assented to by believing and at the same time without descending into irrationality. This is the domain of faith (cf. *GA*, 237).

A belief that counts as genuine knowledge relies on testimony rather than a personal discovery of the object of belief as something trustworthy. In accepting the testimony of another person as true, we will usually do so based on sufficient grounds that warrant our believing that it is true as reported. When belief is questioned, it is the grounds for holding such a belief, not the act itself. Without such sufficient grounds, belief becomes credulous.

Therefore, faith is a distinct form of reasoning based on presumptions rather than evidence or raw fact (*US*, 203/4). It is not contradictory to reason but capable of going beyond reason, and, as such, faith is above, not opposed to

reason. Because faith can go beyond sense or reason, it covers a wide area of knowledge compared to science. Newman states that “[h]ow few things there are which we can ascertain for ourselves by our own senses and reason” (*GA*, 194). There is a vast area of our lives that we rely on others for information. Much of what we learn in history and geography is beyond our personal experiences. We accept much of the contents of history and geography based on the testimony of trusted persons. Such events like past wars, natural disasters and the life and times of one's ancestors are accepted based on the testimony of others. We can only believe these stories since we could not have been present when they occurred. Because these facts can only be accepted and acknowledged as accurate, they are not less accurate. Certitude arising from belief constitutes knowledge compared to knowledge through the senses or reason. Therefore, according to Newman, we assent to propositions of belief and reason or sense in much the same way because assent is always unconditional, whether regarding scientific or religious beliefs. However, because some beliefs are not true, the problem of knowing which beliefs are true and differentiating between true and false beliefs arises. Newman in the *Grammar of Assent* tried to tackle this problem (cf. *GA*, 230-240).

It is important to remember that Newman thinks natural knowledge is the foundation for supernatural knowledge. In other words, natural knowledge prepares the mind for the reception of supernatural knowledge (*Idea*, 396-398, 415-416). Equally important is what he considers the boundary of reason, which is also the point of contact between natural and supernatural knowledge. When reason has expended its resources and reached its set limits, the mind makes the crucial switch from reason to faith (cf. *PN II*, 101). This raises the question of the nature of divine faith and how it arises in the mind. That forms the context of Newman's explication of the distinction and the relationship between faith and reason.

Faith

Newman defended the reasonableness of faith amidst the challenge of the rationalist-empiricist that requires the explicit demonstration of truth/knowledge based on evidence/facts as the ideal form of reasoning across all disciplines. He begins his consideration of faith by denying the assertion that “faith is but a moral quality, dependent upon Reason” (*US*, 182). Newman questions the statement: “Will anyone say that a child or uneducated person may not savingly act on Faith, without being able to produce reasons why he so acts?” He says, if the child or uneducated person does not require to produce such reasons for his or her actions, while then, “Reason need not be the origin of Faith, as Faith exists in the very persons believing, though it does test and verify it” (*US*, 183).

Newman contrasts faith and syllogistic reasoning as two different habits of the mind: “Faith is an instrument of knowledge and action, unknown to the world

before, a principle *sui generis*, distinct from those which nature supplies, and in particular [...] independent of what is commonly understood as Reason" (US, 179). He comprehends faith as a habit of the mind. In his *University Sermons*, we read: "faith viewed as an internal habit or act, does not depend upon inquiry and examination, but has its own special basis, whatever that is" (US, 184). It is a property that helps the individual to dependably obtain a result properly. What is acquired by the habit of faith is knowledge. Therefore, faith is a cognitive habit. When acts of faith are the origin or source of belief, the belief in question is asserted as correct, right, adequate, but it also constitutes knowledge.

Moreover, faith is independent, irreducible, to the habit of belief-formation, which Newman calls syllogistic reason. Newman asserts that "faith is independent of processes of reason, seems plain from their respective subject-matters" (US, 180). Faith is a principle *sui generis*, with its own unique basis. It is similar to other belief-forming faculties where substantial questions of great complexity are concerned: moral perception, conscience, judgment about other people's character. He regarded the act of faith formally as a type of reasoning. That is to say, faith is a way of knowing and attaining the truth. It is a specific type of intellectual assent. Therefore, exercising faith is reasonable but differs from syllogistic or formal modes of reasoning.

Newman articulated an understanding of the relationship between faith and reason that entails no contradiction because faith understood as trust, assurance, or confidence is our usual and basic attitude and our common attribute in dealing with ordinary matters of life. In other words, we more often than not act on faith and act in such a manner that we act reasonably/rightly upon reflection, which entails a broader sense of reasonability. Newman categorised this broader sense of rationality or reasonability as certitude (cf. Kłos 2014, 113-116).

Furthermore, not all the arguments that justify a person's beliefs need to be instantly cognitively graspable to the reasoner. Faith can exist without formal arguments because not everyone can prove their faith with the force of arguments. Faith is independent of reason, but that does not mean that the faith in question cannot be put into proposition or argumentative statements. Therefore, true faith, Newman says "admits but does not require the exercise of what is commonly understood by reason" (US, 255). The justification of faith lies in its success but first requires a spontaneous response in obedience before reflection. Newman wants to show

that the reasonings and opinions which are involved in the act of Faith are latent and implicit; that the mind reflecting on itself is able to bring them out into some definite and methodical form; that Faith, however,

is complete without its reflective faculty, which, in matter of fact, often does interfere with it, and must be used cautiously (*US*, 277).

Newman differentiates between the situation whereby a person has sufficient grounds for believing something on the one hand and on the other hand a person knowing and being able to tell the grounds for believing something. There are in several areas of belief formation proper grounds for believing something. This is the case in moral perception and judgement. Newman states, "...in the case of questions in which party spirit, or political opinion, or ethical principle, or personal feeling, is concerned, men have a surprising sagacity, often unknown to themselves, in finding their own place" (*US*, 211). Nevertheless, these grounds may not be promptly comprehensible and articulated to the reasoner. He further states that people

may argue badly, but they reason well; that is, their professed grounds are no sufficient measures of their real ones. And in like manner, though the evidence with which Faith is content is apparently inadequate to its purpose, yet this is no proof of real weakness or imperfection in its reasoning (*US*, 212).

Similarly, he says:

The sheep could not tell how they knew the Good Shepherd; they had not analysed their own impressions or cleared the grounds of their knowledge, yet doubtless grounds there were: they, however, acted spontaneously on a loving Faith (*US*, 281).

Therefore, faith is a habit like other habits through which people can get it dependably correct in many areas. Newman cites the example of the skilful mountain climber who understands the situation of the climb, and consequently who, "by quick eye, prompt hand, and firm foot, ascends how he knows not himself, by personal endowments and by practice, rather than by rule, leaving no track behind him, and unable to teach another" (*US*, 257). He also points to "the sagacity with which a great army general knows what his friends and enemies are about and what will be the final result" (*US*, 217). In similar circumstances like the ones mentioned above, getting it right in factual matters entails how sharp one's instinct is apt to master such situations. Newman identifies such instinctive judgment with what he calls the illative sense.

Reason

Descartes, at the dawn of modernity, sought to build philosophy on a sure foundation comparable to that of science and mathematics. This led him to reject previously accepted foundations of knowledge and everything that had

the semblance of doubt. He concluded that the rational person could only entertain and accept distinct and clear ideas of the mind in the pursuit of true knowledge. Newman sees that as an error and rejects doubt as a starting point of reasoning. He argues that the human being is oriented towards the truth, aided by his natural faculties. Human doubt is not necessarily an obstacle; instead, it constitutes part of the cognitive process to unravel the truth. Doubt is natural to the mind. Newman states that “we do but fulfil our nature in doubting, inferring, and assenting; and our duty is, not to abstain from the exercise of any function of our nature, but to do what is in itself right rightly” (GA, 11).

Similarly, the human tendency to error is not a defect in human nature. Doubt, therefore, should be accepted as a reaction of the mind to error and a limit to our knowledge. The recognition of that is important if we are to avoid the mistake of equating certainty with certitude which, according to Newman, are similar cognitive goals. Thus, the notion of truth is not affected by the procedure and standards of certainty. That is based on his understanding of reason and the reasoning process, which is personal.

Newman defines “Reason is the faculty by which we arrive from things known to things unknown” (TP vol. 1, 47). We live in a world of things broadly divided into material and immaterial. Their existence is independent of us and vice versa. Our knowledge of the material world is through the senses. Such is not the case with the immaterial world. Newman maintains that no faculty puts us in direct contact with the immaterial realities like the sense does with material realities “except indeed as regard our soul and its acts” (US, 205). Still, our knowledge of the world is better described as mediated by some instruments under certain conditions such as time and place. He asserts that

we must be near things to touch them; we must have light to see them; we can neither see, hear, nor touch things past or future. Now, Reason is that faculty of the mind by which this deficiency is supplied; by which knowledge of things external to us, of beings, of facts, and events, is attained beyond the range of sense.

Though Reason may be limited in its power, it is boundless in its reach, transcending the material world and touching the spiritual realm to bring us knowledge. On that basis, Newman maintains that every person reasons and reasoning is nothing other than gaining the truth from a former truth. Reason is self-conscious and self-reflective. “We not only feel, and think, and reason, but we know that we feel, and think, and reason; and not only know, but can inspect and ascertain our thoughts, feelings, and reasoning; not only ascertain but describe” (US, 256). Thus, a person is capable of reasoning upon his/her reason. “They reason upon their reason,” Newman states and consequently describes

reason as “the faculty of gaining knowledge without direct perception, or of ascertaining one thing by means of another” (*US*, 256). Thinking is a personal act which is not based on rules but on an inward faculty. Hence, we reason without effort or consciousness. The exercise of reason is a spontaneous living energy within us, not an art. Like a power, all persons possess reason, but it differs in range and quality as a self-reflective capacity (cf. *US*, 257). Newman says that “the gift or talent of reasoning may be distinct in different subjects *nevertheless* the process of reasoning is the same” (*US*, 259). That explains the possibility of people arriving and sharing the same beliefs, be they political or religious. Reason organises and puts order and uniformity into the different and conflicting individual opinions/views. This is how we arrive at shared beliefs defended by institutions.

The differences in held beliefs or opinions arise not from the reasoning process itself “but in the first premises from which reason proceeded” (cf. Pattison 1991, 151). Besides, it also explains why some people are gifted in one area and less in another. Newman asserts that a person “remembers better and worse on different subject-matters, and reasons better and worse. Some men's reason becomes genius in particular subjects and is less than ordinary in others” (*US*, 259). Hence, in this sense, reasoning is said to be departmental and admits of specialities (cf. *GA*, 230). Newman further differentiates between reasoning and the self-reflective process of reason, that is, reason investigating itself. He writes:

All men reason, for to reason is nothing more than to gain truth from former truth, without the intervention of sense, to which brutes are limited; but all men do not reflect upon their own reasonings, much less reflect truly and accurately, so as to do justice to their own meaning; but only in proportion to their abilities and attainments. In other words, all men have a reason, but not all men can give a reason.

He variously calls these two exercises of the mind: reasoning and arguing, conscious and unconscious reasoning, or implicit and explicit reasoning. In the introduction to *Grammar of Assent* Ker (1985, xxvi) gives a precise distinction between implicit and explicit reasoning:

Explicit or conscious reasoning is the analysis or investigation of implicit or unconscious reasoning: it means arguing as opposed to reasoning, it involves giving rather than having a reason. It is critical as distinct from creative reasoning and does not necessarily imply the possession of the latter, which again may be distinct in different subjects, though the process of reasoning is the same, so that some men's reason becomes genius in particular subjects, and is less than ordinary in others.

Newman associates explicit or conscious reasoning with terms and activities such as “science, method, development, analysis, criticism, proof, system, principle, rules, and others of like nature” (*US*, 259). In comparison to science, faith is not based on explicit or conscious reasoning processes but on implicit reasoning which is natural reasoning as well. It is unconscious reasoning and largely automatic; it is a peculiar and personal mode of abstraction, “a power of looking at things in some particular aspect; and of determining their internal and external relations thereby” (*GA*, 256).

There is no reason to think that explicit reason is superior to implicit reason simply because the former involves greater rigour. Implicit reason is the subject matter of explicit reason. Implicit reason provides explicit reason with the raw data it needs to work on. Explicit reason reflects and puts in logical order or argumentative form what is already known through implicit reasoning. Thus, implicit reason is enriched by explicit reason by the overt use of theories, deductions, definitions, and laws. Its function is to sharpen our natural and implicit powers of reason, not replace them. The process of implicit reasoning, according to Newman, “is complete in itself, and independent. The analysis is but an account of it; it does not make the conclusion correct; it does not make the inference rational. It does not cause a given individual to reason better. It does but gives him a sustained consciousness, for good or for the evil that he is reasoning” (*US*, 259).

We have seen earlier that for Newman, faith and reason are two habits of the mind. In other words, they are two distinct modes of knowing. Faith and reason are not unrelated types of knowing distanced from each other but two complementary modes of knowing. Newman will stress that each is complete in its processes and a valid source of knowledge. Nevertheless, they have something in common. Like faith, reason too proceeds from a measure of assumption, presumption, and prejudice. Newman is emphatic that this is the base from which thought proceeds. Knowing for him is a personal act, very much like the act of faith. Unbelief and its opposite belief are based on presuppositions (*GA*, xxiv). Therefore, doubt is merely a possibility to affirm the contrary view or position; hence, it is a type of assent.

Faith is not irrational or unreasonable; it is an act of the mind and has its grounds obtained or gathered from differences, such as hope and desire. Faith begins with a habit of trust and gradually builds confidence in accepting things based on previously established grounds. This is how we believe that a source of information is trustworthy. There are many instances of belief without a complete proof (cf. *GA*, 106). According to Newman, it is impossible to make progress in our inquiry if we are first to establish that we are certain. By habit, we have come to trust our senses, our memory, and our daily sources of information. We continue to exercise such trust and confidence until they fail

us. Faith arises as an acquired habit of trust with its object through frequent repetition over a considerable period. The human mind must, by necessity, be tuned to judge and to receive the truth. In the aforementioned sense, faith is synonymous with implicit reason that is guarded against error more by instinct and habit than by mental sharpness.

According to Newman, the structure of reasoning and faith begins not by reasoning but by an apprehension of the object, which afterwards inclines our assent. The grounds for assenting are sorted out later and affirmed or asserted. There are numerous occasions in which we believe without understanding and consequently cannot prove. We often believe what we cannot understand and what we cannot exhaustively comprehend or prove. Conviction in the mind is often not something that occurs instantaneously. Rather, we gradually, over time, grow into it. Concrete rationalities are not ultimate tests, but they are sufficient tests in practical rationality. Newman categorizes assent into two: notional assent, which consists of profession, credence, opinion, presumption, and speculation, and real assent, which he describes as imaginative certitude arising from real-world experiences of the individual. Assent to any belief can either be notional or real. Therefore, we attain certitude (a state of mind) all the time by orienting ourselves towards specific truths, and this existential encounter with our object of assent bestows our certitude a character or hallmark of irreversibility. We have noted earlier that persons possess an illative sense, "the power of judging and concluding, when in its perfection" (GA, 227/8) the correctness of inferences in the same ways that our prudence judges life practically. The judgment of illative sense includes decisions such as what authorities are worth placing our trust on. Therefore, it will not be wrong to assert that all good reasons to some extent are founded on some measure of faith, and all true faith has some measure of reasonableness in itself.

Belief and Action

Newman had little or no interest in speculative philosophy, particularly in German metaphysics. The dichotomy between action and belief is one of the areas he will disagree with Arians, liberals and Germans, for whom belief tended to be purely an intellectual preoccupation. Life begins when we believe and live by the truths we assent to. That is the case where belief is said to have an epistemic value; consequently, the said belief affects human conduct. According to Pattison (1991, 171), Newman agrees with Marx in criticising liberal Germans that "man must prove the truth, i.e. the reality and power, this sidedness of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question." For Newman, belief and action are inseparable. Newman first made this connection when he argues, as we stated in the previous chapter, that theoretical propositions are less effective in inspiring action and touching the heart. That is

because theoretical propositions engender notional assent. However, an act of belief and real assent can move a person to action (GA, 64). Therefore, belief and action are two aspects of a single reality: truth. Analogically speaking, Pattison (1991, 171) further explains:

Belief is for humans what knowledge is for God. God's knowledge is always realized; so is man's belief. For God to know the light is for light to exist. God's truth is a perfect union of knowledge and action. Human truth is constructed after the divine model, but our truth is an imperfect pairing of belief, or the lack of belief, from which it proceeds.

That conception and expression of belief become the standard against which every thought and deed is measured. According to Newman, what justifies a person is a mind that acts believably (GA, 64). Action is critical to justification. Where a person's acts flow or proceed from his/her belief, it expresses truth. That is authentic living. In other words, belief and action merge to express truth. The intellect does not rest until it arrives at such unity or truth. The goal of life is to acquire true beliefs that inspire the right actions. Kłos (2021, 194, cf. Karol Wojtyła 1979) further explains that “[we] need to live an active life. Life is for action as Newman would say, i.e. the person is present in his acts.”

Modern secularization led to the separation of politics, morality and religion as their ontological relations were denied. Secularization as a product of modernity triggered the challenge of the loss of the spiritual/metaphysical vision of the world and the inauguration of the secular and “mechanistic vision of the world in which the individual, within the confines of the independent intellect and limited only by sheer logic, expands the space of his absolutist choices” (Kłos 2021, 40). Consequently, religious belief ceased to be a reference to and motivation for human action. It is separation of belief from action that Newman thinks triggers every form of personal immorality and social anarchy. He accused the liberals of demoralizing belief to the extent that belief is merely intellectual, that is, a matter of notional assent. Belief, according to Newman, demands a view of life along with intellectual and real assent to realities outside of the self. It requires an object and results in action. Newman's rejection of religious liberalism was the basis of his denunciation of modernism. Under the influence of liberalism, the modern world is heading to ruins because it does not believe and, thus, fails to act believably (cf. Kłos 2021, 194).

Newman's emphasis on the necessary connection between good thought and good conduct can only be compared to a causal relation, that is, one necessarily follows the other, a doctrine that he was committed to. Newman's idea or thought is that if good conduct is required of all persons without exception, and good conduct is the result of good belief, then acquiring and maintaining good belief is important and not reserved for any class or group of persons.

Consequently, acquiring and professing true belief is the highest obligation that binds every person without exception.

Newman started with a philosophy that placed reason under the instinctive guidance of the illative sense. However, when it comes to the theory of belief, reason has total authority in human affairs. Everyone, learned and uneducated alike, must obey or follow the dictates of their reason. Through instinct, we apprehend that God and truth necessarily exist. Nevertheless, it is the function of reason to organize these apprehensions into intelligible principles or rules for action. Belief is more than mere feeling or sensation but the recognition and coordination of the sensation that results in action or decision. "Belief is what right reason makes out of pious instinct" (Pattison 1991, 174). For Newman, the primacy of belief meant that those below the age of reason were too young to have faith. Though the grounds for belief are intimated by instinct, belief is built on instinct. However, it is reason that holds them together. Similarly, "in religion, the imagination and affections should always be under the control of reason" (*TP*. Vol.1., 27).

For Newman, human action is controlled and guided by correct beliefs. Therefore, action for him is more than mere reflexes or involuntary actions. Action for Newman means conduct. It is the area of behaviour over which the mind is thought to exercise conscious control. Likewise, by belief, Newman did not mean mere rational acknowledgement of some propositions, but reasoning so intensely conjoined with feeling and instinct that it is tightly linked with what is personal and individual.

When there is an acknowledgement of a principle or law without the corresponding action or conduct, Newman refers to such recognition of principle/law as an inference or notional assent. Let us reemphasise again that an inference or notional assent does not affect conduct and is not worthy of the name belief. On the other hand, belief or real assent does affect conduct (cf. *GA*, 64; *JFC*, 327, 293).

Newman maintains a necessary correlation between belief and conduct. Good conduct must necessarily proceed from valid and reasonable belief as their source. Right reason is informed by true belief, which in turn proceeds from pious instincts instructed by right reason. If belief is false, if the instincts are perverse, or if reason is corrupt, the action that results will be wrong, no matter how noble in appearance. Good deeds must come from correct beliefs.

Newman argues that men ought to live by belief, and all life worthy of the name is lived by belief. The modern world lives in a state of (spiritual) paralysis because it does not believe. Newman writes: "Many a man will live and die upon a dogma; no man will be a martyr for a conclusion [...]. No one, I say, will

die for his own calculations; he dies for realities" (*DA*, 293). The weakness and strength of liberalism lie in tolerating everything and believing nothing. Hence, toleration in such a manner is the worst enemy of (objective) truth and can only lead to unbelief which is the direct consequence of action divorced from the dogma of belief.

The implication of the texts we have analysed so far is enormous. We can make the critical connection or relation between truth and politics in Newman's thoughts. He stresses that belief or faith is a novel principle of action and that belief has primacy over action. In other words, belief precedes action, and at the same time, it is its source. In the words of Norris (2009, 76), "faith opens to the believer a whole world inviting to action and driving such action with a unique inspiration and energy [...]. Through faith, a unique principle of action enters history and trans-values all human thinking and acting. Ordinary mortals take upon themselves divinely appointed roles."

Therefore, in social/political context where and when religion or faith is stifled, actions that originate from belief are hindered, and religious-minded persons may find little or no motivation/inspiration and incentive for social and political action. They cannot participate and contribute fully to the social, economic and political life of the communities in which they are members. As stated earlier, right belief and right action are two aspects of a single reality: truth. Then truth is the end or goal, not the starting point, of human endeavour. Belief is for humans what knowledge is for God. God's knowledge is always realized, so is man's belief. For God to know light is for light to exist. God's truth is a perfect union of knowledge and action. Human truth is constructed after the divine model, but our truth is an imperfect pairing of belief, or the lack of belief, from which it proceeds. Belief thus conceived is the standard against which every thought and deed is judged. Besides, objective truth could be viewed as the instrument or bridge connecting heaven and earth, politics and religion. This is because Newman is emphatic that truth is one and there are no contrary or competing truths. Humans define themselves by their beliefs. Newman contended that belief is the basis of human life, and economic, political, and social institutions are the superstructure. A culture built on false belief is destined to ruin because false belief is always subject to decay. Only a culture built on true belief can aspire to permanence.

The separation of belief and action has the consequence of denying religion its role as the bond of society. Newman traces the attempt to replace or displace religion as the bond of society, first from Cicero to Lord Brougham and Mr Bentham and lastly to Robert Peel. The latter had followed closely the teaching of Lord Brougham and Bentham, both of whom were influenced by Cicero (cf. *DA*, 258). Education in natural science is the sure way of progress, and in

acquiring the egalitarian form of knowledge, one "will feel the moral dignity of his nature exalted. We are harmonizing the gradations of society, and binding men together by a new bond" (*DA*, 261). Newman critically assessed these remarks to note, among other things, that the knowledge Sir Robert Peel and his predecessors' offered was "not a victory of mind over itself but a mere philosophy of expedients." Sir Robert Peel's proposal amounted to mere speculation disguised as enlightenment. He failed to substantially articulate any belief system or practice to substantiate these speculations into good actions. In the words of Newman, Sir Robert Peel neglected the higher instincts which steadily seek the truth but assumes the human person to be a mere calculating machine operated by unaided secular reason (*DA*, 258-261). Pattison (1991, 178) notes that Newman was a rationalist whose philosophical rationalism was anchored in an instinctual commitment beyond reason. Hence, for Newman, objective reason was always in danger when left alone to fend for itself without the pious support of subjective reflection. In objection to Sir Robert Peel's primitive scientism, Newman stated that "man is not a reasoning animal; he is a seeing, feeling, contemplating, acting animal" (*DA*, 294). In his order of the hierarchy of values, Newman maintained that man's instincts for God and truth must be addressed before his reason is engaged. "First comes Knowledge, then a view, then reasoning, and then belief" (*DA*, 293). In agreement with Cicero, Peel not only prioritized reason over faith, science over religion and theology but excluded faith in the formation of moral and religious character. But Newman wants the formation of the moral and religious character of the citizens through faith to come first (which is the function of religion), before utility and amusement to follow accordingly. That follows from the understanding that Christianity is primary in building the character of individuals and consequently the foundation of society (cf. *DA*, 294).

Newman's Concern with Certitude and Truth

The search for certitude characterizes Newman's philosophical endeavour. The search for certitude also forms a thread binding all his intellectual investigations. We can discern a relentless pursuit of certitude from his study of the Arians to the rest of his publications. Without the possibility of certitude, there could be no progress in the search for truth or knowledge. For Newman, certitude is a qualitative enhancement to knowledge, truth, and understanding. It is, "[t]he perception of a truth with the perception that it is a truth, or the consciousness of knowing, as expressed in the phrase, I know that I know (*GA*, 197).

In his considerations, it was crucial to reach certitude because in attaining certitude, we do not only know the truth, but we possess it, and, more importantly, we can know the reason for the truth. Besides, we can offer a satisfactory and rational explanation for our assent. To appreciate Newman's

quest for certitude, we recall from chapter one that rationalists and empiricists claim that demonstration or formal logic is the only foundation for any certainty. Religion has no such certainty. In other words, liberalism claimed that there is no positive truth in religion (cf. *Apo*, 294-296). The implication of this stand was clear and frightening to Newman. It reduces all dogma to opinion or personal sentiment and, consequently, truth and certitude are not akin to all forms of theology. The long-term consequence of the stand of liberalism is the complete annihilation or obliteration of religion and the establishment of atheism, with foreseeable dire consequences. Therefore, in the words of Kłos (2021, 40), “[a]t the time when the applied sciences ruled, traditional views were being undermined, and the revolutionary turmoil seemed to have spread over all the continents, Newman stood up first in defence of the person, and then of the Church with her transcendent claims and her dogmatic structure.” Newman defended the truth by personation i.e., he lived by the truth or gave a personal witness to the truth he had come to believe. The importance of that kind of witnessing to and defending of truth still matters today. He asserts that there is positive truth in religion, and there is certitude, that is, the awareness of the positive truth.

Why Truth Matters

The question of truth in the nineteenth century was and remained an important issue in liberal democracy. Social relations and communications (free speech) should be based on a clear notion of truth that forms the foundation of a free democratic society. Kłos (2003, 165) asserts that “it is on such foundations that responsibility is shaped.” Without settling the argument of what truth means, what it is or whether truth is objective or subjective, it is commonly accepted that there is truth. However, the awareness of its existence does not automatically translate into grasping or possessing it, whether we believe it is given or made (cf. Maryniarczyk 2016, 78/9). Whichever side of the debate one belongs to, truth entails a process of discovery or revelation that is open and unending (cf. Maryniarczyk 2016, 75). The direct corollary from the above view is that while truth can be said to exist, humans cannot know it in full at once. However, the implicit assumption here is that the truth can be known, and such knowledge has its satisfactions besides its usefulness or benefits because the human intellect, as we said, is made for truth (cf. Maryniarczyk 2016, 77). That explains and justifies the human search for meaning.

The desire for truth transcends time and change. Therefore, comprehending truth and bringing it to bear upon existence exacts the greatest positive influence in a person's life. However, that is far from claiming that everyone loves the truth and would like to base their lives on what that truth entails. In this sense, truth is implicitly connected with action, such that action, whether it is speaking, being silent, doing or not doing, is the expression of truth.

Consequently, finding the truth is crucial in getting it right. Thus, truth precedes and at the same time inspires and influences action. In this context, the search for new knowledge and truth makes sense but only when the discovery of new truth entails the commitment to a corresponding action or behaviour (cf. Maryniarczyk 2016, 78/9).

The human condition is the point of departure in the quest for knowledge and truth, which translates into progress. Nature had endowed human beings with intellectual abilities higher than animals. In comparison, animals have survived and are settled naturally in their environment guided by their instinct. Meanwhile, humans have developed a culture that has facilitated their superior adaptation and survival based on their intellectual abilities and driven by a sense of purpose and progress.

Besides communicating and solving fundamental problems of existence/survival, humans have developed a complex web of mutual interdependence and cooperation as part of cultural evolution. It is also only humans who can self-reflect on their existence and consciously set themselves on the path of discovery or search for meaning and truth. Furthermore, only human beings are bothered about the ultimate origin and end of life, the destiny of the world and their place in it. Seeking and finding the answers to these ultimate questions of life is the essence and the true meaning of the human search for truth (cf. MacIntyre, 2014, 55). The relentless search for truth means constantly extending the frontiers of knowledge in an attempt to answer the theoretical question of 'why' on the one hand and on the other hand the practical question of 'how.'

However, the search for meaning and truth comes with the humble recognition that the human mind is limited in its capacity to view and grasp the whole of reality from one standpoint and comprehend the whole truth from that standpoint. Besides, human life is finite and fragile. Its lifespan is too short to acquire all the knowledge there is to know. Therefore, human finitude, vulnerability, and the limited nature of human powers mean that we are dependent animals (cf. MacIntyre 2014, 1-5).

We rely on other persons' strength, expertise, knowledge, powers for our well-being and continuous survival. Therefore, human society and cooperation appear natural and fundamental for our survival. However, human action would be impossible if we needed to know every detail about our decisions before acting. Hence, we must trust others in what they say and represent, as Newman will require us to trust and rely on our natural faculties. Thus, we have roles and responsibilities arising from belonging to the community. This is an existential human condition that engenders trusting others on the things and areas of life that we do not know or have the capacity to understand that they do

and are experts on. In this sense, trust and sincerity are natural virtues and the duties we owe each other without exceptions. In this sense, a bridge of trust or compromise of sincerity has moral and legal implications. If everyone lied, deceived, concealed the truth in our search for meaning, collective actions/goals would be impossible, and our long time survival and progress would be frustrated.

Human beings are social and political animals who embody those relationships of giving and receiving through which our individual and common good can be achieved (MacIntyre, 2014, 129). This sort of shared human survival depends, but not exclusively, on the collective recognition of the virtues of truth, trust and sincerity as the foundation of the political society. Newman understands religion to provide these virtues and more for the wellbeing of society.

Conclusion

As we have seen from the beginning, the question of faith, especially its expression as trust, is significant to Newman. This is immediately seen from the moment and from the perspective that he considers faith as the principle of action and a natural human faculty on *par* with the intellect/reason (*GA*, 73). Faith as a principle of action means it is a source of action, even if it is only so indirectly. Furthermore, faith is on *par* with reason, implying an epistemic value. Finally, we reiterate that faith constitutes an independent way of arriving at knowledge that is non-contradictory but rather complementary to reason. Hence, faith and reason co-exist in the human subject, not in opposition as asserted in the pre-modern era. To buttress these aspects of faith, Newman undertook to look at the concrete human experience in the exercise of faith (Klos 2014, 113).

Let us repeat here by emphasising that he observes that the concrete person found in a real situation is in a state of functional disarrangement. Newman uses the phrase 'functional disarrangement' to underline the fact that human existence and knowledge begin at a stage of chaos, confusion and conflicting words and images in concrete situations as against the clear and distinct ideas of Descartes. This means that our starting point is not certainty or certitude, and it is neither doubt. Our ideal starting point is trust. A person is called to choose that or this and act that way or the other way despite this challenge of uncertainty and confusion. At the person's disposal to navigate through the chaos and confusion are his/her faculties, and he/she has to trust them to be able to make the right decisions/choices that, in the end, are his/her personal effort and responsibility. Trust is prior to certainty. The chain of trust begins with us trusting our faculties and then trusting others and accepting what they say. Therefore, trust is at the very foundation of human existence, such that neither life nor action is possible without it (*PPS*, 124). This kind of faith arises

from our concrete situation as finite beings in relation to our abilities and knowledge.

Consequently, we rely on others and necessarily fall back on others in faith/trust on those matters that we are incompetent. Hence, faith is important because it enables us to transcend the limits of reason to know metaphysical realities. Besides, faith, i.e. trust, open up the possibility of building interpersonal and interdependent relationships that create social bond/cohesion and cooperation necessary for the survival and growth of any society. Therefore, trust enables the attainment of those goals that individual abilities cannot achieve without the help and cooperation of others in society.

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