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REVELATION AND SACRED SCRIPTURE IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

Extracto de la Tesis Doctoral presentada en la Facultad de Teología de la Universidad de Navarra

PAMPLONA
1985
Ad normam Statutorum Facultatis Theologiae Universitatis Navarrensis, perlegimus et adprobavimus

Pampilonae, die 1 mensis martii anni 1985

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Excerpta e Dissertationibus in Sacra Theologia
Vol. IX n. 5
The life and work of John Henry Cardinal Newman has been of considerable significance on both Catholic and Anglican scenes for over a century now. One testimony of this is the extensive Newman literature, which has greatly increased in recent years. This truly remarkable Englishman has many claims to fame: brilliant Oxford academic, a biblical scholar of note, leader of the Oxford Movement in the Anglican Church, one of the most celebrated converts to the Catholic Church and —first and foremost—a great pastor of souls. The most outstanding moments of his long and rich life must surely be: his first «conversion» (to the Evangelical persuasion) at the age of fifteen, his reception into the Church in 1845 and his elevation to the cardinalate by Pope Leo XIII in 1879.

It is no exaggeration to say that Newman’s whole life was a crusade on behalf of Revealed Religion. He was deeply conscious of his responsibility to defend the great truths of Revelation delivered by God to men. Upon his own admission, the main enemy of his life’s struggle was the «Spirit of Liberalism» which he also called «the antidogmatic principle». Two salient characteristics are very evident in the stance of this eminent champion of Revealed Religion. First, there is his great love and admiration of the Church, particularly «the Church Catholic of primitive times»; and second, his intimate acquaintance with every part of Sacred Scripture. The latter is not hard to detect in his writings. He knew much of Scripture by heart, and left congregations spell-bound by his extensive and expert use of it.

The aim of this investigation has been, on the one hand, to present the reader with that understanding of Revelation which Newman has conveyed through his published works in general; and on the other hand, to elucidate (for the first time, as far as we have been able to ascertain) his view on the precise role and importance of the Sacred Text within Revelation as a whole.
From the outset it is taken as obvious that Newman considered both Sacred Scripture and Tradition as necessary for a full knowledge of Revelation. Apart from the question of the relationships Revelation-Scripture and Scripture-Tradition, many other important questions arise in the course of Newman’s writings on the topic. We have tried, in fact, to be fairly exhaustive, at least in so far as trying to mention all the principal points which he raised in this context.

As regards the method followed in this study, a decision was made from the outset to treat Newman’s thought on this whole field as being one coherent doctrine. The fact that he converted from Anglicanism to the Catholic Church half-way through his long life does not, in principle, alter the fact that his thinking on Revelation and Scripture was always the same essential doctrine, which underwent a progressive enrichment throughout his long life. We have, however, thought it useful, as a general practice, to present his thoughts (under each heading) in the same order that they developed, viz. mainly chronologically, and as related to the principal milestones of his life, such as his more famous publications.

Virtually all of Newman’s published religious works have been referred to for the purpose of this investigation. The list of abbreviations of Newman’s works is incorporated into the Bibliography.

Finally, I wish to express my deep gratitude to Dr. José Morales, the supervisor of this thesis, whose clear and thoughtf ul guidance has been of invaluable help throughout the course of this work; also my sincere thanks to all the academic staff of the Faculty of Theology, particularly to the Dean, Prof. José Luis Illanes Maestre, for his helpfulness at the time of fixing the precise topic, and for his permission to present the thesis in English.
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BIBLIOGRAFIA DE LA TESIS

a) *Works of Newman*

The standard edition of the collected works of Newman is that of Longmans, Green and Co., London (1874-1921) in 40 volumes. The works cited below are from this collection unless otherwise stated. A new impression of the collection has been undertaken by Christian Classics Inc., Westminster, Maryland, 1966-78.

Abbreviations used in the text are shown on the left.

- (The) **Arians of the Fourth Century**, 1833.
- **Callista. A Tale of the third century**, 1855.
- **Certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching. I. 12 Lectures addressed in 1850. II. Letter to Pusey, 1866; Letter to the Duke of Norfolk, 1875.**
- Correspondence with John Keble and others (1839-1845). Edited at the Birmingham Oratory, 1917.
- **Discourses to Mixed Congregations**, 1849.
- **Discussions and Arguments** (1836-1866), 1872.
- **Essays Critical and Historical I-II** (1828-1846), 1871.
- **Essays on Biblical and Ecclesiastical Miracles** (1825-1843). 1870.
GA  Grammar of Assent, 1870.

HS  Historical Sketches, I-III (1824-1860), 1872.


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1. INTRODUCTION

a) The Protestant view of Revelation and Sacred Scripture

The first outright denial of Revelation, as held by all of Christendom, came in the Eighteenth Century with Deism and the various forms of the subsequent Rationalism: Illuminism, Liberal Protestantism and Modernism. As for the Protestant Reformers of the 16th Century, they believed in Revelation but disagreed with the Catholic Church as to where it may be found.

The Catholic Church held from earliest times that Divine Revelation comes to us from two sources: Sacred Scripture and Tradition; moreover, that the only legitimate custodian and authoritative interpreter of the depositum of divinely revealed Truth is the Church herself. But at the Reformation a great change came about in the concept of Revelation when the Protestants laid down their fundamental dogma of the Bible as the sole and infallible authority in religion. Thus the so-called sola Scriptura doctrine of Luther and the Protestants came to constitute a theology which was strictly biblical. It was antagonistic—in that regard—to the Catholic doctrines of Tradition and Papal Infallibility, and even to classical philosophy.

It was at the Council of Trent (1545-1565) that Catholic belief in revelation—with its source of Scripture and Tradition, interpreted by the Church—was laid down: «The holy, ecumenical and general Council of Trent... keeps this constantly in view, namely, that the purity of the Gospel may be
preserved in the Church after the errors have been removed. This (Gospel), promised of old through the prophets in the sacred Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, first promulgated from his own lips, and then commanded that it be preached to all creatures as the fount of all saving truth and rules of conduct. It also clearly perceives that these truths and rules are contained in written books and unwritten traditions which have come down to us, having been received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or from the apostles themselves, by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, have been transmitted, as it were, from hand to hand.

The English Reformers' position on Revelation was also typically Protestant. As D. Waterland wrote, «Scripture alone is our complete rule of faith and manners»². From that viewpoint, we apparently can and do receive the whole of revealed truth from Scripture. The position of the newly established Anglican Church, —set forth in the Sixth of its Thirty Nine Articles— was that God's word as contained in Scripture, was the sufficient rule of faith; this position was taken up by its leading writers³.

Yet it seems that «in doctrinal matters, antiquity, the Fathers, and the primitive Church were held in high esteem and were quoted as arguments, even though from a special point of view only»⁴. Hence the predominant importance of the Bible for Anglicans must be recognized, but so too must their considerable acceptance and use of tradition.

In short, for Anglicans —no matter how «high»— the basic teaching as to authority in the matter of revelation is that of Scripture, which is «the first and last Court of Appeal, the one and infallible source of faith; any authority attributed to tradition beyond that of Scripture —which is the decisive point— would be an immediate breach of the Anglican system»⁵.

1. Council of Trent, Session IV, 8th April 1546, Decretum de libris sacris et de traditionibus recipiendis, DS 1501 (783).
During the late Eighteenth Century the Church of England underwent a vigorous Evangelical Revival, the influence of which was widespread and long lasting. Evangelicalism was largely the effect of the popular Methodist preaching of John Wesley (1703-91) earlier in the same century. This line of development was undoubtedly part of the Low Church, Calvinist tradition.

One specific way in which the Evangelical Revival gave a new life and emphasis to the Bible in England was with the rise of the Bible Societies. Such societies’ specific aim was the propagation of bibles among the masses, and their great success unquestionably did much to promote, far and wide, unguided reading of «the Bible and the Bible, alone».

If the Evangelical doctrines seemed relatively straightforward and disconnected from any serious theology, this was not the case with the Tractarians of the Oxford Movement (1833-45), notably Newman, Richard Hurrell Froude, John Keble, Dr. E. B. Pusey and W. G. Ward. They were gifted and far-looking young Oxford dons, products and to some extent admirers of the old High Church tradition, who nonetheless were revolutionaries since they accepted the breakdown of the old alliance and the passing of the old order. As we might have expected, the study of tradition became one of the main concerns of the Movement. It did much to give support, cohesion and context to the teachings of theologians, such as Edward Hawkins, who were in favour of tradition, as well as expressing the personal convictions of the Tractarians themselves.

The Oxford Movement brought to Anglican theology a hitherto unparalleled appreciation of tradition compared with Scripture. It was not surprising then that a reaction against this catholicizing trend was forthcoming from the adherents of the sola Scriptura.

To sum up, the Anglican Church seems to have generally considered Tradition as a help in interpreting Scripture although there was always a strong Protestant line which held unconditionally to the sola Scriptura. However, only one source of faith: Scripture, has been accepted by virtually all theologians

(with very few exceptions). The maximum catholicizing tendency was seen in the special case of the Oxford Movement, which collapsed in due course as a result of a strong Protestant and liberal reaction. It is against such a composite background that we shall shortly be examining Newman's teachings as to the sufficiency of Scripture.

b) Newman and the Doctrine of Revelation

From the time of his conversion in 1816 onwards, the inspiring principle in Newman's life was to be his love of the revealed word of God. He always distinguished clearly between what he called natural and Revealed Religion. In the case of natural religion, conscience is one of the important means by which doctrines are communicated to man.

Natural religion is however seen by Newman as being imperfect and incomplete. He is convinced of the need for a supernatural Revelation. «Natural Religion, certain as are its grounds and its doctrines as addressed to the thoughtful, serious minds, needs, in order that it may speak to mankind with effect and subdue the world, to be sustained and completed by Revelation» 7.

Considering our misery, and God's mercy, the news of a supernatural revelation, «far from suspicious is borne in upon our hearts by the strongest presumptions of reason in its behalf» 8. But it by no means opposes Natural Religion, being in fact rooted deeply in the natural course of things, of which it is merely the end-point and completion. Inversely, Natural Religion creates an anticipation that a supernatural revelation has been given 9.

Revelation was never, on Newman's part, the object of a direct or systematic treatment; yet at the time of his conversion in 1816, the conviction which alone occupied his soul was the

reality of that «world which Revelation has announced. There were but two important things in the whole universe: «our own soul, and the God who made it» 10. He was transfixed by «the reality of the invisible world» 11.

Of all the books lent him by Mr. Mayers —the agent of his first «conversion»— those of Thomas Scott (1747-1821) had the greatest influence. From Scott he learned detachment from the world and, above all, love of the Truth, which he saw as entailing a moral and doctrinal commitment. In short, he was led to an all-embracing love and acceptance of Revelation or —more accurately— of that «system of religious truth» 12 granted us by God. «His conversion was the turning point», Dessain tells us, «which was to give the rest of his life its unity. His unfolding mind was captured by the Christian Revelation, and his heart by the Christian ideal of holiness» 13. His acceptance of Revelation was far from a static affair: it meant personal sacrifice and effort.

Precisely because Revelation is from God, and because we are totally reliant upon the means He has provided us for attaining to a knowledge of it, Newman bids us «be very reverent in dealing with Revealed Truth» 14. He warns against all rash theorizing and systematizing, as being much like looking into the Ark under the Old Law. We should be «solicitous to hold it safely and entirely» and «zealous and pertinacious in guarding it»; similarly, he insists that we «religiously adhere to the form of words and the ordinances under which it comes to us» 15, for apart from these, the Revelation does not exist. That is why we must receive the whole of God's Revelation, by all the means left to us. Revelation is a coherent whole. It is one, for God's Truth is one.

c) Scripture in relation to Tradition

We learn in the Apologia pro Vita sua how, as an undergraduate, Newman was introduced to the doctrine of Tradition through assisting at a celebrated university sermon of Dr. Edward

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Hawkins on the topic. In subsequent years this proved of great influence in Newman's thought. It was the realization that «if we would learn doctrine, we must have recourse to the formulas of the Church; for instance to the catechism and the Creeds» 16. He came to understand, especially once he began a serious reading of the early Church Fathers in 1828, that the Revealed Truth of Christianity necessarily requires an authoritative custodian and teacher; and that it is the Church which has been given to us to fulfill that role.

The early Church, which he soon came to love, was, in his eyes, «a Revelation of that Blessed Spirit in a bodily shape, who was promised to us as a second Teacher of Truth after Christ's departure, and became such upon a subject matter far more diversified than that on which Our Lord revealed Himself before Him» 17. She represented the greatest possible identification with God's Revealed word, and inasmuch as she was a kind of embodiment of the Holy Spirit, she was constituted as the definitive and only authority on that Word.

He points out at further length, in his essay Apostolical Tradition 18, that a definite tradition of a body of revealed truth was an elementary principle of early Christianity. It was, moreover, a «substantive teaching, not a mere accidental deduction from Scripture» 19. To Newman, this existence of a definite body of truth implied that it could have no «natural limit or circuit»; being carried on in the lifelong contact of master and scholar, it was «too minute, too complicated, too implicit, too fertile, to be put into writing, at least in times of persecution; it was for the most part conveyed orally» 20. Tradition he thus saw as primarily oral, not being limited to, nor necessarily derived from, any book, the Bible included.

Newman consistently insists on the necessity of being led by both Scripture and Tradition, in order to attain the whole revealed truth. It was more than evident to him that Scripture cannot, and does not, «force on us its full dogmatic mean-

16. Apologia pro Vita sua, p.22.
17. US, p. 79. Sermon of 1832.
20. ECH, I, p. 126.
ing» 21: i.e. that one definite sense which it does possess. Therefore, Scripture could never be used alone, i.e. without Tradition. But once this be accepted, then Scripture—the written word—serves as a powerful and clear indicator of the Truth. Thus there was clearly no question of any right to be «Bible Christians», despite the fact that the Sacred Text is essential in proving and defending the revealed truths. Athanasius considered Scripture—as interpreted by Tradition—to be «a document of final appeal in inquiry». Hence the great practical value of Scripture would seem to lie in its suitability for confirming and vindicating doctrines.

It is Newman’s view, then, that Scripture has a unique and invaluable regulatory role in witnessing to Catholic Truth. He never suggests that it is self-sufficient, given that it never recognizes itself, and does not give us the means for its correct interpretation.

But it seems always to have served as a firm reference-point—being a written document—for determining doctrine, in all ages. Containing, in every passage, one definite, main sense (i.e. stating dogmas, more or less clearly) it is therefore seen by Newman as a powerful and reliable record of Revealed Truth for use by the Church.

2. THE INSUFFICIENCY OF SACRED SCRIPTURE AS «SOLE» SOURCE OF REVELATION

a) Its Antecedent Probability

Without doubt, Newman had a remarkably wide knowledge of Sacred Scripture, as is shown by his expert and constant use of it. The Bible dominated the religious atmosphere of the family and it was the source of his first ideas about God. He tells us himself: «I was brought up from a child to take great delight in reading the Bible» 23. His love for the Bible increased

upon his «conversion» and, on going up to Trinity College Oxford in 1817, his conviction of being bound by God's word became «an ever greater sense of reverent love for sacred Scripture»\(^{24}\). In keeping with one of his guiding principles «knowledge is nothing compared with doing»\(^{25}\), he began to study Scripture more intensely. He learned extensive tracts of the Bible by heart. «The basis of Newman's intimate knowledge of scripture as source of personal piety and consolation was laid in those years from 1822 on»\(^{26}\).

Nonetheless, there is plenty of evidence to show that Newman was opposed to the Protestant notion of the sufficiency of Sacred Scripture. Whilst he could rejoice in affirming that one «cannot have a better employment than that of sifting as it were, the contents of the Bible» he could also caution that «life is not sufficient for a perfect view of the comprehensive subject they treat on»\(^{27}\). Indeed, Newman never maintained that we can fully master that «comprehensive subject» —Revealed Truth— by using Sacred Scripture alone. The Bible, in other words, is not coextensive with the whole of Revelation.

As we know, Newman adhered finally to the whole revealed system, as a series of living realities, albeit in an «invisible world». Of one thing he was certain: «If there is a Revelation, there must be a doctrine; both our reason and our hearts tell us so»\(^{28}\). But we are not obliged to conclude it must be in Scripture. «If it is not in Scripture it is somewhere else; it is to be sought elsewhere»\(^{29}\). We must be convinced that Revelation does contain a message for «there is a overpowering antecedent improbability in Almighty God's announcing that He has revealed something, and there revealing nothing; there is no antecedent improbability in his revealing it elsewhere than in the inspired volume»\(^{30}\).

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29. Ibid.
30. *DA*, p. 133.
His argument, thus begun, leads on to suggest that the whole of Revelation is in fact, unlikely to be contained in Scripture. Undoubtedly it is the inspired word of God, «in spite of its human form, it has in it the Spirit and mind of God»\(^{31}\). He examines the structure of the Bible and observes «that Scripture is not one book; it is a great number of writings, of various persons, living at different times, put together into one, and assuming its existing form as casually and by accident»\(^{32}\). It is like seizing the papers or correspondence of learned men and bundling them together into one volume\(^{33}\). The doctrines, first principles, rules and objects of the particular school of learning would be taken for granted, alluded to, not clearly stated as such. There would also be repetitions, hiatuses, omissions, apparent contradictions and, in the long term, much unresolvable obscurity. Such, he suggests, is the structure of the Bible. It is «the writings of men who had already been introduced into the knowledge of the unseen world and the society of Angels, and who reported what they had seen and heard; and they are full of allusions to a system, a course of things, which was ever before their minds, which they felt both too awful and too familiar to them to be described minutely, which we do not know, and which these allusions, such as they are, but partially disclose to us»\(^{34}\). Therefore, an attempt to deduce the whole of revealed religion from the Bible he views as being rather like that of ascertaining the whole of Roman history from the extant letters of Roman politicians and from fragments of annals, laws, inscriptions and medals.

Judging antecedently, then, Newman thought it «very improbable indeed, that it (the Bible) should contain the whole of the Revealed Word of God»\(^{35}\). He was «naturally led to look not only there, but elsewhere, for notices of sacred truth»\(^{36}\). He was in favour of presuming that the Bible does not contain the

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32. *Ibid*.
33. Newman had no doubts as to the intrinsic unity and divine inspiration of Sacred Scripture. Here he is simply presenting one particular argument, with analogies, to show that it is unlikely to constitute the whole of Revelation.
34. *Ibid*.
36. *Ibid*.
whole of Revealed Truth, judging from its *prima facie* appearance, until such time as we can prove that it does.

This conviction of Newman's, as to the insufficiency of Sacred Scripture, is traceable throughout his life: in 1850, a recent convert, he was able to say that Catholics «do not consider that Scripture is the whole word of God, or the sole rule of faith»\(^ {37}\). Invited to prove the doctrine of Church infallibility from Scripture, he pointed out that it would be necessary to «prove first that nothing is revealed but what is contained in the Holy Scriptures»\(^ {38}\).

\[b) \text{ Practical evidence to support it} \]

Newman was an avid reader of books, from his boyhood days\(^ {39}\), as well as of the Bible. Yet, in relation to religion, his estimation of the value of books was notoriously sparing. Books, he argues, are not of primary importance in the Spread of religion. More specifically, they never have been, for «Christianity has not been spread, as other systems in an isolated manner, or by books; but from a centre, by regularly formed bodies, descendants of the three thousand who after St. Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost, joined themselves to the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship»\(^ {40}\). As for the present, and the future too, he was adamant that the message of Christian Revelation could not be confined within narrow limits. Christianity «is not a mere law, a Jewish yoke, but a new law, a service of freedom, a rule of spirit and truth»\(^ {41}\). At the height of the Oxford Movement, in 1842, he felt that «men are... beginning to understand that the Gospel is not a mere scheme or doctrine, but a reality and a life, not a subject for books only, for private use, for individuals, but for public profession, for combined action, for outward manifestation»\(^ {42}\).

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38. *Ibid*.
41. *SD*, p. 115, Sermon of 1842.
42. *Ibid*.
In addition, Newman reminds us that it is incorrect to claim our Scripture as the only means of revelation by God to man. To be exact, «we must confess, on the authority of the Bible itself, that all knowledge of religion is from Him, and not only that which the Bible has transmitted to us» 43. There exists a traditionary body of divine truth, given to mankind, «so that Revelation, properly speaking, is a universal, not a local gift» 44. Therefore, whilst we have the benefit and security of knowing that «the word and the Sacraments are the characteristic of the elect people of God» we must not thereby forget that all men are guided by the truths of Natural Religion and the «internal notions of right and wrong which the Spirit has put into the heart of the individual» 45. In other words, there are parts of Revelation which precede, and remain outside, our Scriptures.

Another practical instance of the insufficiency of Scripture arises in Tract 71 (1836). Newman claims that the argument of ultra-Protestantism: «the Bible and nothing but the Bible», constitutes an «unthankful rejection of another great gift, equally from God» 46, viz. the Rule of Faith. The Anglican position (from which he was speaking) and the Catholic position —though different as to their assessment of the role of Scripture— converge insofar as they cannot accept that the «Bible alone» is the rule of faith, or substitute for it.

c) Lack of basis for the Protestant dogma

Newman frequently pointed to the lack of justification, on the part of Protestants, for claiming belief in Scripture as a «fundamental» —indeed the fundamental— article of faith. «If it is», the implication for Anglicans is «that there are fundamental doctrines besides the articles of the Creed» 47, which would contradict Anglican teaching. He thus refused to accord

43. The Arians of the Fourth Century (Arians) p. 79-80.
44. Arians, p. 80.
45. Ibid.
46. The Via Media (VM), II, p. 541.
47. VM, II, p. 240. The text is that of The Prophetical office of the Church, being a series of lectures delivered between 1834 and 1836.
the status of dogma to the notion «the Bible, and the Bible only is the religion of Protestants». As an Anglican he nonetheless ceded that it could arguably be regarded as the very foundation of the fundamentals, i.e., that the original framers of the Creed may have used Scripture as their basis. He seems to permit, in this sense, the principle of the «Bible alone» sensu lato, but he does not propound, nor claim to justify it. «As far as the facts of the case go, that may be, which we say really is. The indirect manner in which Scripture is referred to in the Creed, while it agrees with the notion that the Creed contains all the fundamentals, seems also to imply that Scripture is their foundation». It was thus acceptable —whilst he was still an Anglican— to consider that «Scripture is the foundation of the Creed», but he refused to accept that belief in Scripture is «the foundation of belief in the Creed». That is to say, there is no valid ground for a dogma of belief in Scripture alone. The Protestant catch phrase, he allows, may, at best, be indirectly valid, but it cannot be a «principle» or dogma. Scripture is indeed divine; but this, although a necessary and all-important, is only a collateral truth. A purely Bible—based religion is, in short, unviable, for «the Bible does not carry with it its own interpretation». And if we accept the doctrines of the Creed, we must, logically, give up the «Bible alone» position; at least in all but the loosest, most indirect sense of the phrase.

d) Manifest deficiency of «Bible religion»

Both before and after his conversion in 1845, Newman considered «Bible Religion» to be the «recognized title and the best description of English religion». It consisted «not in rites and Creeds, but mainly in having the Bible read in Church, in the family and in private». He professed himself «far from

48. He recognizes, as distinct, the Catholic position which denies that the Bible was, in fact, used «as the fundamental record of the Gospel».
50. VM, II, p. 244.
51. Ibid.
52. VM, II, p. 245.
54. Ibid.
undervaluing the mere knowledge of Scripture which is imported to the population thus promiscuously»\textsuperscript{55}. Indeed he thought it «has in matter of fact been to our people a vast benefit»\textsuperscript{56}. It has «attuned their minds to religious thoughts; it has given them a high moral standard; it has served them in associating religion with compositions which, even humanly considered, are among the most sublime and beautiful ever written; especially it has impressed upon them the series of Divine Providences in behalf of man from his creation to his end, and, above all, the words, deeds and sacred sufferings of Him in whom all the Providences of God centre»\textsuperscript{57}.

Such was the service done to England by the indiscriminate reading of Scripture, yet, for Newman, «much more is necessary than the benefits which I have enumerated, to answer to the idea of a religion»\textsuperscript{58}. The «Bible Religion» of England «is not a religion of persons and things of acts of faith and of direct devotion; but of sacred scenes and pious sentiments. It has been comparatively careless of creed and catechism; and it has in consequence shown little sense of the need of consistency in the matter of its teaching. Its doctrines are not so much facts as stereotyped aspects of facts; and it is afraid, so to say, of walking round them. It induces its followers to be content with this meagre view of revealed truth»\textsuperscript{59}. This, in his view, was the fruit obtained from a religion of Scripture-reading. It undoubtedly elicits some assent, but that assent «is at best notional», and concerns a «contracted range of doctrine»\textsuperscript{60}.

Such a religion seemed to Newman to be doctrinally impoverished, to miss much of the Revealed Truth. Being a religion of sentiment and notions he observes, correctly, that —of course— in time of trouble «the Bible is so great a solace and refuge... to the mass of piously-minded and well-living people in all ranks of the community»\textsuperscript{61}. But its failure as a vehicle for conveying the truths of Revelation is manifest: «what Scripture

\textsuperscript{55}. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{56}. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57}. GA, 56-57.
\textsuperscript{58}. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59}. GA, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{60}. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{61}. GA., pp. 57-58.
especially illustrates from its first page to its last, is God’s Pro-
vidence; and that is nearly the only doctrine held with a real
assent by the mass of religious Englishmen”\(^{62}\).

Although Newman made these observations in his later,
Catholic life, they are essentially views which he held from the
time of the Oxford Movement from 1837 onwards. We can take
them in the light of his declared aim of strengthening the
English Church as the home of dogmatic religion and imparting
spiritual life to her institutions. If he could write in 1863: «At
this very time we are witnessing the beginning of the end of
Protestantism, the breaking of that bubble of «Bible-Christianity»
which has been its life»\(^{63}\), it was only because he saw that the
essential element lacking in the «Bible religion» of England was
the Church. She «has ever got on and made way, to the surprise
of the world» whilst «on the other hand the seceding bodies have
sooner or later come to nought»\(^{64}\).

3. FOR WHAT IT IS INSUFFICIENT

a) For teaching matters of discipline

We have already seen how Newman identified many praise-
worthy effects of the widespread propagation of the Bible in his
own day. In a speech to the Bible Society in 1828 he argued that
its direct and straightforward object, viz. «that all ranks and all
nations should be supplied with the Scriptures», taken by itself
«must be good — a direct and immediate good»\(^{65}\). This he consi-
dered to be cause for joining the society. On the other hand, he
also saw certain bad effects. Among these he identified «the princi-
ple that the Bible Society creates a certain indifference to the pre-
servation of Ecclesiastical order»\(^{66}\). At that time he was already
acquainted with the early history of the Church, largely through

\(^{62}\) GA, p. 57.
\(^{64}\) Ibid.
\(^{65}\) Ibid.
the writings of the Fathers. Over the following three or four years, his appreciation of the importance of that «Ecclesiastical order» —here revealed in an immature form— developed significantly.

Much of Newman’s thought on this question is laid out in a most convincing manner in the sermon *Ceremonies of the Church*, delivered in 1831. To those who ask why we should persist in external practices not mentioned in the Bible he replies that the Bible was «never intended to enjoin us these things, but matters of faith; and that though it happens to mention our practical duties, and some points of form and discipline, still that it does not set about telling us what to do, but chiefly what to believe; and that there are many duties and many crimes which are not mentioned in Scripture, and which we must find out by our own understanding, enlightened by God’s Holy Spirit»

Scripture’s silence, then, on many matters of external form is attributed by Newman to the fact that such things are outside its real aim. But he warns us against rejecting practices for which no scriptural basis can be found. Our Lord, he points out in this context, was careful to observe the rites and customs of the religion he had come to fulfill, and he likewise points out how St. Paul never bade the Christians of Jewish origin to renounce the rites of the Law, indeed, he even encouraged them to retain them. And so it is that «we learn the great importance of retaining those religious forms to which we are accustomed, even though they are, in themselves indifferent, or not of divine origin»

For the present, therefore, the is emphasizing the importance of the forms and rites of religion, though they lack confirmation by Scripture, and in due course he proceeds to justify this course more fully. He takes, first of all, some specific cases of crimes not formally condemned in Scripture: «For instance there is no prohibition of suicide, duelling, gaming, in Scripture; yet we know them to be great sins; and it would be no excuse in a man to say he does not find them forbidden in Scripture, because he may discover God’s will in this matter

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independently of Scripture. And in like manner, various matters, of form and discipline are binding, though Scripture says nothing about them; for we learn the duty in another way»69.

What a direct refutation of the sola Scriptura! Not only is Scripture silent on certain matters of importance for the Christian’s conduct, it is but one of several ways by which God’s will is made known to us. Moreover he is pointing out that the obligatoriness of such prohibitions and other observances is as great as if it were coming direct from Scripture. He identifies three ways by which God’s will is expressed to us: Scripture, Antiquity (Tradition) and «Nature» (conscience): «Matters of faith, indeed, He reveals to us by inspiration, because they are supernatural: but matters of moral duty, through our own conscience and divinely-guided reason; and matters of form, by tradition and long usage, which bind us to the observance of them, though they are not enjoined in Scripture. This is the proper answer to the question ‘why do you observe rites and forms which are not enjoined in Scripture?’ though to speak the truth, our chief observances are to be found there, as the Sacraments, Public Worship, the observance of the Lord’s day, Ordination, marriage and the like»70.

The key factor, then, in justifying the external, formal aspects of religion is identified as Tradition, the immemorial custom of Christians from the very first times. Newman regards Tradition to be invested with an authority every bit as binding on the faithful as any of the injunctions of Scripture (which many people happily accept without question). He also emphasizes the essential unity and harmony between Scripture and Tradition, indicating that the major rules for religious practice and discipline are indeed testified to directly by Scripture. In order to draw out the necessary harmony and complementarity between Scripture and the Church’s traditional practice he harps back to the incompleteness of Sacred Scripture, as arising from its limited aim. Clearly, Scripture «tells us what to believe, and what to aim at and maintain, but it does not tell us how to do it; and as we cannot do it at all unless we do it in this manner or that, in fact we must add something to what Scripture tells us. For example, Scripture tells us to meet toget-

69. Ibid.
70. PPS, II, p. 73.
her for prayer, and has connected the grant of the Christian blessing on God’s part, with the observance of union on ours; but since it does not tell us the times and places of prayer, the Church must complete that which Scripture has but enjoined generally»71.

Scripture is thus considered as laying down the truth and demands of our faith in general; but it is seen to lay on us the consequent obligation to look to the Church, whose role it is to tell us how—in concrete terms—we are to practice that faith. In other words, Scripture’s incompleteness is made up for by the Church’s ordinances. This is a view perfectly consistent with the idea of the unity of Revelation, as being made up by Scripture, and the Church which is «a Revelation in some sort of that Blessed Spirit in a bodily shape»72. This idea of perfect complementarity is taken further, such that «The Bible then may be said to give us the spirit of religion; but the Church must provide the body in which that spirit is to be lodged. Religion must be realized in particular acts, in order to its continuing alive»73. This is the recognition of a fundamental fact of our human nature, that the whole of our life necessarily consists of concrete acts. Therefore, Newman recognizes two objective expressions of God’s will. The one Divine Word is revealed to us by both Scripture and the Church’s rites and dispositions; each being important and necessary, and each directed to its specific end: of telling us what truths to maintain, and how to maintain them. We are thereby given a fully integral religion which consists, as we do ourselves, of a body and a soul.

The unique authority which Newman attributes to Primitive Church practice was obviously based on the Apostolic argument. If we cannot obtain a complete guide to worship and conduct from Scripture, we ought not be surprised, nor perturbed. The Early Church has already resolved all possible problems since «it was the custom of the early Church, as is well known, to settle in Council such points in her discipline, ordinances and worship, as the Apostles had not laid down in Scripture, as the occasion arose, after the pattern of their own

71. Ibid.
72. US, p. 82, Sermon of 1832.
73. PPS, II, p. 76.
proceedings in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts»74. The authority and force of Tradition, in other words, was here seen in practice, as being more than adequate to make up for the deficiencies of Sacred Scripture. Thus did the early Church decide on questions such as Easter, heretical Baptism and other matters «and after that same precedent in the Acts, she recorded her decisions in formal decrees, and ‘delivered them for to keep’ through the cities in which her members were found»75. So it was that the Church determined matters not specified in the Scriptures by following the unwritten directions of the Apostles «or after their practice, or at least, after their mind, or as is called in Scripture, their minding or ‘spirit’»76.

b) For furnishing or transmitting the whole of the Faith

On many occasions, Newman took issue with the fallacious popular idea that «Scripture is given us for the very purpose of making the knowledge of our duty easy to us»77. There is no evidence anywhere, he suggests, which indicates that it was intended to take away all difficulties of every kind, «No; Scripture has not undertaken to tell us every thing, but merely to give us the means of finding every thing»78. What we have no right to do is to : «infer, either that it must actually be commanded in the letter of Scripture, or that it can be found out by every individual for and by himself»79. Scripture, it appears, is insufficient not only in cases of discipline, such as the Episcopalcy; for cases of doctrine too, «necessary doctrine, doctrine the very highest and most sacred, may be produced, where the argument lies as little on the surface of Scripture»80. For example the doctrine of the Holy Trinity — «where is this solemn and comfortable mystery formally stated in Scripture, as we find it in the creeds?»81. With such instances does Newman con-

74. Historical Sketches (HS), I. p. 422.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
81. Ibid.
front the sola Scriptura school who take it «as beyond all question, that, if we would ascertain the truths which Revelation has brought us, we have nothing else to do but to consult Scripture on the point, with our own private judgment».

In defence of this argument, Scripture itself is brought to bear, in this much, «that clearly as Scripture speaks of the divine inspiration of its writer, yet it nowhere says that it, by itself, contains all necessary doctrine». It is without credentials of its own; it contains no recognition even of its own existence. There seems no a priori reason for assuming that all the truths of our faith are there.

Again, on examining the books which comprise the Canon, he notes how some books were lost, others are preserved only in translation (e. g., Mt. and Hebr.) and some were handed down on the basis of insufficient —humanly speaking—evidence; and they were not received as one volume till the Fourth Century. These seem to be disproofs «of any intention, either in the course of Providence or in the writers, that the very books of Scripture, through inspired, should be the Canon of faith, that is, that they should bound and complete it». By this simple common sense observation, he deems it unlikely that Scripture was meant to give us the whole faith.

In a more practical view, Newman noticed how, historically, the truths of the faith have never been learned merely from Scripture alone. Surely, he says, «the Sacred Volume was never intended, and is not adapted, to teach us our creed». From the very beginning indeed, the rule has been «that the Church should teach the truth, and then should appeal to Scripture in vindication of its own teaching». Hence whilst he seems to have held throughout his life that «the truth itself is declared in one form or another in every part of Scriptures». Yet he also maintained «the insufficiency of the mere private study of Holy Scripture for arriving at the exact and entire truth which Scripture really contains». In this regard, he felt
supported by the knowledge that in practice «creeds and teachers have ever been divinely provided» 89, an apparent admission, on the part of Divine Providence, of the insufficiency of Scripture. His realization that the Church is and has been from the beginning— the agent of teaching the faith led him to remark in 1835, a propos of the Fathers, «I am surprised more and more to see how entirely they fall into Hawkins’ theory even in set words, that Scripture proves, and the Church teaches» 90.

The early Christians «preached Christ»; they called on men to believe, hope and place their affections, in that «Deliverer who had come and gone» 91, their moral instrument of persuasion being the «promise of His invisible Presence and Protection here, and of the Vision and Fruition of Him hereafter» 92. Indeed, he claims, their principle of conversion, moral life and fellowship was the «Image of Christ» 93. It is that Image which «both creates faith, and then rewards it» 94. The mystery of that Image was partly resolved by Christ’s fulfilling the Jewish prophecies — «commonly in a contrary sense» 95 to their understanding of them— but even yet it was not revealed in its fulness. Newman explains this by saying that Christianity took on a prophetical character of its own, «assigning from the first a rule and a history to its propagation, a rule and a history which have been carried out to this day» 96. The «central doctrine of Revelation, the Mediation of Christ» 97, is the power of Christianity: that «living truth which can never grow old» 98. This power, working in us through the gifts He lefts us, perpetuating His Image is «the prerogative of Him and Him alone» 99 and is «a grand evi-

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89. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid.
95. GA, p. 454.
96. Ibid.
97. GA, p. 487.
98. Ibid.
dence how well He fulfils to this day that Sovereign Mission which, from the first beginning of the world’s history, has been in prophecy assigned to Him»

We can thus see how, for Newman, Christ alone is the centre and fullness of the truths of Revelation and that moreover men did but partially and incipiently attain to that truth at the outset i.e. upon the establishment of Christianity. For the Founder of Christianity left within it a «prophetical character» which is at work and indeed not yet complete. So it is that we cannot tie Christ, Truth itself, to the Scriptures, old or new — upon which he showed «so little of conscious dependence..., or of anxiety to fulfill them»

The progress of Christianity, for Newman, is itself of the nature of a prophecy, in the course of which the mystery of Christ’s Image is being gradually revealed.

c) For procuring conversion to, and unanimous profession of the one existing Faith

If Newman was clearly aware that there existed but one True Faith, he was not thereby convinced that Scripture alone was an adequate instrument for bringing all Christians to firmly hold that one Faith, and give common witness to it. In the first place there was no guarantee in the case of even one individual: «as to scripture being practically sufficient for making the Christian it seems to me a mere dream— nor do I find it anywhere said in Scripture»

Undoubtedly, he admitted, in later life, that the perusal of Scripture is «the religion of the religious portion of Protestants», so much so that «to say they are religious and that they read the Bible are equivalent phrases»

In reality, however, «they have mainly no notion of religion, but as an acquaintance with the Bible»

For Newman, then, «though in England those who are religious read the

100. Ibid.
104. Ibid.
Bible» it did not follow that «those who read the Bible are religious» 105.

As a consequence of this observation he felt that «the Bible cannot become the instrument of conversion of the masses» 106. In illustration he pointed to the fact that «the vicious and profligate classes in England are not those among whom the Bible circulates». Is this to be explained by saying «the circulation has not been pushed? no — it has been pushed, but it has been rejected» 107. In other words the Bible is not an effective means of bringing many —or even one individual— to embrace the Christian faith. He recognized the long standing disagreement on this point, between High and Low Church in England, and —albeit speaking as a Catholic— came down on the side of the High Church, whose position he assessed as being that «the Bible was never intended to be the instrument of conversion» 108.

Even amongst those who were already converted, he claimed, Scripture was not given «as a test of the religious temper which it forms, and of which it is an expression» 109. It was, in short, no means of guaranteeing unity among the faithful for it could not guarantee in them an unequivocal, uniform state of mind. For example, «as regards the doctrine of the Trinity, the mere text of Scripture is not calculated... to ascertain the temper of those who profess to accept it as a rule of faith» 110. This was evidenced in the very root of the Arian controversy, whereby the Arian party chose to (wrongly) interpret the Scriptures and thus left the Nicene Fathers with no other choice than to «erect a witness for the truth, which might be a guide and a warning to all catholics, against the lying spirit which was abroad in the Church» 111. They could not simply ignore the attack, leaving the question shut up in the words of Scripture, «for the words of Scripture were the very subject of the controversy and, to have prohibited the controversy, would, in fact

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105. Ibid.
106. LD, XX, p. 287.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid.
110. Arians, p. 143.
111. Arians, pp. 143-144.
have been to insult the perplexed, and to extend real encouragement to insidious opponents of the truth» 112.

The Nicene Fathers were, in practice, forced to take positive steps to resolve matters upon which Scripture itself was not altogether clear. It was urgent for them to «discuss the subject in controversy fully and unreservedly, and to state their decision openly» 113; and this, because the words of Scripture were being taken in a sense contrary to the orthodox one. A connected statement was necessary. Newman explains why: «If, for instance, Scripture bids us adore God, and adore His Son, our reason at once asks, whether it does not follow that there are two Gods; and a system of doctrine becomes unavoidable» 114. Such an «intellectual expression of theological truth not only excludes heresy, but directly assists the acts of religious worship and obedience» 115. In the same way, then, that Scripture alone seems insufficient for guaranteeing a clear uniform assent of all in the faith, so too it is insufficient for securing unanimity in thought and action.

It was in the light of these principles, Newman shows, that the Nicene Fathers were thus obliged to speak out. The task was one of producing the necessary firm and connected statement, bearing in mind that «if the Church would be vigorous and influential, it must be decided and plainspoken in its doctrine, and must regard its faith rather as a character of mind than as a notion» 116. It is that character of mind, he suggests, which was achieved by the Creeds. On the other hand, «how idle it is to suppose that to demand assent to a form of words which happen to be scriptural, is on that account sufficient to affect an unanimity in thought and action» 117. Precisely the advent and use of the Creeds shows up the insufficiency of Scripture for securing unanimous profession of the one, true faith.

Simply going on the basis of results, Newman held as untenable the ultra-Protestant theory that Scripture with the aid of

112. Arians, p. 144.
113. Arians, p. 142.
114. Arians, p. 146.
115. Ibid.
116. Arians, p. 147.
117. Ibid.
private judgment could bring all to a clear knowledge of the one selfsame Revelation. Their very first principle, he held, «is inconsistent with the idea of there being any certainties in Revelation whatever; for, if nothing is to be held as revealed but what everyone perceives to be in Scripture, there is nothing that can be so held, considering that in matter of fact there is no universal agreement as to what Scripture teaches and what it does not teach»118. Each man’s right to private judgment ipso facto deprives him of the right of judging for others, and so he is bound in consequence of his principle to tolerate all other opinions. So it is, Newman shows, that the expected—and actual—result of ultra-Protestant thinking is universal disagreement, rather than unanimity; thus it infallibly leads to Latitudinarianism.

The effect of that type of «Bible-Christianity» is seen by Newman as highly damaging. It is unchristian, for «as soon as it is assumed that the main condition of communion is the acceptance of the Bible as the word of God, doctrines of whatever sort become of secondary importance»119. The only real doctrine for those «Bible-Christians» is the right of private judgment of the Bible. All other doctrines become, in effect «matters of mere opinion»120. And by this simply Latitudinarian principle men arrive «by no very intricate process to the recognition of Socinians and Pelagians as Christians»121. So it is that ultimately they must give up holding any definite essentials of faith, he argues, for they are in an untenable position. «They must give up their maxim about the Bible and the Bible only, or they must give up the Nicene formulary»122.

Here too is demonstrated the necessity of receiving the Creed as a first principle in order to secure communion of belief. The Bible per se, not carrying with it its own interpretation, provides no valid basis for their simultaneously holding fundamentals of faith. If it be taken along with the Creed, that is a tacit admission of its insufficiency; and where the Creed is really abandoned, the universal lack of unanimity likewise

118. ECH, I, p. 104.
119. VM, I, p. 245.
120 Ibid.
121 Ibid.
122 Ibid.
shows «how idle it was to suppose that to demand assent to a form of words which happens to be scriptural, is no that account sufficient to effect an unanimity in thought and action»\(^{123}\).

4. WHY IT IS INSUFFICIENT

a) It does not surpass the personal influence of the teacher; the role of the teacher

One of Newman’s constant themes in treating of the spread of Christianity was to emphasize the superlative value of the teacher of the faith in comparison with that of books or the written word. The lines written off Zante in 1832 tell much in that regard: «Book-lore neer served, when trial came - nor gifts, when faith was dead»\(^{124}\). The theme of the personal influence of the teacher was frequent, but in special relation with Sacred Scripture it was considered at length in the essay *Private Judgment* of 1841\(^{125}\). To Newman it is apparent «that Scripture seems always to imply the presence of teachers as the appointed ordinance by which men learn the truth; and it is principally engaged in giving cautions against false teachers, and tests for ascertaining the true»\(^{126}\).

Much of the basis of this great appreciation of the role of the teacher is found outlined in his famous sermon on *Personal Influence*. There he treats of the difficulties which beset the propagation of the Truth: such as lack of instruments, Truth’s vulnerability to arguments of mere Reason, and also written and spoken attacks. How, he asks, has the truth «held its ground among men, and subjected to its dominion unwilling minds, some even bound to the external profession of obedience, others at least in a sullen neutrality, and the inaction of despair?

«I answer, that it has been upheld in the world not as a system, not by books, not by argument, nor by temporal power,

123. *Arians*, p. 147.
but by the personal influence of such men as have been already described, who are at once the teachers and patterns of it. The real vehicle for promoting and extending the truth is seen as the lives of those men who have assimilated it and embody its precepts in word and action. Compared with which, the Bible—being merely a book—would seem to be inadequate for the task, if taken alone. He felt, from his early years that «it is a deceit and a mischief, to think to understand the Christian doctrines as a matter of course, merely by being taught by books». The Truth is spread, in other words, when lived by the individual and transmitted in a direct personal way to others. So it is that «we shall find it difficult to estimate the moral power which a single individual, trained to practise what he teaches, may acquire in his own circle, in the course of years». His thesis is that it is such individuals who are the true interpreters of the scriptures. They spread truth in a powerful and effective way to those (relatively few) who see them. Thus, whilst public opinion might triumph in the short term, truth continues to spread thus, and ultimately triumphs overall.

The great reverence and care which Newman evinced in treating of the Revealed Truth was often noticeable. He wished that «he may be betrayed into no familiarity or extravagance of expression, cautiously lowering the Truth, and (as it were), wrapping it in reverent language, and so depositing it in its due resting place, which is the Christian’s heart». He was particularly concerned at the irreverence which can arise at the indiscriminate exposure, distribution, and rough use which Scripture Truth is apt to suffer when handled by men. Thus he wished to be «guiltless of those unutterable profanations with which a scrutinizing infidelity wounds and lacerates it». This was what moved him to affirm «the unfitness of books, compared with private communication, for the purpose of religious instruction, levelling, as they do, the distinctions of mind and temper by the formality of the written character, and conveying

127. US, p. 91.
128. PPS, I, p. 42. Sermon of 1825.
129. US, p. 94.
130. Arians, p. 137.
131. Ibid.
each kind of knowledge the less perfectly, in proportion as it is of a moral nature, and requires to be treated with delicacy and discrimination. The written word is seen as a leveller, it is too formal, it is inaccurate for communicating evangelical truth. The only truly appropriate and worthy medium is «private communication», the personal influence of the teacher.

It is interesting to note that, inasmuch as he employed Scripture in preaching, Newman himself was a living example of reverence, such that the written word took on a new life when he read aloud. «Perhaps the most vividly remembered characteristic of Newman’s preaching was his marvellous reading of Holy Scripture» When reading the Gospel, «the marked thing, which cannot be described, was the increased reverence in the reader’s voice which culminated when he came to the words of our Saviour. Before and after these there was a kind of hush. A most wonderful thing about it all was the complete elimination of the personality of the reader. He seemed to be listening as much as reading. The words were like a living agent, he but their instrument».

In discussing the means «for arriving at the exact and entire truth which Scripture really contains» Newman brought into play much straightforward factual evidence. As a first example, the fact that «creeds and teachers have ever been divinely provided» seemed to speak eloquently of Scripture’s insufficiency in this regard. Undoubtedly the Scriptures would have been used by inquirers and neophytes in the first centuries for the purposes of morals and instruction in the rudiments of the faith, yet «they still might need the teaching of the Church as a key to the collection of passages which related to the mysteries of the Gospel».

Again, our frequent experience, of having been blind to certain truths in the past, is cited as another corroboration of the teacher’s role. For example «we get acquainted with some one

134. SN, Introduction, pp.xi-xii.
135. Arians, p. 51.
136. Ibid.
137. Ibid.
whom God employs to bring before us a number of truths which were closed on us before; and we but half understand them, and but half approve of them; and yet God seems to speak in them, and Scripture to confirm them. Here is illustrated the complementarity of teacher and scriptures; and the fact that possessing Scripture alone is no guarantee we have access to its truths. God, it seems, relies on other human agents as the necessary means of introducing us into these truths. Once introduced, we may then discern them in Scripture too.

A third instance of the indispensability of teachers is the evidence from Scripture itself: in particular, those cases where conversions are seen to be brought about clearly through the agency of a teacher. Wherever an appeal seems to be made, in those passages, to private judgment «this is done in order to settle who the teacher is, and what are his notes of tokens, rather than to substantiate this or that religious practice». When our Lord speaks of searching the Scriptures, Newman shows, he is clearly suggesting that their office is of leading, not to a knowledge of the Gospel, but of himself, its Author and Teacher. The invitation is always to seek the Gospel teacher; «not what God has revealed, but whom has He commissioned?». For us, Newman goes on, the logical question naturally arises: «who is the teacher now, from whose mouth are we to seek the law, and what are his notes?». It is in perfect coincidence with this view that, in matter of fact, «we find in both Testaments that teachers are promised under the dispensation of the gospel»: in many passages from the Old, and far more concisely in the New but, «what is much more apposite than a longer description, with the addition of the name of our promised teacher: ‘The Church of the living God’, says St. Paul, ‘the pillar and ground of the truth’. The simple question for Private Judgment to exercise itself upon is, what and where is the Church?».

139. For example, Our Lord's telling the Jews to «search the Scriptures», or the treasurer of Candace who was reading the book of Isaias when Philip met him.
141. *Ibid*.
Teachers seem to be implied throughout Scripture as the divinely intended means by which we may learn the truth. Our Lord bids us beware of «false prophets» not of «false books». Scripture «makes the teacher the subject of private inquiry», and not the thing taught. It bids us seek his credentials, avoiding him if he proves unholy etc. Thus, concludes Newman «the notion of gaining religious truth for ourselves by our private examination... has no broad sanction in Scripture»\(^{145}\). The great question it poses is: «who is God's prophet, and where?»\(^{146}\).

Fourthly, there is the weight of educational evidence. Newman observed how religious teaching —whose subject matter is truth necessary for us— has, as its great instrument or organ, «that which nature prescribes in all education, the personal presence of a teacher, or, in theological language, oral Tradition»\(^{147}\). The role of the teacher is indispensable. «It is the living voice, the breathing form, the expressive countenance which preaches, which catechizes. Truth, a subtle, invisible, manifold spirit, is poured into the mind of the scholar by his eyes and ears, through his affections, imagination, and reason; it is poured into his mind and is sealed up there in perpetuity, by propounding and repeating it, by questioning and questioning, by correcting and explaining, by progressing and then recurring to first principles, by all those ways which are implied in the word 'catechising'»\(^{148}\). These characteristics, found only in the person of the teacher, are therefore what moved Newman to regard the teacher as unique and without substitute. He points to the early days for the Church when the work of the catechist took years in the task of ridding the mind of pagan errors, moulding it on the Christian faith. The Scriptures were, undeniably, available «but St. Irenaeus does not hesitate to speak of whole races, who had been converted to Christianity, without being able to read them»\(^{149}\). Many who reached the heights of sanctity, wisdom and learning were unable to read or write, such as the hermits, St. Anthony, or Didymus of Alexandria, who was blind. Similarly, this secondary importance of the Scriptures appears in what Newman considers to have been the Church’s

\(^{146}\). \textit{Ibid}.  
\(^{149}\). \textit{HS}, III, p. 15.
ancient discipline, the *Disciplina arcani*, by which «the more sacred doctrines of Revelation were not committed to books but passed on by successive tradition»

Newman’s esteem for the teacher in transmitting doctrine is clear from the great importance he accorded to tradition. The definite doctrine concerning Christ which is found all over the Church and plain to all, was —he observes— «strictly speaking, taught to the present generation —not learned by it so much as taught it— taught it by the generation immediately before it, not gathered in the first instance by its own inferences from Scripture». Moreover, he continues, there is little doubt that that previous generation was taught the same matters by their own predecessors, «and further, that this process of transmission and acceptance —that is, of tradition— has gone on for many centuries; nay, we might say, up to the very first or Apostolic century».

This learning of the faith by Tradition, is moreover seen not only as a matter of duty or theory but a reality. «It is not true in fact, and never will be, that the mass of serious Christians derive their faith for themselves from the Scriptures. No; they derive it from Tradition, whether true or corrupt; and they are intended by Divine Providence to derive it from the true, viz., that which the Church Catholic has ever furnished». We learn the faith: not from Scripture, nor on our own; but from Tradition and from the mouth of divinely appointed teachers given by the Church.

b) *It is directed more to the affections than the intellect*

In explaining why the Church was moved, in the Arian controversy, to speak out with a formal statement of doctrine,

150. *Ibid*. The idea of a specific *Disciplina arcani* has since been show to be groundless. However, Newman seems to use this idea mainly in order to convey his idea of Tradition and to prove the existence of a tradition apart from Sacred Scripture.


152. *Ibid*.

153. *VM*, I, p. 244.
Newman points to the simple fact that «much as we may wish it, we cannot restrain the rovings of the intellect, or silence its clamorous demand for a formal statement concerning the Object of our worship»\(^\text{154}\). It was precisely such «rovings» and «clamorous demands» which the Nicene Fathers were obliged to deal with. There was no question that they could simply «shut up the question in the words of Scripture; for the words of Scripture were the very subject in controversy», a demonstration of the fact that «the mere text of Scripture is not calculated either to satisfy the intellect or to ascertain the temper of those who profess to accept it as a rule of faith»\(^\text{155}\).

Newman underlines the importance of Creeds. They «tranquilize the mind», exclude heresy, aid worship and encourage obedience. They are addressed, as it were, principally to the mind, whereas Scripture is «addressed principally to the affections»\(^\text{156}\).

It would of course be far from just to dismiss this characteristic of Scripture as useless. Newman certainly valued highly the Bible’s capacity to console, inspire and comfort. Great as the comforting effect of Scripture may be to the oppressed Christians, these benefits are nonetheless confined to the affective order; and even there, they would seem to have a certain limit, for «when we read the Bible and religious books in private, there is great comfort; but our minds are commonly more roused and encouraged in Church, when we see those great truths displayed and represented which Scripture speaks of»\(^\text{157}\). By «minds» we understand «spirit» in the wide sense as including intellect and affections, such that the acting out of Scripture truths in a living way in the Church is considered more effective in satisfying our intellectual appetite and even our affections, than Scripture reading alone.

c) It presupposes conscience

The process of acquiring religious truth with the help of Scripture must necessarily take into account —in Newman’s

\(^{154}\) Arians, p. 146.

\(^{155}\) Arians, p. 143.

\(^{156}\) Ibid.

\(^{157}\) PPS, III, p. 251.
view—the role of natural conscience. There is a necessary and beneficial complementarity between the Bible, where truths are "preserved in writing, and so cannot be lost or altered"\(^{158}\), and our conscience, which impresses on the mind from the earliest years, basic notions to be likewise trusted, for they come from God. Notions such as "our certainty that there is a right and a wrong; that some things ought to be done, and other things not done; that we have duties, the neglect of which brings remorse; and further, that God is good, wise, powerful, and righteous, and that we should try to obey Him"\(^{159}\). Since we obtain them without mental exertion, although they may be strengthened thereby, they can never make us proud "because they are ever attended by a sense of sin and guilt"\(^{160}\). They thus form a basis, albeit an imperfect one, for attaining to the knowledge of Scripture truth. "Far from leading a man into error, they will, if obeyed, of a certainty lead him to a firm belief in Scripture; in which he will find all those vague conjectures and imperfect notions about truth, which his own heart taught him, abundantly sanctioned, completed, and illustrated"\(^{161}\). To preach and follow Christ does not, then, involve the ignoring of that Natural Religion which Conscience teaches, "but the displaying all that Nature and Scripture teach concerning divine Providence (for they teach the same truths)"\(^{162}\). Newman shows how the early Church recognized this unity and harmony between the dictates of Conscience and Scripture, in practice. During the introductory, catechetical, period of instruction in the faith, which lasted two or three years, the teaching advanced "from the most simple principle of Natural Religion to the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, from moral truths to the Christian mysteries"\(^{163}\). It was the Church's "uniform method to connect the Gospel with Natural Religion, and to mark out obedience to the moral law as the ordinary means of attaining to a Christian faith", the higher evangelical "truths... being received as the reward and confirmation of habitual piety"\(^{164}\). It was significant, in this regard, that among the converts, none were found

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161. *Ibid*.
162. *US*, p. 34. Sermon of 1831.
163. *Arians*, p. 44.
cant, in this regard, that among the converts, none were found who had not been faithful to lights already received and who were not marked out —previous to conversion— «by a strictly conscientious deportment» \textsuperscript{165}.

The teachings of the natural conscience thus constitute an important aid to receiving Scripture truth. Newman admits that the way of Christian faith and obedience is not the same as natural religion, being beyond it, yet «not far» beyond it: «not far in the case of those who try to act up to their conscience; in other words, that obedience to conscience leads to obedience to the Gospel, which, instead of being something different altogether, is but the completion and perfection of that religion which natural conscience teaches» \textsuperscript{166}. It is not that conscience and Scripture tell us different things: it would certainly be strange if the God of nature told us one set of truths and the God of grace another. «But it is not so; there are not two ways of pleasing God; what conscience suggests, Christ has sanctioned and explained» \textsuperscript{167}. To love God and our neighbour are the two great precepts of the Gospel and the Law alike: he who tries to follow them by the light of nature is «not far» from Christ’s kingdom. It is One God, and none other but He, who speaks first in our consciences, then in His Holy Word» \textsuperscript{168}. Indeed God has expressly told us so in Scripture in referring repeatedly to «the great Moral Law as the foundation of the truth» \textsuperscript{169}. The unicity of the Law, then, and of its Author, is of prime significance for Newman. He sees the Scripture message as being necessarily preceded and announced by that of our conscience. «The Law of God written on our hearts, bids us serve Him, and partly tells us how to serve Him, and Scripture completes the precepts which nature began» \textsuperscript{170}. God’s written Word, in Scripture, thus simply completes and confirms that other —perhaps weaker— interior message of conscience, present from the beginning.

The teachings of Scripture must be received, Newman felt, obligatorily in the context of those of our conscience. If a man avoids consulting and obeying his conscience, what is the conse-

\textsuperscript{165}. *Arians*, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{170}. *Ibid*.
The teachings of Scripture must be received, Newman felt, obligatorily in the context of those of our conscience. If a man avoids consulting and obeying his conscience, what is the consequence? «That at once he misinterprets and perverts the whole tenor Scripture» 171. Men tend, if not thus checked, to shrink away from what they consider to be the «dark side» of religion. They easily convince themselves that the strong declarations of Scripture are figurative, or no longer apply, since such men «have no language within their heart responding to them. Conscience has been silenced» 172. And precisely because it has been silenced, they refuse to «credit the plain word of Scripture» 173, choosing to think that it must speak only of benevolence, harmony, joy, mercy, peace, and seizing only on those passages which seem to support their own opinions. Such distortion, then, of the Scripture message is the consequence of neglecting the conscience. It is indeed «the creed of shallow men, in every age, who reason a little, and feel not at all, and who think themselves enlightened and philosophical» 174. To attempt following Scripture, therefore, while simultaneously rejecting conscience was clearly out of the question.

For Newman, the best argument for believing the whole of Natural and Revealed Religion —«better than all the books in the world... an argument intellectually conclusive, and practically persuasive whether for proving the Being of a God, or for laying the ground for Christianity,—, is that which arises out of a careful attention to the teachings of our heart, and a comparison between the claims of conscience and the announcements of the Gospel» 175.

d) It teaches by suggestions and allusions

Newman often referred to Scripture’s characteristically faint and indirect way of conveying doctrines. It seemed to teach as if by mere allusions, or suggestions. He offered several explanations, and instances, of this characteristic.

173. Ibid.
174. Ibid.
175. OS, p. 74. Sermon of 1856.
To begin with, he asks us to remember that Our Lord addresses us in the Gospel as sons, not servants, «as those who love God, and wish to please Him. When a man gives orders to those whom he thinks will mistake him, or are perverse, he speaks pointedly and explicitly; but when he gives directions to friends, he will trust much to their knowledge of his feelings and wishes, he leaves much to their discretion, and tells them not so much what he would have done in detail, as what are the objects he would have accomplished. Now this is the way Christ has spoken to us under the New Covenant» 176. Christ addresses us as friends, who already know him, and who are ready —as friends are— to respond to His slightest desire, without the need for compulsion or overexplicitness. He intended us, Newman suggests, to ask —with a reverent and affectionate faith—: «What is most likely to please Christ?» And this is just the question that obtains an answer in Scripture; which contains just so much as intimations of what is most likely to please Him» 177.

We are, in this manner of thinking, told just enough by Scripture on most things, but no more than that. So it is that, with this humble, affectionate attitude of Christ’s friends, we have inferred, from His simple words «suffer the little children...», His desire that children be brought close to Him in baptism. Or we have read in Acts and I Corinthians of the Apostolic Church’s custom of worshipping in public, and so, —with similar docile affection—, we have followed it 178. Likewise, in adhering to the ecclesiastical system, which is only faintly traced in Scripture», we are acting obediently, as wise and zealous expounders of Christ’s will, though we be labelled «fanciful theorists» or «inconclusive reasoners» 179. Scripture’s method is thus to depend on our loving, considerate acceptance, which constitutes the bringing to life of its but partial or weak suggestions.

Another view of Newman’s on this subject arises from noticing the characteristic of Faith. It is, in a sense, a process of Reason, but one «in which so much of the grounds of inference

177. Ibid.
179. Tracts. I, no. 8, p. 3.
cannot be exhibited, so much lies in the character of the mind itself, in its general view of things..., that it will ever seem to the world irrational and despicable; - till, that is, the event confirms it» 180. He observes, moreover, that it seems characteristic of the reasonings of inspired men in Scripture, and even of God Himself, to be possessed of this «recondite nature», to the extent «that irreverent minds scarcely hesitate to treat them with the same contempt which they manifest towards the faith of ordinary Christians» 181. The reasoning then of Faith, he remarks, appears to be of a very subtle character. And considering that in Scripture, even the Catholic doctrines are but indirectly or subtly proved by such reasoning, then (he concludes): «It may be that such a peculiarity in the inspired text is the proper correlative of Faith; such a text the proper matter for Faith to work upon» 182. This very indirectness of Scripture’s method is therefore almost to be expected from the very fact that we are living under Faith, and not under the Old Law. Our Scripture in other words, presupposes Faith, its very indirectness being the necessary matter for exercising it.

This approximative character of Scripture led Newman to warn against the danger of exaggeration or excessive systematization in proving doctrines with Scripture. After all, «almost all reasons formally adduced in moral inquiries, are rather specimens and symbols of the real grounds, than those grounds themselves. They do but approximate to a representation of the general character of the proof which the writer wishes to convey to another’s mind... they are hints towards and samples of, the true reasoning, and demand an active, ready, candid, and docile mind, which can throw itself into what is said, neglect verbal difficulties, and pursue and carry out principles» 183. Newman thus sees it as vain to try to flatly prove the doctrines of Christianity using Scripture, for the proofs are of the subtle type and not the mathematical or legal. He sees Scripture as teaching us doctrines, not after the manner of a courtroom, but by hints and approximations. It merely provides us with argum-

181. Ibid.
183. US, p. 275.
ents or evidences of the Truth, but that—for Newman—does not imply that it thereby provides us with the Truth itself.

Scripture could also be deemed insufficient, declares Newman, for the reason that it often seems to be referring to the circumstances it relates, as known, and not narrating them. As examples he takes the case of Lk XXII, 20 where the evangelist, after describing the consecration of the bread, adds immediately «'Likewise also the cup after supper saying' etc.; he does not narrate it in its place; he does but allude to it as a thing well known, in the way of a note or memorandum» 184; and that of Mk VI, 29: recounting John the Baptist's martyrdom where the evangelist says «'when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse and laid it in the tomb'. He is evidently speaking of an occurrence, and of a tomb, which were well known to those for whom he wrote» 185. All of which moves Newman to draw an important conclusion viz. «if historical facts be thus merely alluded to, not taught, why may not doctrines also?» 186. Indeed, he claims, one of the main points in dispute in the Scripture controversy is the question: «where is the proof that Scripture was intended to teach doctrine?» 187. It is one which seems highly dubious, taking into account such examples as these.

e) Relative Obscurity

In some of his early sermons Newman took issue with the popular error that truth was wide open to everyone and accessible with little effort. The Gospel—he insisted—«has its mysteries, its difficulties, and secret things, which the Holy Spirit does not remove» 188. He was disquieted by those symptoms of the popular aberration, which he saw, e.g. the satisfied pride of those men who now and then have some serious thoughts or open the Bible; or the delusion of those who believe that educa-

185. Ibid.
186. Ibid.
187. Ibid.
188. PPS, I, p. 203. Sermon of 1829.
tion and ability to use religious words will make them understand religion itself; or the confidence of those who «say that religious truth is simple and easily acquired; that Scripture, being intended for all, is at once open to all, and that if it had difficulties, that very circumstance would be an objection to it». He wished to emphasize the fact that Scripture is, in fact, «obscure in its text», whilst being «intelligible in its general drift», thereby tempting its readers «to a lax and disrespectful interpretation of it». They are gravely mistaken, he claimed, who think that Scripture is without difficulties, easily understood, «never remembering that to seek and gain religious truth is a long and systematic work».

The obscurity of Scripture in its pronouncements of doctrine seems to arise from its very structure, according to Newman. If it «contains any religious system at all, it must contain it covertly, and teach it obscurely, because it is altogether most immethodical and irregular in its structure». He goes as far, indeed, as to discern a certain consistency throughout Scripture as to «the peculiar character of its structure, the unostentatious, indirect or covert manner, which it adopts, for whatever reason, in its statements of whatever kind». The obscurity seems to almost constitute «a certain law», in the same way that «the avowal ‘it is my way’, ‘I always do so’, is often given and accepted as a satisfactory account of a person’s mode of acting». Since order implies a principle, so order in Scripture implies a principle in it. «If I show that the Bible is written throughout with this absence of method, I seem to find an order in the very disorder, and hence become reconciled to it in particular instances. That it is inartificial and obscure as regards the relation of facts has the effect of explaining its being obscure in statement of doctrines; that it is so as regards one set of doctrines, seems naturally to account for its being so as regards an-

190. *Arians*, p. 58.
191. *Ibid*.
192. *Ibid*.
other»\(^{197}\). Thus an obscure, irregular manner, which at first seemed negative in character, ends with being positive, because of its very order and consistency.

The almost universal lack of clarity in Scripture is (therefore) —in his view— by no means an argument against the divinity of its doctrines; on the contrary it seems to be the characteristic hallmark of their divine Author, who will undoubtedly have had «some wise and unknown reasons»\(^{198}\) for not stating them clearly there. One natural explanation adduced for the obscurity of Scripture doctrines is its being written in «Economical Language» i.e., «language relating to matters beyond the direct apprehension of those to whom it is addressed, and which, in order to have a chance of conveying to them any idea, however faint, of the fact, must be more or less of an analogous or figurative character, as viewed relative to the truths which it professes to report, instead of a direct and literal statement of the things which have to be conveyed»\(^{199}\). It is an economy, for example to represent a king as a richly dressed man sitting on a throne with a crown and a sceptre, or to represent angels as bright beings with wings. Scripture indeed is seen to be «necessarily full of economies, when speaking of heavenly things, because there is no other way of introducing into our minds even a rude idea, even any idea at all, of matters so utterly out of our experience)\(^{200}\). Thus, whilst we are obliged to keep strictly to what we are told in such statements, we are at the same time aware of their imperfect character. Newman quotes Athanasius\(^{201}\) as saying that Scripture gives us these economical images so that we may form some ideas «however poorly and dimly, as far as is attainable»\(^{202}\).

On the other hand, Newman does not consider we are left without any further means of clarifying our image of those heavenly things. Scripture may indeed be obscure for various reasons, but the early Church is seen as providing the necessary clarification. Whilst Scripture was used by inquirers and

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197. Ibid.
198. Ibid.
199. Ath., II, p. 91.
200. Ibid.
201. Orat. ii. 32.
neophytes in the first centuries «for the purposes of morals and for instruction in the rudiments of the faith, they still might need the teaching of the Church as a key to the collection of passages which related to the mysteries of the Gospel, passages which are obscure from the necessity of combining and receiving them all» 203. Thus Scripture’s obscurity, the result of its necessarily «economical» language, was in practice remedied by the Church’s teaching. Scripture, certainly, has a specific role: to enshrine God’s truth, in some way, all at once. In its general drift it does indeed convey that truth to us but the fact remains that it is «obscure in its text» 204. Its role does not, therefore, extend to that of clarifying that truth, for here the Church’s teaching has always proved of primary importance.

St. Vincent of Lerins’ tract on Heresy is quoted by Newman to show how Scripture’s difficulties must necessarily be made up for by the Church’s teaching: «All men do not understand it in one and the same sense, but divers men diversely, this man and that man, this way and that way, expound and interpret the sayings there of, so that to one’s thinking, ‘so many men so many opinions’ almost be gathered out of them» 205. Therefore the Catholic Church’s rule of authority must be called upon «for the avoidance of so great windings and turnings, of errors so various» 206.

f) The flaws of Private Judgment

We are able to find a continual rebuttal of the principle of Private Judgment in Newman’s writings. He saw it as «the Principle maintained in theory, as a sort of sacred possession or palladium by the Protestantism of this day» 207. He understood the right of Private Judgment in matters of religious belief and practice to mean «the prerogative, considered to belong to

203. Arians, p. 51.
204. Arians, p. 68.
206. Ibid.
207. VM, I, p. 128.
each individual Christian, of ascertaining and deciding for himself from Scripture what is Gospel truth, and what is not» \(208\).

The influence of the Private Judgment theory was very strong even in the Church of England, in Newman's day, which he attributes to the tendentious tone of the *Thirty Nine Articles* in that regard. Many and great were the dangers which Newman identified in the practice of Private Judgment. It meant, on the one hand, to rashly remove the Scriptures «from the Church's custody, and commit them to the world, that is, to what is called public opinion; which men boast, will ever be right on the whole, but which in fact, being the opinion of men, who, as a body have not cultivated the internal moral sense, and have externally no immutable rules to bind them, is, in religious questions, only by accident right, or only on very broad questions, and tomorrow will betray interests which today it affects to uphold» \(209\). He thus shows his concern for safeguarding the sacred writings from the ravages of men at large who have no especial claim to correctly interpret them.

Men who thereby arrogate to themselves the right to interpret the Scriptures are seen as temerarious bigots. On their own initiative, «they conceive that they profess just the truth which makes all things easy... they have their one or two topics, which they are continually obtruding, with a sort of pedantry... Perhaps they have discovered, as they think, the leading idea, or simple view, or sum and substance of the Gospel» \(210\). Such people always appear to have clear and decisive explanations of the doctrines of the faith. Newman sees them as claiming that the sacred writers were precisely of their own creed, and as calling on the common sense of mankind generally to decide on the doctrines. With the high-handedness characteristic of bigots «they profess to say just what each passage and verse means, what it must mean. To see in it less than they see is, in their judgment, to explain away; to see more, is to gloss over. To proceed to other parts of Scripture than those which they happen to select, is, they think, superfluous, since they have already adduced the very arguments sufficient for a

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\(209\). *US*, p. 73. Sermon of 1831.

clear proof; and if so, why go beyond them?»211. This type of «authority», arbitrarily invoked, devoid of any real justification, is truly harmful, in Newman’s view: it selects a few ideas from Scripture and abandons the rest, offers interpretations which are artificially clear and exact, and rejects any further truths when offered, on the basis that «any one truth excludes another which is distinct from it»212.

As to the flaws intrinsic in the theory, Newman has much to say. In recognizing that from earliest times the rule has been that the Church should teach the truth and then should appeal to Scripture in vindication of its own teaching, he comments how «from the first, it has been the error of heretics to neglect the information thus provided for them, and to attempt of themselves, a work to which they are unequal, the eliciting of a systematic doctrine from the scattered notices of the truth which Scripture contains»213. The error of trying to judge for themselves from the words of Scripture alone is evident, for they reject the additional help offered. It is an attitude similarly foolish to that of some self-sufficient philosopher who temerarily rejects Newton’s Law of gravitation and tries to strike out, alone and ill-prepared, with his own theory of motion. In this connexion, he finds support in St. Irenaeus’ argument: that we know the Christian doctrines through those men who transmitted the Gospel to us «first proclaiming it, then (by God’s will) delivering it to us in the Scriptures»214. Irenaeus argued that the doctrine came first from men, only later and secondarily from the Scriptures, and concluded: «Nor dare we affirm that their announcements were made previously to their attaining perfect knowledge, as some presume to say, boasting that they set right the Apostles»215. Which argument serves precisely to rebut the theory of Private Judgment in any age.

Another flaw of the theory is the assumption that when God speaks by inspiration, all external natural means of judgment are superseded, except Scripture. To Newman, «this is an arbitrary decision, contrary to facts; for unless inspiration made use

211. US. pp. 306-7.
213. Arians, p. 50.
214. Arians, p. 53.
215. Ibid.
of an universal language, learning at least must be necessary to ascertain the meaning of the particular language selected; and if only one external aid be adopted, of course all antecedent objection to any other vanishes» 216. Thus the position is untenable that external means, such as the Church, Tradition, Catholicity, learning, etc., must be excluded as the Protestant promoters of Private Judgment insist. They accept one external means—Scripture—why not others? Newman invites us to discard such a narrow viewpoint and to «rather accept all the means which are put within our reach, as intended for use, and as talents which must not be neglected» 217.

Newman therefore bids us have no doubt «that Divine aid alone can carry any one safely and successfully through an enquiry after religious truth» 218. If we accept the living God (and his offers of help) as being a living oracle, we shall realize that in this case «we have no appeal from the speaker» 219, whereas if we only accept his book, then clearly (but sadly) «the final decision remains with the reader» 220. In short, we must be prepared to accept God speaking to us through the different media he has chosen and not only through his Scriptures.

The Private Judgment of Scripture, then, is inadequate because it ignores our need of divine help; also because it «has no broad sanction in Scripture». Indeed where Scripture seems to speak of private judgment it simply «makes the teacher the subject of that inquiry, and not the thing taught» 221. Thus, Newman concludes, the great question with which we are confronted for the exercise of private judgment—if any—is: «Who is God's prophet, and where? Who is to be considered the voice of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church?» 222. We are thus left with the duty of following the Church, that living oracle of God; and not our own opinion about the contents of Scripture.

216. VM, I, p. 131.
217. Ibid.
218. ECH, II, p. 342.
220. Ibid.
221. ECH, II, p. 354.
222. ECH, II, p. 355.
CONCLUSIONS

1. Newman sets before us what must surely be one of the most comprehensive critiques of the Protestant *sola Scriptura* principle ever made. This critique is to be especially prized not only on account of its clarity, breadth and relevance to our times, but also the intellectual honesty and sense of «fair play» which characterize it.

   It is the honesty and the objectivity of a Christian who loves Sacred Scripture dearly, who was reared in «the Religion of the Bible» and who has experienced Protestant biblical fundamentalism from the inside.

2. The insufficiency of Sacred Scripture is, for Newman, a *formal* insufficiency, i.e., Scripture is not enough for the full knowledge of Revelation; there is need for a Tradition to interpret it and a religious authority to teach it without error or doubt.

   At times, he seems to hint at the material insufficiency as well, but does not state it clearly. Newman is one of the theologians who open the modern debate about whether there are revealed truths in tradition which are not found in the written Word.

3. Newman demonstrates that the Protestant maxim: *The Bible and the Bible alone is the Religion of Protestants*, is inseparable in practice from the principle of private judgement. In effect, this principle is an alibi for locating in Man, and not in God, the final word on faith and morals. It means taking the Bible and mastering it, and interpreting it ourselves, and admitting just what *we* choose to see in it.

   It amounts to the arbitrary judging of a mere *book*, quite different to a humble submitting to a *living authority*. Newman reminds us, in this regard, that there is an essential difference between the act of submitting to a *living oracle* and to his *book*; in the former case there is no appeal from the speaker, in the latter the final decision remains with the reader. In this way the *sola Scriptura* principle usurps the role of God as ultimate religious authority and makes true obedience to His will impossible for the individual. It thus throws open the doors to a radical subjectivism and deifies pragmatic morality.
4. Protestants too, says Newman, follow a tradition in their discipline and teachings. Theirs, however, is a human rather than divine tradition. The very defect which they falsely attribute to Catholics —of inventing and following human traditions and deforming the written Word— is exactly what happens to them.

5. The Catholic Faith —the Creed— is not obtained from Sacred Scripture through individual effort, as though it were something objective and detached. Rather, it lies hid in the bosom of the Church as if one with her, clinging to, and, as it were, lost in her embrace. Anglicans, in contrast, see it as being sole and unapproachable, with the Church close by, but in the background.

The celebrated dictum of St. Vincent of Lerins, quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus, could be taken in a Protestant sense and is therefore insufficient as the principle for determining the Rule of Faith.

6. The written word of God is fundamental, nonetheless, for the knowledge of Revelation; in every age it is a means of orientation for the life of a Christian; it is always wholesome and appropriate for producing the best religious feelings and convictions. It can never be invoked as a motive or occasion of incredulity. It is impossible, Newman argues, that Scripture could have been responsible for making men disbelieve and fall away from the Church. Rather they disbelieved when they opened the Bible; they opened it in an unbelieving spirit, and for an unbelieving purpose —anticipating, or even hoping, that they would find things there inconsistent with Catholic teaching. Beginning thus in self-will and disobedience, they end in apostasy.
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