

ARISTOTLE'S LOGIC AND
JOHN HENRY NEWMAN'S INFORMAL INFERENCE

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CHAPTER I

John Henry Newman was born in London on February 21, 1801.

John Newman, his father, was a banker whose fortune was lost in the crisis following the Napoleonic wars, and Jemina Fourdrinier, his mother, was a French Huguenot. There were five other children in the Newman family. Because of the bank failure and John Newman's reduction to comparative poverty, he undertook the management of a brewery at Alton to provide for his family.

John Henry Newman, in the early summer of 1808, began his studies at Ealing, an academy for young gentlemen. On December 14th, 1816, his father enrolled him in Trinity College at Oxford from which he received his degree in 1820.

Despite Newman's poor grades he was elected to a Fellowship at Oriel, which was then a badge of intellectual eminence. Following his ordination in the Anglican Church, John Henry Newman became Curate of St. Clement, Oxford (1824), Vice-principal of Alban Hall (1825), Tutor of Oriel (1826), Public Examiner (1827-28), and Vicar of St. Mary's, the University Church (1828). Having reached a state of self-sufficiency, he was able to support his younger brother Francis through his University studies.

After failing in the management of the brewery, Newman's father succumbed in 1824. The family, however, received its support from an

aunt. In 1829, Newman paid the debt to his aunt for her financial assistance and took a cottage for the summer at Horspath for his mother and two sisters, Harriet and Jemina, Mary having died in 1828.

During this period he formed some influential and valuable friendships. Dr. Thomas Scott, an Anglican Rector, influenced him to abandon his belief in predestination and to investigate the dogma of the Trinity. He came to the conclusion that holiness was essential to a happy existence and pursued wisdom through a thorough study of historical texts.

His growing intimacy with Richard Froude gave a fresh orientation to his thoughts and led to devotion to the Blessed Virgin and to serious concern about the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. John Keble and later Edward Pusey, both clergymen, joined Newman and put their intellectual pursuits and findings into subject matter for sermons and later for pamphlets. The first of these so called Tracts of the Times was issued in 1833. The last was Tract 90, 1841, in which Newman concluded that the Church of England did not descend from the Apostles.

Sixteen years passed in which he sought the answer to his religious quest. He was received into the Catholic Church October 9th, 1845. At the request of Dr. Wiseman, he and his fellow-converts took refuge at Maryvale, an old house north of Birmingham. He resided there except for his trip to Rome (Sept. 1846 - Dec. 1847), during which time he was ordained a priest by Cardinal Fransoni on May 30, 1847. He then entered the novitiate of the Oratorian Foundation of St. Philip Neri, and he returned to Maryvale empowered to establish an English Community of the Oratory.

This he did Feb. 1, 1848.

The community was later divided. Newman went to a parish in Birmingham with half of his community; the other went to Fr. Faber in London.

In a series of lectures entitled "The Present Position of Catholics," Newman attacked Giovanni Giacinto Achilli, an apostate priest who had lectured in Birmingham against Popery. Achilli brought suit against Newman, which suit Newman lost. He was forced to pay a large fine, but his friends and former enemies came to his aid.

Newman and his Oratorians next began to establish the Catholic University of Dublin, of which he was Rector from 1854 to 1858. Out of this experience came the Idea of a University and similar discourses which are of tremendous educational value. Due to a sneering remark by Charles Kingsley, Newman wrote a biographical report on the progress of his mind, Apologia Pro Vita Sua.

In 1870, after three years of rewriting, he published An Essay in Aid of the Grammar of Assent. In 1877, Oxford made him an Honorary Fellow of Trinity College. He was made a Cardinal by Pope Leo XIII in 1879, and England felt honored as much as Newman that one of her sons received this display of honor. It was an approval of his life's thought and work.

He died at the Oratory at Edgbaston on August 11, 1890. 1.

CHAPTER 2

An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent, published in 1870, is designed to discuss the way in which men form their religious beliefs and support their essential reasonableness in holding some beliefs with a feeling of absolute certitude. The book is divided into two parts. The main intent of the first is refuting the argument that we cannot believe what we cannot understand; the second shows that a gathering of proofs, not conclusive in themselves but together may compel an absolute certitude.

To try to analyse the Grammar of Assent in a few pages is to simplify his statements and run the hazards of distortion and misrepresentation. Newman's arguments cannot be paraphrased without losing his purpose. No unifying summary of Newman's book is possible.

Of all the works of Newman, not excepting the Essay on Development, the Grammar of Assent is the most difficult to summarize. We might almost as easily reduce to its essentials a landscape by Corot. Every detail, every tiny illustrative point we eliminate, turns out, to our surprise, to have been indispensable to the general effect. 2.

Rather than embark on a lengthy treatise on the Grammar, which is not the purpose of this paper, it will suffice to treat a few main themes of the work in order to supply the reader with a general view of the content.

Before touching upon the themes, however, it would be profitable to observe three key-principles which illustrate his system to us. First: "Life is for action...Life is not long enough for a religion of inferences.... To act you must assume, and that assumption is faith." 3. We must

co-ordinate our thoughts with action. We will not get anywhere without doing something.

The second principle is that "the whole mind reasons, not merely the formal intellect; thought is personal as well as universal." 4. Newman explains this principle in a previous work: "It is the concrete being that reasons; pass a number of years, and I find my mind in a new place; how? the whole man moves; paper logic is but the record of it." 5.

The third principle is that reasoning should be treated as it is actually found in life, not as men are told it should be. Newman regarded abstract reasoning as always dangerous, since it had little contact with life. In this regard Fr. Thomas Harper S. J. has commented: "Never we believe have the manifold and all but contradictory complexities of the human mind been treated with such unscrupulous reality." 6. In summary, just as Thomas Aquinas was the backbone of deductive rationalism of the thirteenth century, John H. Newman was the inductive fire of the nineteenth century.

The Grammar, after introductory chapters on the various attitudes of the mind with regard to propositions, introduces its first important distinction: notional and real assent. Notional assent is an agreement of the mind with abstract propositions; real assent is that which is given to propositions in the concrete. Real assents differ from notional assents only in as much as the apprehension differs, "because the object is more powerful, therefore so is the apprehension of it." Nor does he think, "it unfair reasoning thus to take the apprehension for its object." 7.

Having clearly established this distinction, it can be applied to the

truths of religion. We see through the instrumentality of conscience that there can be and is a real assent to the truth of One God. There may also be a real assent to all the articles contained in the creeds of our faith.

It is because of this difference in apprehension that assents are sometimes called strong and sometimes weak, but Newman opposes the view of Locke that there are degrees of assent. He states that assent is always the same, unconditional, i. e., it is distinct from all other mental acts and exists independently of them. All the reasons for a particular assent may be forgotten or assent to a very evident proposition may be withheld. If we give our assent, reflect back on it and confirm the first action, then our assent is a complex assent or certitude. This is not certitude in the popular sense.

After certitude is established in this manner the question arises how a conditional act -- inference, can lead to an unconditional act -- assent.

The Illative Sense is the name given to the instrument by which converging probabilities effect a complete certitude. Before discussing this, Newman must deal with inference, formal, informal, and natural, and their place in this movement from conditional to unconditional state of mind.

Considered as formal inference, logic does appear to Newman to be a static, descriptive, merely abstract method of reasoning; its inferential exercises are always conditional; as such it strips words of all connatural senses, it drains them of that "depth and breath of associations which constitute their poetry, their rhetoric, and their historical life;" it starves each term down till it becomes the ghost of itself. Its abstractions can only conduct to the abstract, whereas, according to Newman, "we have need to attain by our reasonings to what is concrete." Its conclusions are only probabilities, whereas we need certainties. In this world of sense, Newman says, we have to do with things far more often than with notions or abstractions: "let units come first, and (so-called) universals second; let universals minister to

units, not units be sacrificed to universals. John, Richard, and Robert are individual things, independent, incommunicable; "the common measure between them may be called man, but man is only a name, not an independent reality." 8.

Logic fails to perceive all the considerations which determine an individual's judgment of things. We do not naturally reason from proposition to proposition but from things to things, from wholes to wholes, from concrete to concrete. Logic, however, does have value for Newman. It catalogues knowledge, corrects mistakes, brings order into our thinking, teaches us the direction of truth, and points out the probable fields of experiment and observation.

Newman, after this consideration of formal inference proceeds to informal and natural inference, and finally, as the climax, the illative sense. Because the precise purpose of this paper is to deal with these topics, their treatment will be excluded in this summary of the Grammar.

The final chapter of the Grammar applies the illative sense to religion. Newman reviews the sources of natural theology, conscience as the voice of mankind, and the history of human affairs. The most important of these is conscience. We are bound by conscience to seek truth and to look for certainty by modes of proof which may not result in formal exactness but will lay absolute claim to our belief. We are dealing with the eternal and infinite nature of man's destiny, which demands action.

In his final pages Newman shows what events in the history of Christianity appealed most to him and led him to the certitude of its divinity:

Here I end my specimens, among the many which might be given, of the arguments adducible for Christianity. I have dwelt upon them, in order to show how I would apply the principles of this Essay to the proof of its divine origin. Christianity is addressed, both as regards its evidences and its contents, to minds which are in the normal condition of human nature, as believing in God and in a future judgment. Such minds it addressed both through the intellect and through the imagination; creating a certitude of its truth by arguments too various for direct enumeration, too personal and deep for words, too powerful and concurrent for refutation. Nor need reason come first and faith second (though this is the logical order), but one and the same teaching is in different aspects both object and proof, and elicits one complex act both of inference and of assent. It speaks to us one by one, and it is received by us one by one, as the counterpart, so to say, of ourselves, and is real as we are real. 9.

CHAPTER 3

ARISTOTLE'S SYLLOGISM OR REASONING

Aristotle's definition of a syllogism is:

A discourse in which, certain things being stated, something other than what is stated follows of necessity, from their being so.

The precise meaning of this is obtained from Aristotle's comments on the definition:

I mean by the last phrase that they produce the consequence, and by this, that no further term is required from without in order to make the consequence necessary.

I call that a perfect syllogism which needs nothing other than that which has been stated to make plain what necessarily follows; a syllogism is imperfect if it needs either one or more propositions which are indeed the necessary consequences of the terms set down, but have not been expressly stated as premises. 10.

Aristotle tends to favor the use of universals in reasoning: "All propositions should be taken in their most universal form." 11. When anyone argues, Aristotle says, "Reasoning is more forceable and effective against contradictory people." 12. He goes on to say: "In dialectics, syllogism should be employed in reasoning against dialectics rather than against the crowd." Also "You should display your training in inductive reasoning against a young man," 13. but use deductive reasoning when dealing with an expert. Learn from those experienced in deduction and obtain your cases from inductive reasoners. It is precisely for this reason

that they are trained.

For Newman formal inference and Aristotle's syllogism are one and the same thing. Newman describes formal inference or syllogism in this manner:

Let then our symbols be words: let all thought be arrested and embodied in words. Let language have a monopoly of thought; and thought go for only so much as it can show itself to be worth in language. Let every prompting of the intellect be ignored, every momentum of argument be disowned, which is unprovided with an equivalent wording, as its ticket for sharing in the common search after truth. Let the authority of nature, common-sense, experience, genius, go for nothing. Ratiocination, thus restricted and put into grooves, is what I have called Inference, and the science, which is its regulating principle, is Logic.

The first step in the inferential method is to throw the question to be decided into the form of a proposition; then to throw the proof itself into propositions, the force of the proof lying in the comparison of these propositions with each other. When the analysis is carried out fully and put into form, it becomes the Aristotelic syllogism. 14.

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It is the accumulation of probabilities, independent of each other, arising out of the nature and circumstances of the particular case which is under view; probabilities too fine to avail separately, too subtle and circuitous to be convertible into syllogisms, too numerous and various for such conversion, even were they convertible. 15.

This is Newman's conception of the real method or reasoning in the concrete. This kind of inference, though still a form of logic is no longer abstract, but carried out into the realities of life, and "its premises being instinct with the substance and the momentum of that mass of probabilities, which, acting upon each other in concretion and confirmation carry it home

definitely to the individual case, which is its original scope." 16. Such a reasoning process is more or less implicit, not reasoned out consciously. Furthermore, it is still dependent on premises. It is almost impossible that all the evidence be explicitly before the mind. For example, we are able to recognize brothers without enumerating the attributes of each. We can tell the characteristics of other people by these innumerable small signs which are too minute and intricate to allow explanation. In this reasoning field, however, the problem of unconditional assent and certitude is still left unsolved. Therefore, it remains to illustrate this process and show how we can have certitude.

Newman gives some illustrations of certitudes which seem to rest on probabilities. We are certain that England is an island, but we cannot analyse the proof satisfactorily. Father Hardouin maintained that Terence's Plays, Virgil's Aeneid, Horace's Odes and the Histories of Livy and Tacitus were the forgeries of the monks of the thirteenth century. Most of us are convinced that this cannot be true, but if we attempt to draw up historical arguments, we find that they are weak. What are my grounds for thinking that I, in my own particular case, shall die? The future cannot be proved a posteriori, and as to an a priori proof, what is the worth of so-called laws or generalized facts? 17.

These concrete facts need explanation, which must be sought in the proofs or inference. Re-examining the evidence again we see that the object of sense presents itself to us as a whole. We grasp the entire premises and conclusions per modum unius, "by a sort of instinctive perception of the

legitimate conclusion in and through the premisses." 18. Hence the reason why the same evidence produces different effects on different people. When we reason in the concrete, "we judge for ourselves and by our own light, and we judge too, the argument as the expression of another living person." 19. Newman illustrates this by arguments that depend for their understanding on the mind of the recipient. He points especially to religion which may require a mental discipline and organization and a certain steadiness in our intellectual vision. Newman quotes the great passage of Pascal on the establishment of the Christian religion, and "remarks that though many have been converted and sustained in their faith by the argument, nevertheless the statement is intended to be a vehicle of thought, and to open the mind to the apprehension of the facts of the case, and to trace them and their implications in outline, not to convince by the logic of its wording." 20.

As an illustration of the way the converging probabilities lead to a certain assent, Newman displays a brilliant parallel between concrete reasoning and the method of proof which is the foundation of modern mathematical science:

We know that a regular polygon, inscribed in a circle, its sides being continually diminished, tends to become that circle as its limit; but it vanishes before it has coincided with the circle, so that its tendency to be the circle, though ever nearer fulfillment, never in fact gets beyond a tendency. In like manner, the conclusion in a real concrete question is foreseen and predicted rather than actually attained; foreseen in the number and direction of accumulated premisses, which all converge to it, and as the result of their combination, approach it more nearly than any assignable difference, yet do not touch it logically (though only not touching it,) on account of the nature of its subject-matter, and the delicate and implicit charac-

ter of at least part of the reasonings on which it depends. It is by the strength, variety, or multiplicity of premisses, which are only probable, not by invincibles syllogisms, . . . that the practised and experienced mind is able to make a sure divination that a conclusion is inevitable, of which his lines of reasoning do not actually put him in possession. 21.

This is what is meant by a proposition being "as good as proved," a conclusion as undeniable "as if it were proved," and the reasons for it "amounting to a proof," for a proof is the limit of converging probabilities. 22.

Another evident illustration of the intellectual process by which we pass from conditional inference to unconditional assent is in the Court of Law. The evidence will often consist of indications which taken separately are so slight that they would hardly merit attention, but collectively are perfectly convincing.

To complete this explanation a short analysis of natural inference must be given. It is called natural because it is the one ordinarily used. It argues from things to things, concrete to concrete, wholes to wholes. It is by some sort of instinct that the mind passes from evidence to conclusion. It may be said to be a method of passing from one concrete proposition to another without the use of any tangible middle term. A farmer is sure it will rain tomorrow, but cannot give his reasons. A physician can diagnose a patient and prescribe the correct treatment, and yet be unable to defend his judgment before another physician. A saint may be able to detect truth from heresy, although unable to state the grounds of his choice. Natural inference may be called instinct, not in the sense that it perceives facts without any assignable reason as to how those facts have been perceived,

but its conclusions are but probabilities whose cumulative weight produces certainty and justifies action.

Now, what is that power within a person which enables him to pass to certainty from a judgment on the cumulation of probabilities? Is there any criterion by which we can test the validity of our inferences? Newman calls this the Illative Sense. It is by means of this Illative Sense that the average man can have a real certitude of the fundamental truths of religion without depending on the traditional logically demonstrative proofs. It is not a sense in the scholastic meaning of the term--not some organic faculty essentially distinct from the intellect. It is the perfection of the ratiocinative faculty and is to be used in a way parallel with the terms: good sense, common sense, sense of beauty, etc.: 23.

The Illative Sense then is the living intellect acting in the concrete living man; acting in conjunction with all his other faculties, utilising them, controlling them or relinquishing them according to its perfections of judgment; and acting in a way too subtle and too elastic to have its processes reduced to the forms of paper logic. Just as the moral conduct, just as the artistic sense is the mental faculty which is the ultimate test of beauty; so also the illative sense is the ultimate test of right reasonings. 24.

Newman explains the nature and claims of the Illative Sense in four respects:

First, viewed in its exercise, it is one and the same in all concrete matters, though employed in them in different measures. We do not reason in one way in chemistry or law, in another in morals or religion; but in reasoning on any subject whatever, which is concrete, we proceed, as far as indeed we can, by the logic of language, but we are obliged to supplement it by the more subtle and elastic logic of thought; for forms by themselves prove nothing.

Secondly, it is in fact attached to definite subject-

matters, so that a given individual may possess it in one department of thought, for instance philosophy.

Thirdly, in coming to its conclusion, it proceeds always in the same way, by a method of reasoning, which as I have observed above is the elementary principle of that mathematical calculus of modern times, which has so wonderfully extended the limits of abstract science.

Fourthly, in no class of concrete reasonings, whether in experimental science, historical research, or theology, is there any ultimate test of truth and error in our inferences besides the trustworthiness of the Illative Sense that gives them its sanction. 25.

The Illative Sense, then, is a personal gift, but this does not limit its range. It will show itself in operation in any subject matter of thought. It will be used in reasoning from primary facts as well as directed towards personal issues. It will be the instrument of induction from particulars as well as deciding what are general laws and what conclusions cannot be reached beyond bare probability. It is by this power that we believe in an extended material world, that we hold to the uniformity of nature and regard its laws as unchangeable. Thus its range is seen to be vast. Newman's theory is thus complete.

CHAPTER 4

NEWMAN'S COMPARISON OF INFORMAL INFERENCE WITH SYLLOGISM OR LOGIC

Every exercise of nature or of art is good in its place, and there are manifold uses of this logical inference. It is the principle of order in our reasoning; it converts chaos into harmony; it lines up and maps out our knowledge of things and their relationship; it brings together many minds to concentrate on one subject matter. Logic prepares language for our use. Even if it may not lead to truth, it leads us to form propositions in the direction of truth. Facts are held together, difficulties explained, and problems are recognized with a logical hypothesis. The logical processes enable a person to take a short cut in investigating a problem. 26.

The difference between the logical method and informal inference is as great as the difference between the logical sketch of a man and his portrait. The portrait has, not a mere outline, but all the intricate details filled in and shades and colors harmonized together. This is also the intricate process of ratiocination reaching for the concrete fact as compared with a syllogistic treatment. This reasoning does not supercede the logical form of inference but carries it into the realities of life -- to the individual case. The purpose of concrete reasoning is to open the mind to the apprehension of the facts of the case and to trace them by their implications in

outline, not to convince by the logic of its mere wording.

Newman says that conclusions in informal inference are reached, not by any verbal enumeration of all the considerations involved, but by a mental comprehension of the whole case, and a determination of its basis, sometimes after much deliberation and delay, but sometimes by a clear and rapid act of the intellect -- an unwritten summing-up -- like the summation of the terms plus and minus of an algebraical series. 27.

Logical abstractions can only lead to the abstract, whereas, according to Newman, we must attain by our reasonings what is concrete. Its conclusions are only probabilities, whereas we need certainties. 28. In our world of sense, continues Newman, we deal with things far more often than with notions or abstractions: "Let units come first and (so-called) universals second; let universals minister to units, not units be sacrificed to universals. John, Richard, and Robert are individual things, independent, incommunicable." 29.

This ratiocination is far more complex than can be expressed by lips or written on paper. The syllogism is to living thought only what the skeleton is to the living man. It enables mind to communicate with mind and find out where each differs, but this is a small part of investigation of truth. "Its chain of conclusions hangs loose at both ends." It starts from first principles which is a controversy in itself and terminates in an abstract conclusion which is an inadequate representation of concrete reality. "Thought is too keen and manifold, its sources are too remote and hidden, its path too personal, delicate, and circuitous, its subject matter too

various and intricate, to admit of the trammels of any language of whatever subtlety and whatever compass." 30.

Newman regards logic as of very limited use in religion. It rarely brings about belief, but it clarifies, illuminates and enlarges the belief already attained by other than merely logical means. This explains Newman's habit of using logic somewhat ruthlessly as an inferior tool, i. e., to be put aside when it cannot add to belief. Newman regards the fact that "many of our most obstinate and most reasonable certitudes depend on proofs which are informal and personal, which baffle our powers of analysis, and cannot be brought under our logical rule, because they cannot be submitted to logical rule, because they cannot be submitted to logical statistics." 31.

Father Thomas Maher, S. J., comments on Newman's use of logic and informal inference from the psychological viewpoint:

The great mass of our practical, moral, social and political as well as scientific faiths have their sources in informal and implicit inferences of this kind; and it is by working through such channels rather than by formal arguments, that permanent real assents are obtained. By controversy a man is rarely persuaded of anything except of the truth of his own view. Philosophical positions rushed by a logical assault are not permanently retained. Intellectual assent extorted at the point of the syllogism soon rebels. It is by the gradual process of sapping and mining that convictions are subverted and conversions effected. It is by famine that beliefs are starved and atrophied. And such is the infirmity of the human mind, that unless it be frequently reinforced, it will be compelled by the slow but constant pressure of the siege all around to capitulate and surrender its most cherished, perhaps even its best warranted faiths." 32.

Newman deems logic an accessory after the fact in matters of concrete thought and action. Logic's function is to correct and check-up. But in

thinking with the whole man, the inferential method is at times set aside. In the chapter, "Natural Religion," Newman after a considerable discourse on the concrete evidences in the world of an omnipotent Providence pauses "and as if looking at the reader with calm defiance adds:" 33. "Should it be objected that this is an illogical exercise of reason, I answer, that since it actually brings them to a right conclusion, and was intended to bring them to it, if logic finds fault with it, so much the worse for logic." 34.

In another place, Newman says that he does not trust scientific demonstrations in questions of concrete fact. Let those who have the gift of demonstration use it. But for Newman, it is more in accord with his own judgment to prove Christianity in the same informal way he proved that he was born and that he will die. 35.

Father Martin D'Arcy, S. J., comments on Newman's introduction of the Illative Sense and points to the place of formal inference:

That certainty is a state which all of us can verify he assumes; he has argued also that certitude is not a passive impression made upon the mind, but in all concrete questions an active recognition of propositions as true. Now reason never bids us be certain except on absolute proof, and, nevertheless, formal inference cannot be more than conditional, cannot produce more than the probable. What criterion then can there be which will warrant our certitude? The answer is that the sole and final judgment on the validity of an inference in concrete matter is committed to a mental faculty, the Illative Sense. 36.

CHAPTER 5

CRITICISM OF NEWMAN'S COMPARISON

Much of the criticism leveled at the author of the Grammar is due to a misunderstanding of his terms. Newman used "probability," not necessarily meaning doubtful probative value, but merely not demonstrative. To him a proof based on "probabilities" was a proof grounded in cumulative or circumstantial evidence as opposed to one based on scientific and absolutely demonstrative logic. The word "certitude" signifies two elements: a) the reasonable absence of all doubt; b) the degree of positive adhesion to the truth embraced. Newman follows the former and denounces the latter. There are no degrees of certitude (in opposition to Locke who held for degrees).

When it is said that feeling and imagination are seen to be modes of knowledge, the meaning is not that they act quite independently of reason, but that the reason's controlling action as it takes place in the living concrete man is too rapid and too subtle to have its process written down on paper in formal syllogistic terms. It is seen, therefore, that Newman does not invent any organic faculty which makes inferences. Newman insists on the paramount supremacy of reason:

It seems a truism to say, yet it is all that I have been saying, that in religion the imagination and affections should always be under the control of reason. . . . Sentiment, whether imaginative or emotional, falls back

upon the intellect for its stay, when sense cannot be called into exercise: and it is in this way that devotion falls back on dogma. 37.

It has been objected that Newman's statement, "Actions can demonstrate better than many syllogisms," is mere verbiage; but every human act has a syllogism somewhere, says Thomas Gerrard. 38. There is a difference between that syllogism and the one spoken of in the statement. The one is implicit, the other explicit. Human acts, generally speaking, have not one, but thousands of syllogisms contained (implicitly) in them; for some human acts depend on the experience of a life-time. To use a very appropriate example, how many syllogisms would it take to produce a demonstration equal to that act by which Newman joined the Catholic Faith?

Father D'Arcy and others say that, in certain critical passages Newman seriously weakens the objective foundation of the universal idea. Universal for the Scholastics is a concept of the essence of a thing. It is for Newman a vague general notion with little or no application to the knowledge of the individual thing:

Universals are ever at war with each other; because what is called a universal is only a general; because what is only general does not lead to a necessary conclusion. Let units come first, and universals second; let universals minister to units, not units be sacrificed to universals. 39.

It is obvious that Newman is expressly speaking of the universal. The critics find that his treatment is purely nominalistic and conceptualistic. Father D'Arcy finds fault with Newman's habitual disparagement of the notional as compared with the real;

It looks as if this came from the philosophy he knew best, the views of Locke, Hume and Butler. Many of their assumptions must have been current in the Oxford of his time, and they provided him with what is no better than a nominalist theory of knowledge. His emphasis on the concrete, on vivid experience, on the symbolical nature of notions, rings true to empiricist teaching, and the emphasis has for effect to throw doubt on the value of logic and metaphysics. There are places where Newman corrects this impression, and it is true that his thought rises above the language in which he expressed it. His conclusions are weakened by the too sharp separation of assent from inference, certitude from proof. The illative sense is introduced as a newcomer without antecedents and without its proper title, and is made to do duty for all manner of acts and processes of thought because in the preceding chapters thought has been deprived of some of its functions. Almost all that causes dissatisfaction in the analysis can be traced back to his theory of the notion or universal. 40.

A general notion is built up from particulars, says Newman, and bound together into unities and organized by means of formulas. At the end, he says, we have little more than a set of labels.

This is not true in all cases according to D'Arcy. In scientific investigations we operate on a rough idea and organize on the minimum of knowledge that we possess. We are constantly searching for more evidence, and we control the investigation by our apprehension in particular cases of the true nature of some of them. This method is followed in extreme cases of ignorance but not for all knowledge. Actually, in the more evident cases the unity which characterizes certain objects is seen at a glance, for we have no intellectual knowledge of particulars as such; we know them only as particulars of a universal.

The empiricists put the intellect aside and operate with the senses,

memory and imagination. They suppose, therefore, that at the beginning there are present only a multitude of sensible phenomena, and they try to explain, from these changing series without a name, how it is possible to construct the notions of universal, substance, cause, the necessary, and give an account of the world in which we live. Father D'Arcy says they are building something without a foundation. There is no such thing as a sensation as such. "I do not perceive first a sense datum and infer that it is something; I cannot think of a sense datum except as something, and the thing is not perceived by the senses, but apprehended by the mind; it is a universal and a notion." 41. The universal is given together with the particular, and thought is not something tacked-on to an exclusive sensible world.

C. Stephen Dessain objects to the unjustified treatment accorded Newman by D'Arcy and others. It is quite true, he says, that the nominalist approach is not made a substitute for metaphysics, nor does it degenerate, like that of the nominalists into agnosticism." 42. This is what Newman is against. An approach to validity of knowledge must be psychological. "We are in a world of facts," says Newman, "and we use them for there is nothing else to use. We do not quarrel with them, but we take them as they are." In order to arrive at the facts of any matter, we must set aside generalities and take things as they really are with all their circumstances. 43. Nominalists regard abstract concepts as purely subjective. This was not Newman's philosophy; his is that of common sense. He stresses the poverty of the concept but admits that it gives true knowledge. It represents

part of reality and must be continually controlled by experience. "The superficial and theoretical accusations of nominalism can be refuted from almost any page of the Grammar of Assent." 44.

Dr. Hedley says that Newman's illative sense is pure subjectivism. 45. Father D'Arcy concludes his analysis of the illative sense by stating that Newman's illative sense is weakened by the philosophical thought of the time, and that the good points must be translated into a different idiom for their proper worth to be appreciated. He accuses Newman of basing thought on instinct and throwing out the intellect. He finds it difficult to place the illative sense in any convincing philosophical system. He then expounds on his own illative sense which he calls interpretation and fits it in a sound philosophical theory of knowledge. 46.

Dessain says that D'Arcy misunderstood the illative sense. Sense as Newman clearly explained does not mean something irrational. Sense is often used in connection with rational thought. The conclusions of the illative sense are all the result of a natural mode of reasoning. "The illative sense is simply our intellect, our reason, working unconsciously, and arriving at its conclusions in an intellectual and reasonable manner." 47. Newman says that any exercise of judgment in coming to a conclusion which does not follow a rigid scientific proof is an exercise of the illative sense.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

To the professed student of the sciences of logic, psychology, and natural theology, with its culmination in revealed theology, the main thesis and terms in which the purpose of the Grammar of Assent is expressed have a very different meaning. He does admire the genius of the author but looks at his work through a thousand side-lights thrown upon it by other systems of thought. The student analyses and puts the thought into categories. The Grammar, however, was in no way intended to be a scholastic treatise.

Newman's theme possesses great value for work in the priesthood. He shows how argument and syllogizing will not convert the world. As a matter of fact, Newman chose as title-page motto the saying of St. Ambrose: "It has not pleased God to save his people by means of logic." Newman meant to convey to his readers that he was not going to defend his thesis on the strength of clear-cut syllogism. He was sure that human beings could not be reached by means of logic. He teaches us the pastoral approach -- the real concrete way to approach men. He does not, however, throw out the intellect but emphasizes the use of the "whole man." He taught others how to make principles both intelligible and attractive to every variety of character.

Newman has given us valuable insights through his insistence on viewing the intellect as a living organism, following its own interior laws. The fact emphasized by Newman remains: the average man does not arrive at certitude through logical and syllogistic demonstration, yet his certitude is not thereby rendered invalid. The errors in the Grammar can be corrected without altering its conclusions according to some critics. But others say that with a proper understanding of terms and their use even this criticism can be discarded. Even for one who does not accept the general theory of Newman, the acuteness of its psychological observation, and its carefully selected and vivid illustrations make it a valuable source for studies in the psychology of faith and conversion.

FOOTNOTES

1. J.H.N. Autobiographical Writings, Henry Tristram, ed., pp. 3-18. Wilfrid Meynell, The Founder of Modern Anglicanism, pp. 1-200. John Henry Newman, An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent, pp. 1-2.
2. E.D. Benard, A Preface to Newman's Theology, p. 159.
3. C.H. Harrold, John Henry Newman, p. 142.
4. Loc. cit.
5. John Henry Newman, Apologia Pro Vita Sua, p. 264.
6. Thomas Harper, S.J., "On Common Sense and Moral (in reference to Dr. Newman's Grammar of Assent)", Month, 12(1870)366.
7. John Henry Newman, An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent, p. 49.
8. C.H. Harrold, op. cit., p. 153.
9. John Henry Newman, op. cit., p. 379.
10. Aristotle, Prior Analytics, 24^b 18-27.
11. Aristotle, Posterior Analytics, 105^b 32-33.
12. Idem., 105^a 18.
13. Idem., 164^a 13-14.
14. John Henry Newman, op. cit., pp. 211-212.
15. Idem., p. 230.
16. Idem., p. 233.
17. Idem., p. 239.
18. Loc. cit.
19. M.C. D'Arcy, Nature of Belief, p. 96.

20. Loc. cit.
21. John Henry Newman, op. cit., pp. 253-254.
22. Idem., p. 254.
23. Idem., p. 271.
24. Idem., pp. 120-121.
25. Idem., p. 281.
26. Idem., p. 228.
27. Idem., p. 232.
28. Idem., pp. 215-216.
29. Idem., p. 223.
30. Idem., p. 227.
31. Idem., p. 239.
32. Thomas Maher, S.J., Psychology: Empirical and Rational, pp. 324-325.
33. C.H. Harrold, op. cit., p. 154.
34. John Henry Newman, op. cit., p. 313.
35. Idem., p. 319.
36. M.C. D'Arcy, op. cit., p. 98.
37. John Henry Newman, op. cit., pp. 300-318.
38. Thomas Gerrard, "Practice of Knowledge. The Purpose of the Grammar of Assent," Dublin Review, 137(1905)122-123.
39. John Henry Newman, op. cit., p. 223.
40. M.C. D'Arcy, op. cit., p. 102.
41. Idem., pp. 101-104.

42. C.S. Dessain, "The 'Grammar of Assent' and the 'Sure Future,'" Downside Review, 75(1957)17.

43. John Henry Newman, op. cit., pp. 272 & 243.

44. C.S. Dessain, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

45. Thomas Gerrard, op. cit., pp. 122-123.

46. M.C. D'Arcy, op. cit., pp. 112-137.

47. C.S. Dessain, op. cit., p. 13.

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