

**ON THE SCOPE &  
NATURE OF UNIVERSITY  
EDUCATION. [LONDON]**

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On the Scope & Nature of University Education. [London] by John Henry Newman

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**JOHN HENRY NEWMAN**

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MOST  
CURRENT  
FOR THAT  
THEY COME  
HOME TO  
MEN'S  
BUSINESS  
& BOSOMS  
LORD BACON

On the SCOPE  
& NATURE OF  
UNIVERSITY  
EDUCATION  
By CARDINAL  
JOHN HENRY  
NEWMAN &



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## INTRODUCTION

CARDINAL NEWMAN'S lectures on the "Scope and Nature of University Education" have quite special interest as a turning-point in his mental history. At Oxford he was regarded as the head of the Reactionaries, the unflinching opponent of all "liberalism" in Theology. In later life he was called by many a "Liberal Catholic," and though he most strongly repudiated that epithet he did admit in 1866 his "enthusiastic agreement" with the general line of thought of Montalembert and Lacordaire who gloried in the title of "Liberal Catholic." Later on came a phenomenon yet more surprising on the surface. Such advocates of Modernism as Abbé Loisy and M. Leroy claimed Newman's philosophical thought as being in line with their own speculations. The fact is that labels and watchwords are constantly so inadequate as to be quite misleading. Not all opponents of Liberalism have been illiberal. All Newman's earlier career emphasised his opposition to Liberalism. His later years brought in evidence his true liberality. Newman was never a Modernist, but he was keenly alive to the changes of outlook wrought by the thought and research of modern days. One side of his thought was emphasised at Oxford, another was developed in his later Catholic life. And the change was brought about by the circumstances in which these lectures were written.

The inadequacy of popular watchwords explains in other cases also the gradual fusion of schools of thought



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which had been at first simply opposed to one another. While liberal thinkers have claimed as their ally a man whose opposition to Liberalism was the very keynote of his mission at Oxford, we have seen a similar alliance in later times between the descendants within the Church of England of the two opposite schools which divided Oxford in the forties. The High Church party which long carried on the traditions of Tractarianism startled the world in 1889 by a manifesto on behalf of breadth in theology—the famous *Lux Mundi*. The writers I allude to singled out especially the subject of Biblical inspiration and the historical treatment of dogma, both of which had been exclusively associated in earlier years with those implacable foes of Tractarianism, the disciples of Dr. Arnold. The old opposition in matters theological was between the High Church and the Broad Church, though the phrase “Broad Church” was subsequent to Newman’s day. But *Lux Mundi*, whose authors all claimed to be High Churchmen, was as broad as it was high in its theology. It differed from Broad Church theology in retaining the idea of the Catholic Church, which the Oxford Movement had brought into evidence, as of paramount importance both in theology and in the philosophy of belief.

Newman never exhibited the highly speculative vein apparent in *Lux Mundi*. But throughout his opposition to unrestrained theological Liberalism, a Liberalism which threw overboard the idea of a corporate church and the sacredness of tradition, he had been alive to the necessity of facing fearlessly the new outlook presented by advancing science and research. We can see this clearly in the first of the Oxford

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University Sermons preached when he was only twenty-five years old. In the days of the Oxford Movement no doubt he was a party man and his party was in a sense reactionary. But to careful readers of the University Sermons and the Essay on Development the width of his outlook was quite apparent. His conception of the development of Christian doctrine as gradually bringing into view fresh aspects of truth really made room for the advancement of secular knowledge, its gradual reconciliation with the essence of traditional Catholic truth, and the necessary modifications in the analysis of that truth. What changed with him was, as I have said, not so much his views as his party and his emphasis. He had opposite dangers to face in the earlier and the later period. At Oxford he feared that Christianity would be swept away by the tide of rationalistic Liberalism which lost sight of the profound truths contained in the Christian tradition and derived from revelation. In later years his fear was exactly the opposite. He was alive to the danger lest theological narrowness might be an equally dangerous opponent to Christianity by bringing about an apparent alliance between Orthodoxy and Obscurantism. The lectures here published mark the point at which this change of emphasis began. \*They are one long plea for the compatibility of a complete culture of mind and all the frankness it entails with adherence to the Catholic faith. He was, as Rector of a Catholic University, face to face with the necessity of marking out for sharp-witted young men an attitude towards science and theology which was entirely reasonable. The task before him was the formation in the undergraduate of

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a mentality which should be at once thoroughly educated and thoroughly religious. He declares in his own preface to these lectures that he does not regard a University as concerned with research, only with teaching and education. But when he entered on the duties of his office he saw that this hard and fast line could not be drawn. A thoughtful Catholic must take account of problems which every other thoughtful man was discussing. It was impossible in a time of constant scientific movement to disregard or be indifferent to the results of research.

The lectures on the Scope and Nature of University Education, therefore, led up to his great plea for intellectual liberty in a University. That plea is contained in the lecture on Christianity and Scientific Investigation which is published in the larger volume known as *The Idea of a University*, and is given at the end of the present book. In the face of constantly advancing science and criticism the attitude of the thoughtful Catholic in their regard was an urgent question, and he hoped gradually to define that attitude in a University which should contain experts in all the sciences, and which being a learned body might consent to allow the complete freedom of discussion which is indispensable to true scientific progress. The danger of scandal and of upsetting the popular mind by novel views would be reduced to a *minimum* in discussions conducted not by a mixed body of learned and unlearned in the periodical press, but among specialists in a University. Thus the conception of a University as a place in which young men should form habits of frank cultivated and accurate thought was enlarged in the lecture on Christianity and Scientific Investiga-