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978-0-521-87186-0 - The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman

Edited by Ian Ker and Terrence Merrigan

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO  
JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

John Henry Newman (1801–90) was a major figure in nineteenth-century religious history. He was one of the major protagonists of the Oxford or Tractarian Movement within the Church of England whose influence continues to be felt within Anglicanism. A high-profile convert to Catholicism, he was an important commentator on Vatican I and is often called ‘the Father’ of the Second Vatican Council. Newman’s thinking highlights and anticipates the central themes of modern theology including hermeneutics, the importance of historical-critical research, the relationship between theology and literature, and the re-interpretation of the nature of faith. His work is characterized by two elements that have come especially to the fore in postmodern theology, namely, the importance of the religious imagination and the fiduciary character of all knowledge. This *Companion* fills a need for an accessible, comprehensive and systematic presentation of the major themes in Newman’s work.

Ian Ker is Senior Research Fellow in Theology at St Benet’s Hall, Oxford. He has published over twenty books, mostly on Newman, including *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (1988, 1999).

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## Preface

John Henry Newman continues to attract the attention of students and scholars from a range of disciplines, including theology, philosophy, and literature. The extent and range of the interest in Newman and his work is in itself an argument for a book that brings together essays that provide a comprehensive introduction to his theology. The fact that much of the work devoted to Newman is of a specialized nature reinforces the need for a systematic presentation of the major themes of his work and the context in which his thought developed.

The ongoing interest in Newman is easily explained.

In the first place, Newman was a major historical figure in his own right. His life (1801–90) spans a fascinating century and Newman was a witness to and a commentator on much nineteenth-century history. Moreover, Newman was directly involved in a number of significant developments throughout the century. He was the major protagonist in the so-called Oxford Movement, the author of the seminal text, *The Idea of a University*, an important commentator on Vatican Council I, and an innovative thinker in the field of theological epistemology.

His significance to his own age perhaps pales in comparison to the stature he has enjoyed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Newman's work is regarded as marking a watershed in the development of modern (especially Catholic) theology. He is regarded as a leading representative (and in Catholic theology, one of the forerunners) of the turn to the subject in modern thought. His own theology highlights and anticipates themes that are characteristic of modern theology, including the importance of historical-critical research, the hermeneutics of doctrinal development, the place of experience in the life of faith and in theology, the relationship between theology and literature, and the re-interpretation of the nature of faith. In regard to the latter theme, Newman's work is characterized by two elements that have come especially to the fore in contemporary (postmodern) theology, namely, the importance of the religious imagination and the fiduciary character of all knowledge.



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Newman's novelty and his relevance to modern theology are evidenced in the fact that he was appealed to by leading figures in the movement known as Catholic Modernism, and that he is regarded as the precursor of the movement for the retrieval of the scriptural and patristic sources of theology (ressourcement or 'nouvelle théologie') and of the Second Vatican Council (of which he is often called the 'Father' or the 'invisible peritus').

Newman is a thinker whose influence and concerns extend well beyond the nineteenth century into the (modern) twentieth and (post-modern) twentieth-first centuries. Recent studies have highlighted the postmodern themes in Newman's writings and contemporary authors continue to find inspiration in his work.

In conclusion, then, first, Newman is an excellent point of entry to the history and development of theology since the nineteenth century. Second, Newman's work is significant in its own right. He was a seminal thinker who anticipated modern and postmodern concerns and themes and who explored these in an original fashion. The ongoing interest in Newman is ample testimony to his contemporary relevance. And third, in the face of more and more specialized studies of Newman, there is a great need for an accessible, comprehensive and systematic presentation of the major themes in his own work.

Ian Ker  
and  
Terrence Merrigan

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## Abbreviations and references

References to works published during Newman's lifetime are to the uniform edition, which was published by Longmans, Green & Co. of London between 1868 and 1881.

Posthumously published works of Newman, which are identified here according to the edition used, include the following: *Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman during his Life in the English Church*, ed. Anne Mozley, 2 vols. (London, 1891); *My Campaign in Ireland, Part 1*, ed. W. Neville (privately printed, 1896); *Correspondence of John Henry Newman with John Keble and Others: 1839–1845*, ed. at the Birmingham Oratory (London, 1917); *John Henry Newman: Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Henry Tristram (London and New York, 1956); *Meditations and Devotions of the late Cardinal Newman* (London, 1893); *The Philosophical Notebook of John Henry Newman*, ed. Edward Sillem, 2 vols. (Louvain, 1969–70); *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Faith and Certainty*, ed. Hugo M. de Achaval, SJ, and J. Derek Holmes (Oxford, 1976); *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Biblical Inspiration and on Infallibility*, ed. J. Derek Holmes (Oxford, 1979); *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, ed. John Coulson (London, 1961); Henry Tristram, 'Cardinal Newman's *Theses de Fide* and his Proposed Introduction to the French Translation of the University Sermons', *Gregorianum* 18 (1937), 219–60; *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. C. S. Dessain *et al.*, vols. i–xxxii (Oxford and London, 1961–2008).

All dates indicated below refer to the original date of publication.

<i>Apo.</i>	<i>Apologia Pro Vita Sua</i>
<i>Ari.</i>	<i>The Arians of the Fourth Century</i>
<i>Ath.</i>	<i>Select Treatises of St Athanasius</i> , 2 vols.
<i>A.W.</i>	<i>John Henry Newman: Autobiographical Writings</i> , ed. Henry Tristram (London and New York, 1956)
<i>Call.</i>	<i>Callista: A Tale of the Third Century</i>

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- Campaign*    *My Campaign in Ireland, Part I*, ed. W. Neville (privately printed, 1896)
- Cons.*        *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, ed. John Coulson (London, 1961)
- D.A.*        *Discussions and Arguments on Various Subjects*
- Dev.*        *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*
- Diff.*        *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*
- Ess.*        *Essays Critical and Historical*
- G.A.*        *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*
- H.S.*        *Historical Sketches*
- Idea*        *The Idea of a University*, ed. I. T. Ker (Oxford, 1976)
- Jfc.*        *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification*
- K.C.*        *Correspondence of John Henry Newman with John Keble and Others, 1839–1845*, ed. at the Birmingham Oratory (London, 1917)
- L.D.*        *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. Charles Stephen Dessain *et al.* (Oxford and London, 1961–2008), vols. i–xxxii
- L.G.*        *Loss and Gain: The Story of a Convert*
- M.D.*        *Meditations and Devotions of the late Cardinal Newman* (London, 1893)
- Mir.*        *Two Essays on Biblical and on Ecclesiastical Miracles*
- Mix.*        *Discourses Addressed to Mixed Congregations*
- Moz.*        *Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman during his Life in the English Church*, ed. Anne Mozley (London, 1891)
- O.S.*        *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions*
- P.N.*        *The Philosophical Notebook of John Henry Newman* (1969–70)
- P.S.*        *Parochial and Plain Sermons*
- Prepos.*    *Present Position of Catholics in England*
- S.D.*        *Sermons Bearing on Subjects of the Day*
- S.N.*        *Sermon Notes of John Henry Cardinal Newman, 1849–1878*, ed. at the Birmingham Oratory (London, 1913)
- T.P. i*        *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Faith and Certainty*, ed. Hugo M. de Achaval, SJ, and J. Derek Holmes (Oxford, 1976)
- T.P. ii*      *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Biblical Inspiration and on Infallibility*, ed. J. Derek Holmes (Oxford, 1979)

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<i>T.T.</i>	<i>Tracts Theological and Ecclesiastical</i>
<i>Theses</i>	<i>Cardinal Newman's Theses de Fide and his Proposed Introduction to the French Translation of the University Sermons</i>
<i>U.S.</i>	<i>Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford</i>
<i>V.M.</i>	<i>The Via Media</i>
<i>Ward</i>	<i>Wilfrid Ward, The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green &amp; Co., 1912)</i>

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