

**A LETTER TO THE REV. GODFREY
FAUSSETT, D.D.
MARGARET-PROFESSOR OF
DIVINITY, ON CERTAIN POINTS
OF FAITH AND PRACTICE**

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A Letter to the Rev. Godfrey Faussett, D.d. Margaret-Professor of Divinity, on Certain Points of Faith and Practice by J. H. John Henry Newman

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J. H. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

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A LETTER

TO THE

REV. GODFREY FAUSSETT, D.D.

MARGARET-PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY,

ON

CERTAIN POINTS

OF

FAITH AND PRACTICE.

BY THE

REV. J. H. NEWMAN, B.D.

FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE.

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A LETTER,

&c.

REV. SIR,

I MAKE no apology for troubling you with this Letter, for I cannot conceal from myself that I am one of those against whom your recent Publication is directed. My first impulse indeed, when I heard of the probability of its appearance, was to resolve not to answer it, and to recommend the same course to others. I have changed my mind at the suggestion of friends, who, I feel, have taken a sounder view of the matter; but my original feeling was, that we have differences and quarrels enough all around us, without adding to them. Sure I am, that the more stir is made about those opinions which you censure, the wider they will spread. This has been proved abundantly in the course of the last few years. Whatever be the mistakes and faults of their advocates, they have that root of truth in them which, as I do firmly believe, has a blessing with it. I do not pretend to say they will ever become popular with the many, that is another matter;—nor do I say they will ever

gain that powerful external influence over the many, which truth vested in the Few, cherished, throned, energizing in the Few, often has possessed;—nor that they are not destined, as truth has often been destined, to be cast away and at length trodden under foot as an odious thing;—but of this I am sure, that at this juncture in proportion as they are known, they will make their way through the community, picking out their own, seeking and obtaining refuge in the hearts of Christians, high and low, here and there, with this man and that, as the case may be; doing their work in their day, as raising a witness to this fallen generation of what once has been, of what God would ever have, of what one day shall be in perfection; and that, not from what they are in themselves, because viewed in the concrete they are mingled, as every thing human must be, with error and infirmity, but by reason of the spirit, the truth, the old Catholic life and power which is in them.

And, moreover, while that inward principle of truth will carry on their tide of success to those bounds wider or straiter, which, in God's inscrutable providence, they are to reach and not to pass, it is also a substitute for those artificial and sectarian bounds of co-operation between man and man, which constitute what is commonly called a party. I notice this, because though you do not apply the word *party* to their upholders, you do speak of an existing "combination," "an indefinite and appa-

rently numerous body of friends," nay you hint at a "formidable conspiracy;" words which mean more than that unity of action which unity of sentiments produces. Men who think deeply and strongly, will act upon their principles; and if they think alike, will act alike; and lookers on, seeing the acts, and not seeing the principles, impute that to concert which proceeds from unanimity. So much I would grant in the present case, and no more; unless the contingency of two persons thinking alike and acting on their thoughts be party spirit, the appearance of party may easily exist in cases where there is not the reality. Like actions inevitably follow; but their doers are not party men, till their own personal success becomes prior in their thoughts to that of their object.

Such is the position in which the opinions and persons stand, which you so heavily censure. And whatever be the consequence to those persons, I see nothing but advantage resulting to those opinions from such publicity and discussion as you are drawing upon them. As far as they are concerned, I should have no anxiety about addressing you; but a feeling of the miserable breach of peace and love which too commonly follows on such controversies, to say nothing of one's own private convenience, is enough to make any one pause before he engages in such a discussion. I cannot doubt such is your feeling also, and therefore I deeply regret that a sense of imperative duty should

have obliged you to commence it. No one of course can deny that there may be cases when it is a duty to hazard such a result; the claims of truth must not be compromised for the sake of peace. Nor has any one cause to complain of those who, from a religious regard to purity of doctrine, denounce what he admires. But this I think may fairly be required of all persons, that they go not so far as to denounce in another what they do not at the same time shew to be inconsistent with the doctrines of our Church. Now this is the first thought which rises in my mind on the perusal of your pamphlet. I do not find in it any proof (I do not say of the erroneousness of the opinions and practices you condemn, but) even of their *contrariety to our Church's doctrines*^a. This seems to me an omission. You speak of an "increas-

^a Dr. Faussett, in the Preface to the Second Edition of his Pamphlet, says, that this Letter "should seem to have been *written without any complete perusal of it, including of course the Notes and Appendix.*" p. iv. It seems then what it is not. He adds, "Hence I presume it is, that I am supposed to make assertions without proof." I certainly do not yet see that Dr. F. *proves* that the persons he censures "*overvalue tradition,*" are "*unscriptural,*" or that they contravene our Articles and Prayer Book. This last point especially is what I ask proof of; instead of which Dr. F. asks why *I* do not appeal to *Scripture*, as if it were not enough for my purpose with a fellow-Churchman and an opponent, to appeal to the formularies of our Church. Were he not a Churchman, or were I teaching him instead of defending myself, I should appeal to *Scripture*; but as Churchmen we are bound to agreement on some points, with the permission of differences on others.

ing *aberration* from Protestant principles," "a disposition to *overvalue* the importance of Apostolical tradition;" " *exaggerated* and *unscriptural* statements," a " *tendency* to depreciate the principles of Protestantism," and to " *palliate*" the " errors of Popery," " gradual and near *approximation* towards" the " Roman superstitions" concerning " the Lord's Supper." Now this is all assertion, not proof; and no one person, not even a Bishop, may at his mere word determine what doctrine shall be received and what not. He is bound to appeal to the established faith. He is bound *conscientiously* to try opinions by the established faith, and in doing so he appeals to an Unseen Power. He is bound to *state* in what respect they differ from it, if they differ; and in so doing he appeals to his brethren. The decision, indeed, is in his own hands; he acts on his own responsibility; but before he acts he makes a solemn appeal before God and man. What is true of the highest authority in the Church, is true of others. We all have our private views; many persons have the same private views; but if ten thousand have the same, that does not make them less private; they are private, till the Church's judgment makes them public. I am not entering into the question what is the Church, and what the difference between the whole Church and parts of the Church, or what are, what are not, subjects for Church decisions; I only say, looking at the English Church at this moment