

Blast From the Past: John Henry Newman

Michael Sean Winters | Sep. 13, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

No one should read the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* without first reading the correspondence between Newman and Charles Kingsley that gave rise to its publication. Newman was, amongst other things, a great controversialist. As the following letter he wrote to the editors of Macmillan's Magazine demonstrates, I suspect Newman would be a great blogger if he were to live in our time, and hereby recommend that he be declared the patron saint of bloggers once he is eventually canonized. Here is the letter:

Dr. Newman to Messrs. Macmillan and Co.
The Oratory, Dec. 30, 1863,

Gentlemen,

I do not write to you with any controversial purpose, which would be preposterous; but I address you simply because of your special interest in a Magazine which bears your name. That highly respected name you have associated with a Magazine, of which the January number has been sent to me by this morning's post, with a pencil mark calling my attention to page 217.

There, apropos of Queen Elizabeth, I read as follows:-

"Truth, for its own sake, had never been a virtue with the Roman clergy. Father Newman informs us that it need not, and on the whole ought not to be; that cunning is the weapon which Heaven has given to the saints wherewith to withstand the brute male force of the wicked world which marries and is given in marriage. Whether his notion be doctrinally correct or not, it is at least historically so."

There is no reference at the foot of the page to any words of mine, much less any quotation from my writings, in justification of this statement.

I should not dream of expostulating with the writer of such a passage, nor with the editor who could insert it without appending evidence in proof of its allegations. Nor do I want any reparation from either of them. I neither complain of them for their act, nor should I thank them if they reversed it. Nor do I even write to you with any desire of troubling you to send me an answer. I do but wish to draw the attention of yourselves, as gentlemen, to a grave and gratuitous slander, with which I feel confident you will be sorry to find associated a name so eminent as yours.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant, (Signed) JOHN H. Newman

You can find the entire correspondence [here](#) [1], or check back tomorrow for more.

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[1] <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/newman/newman1.html>