

Sarah *as He had said*; 'Yahweh did for Sarah *as He had promised*'; 'Sarah conceived and bore a son ... at the appointed time of *which God had spoken to him*' (21:1–2). God, ever faithful, had done as he had said/promised/spoken – Abraham could surely trust him! And, in Genesis 22, trust him, he does. The Aqedah thus defines the meaning of fearing God: obedience and trust that holds back nothing from God!

'I continue to wonder', muses Middleton: 'Suppose Abraham had not been silent. Suppose he had been so sure of the mercy of God that he could wrestle with God, arguing back, challenging God – interceding for his son' (p. 240). But Abraham *was* sure of the mercy of God – that was exactly why he was silent, confident that God *was* going to do something about Isaac post-sacrifice (as Gen 22:5 suggests; cf. Heb 11:19). Middleton concludes: 'The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (and even the New Testament) assumes a stance of honesty toward God in prayer as normative' (p. 227). I, however, do not think that a monolithic pattern of response to God is what scripture endorses. God also welcomes silent obedience to his commands and rewards the faith implicit in these responses (22:16–18) – not a blind faith, but one based on who God is and how he has revealed himself. 'Abraham's silence' was praiseworthy.

Despite my reservations about Middleton's premises and thesis, I found *Abraham's Silence* to be quite a provocative read, spurring thought – so much so that I plan to include this work as required reading in my graduate seminar on hermeneutics. It is that good!

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Stephen Morgan, *John Henry Newman and the Development of Doctrine: Encountering Change, Looking for Continuity*

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In the final chapter, Morgan proposes Newman's *Essay on Development* as a cogent account of doctrinal development. To more fully appreciate this account in the *Essay*, Morgan traces in the first three chapters the development of Newman's thought on the subject, organising each chapter around a different 'hypothesis' Newman proposed. Following Newman's own development of thought closely, Morgan argues, is not only of interest to scholars within Newman studies circles, but also to those seeking a way forward amid various issues raised in twenty-first-century Catholic theology. To illustrate these issues, Morgan focuses in the introduction and conclusion on the debates surrounding *Amoris laetitia* and the death penalty under Pope Francis' pontificate. Morgan argues that a clearer articulation of what it means to embrace the living authority of the church – which Newman came to identify with the Catholic Church – can help one avoid the ultramontanism found on both sides of the liberal–conservative divide within the contemporary Catholic Church.

The first chapter covers some early influences on Newman as well as his writing of *The Arians of the Fourth Century*. It was during his work on *The Arians* that Newman first grappled with the issue of terminological development in doctrine and, subsequently, proposed his first hypothesis: the principle of reserve and the *disciplina arcana*. He argued that the apostles and early church fathers distinguished between teachings which could be made publicly known and teachings which should be kept hidden. Seemingly novel doctrines, according to this hypothesis, were in fact not novel but had only later been made known openly.

The second chapter looks first at the critical response Newman received to his *disciplina arcana*. The most significant objection came from Bishop John Kaye of Lincoln. Kaye contended that, while there was clearly change in doctrinal language in the church before the fourth century, there is no evidence of the use of the *disciplina arcana* during the same time period. Also, the *disciplina arcana* cannot distinguish orthodox teachings from heresy. Consequently, Newman became less sure of his first hypothesis.

Contemporaneous with the rise of the Oxford Movement and the *Tracts for the Times* was Newman's revised hypothesis. In short, this involved grounding the Church of England in antiquity. Regarding doctrine, he argued that the Church of England followed the Vincentian Canon by teaching what had always been taught by all the orthodox fathers. Regarding church structure, the Church of England had strong ties to antiquity through apostolic succession. However, there were issues which needed resolving. First, regarding doctrine, the Vincentian Canon is difficult to follow due to the lack of agreement among the fathers. Also, Newman had to account for extra-biblical doctrines or doctrines not articulated explicitly by the fathers. Finally, Newman had to account for the difference between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, since the former traces its apostolic lineage through Rome. In response to these issues, Newman argued for the *via media*: the Church of England distinguishes itself from Rome and the Protestant communities by holding the middle way between excess and error. A major difficulty for Newman, however, was the fact that it was the Monophysites who held an analogously *via media* position in the early church.

As Newman's confidence in the *via media* waned, his awareness of the need for ecclesial authority rose. This is the subject of the third chapter. There were three significant events which affected the trajectory of Newman's thought. First was a three-part article by Nicholas Wiseman, a Catholic priest, future cardinal and critic of the Oxford Movement. In this article, Wiseman sought to undermine the Anglican claim to apostolic succession and catholicity by arguing that the Church of England was in a state of schism from the Church of Rome, a situation similar to that of the Donatists in the early church.

The second event which had a significant impact on Newman was the critical response to his Tract 90, particularly from the English bishops. In Tract 90 Newman attempted to read the Thirty-Nine Articles in a Catholic direction. He wanted to curb the inclination toward Rome amongst tractarian followers by showing that the Church of England possessed the true teachings of Rome but without the latter's fall into excess and corrupt practices. However, Tract 90 was perceived by many, including bishops, to be an attack on the Church of England. 'It appeared to Newman that the bishops, in condemning Tract 90, were attacking the Catholic faith itself' (p. 197). In the same year the third pivotal event was when the bishops of the Church of England, following certain political motivations, decided to establish a joint Anglican-Lutheran bishopric in Jerusalem. These two events were seen by Newman

as undermining the Church of England's claim to apostolic authority, and consequently as undermining his third hypothesis.

In the final chapter, Morgan treats Newman's last Oxford University sermon and his *Essay*, in which he comes to settle on his final hypothesis: the Church of Rome is the ecclesial authority needed to guarantee doctrinal continuity amid change. The bulk of this chapter is an extended and quite helpful commentary on the major ideas from the *Essay*.

Throughout this book, the reader becomes acquainted with writings from Newman's letters, journals and other sources within his vast corpus. Morgan does a great service in bringing these together. While some of the extended treatments of scholarly debates and historical details might be of limited interest save for the Newman scholar, following Newman through the various difficulties with which he wrestled sheds light on many important issues surrounding the development of doctrine. This fine book, then, will surely be of much interest to both Newman scholars and, more generally, those seeking to account for continuity while encountering change.

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Lyle D. Bierma, *Font of Pardon and New Life: John Calvin and the Efficacy of Baptism*

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In Lyle Bierma's *Font of Pardon and New Life*, we are faced with the dual questions of how 'instrumentalist' is Calvin's doctrine of baptism, as well as how (and to what extent) Calvin developed this over his life. Eschewing the static models (from Brian Gerrish) of 'symbolic instrumentalism', 'symbolic memorialism' and 'symbolic parallelism', Bierma directs us to a group of scholars who have lately noted the chronological progression and development of Calvin over time (in which Calvin himself sometimes wanders in and out of Gerrish's three categories). The strength of these scholars (Janse, Riggs, Lusk, Zachman) is that they can account for Calvin's diplomacy, attempts at compromise and theological development over the years. The downside is that this rich body of work is not only spread out through many sources, but conflicts within itself – and Bierma desires to remedy that lacuna with this monograph.

Bierma generally follows Janse in his developmental division of Calvin's career, beginning with the 1536 *Institutes*; then his first ministry period (Geneva, 1536–8; and Strasburg, 1538–41); his return to Geneva (1541–8); the *Consensus Tigurinus* (1549); and his final writings (1549–59). In Calvin's first writings (chapter 2), the sacraments serve a pedagogical function of teaching, explaining and showing. Their efficacy derives from their status as legal promises for people who have a hard time believing and whose faith is weak. Although there are a 'few indications' (p. 26) that they might be able to impart that to which they are testifying, that is not the general tenor in these early documents. Calvin's primary emphasis is rather on the *subjective assurance* that