

Newman the Fallibilist

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Abstract. The role of certitude in our mental lives is, to put it mildly, controversial. Many current epistemologists (including epistemologists of religion) eschew certitude altogether. Given his emphasis on certitude, some have maintained that John Henry Newman was an infallibilist about knowledge. In this paper, we argue that a careful examination of his thought (especially as seen in the *Grammar of Assent*) reveals that he was an epistemic fallibilist. We first clarify what we mean by fallibilism and infallibilism. Second, we explain why some have read Newman as an infallibilist. Third, we offer two arguments that Newman is at least a fallibilist in a weak sense. In particular, the paradox he seeks to resolve in the *Grammar* and his dispute with John Locke both indicate that he is at least a weak fallibilist. We close with a consideration of whether Newman is a fallibilist in a much stronger sense as well.

I. Introduction

In contrast to many today, John Henry Newman's epistemology, especially in the *Grammar of Assent*, emphasizes the intellect's ability to achieve certitude. Certitude, he claims, is one of humanity's common and natural mental states. In this view, Newman takes himself to disagree with John Locke and his followers who held that knowledge involves certitude, but that certitude (and therefore knowledge) is exceedingly rare; only very rarely do we possess the perfect evidence that alone licenses the certitude necessary for knowledge. The implication drawn by many from Lockean epistemology was that religious matters are not in the realm of knowledge. Legitimate probable opinions may abound, but we should recognize that such beliefs do not constitute knowledge. For Locke this seems to have been a welcome conclusion, as he thought it would, when realized, aid religious tolerance.¹ However, for Newman,

¹Kenneth L. Pearce, "Berkeley's Lockean Religious Epistemology," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 75, no. 3 (2014): 417–38, at 419.

this result was unwelcome. It was a clear expression of the religious liberalism he fought all his life.² The *Grammar* is in large part a defense of religious conviction by way of a defense of the ubiquity of knowledge and certitude.

Newman's emphasis on certitude, however, has led many readers to conclude that he is an infallibilist about knowledge. In this essay, we argue that despite his emphasis on certitude, Newman is an epistemic fallibilist.³ To this end, we first delineate several contemporary understandings of epistemic fallibilism and infallibilism. Second, we consider why one might read him as an epistemic infallibilist. Third, we offer two arguments that Newman is in the fallibilist camp. Finally, we briefly consider the strength of his fallibilism. In the end, we conclude that Newman is not only a fallibilist but that he gives some indication of being a fallibilist in a very strong sense.

II. Infallibilism and Fallibilism

Infallibilism is the view that knowledge requires the possession of truth-guaranteeing reasons or evidence. More formally, infallibilism "is the view that one can know that p only if one's evidence guarantees the truth of p ."⁴ Fallibilists and infallibilists alike agree that one can only have knowledge of true propositions. What is at issue is the nature of the evidence or grounds one must possess in order to know. "If Infallibilism is correct, then you cannot know that p on grounds that merely make it probable that p —after all, they are compatible with *not- p* ! Instead, to know that p you must have grounds that genuinely *guarantee* that p , and so, rule out *not- p* ."⁵ Infallibilism, then, requires conclusive justification, evidence, or grounds such as an airtight demonstration or the ruling out of all possible alternative conclusions.

²See, for example, Newman's note on liberalism in the *Apologia*, esp. points 2–4. John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 252–62. Cf. Frank M. Turner, *John Henry Newman: The Challenge to Evangelical Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 9–12.

³We are not suggesting that Newman explicitly had this epistemological category in mind when he wrote the *Grammar*, nor are we seeking, in anachronistic fashion, to accommodate Newman's thought to contemporary epistemological categories. Instead, we think that the contemporary discussion of fallibilism and infallibilism illuminates Newman's thought.

⁴Jessica Brown, *Fallibilism: Evidence and Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 2.

⁵Jason Leddington, "Fallibility for Infallibilists," in *In the Light of Experience: Essays on Reasons and Perception*, ed. Johan Gersel, Rasmus Thybo Jensen, Søren Overgaard, and Morten S. Thaning (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 161.

According to standard historical accounts,⁶ most Western epistemology has been infallibilist in nature. Only after the rise of modern science does our thinking about arguments and evidence show a clear change, a slow process which lasts from the seventeenth-century until at least the nineteenth-century. While there are still some prominent proponents of infallibilism today, as Baron Reed notes, “Fallibilism is endorsed by virtually all contemporary epistemologists.”⁷

Yet the fallibilism in view here is what we might call “epistemic fallibilism” rather than “faculty fallibilism.” We all know that we make mistakes, that we are personally fallible, and that our faculties of reason and perception have not always led us to true beliefs. As Newman points out, “I remember for certain what I did yesterday, but still my memory is not infallible; I am quite clear that two and two make four, but I often make mistakes in long addition sums” (*GA* 146–7).⁸ Errors in thinking serve as “lessons and warnings, not to give up reasoning, but to reason with greater caution” (*GA* 150).

The chief concern of this essay is not with whether Newman is a faculty fallibilist but with whether he is an epistemic fallibilist—a fallibilist about the

⁶While we will not take up the task here, one could certainly challenge the standard history of epistemology. Perhaps, for instance, when the Platonic tradition distinguishes between knowledge and opinion we might see this as distinguishing what we would think of as degrees/levels of knowledge rather than knowledge and non-knowledge. Or we might see this project as more externalist and metaphysical (i.e., a metaphysical story about contact with the Forms) than internal and epistemic. In either case, we shouldn't assume that “*episteme*” refers to what we would call knowledge. Similar interpretations are available for other supposed infallibilists. We might think of Aristotle and Aquinas as offering strict *scientia* as a paradigmatic case of knowledge rather than as a requirement for knowledge. See Scott MacDonald, “Theory of Knowledge,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 160–95. As Robert Pasnau (*After Certainty: A History of Our Epistemic Ideals and Illusions* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2017], chap. 1) writes of the ideal of *episteme* through strict demonstration in the *Posterior Analytics*, “in Aristotle, it is hard to find a single conclusion that meets all the criteria of his ideal theory” (7). This lends some credence to seeing Aristotle's goal as offering an account of the epistemic ideal rather than a definition of knowledge. Likewise, even Descartes, the posterboy of infallibilism, might be seen as asking what can be *known with certainty* rather than *what can be known*. See Ernest Sosa, “How to Resolve the Pyrrhonian Dialectic: A Lesson from Descartes,” *Philosophical Studies*, 85, nos. 2–3 (1997): 229–49; and Robert Pasnau, “Epistemology Idealized,” *Mind* 122, no. 488 (2014): 987–1021. Many languages other than English express this distinction between knowing and knowing for certain. See Bob Beddor, “New Work for Certainty,” *Philosophers' Imprint* 20, no. 8 (2020): 1–25, at 3.

⁷Baron Reed, “How to Think about Fallibilism,” *Philosophical Studies* 107, no. 2 (2002): 143–57, at 143.

⁸John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, ed. Ian T. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); henceforth *GA*.

evidence, reasons, or grounds required for knowledge.⁹ The literature offers at least two different definitions of epistemic fallibilism. We'll call them "weak fallibilism" and "strong fallibilism." The dominant view, weak fallibilism, holds that "someone can know that p , even though their evidence for p is *logically consistent* with the truth of not- p ."¹⁰ Or, as Stewart Cohen puts it, "a fallibilist theory allows that S can know q on the basis of r where r only makes q probable."¹¹ James Pryor helpfully explains what is at stake vis-à-vis epistemic fallibilism and infallibilism:

A fallibilist is someone who believes that we can have knowledge on the basis of defeasible justification, justification that does not guarantee that our beliefs are correct. We can at best have defeasible justification for believing what our senses tell us; so anyone who thinks we have perceptual knowledge about our environment has to embrace fallibilism. I assume that most of us are fallibilists. Most of us think we do have some perceptual knowledge.¹²

But some philosophers go well beyond saying that defeasible evidence suffices for knowledge (i.e., they go beyond weak fallibilism). They claim that fallibilism is the view that defeasible evidence is all that is ever attainable. Stephen Hetherington, for instance, defines fallibilism as the view that "there is no conclusive justification and no rational certainty for any of our beliefs or theses"; none of our beliefs "are so well justified or supported by good evidence or apt circumstances that they could not be false."¹³ But while Hetherington is a critic of strong fallibilism, Trent Dougherty embraces it. Dougherty holds that "fallibilism is the thesis that we cannot be certain of anything" in the strongest (probability 1) sense of "certain."¹⁴ Some might think this position absurd, pointing to our grasp of necessary truths (i.e., truths that could not have been false). But, at the very least, we do not have an infallible grasp on all necessary truths. Many advanced mathematical theorems are necessarily true but something we might have thought false. Similarly, following lengthy demonstrations requires (fallible) memory even if each premise is necessary and the logic impeccable (cf. *GA* 112–3). In the end, we take strong fallibilism to be the claim that we can

⁹Notice, however, that faculty and epistemic fallibilism may be related. Awareness of our own faculty fallibility at the meta-level may bleed down into particular cases, giving us evidence that our grounds are not conclusive precisely because they are *our* grounds and we are fallible.

¹⁰Jason Stanley, "Fallibilism and Concessive Knowledge Attributions," *Analysis* 65, no. 2 (2005): 126–31, at 127.

¹¹Stewart Cohen, "How to Be a Fallibilist," *Philosophical Perspectives* 2 (1988): 91.

¹²James Pryor, "The Skeptic and the Dogmatist," *Nous* 34, no. 4 (2000): 517–49, at 518.

¹³Stephen Hetherington, "Fallibilism," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, §1 (accessed 30 April 2020), <https://www.iep.utm.edu/fallibil/>.

¹⁴Trent Dougherty, "Fallibilism," in *The Routledge Companion to Epistemology*, eds. Sven Bernecker and Duncan Pritchard (New York: Routledge, 2011), 131–43, at 141.

know on less-than-perfect evidence (i.e., the weak fallibilist thesis) plus the claim that we cannot possess perfectly conclusive evidence anyway.

In what follows, we argue that Newman is an epistemic fallibilist in the weak sense and says a number of things that suggest he may be an epistemic fallibilist in the stronger sense as well. Yet even if Newman embraces strong fallibilism, it must be remembered that this is not (if fallibilism is true) a step toward skepticism.¹⁵ If fallibilism is true, then there is, as C. S. Peirce reminds us, “a world of difference between fallible knowledge and no knowledge,” and embracing strong fallibilism would at most be a recognition that our knowledge, unlike divine knowledge, always rests on imperfect or fallible reasons.¹⁶

III. Newman as an Infallibilist

Before providing positive reasons from the *Grammar* that show Newman to be a fallibilist, we must consider why one might read him as an infallibilist. One may be tempted toward such a reading because of the infamous section on the indefectibility of certitude in the *Grammar of Assent*. Newman says, for example, that “certitude is a right conviction; if it is not right with a consciousness of being right, it is not certitude” (GA 145). Accordingly, certitudes must “correspond with the truth; they are not real unless they are correct.”¹⁷ For Newman, “indefectibility may serve at least as a negative test of certitude . . . so that whoever loses his certitude on a given point is thereby proved not to have been certain” (GA 167).¹⁸ So, certitudes that fail are not genuine certitudes at all, since the latter are truth-guaranteeing.

However, Newman offers several clarifications that complicate such a reading. First, we do not have introspective access to an immediate test or criterion by which to know the difference between real certitudes and merely apparent (i.e., false) certitudes. As Newman says, “No line can be drawn between such

¹⁵As Anselm Ramelow points out, Newman is not retreating to a “simple and fideistic return to the certainty of faith,” nor is he employing a kind of skepticism to level the playing field. (Ramelow, “Knowledge and Normality: Bl. John Henry Newman’s *Grammar of Assent* and Contemporary Skepticism,” *Nova et Vetera* 11, no. 4 [2013]: 1081–114, at 1082.) According to M. Jamie Ferreira, *Doubt and Religious Commitment: The Role of the Will in Newman’s Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), Newman acknowledges the “fallibility and corrigibility” of the belief-forming process without “having to therefore be on the ‘look-out,’ vividly remembering all the probabilities against one’s beliefs, or considering one’s conclusion as the ‘best I can come to’ for the present,” 118.

¹⁶Charles Sanders Peirce, *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, Vol. I (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 16.

¹⁷Ferreira, *Doubt and Religious Commitment*, 103.

¹⁸Newman also notes, however, that, “any conviction, false as well as true, may last; and any conviction, true as well as false, may be lost” (GA 145).

real certitudes as have truth for their object, and apparent certitudes. No distinct test can be named, sufficient to discriminate between what may be called the false prophet and the true. What looks like certitude always is exposed to the chance of turning out to be a mistake" (*GA* 145). And again, "Certitude does not admit of an interior, immediate test, sufficient to discriminate it from false certitude" (*GA* 166; cf. 149–52; *LD* XXIV 104). Second, Newman offers several examples to show that the process of knowing is subject to failure and is therefore fallible. That is, "if by certitude about a thing is to be understood the knowledge of its truth, let it be considered that what is once true is always true, and cannot fail, whereas what is once known need not always be known, and is capable of failing" (*GA* 129). The distinction, for Newman, is between truth and the fallibility of the epistemic process of acquiring it. On this point, he makes an important distinction between truth and the "mental state" of certitude (*GA* 223). The latter does not guarantee the former. Third, he explicitly states that indefectibility is not synonymous with infallibility, nor does it require infallibility. It is a mistake to "confuse infallibility with certitude, and to argue that, since we have not the one, we have not the other . . . the two words stand for things quite distinct from each other" (*GA* 146). In fact, Newman says, "I have gone a good way, as I think, to remove the objections to the doctrine of the indefectibility of certitude in matters of religion, though I cannot assign to it an infallible token" (*GA* 166). As Fr. Ian Ker comments on this passage, "while the indefectibility of religious certitude is generally sustained, there is no absolute guarantee that it will not fail" (*GA* lxix). Contrary to how it may at first appear, Newman's claim that certitudes are indefectible does not imply that certitudes can never fail—and hence does not imply a kind of epistemic infallibilism—but implies "the utter absence of all thought, or expectation, or fear of changing" one's belief (*GA* 127). This, we take it, is the meaning of Newman's indefectibility claim.¹⁹

Another reason one might read Newman as an infallibilist regards his understanding of assent. As he sees things, there are three basic attitudes toward (or ways we entertain) propositions: doubt, inference, and assent (*GA* 10). That is, we may doubt a proposition or affirm it (i.e., assent to it); but we may also hold it through an act of inference.²⁰ Importantly, Newman maintains that assent is always "absolute and unconditional" (*GA* 30, 157). Thus it may sound as if

¹⁹Cf. Ferreira, *Doubt and Religious Commitment*, 111–2.

²⁰Inference is a difficult concept to discern in Newman's thought, but it appears to at least be a pro-attitude in proportion to the strength of the evidence. Pro-attitudes are positive attitudes such as desire or approval that contrast with negative attitudes like disgust and disapproval. In particular, however, assent and inference are positive *propositional* attitudes (or stances toward propositions). Typical propositional attitudes include believing, withholding judgment on, and disbelieving propositions.

he holds that all belief is outright, full belief to the highest degree. So unless he thinks we are constantly irrational,²¹ it would stand to reason that he thinks that we often have conclusive evidence to match such outright, one-hundred percent belief. Therefore, he must be an infallibilist.²²

But just as with his discussion of indefectibility, this is not the case. Newman appears to be speaking of assent “itself” or “in its nature” rather than claiming that every individual act of assent is assent with the highest possible confidence (*GA* 30, 157).²³ He even grants that the experiences that are our evidence, or which form the basis for our assents, are degreed as to their vividness or dullness (*GA* 30, 122). Newman only wishes to maintain, against certain wishy-washy probabilists (who claimed that we can almost never commit ourselves to propositions but must maintain studied circumspection and hold beliefs tentatively or with real doubt²⁴) that assent *itself* is a pro-attitude—and a very common one at that. That is, assent or belief is a pro-attitude toward a proposition without intellectual hesitancy or substantive doubt present.²⁵ So there is no basis for

²¹Newman does not think most people are irrational. Newman’s life-long concern, in fact, was to defend ordinary Christian belief (*LD* XIX, 294). One of Newman’s critics even writes of his “emphasis on the reasonability of the ‘ordinary’ man’s religious beliefs” and his “obsession with the dignity of simple, unlettered Christians.” Jay Newman, “Newman on Love as the Safeguard of Faith,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 32, no. 2 (1979): 139–150, at 139.

²²It should be noted that Newman does not appear to have always held that assent is binary rather than degreed. He speaks elsewhere of a “graduated scale of assent, viz. according as the probabilities attaching to a professed fact were brought home to us.” John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 39.

²³For an argument that Newman’s disagreement with Locke on degrees of assent is merely verbal (since both have to admit a binary understanding of assent as well as degrees of confidence or assurance) see R. A. Naulty, “Newman’s Dispute with Locke,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 11, no. 4 (1973): 453–7.

²⁴Note that to hold a belief that *p* without doubt is not to hold that *p* is indubitable or incapable of rational doubt. It is only to say that while you assent you are not in active doubt. Ferreira, *Doubt and Religious Commitment*, 88.

²⁵In the Scholastic tradition, intellectual certitude was typically seen as assent to a proposition without reasonable doubt or fear of it turning out false. Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, *Man’s Knowledge of Reality: An Introduction to Thomistic Epistemology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1956), 172. Newman similarly speaks of certitude as involving “neither doubt at present nor fear for the future.” *The Theological Papers of John Henry Newman on Faith and Certainty*, ed. J. Derek Holmes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 3; henceforth *TP*. Intellectual certitude is traditionally divided into metaphysical certitude (involving matters of logical and metaphysical necessity), physical certitude (involving the regularly behaving natures of substances), and moral certitude (involving judgments about human action). The latter is the weakest degree of certitude but is still certitude, such as when we lock a criminal away because we have no reasonable doubt that he committed the crime based upon a convergence of evidence. Following the ancient division between knowledge and opinion, certitude was seen as true knowledge. Fr. Joseph Koterski, SJ rightly argues that Newman wrote the *Grammar*, in part, to defend the position that we can obtain genuine certitude (and, hence, genuine knowledge) on a broader range of matters than basic

an infallibilist reading of Newman from his seemingly strong claims about the nature of assent.²⁶

IV. Newman as a Fallibilist

We cannot rest content with these arguments against infallibilist readings of Newman, however. It is also the burden of this paper to offer positive reasons— from within Newman’s own work—that favor a fallibilist reading. Toward this end, we now offer two arguments that he is at least a weak fallibilist.

IV.A. A Fallibilist Reading Makes Better Sense of Newman’s Paradox

First, one cannot make sense of the structure of the *Grammar* if one reads Newman as an infallibilist. In particular, the second part of the *Grammar* attempts to solve a paradox that seems unintelligible on an infallibilist reading; in fact, the paradox is created by Newman’s fallibilist epistemology. Here’s how he introduces the problem at the beginning of chapter 6:

metaphysical, mathematical, and scientific truths. Koterski, “Newman on the Degrees of Certitude,” available at <http://www.newmanfriendsinternational.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Newman-Newsletter-2019-Degrees-of-Certitude.pdf> (accessed 7 January 2021).

Newman might be seen as expanding this Scholastic tradition in two ways. First, as far back as Aquinas (*ST II-II.4.8*) and Bonaventure (*Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, q. 1, a. 1) the tradition has recognized the distinction between looking at certitude (the security of the mind-world connection) from the side of the object (metaphysically, or in the order of being) and from the side of the subject (epistemologically, or in the order of knowing). Newman can be seen as providing an account of certitude and things known from the subject’s point of view, whereas the tradition emphasized the objective, metaphysical side. See H. Francis Davis, “Newman and Personal Certitude,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 12, no. 2 (1961): 248–59, esp. 252–3. Second, Newman might be seen as broadening the third category (i.e., moral certitude) to include many common items of knowledge that are extremely secure but still fallibly known. The chief division in his mind seems to be between mathematical demonstrations and nearly all other forms of genuine certitude. But it is a mistake to conclude that because Newmanian certitude is moral certitude that it is weak certitude (or not certitude at all). In Newman’s time a division was often made between speculative/theoretical certitude and mere practical certitude (where one has enough reason to act *as if p* is true but does not have solid enough grounds to conclude *p* with certitude). Ferreira rightly argues that the moral certitude to which Newman appealed was not mere practical certitude, even if it was not apodictic, Cartesian certitude either. Ferreira, *Doubt and Religious Commitment*, 48–50. Cf. James Collins, *God in Modern Philosophy* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 1959), 367–8 and Ferreira, *Scepticism and Reasonable Doubt: The British Naturalist Tradition in Wilkins, Hume, Reid and Newman* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 227.

²⁶It could be that in allowing that there is something degreed and something binary about assent/belief, Newman is groping toward our contemporary distinction between belief and credence. For a helpful overview of positions on beliefs and credences, see Elizabeth G. Jackson, “The Relationship between Belief and Credence,” *Philosophy Compass* 15 (2020): 1–13. It must be kept in mind, however, that Newman’s notion of credence does not map on to the contemporary use of that word (*GA* 41–4).

What presents some difficulty is this, how it is that a conditional acceptance of a proposition—such as is an act of inference—is able to lead as it does, to an unconditional acceptance of it—such as is assent; how it is that *a proposition which is not, and cannot be, demonstrated*, which at the highest can only be proved to be truth-like, not true, such as “I shall die,” nevertheless claims and receives our unqualified adhesion. To the consideration of this paradox, as it may be called, I shall now proceed; that is, to the consideration, first, of the act of assent to a proposition, which act is unconditional; next, of the act of inference, which goes before the assent and is conditional; and thirdly, of the solution of the apparent inconsistency which is involved in holding that *an unconditional acceptance of a proposition can be the result of its conditional verification*. (GA 105, emphases ours)

The paradox appears to be that fallibly evidenced propositions can be assented to with certitude. That is, propositions that are only conditionally verified (or not one hundred percent proven) can generate full, outright, “unconditional” assent or belief. Thus Newman admits that the bases of our certitudes are not themselves certain. This sets up a paradox, since he believes that we can nonetheless assent to many propositions with certitude (with “unqualified adhesion”) despite the fact that our evidence does not demonstratively prove our conclusion. If Newman were an infallibilist, there would be no paradox to resolve: there is no mystery about strongly believing propositions that have been strictly demonstrated or proved. Instead, the paradox is that in numerous real-life cases we reasonably assent with certitude to propositions that rest on fallible evidence. As Newman’s friend Edward Caswall wrote after a conversation with Newman in 1877, Part II of *A Grammar of Assent* argues “that you can believe what you cannot absolutely prove.”²⁷

Not only is the paradox itself generated by Newman’s fallibilist view of evidence, but his solution is in keeping with his fallibilist epistemology. In chapter eight of the *Grammar*, Newman argues that formal inferences are not how we achieve certitude in everyday affairs. According to Newman, formal inferences are too feeble to support our certitude in concrete matters (as opposed to abstract matters like $2 + 2 = 4$). If asked why one believes in God, he thinks relying on a simple, formal inference (e.g., an inference beginning from the existence of tiny flowers or the starry skies) is bound to be weak. Relying on any such fragile inference for your certitude is not a firm foundation. This is not the sort of matter in which a simple formal inference is very helpful: “for

²⁷C. Stephen Dessain, “Cardinal Newman on The Theory and Practice of Knowledge: The Purpose of the *Grammar of Assent*,” *Downside Review* 75, no. 239 (1957): 1–23, at 3. The comments were written on the fly-leaf of Caswall’s copy of the *Grammar*.

genuine proof in concrete matter we require an *organon* more delicate, versatile, and elastic than verbal argumentation” (*GA* 176). Luckily, our certitudes need not—and in reality do not—rest on such weak formal inferences. Newman’s solution is not the obtaining of infallible evidence, however, but recognizing a God-given and natural faculty—what he calls “the illative sense”—by which we are able to take disparate lines of converging evidence and believe in the direction of the overwhelming (though still not demonstrative) evidence. This is how, for instance, he thinks one can believe with utter certitude that Great Britain is an island or that we will eventually die, even though one has not personally circumnavigated the island or experienced one’s own death.

At this point, those who wish to maintain that Newman is an infallibilist have two main strategies open to them: they must either claim that the illative sense somehow is able to turn fallible evidence into infallible belief or else claim that the evidence in question is somehow not fallible. Joe Milburn nicely represents the first tack.²⁸ He maintains that inference is too feeble a basis for assent in concrete matters because the process is fallible. Newman thinks of the illative sense as an infallible process, according to Milburn, thereby solving the paradox. At one point, he notes, Newman even calls the outputs of the illative sense “absolute proof” (*GA* 223). Hence, Newman is an infallibilist. As Milburn writes,

Anyone who reads Newman as a fallibilist needs to explain, on the one hand, why Newman thinks formal inferences issuing in probabilities are not adequate grounds for our assent, and, on the other hand, what

²⁸Joe Milburn, “Newman’s Skeptical Paradox: Certainty, Proof, and Fallibility,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 94, no. 1 (2020): 105–23. Milburn holds that in Newman’s view it’s “not that demonstrative proofs are truth guaranteeing while informal, absolute proofs are not. Rather, what distinguishes them is that while demonstrative proofs and their various premises can be articulated, informal, absolute proofs cannot be” (122). But this strikes us as implausible. First, Newman only uses the phrase “absolute proof” once in the entire *Grammar* (*GA* 223). Accordingly, it is unlikely that this is a term of art for an inarticulable, informal, infallible process. Second, Newman sometimes uses exaggerated phrases. It is clear, for instance, that the “absolute certitude” he thinks we might possess about natural theology or revelation does not rest on perfect evidence but rather on a convergence of fallible, probable evidence (*Apologia* 38). Third, if anything (for Newman) guarantees truth it must be the illative sense, given that it determines the “limit of converging probabilities and the reasons sufficient for a proof” (*GA* 232). Yet, as we show below, his examples of its workings are anything but infallible or truth-guaranteeing. The illative sense can be honed, but it may still fail. Yet Newman insists that it can be relied on in the same way as our other fallible faculties (e.g., sense perception and memory). “Errors in reasoning are lessons and warnings, not to give up reasoning, but to reason with greater caution. It is absurd to break up the whole structure of our knowledge, which is the glory of the human intellect, because the *intellect is not infallible* in its conclusions” (*GA* 149–50, emphasis ours). As a faculty of intellect, the illative sense is not infallible.

Newman means by an absolute proof if he does not mean a proof that is truth-guaranteeing.²⁹

Yet we think this reading is mistaken.

In Newman's thought, the difference between inference and assent is not that inference rests on fallible evidence while assent rests on conclusive evidence. After all, Newman repeatedly stresses that even propositions that appear utterly certain could turn out to be false (*GA* 145). Rather, inference and assent differ in that inference is based on the limited amount of information that the human mind can see and articulate at once, while the assent of our will generated by the illative sense and informal reasoning in general has a far broader, and hence far more secure, base of (still fallible) evidence.³⁰ If you ask us why we believe in God or why we believe that our spouses are trustworthy, the evidence we can articulate and marshal into a syllogism is quite limited and bound to appear a weak ground for our certitude. Newman thinks it a "fallacy" to assume "that whatever can be thought can be adequately expressed in words" (*GA* 172).³¹ In particular matters of fact such as these, logic attenuates or mutilates our total evidence in order to force it into a syllogism for purposes of public argumentation (*US* 159–60). In chapters eight and nine of the *Grammar*, Newman's answer to the paradox emerges: the true basis of our certitude in concrete matters lies in a cumulative case that is skillfully judged by the illative sense to amount to overwhelming, absolute (but still defeasible) proof.

To further appreciate that the evidence of Newman's illative sense is fallible evidence, consider the illustrations and examples he provides. His examples of such informal inferences at work are of judgments in the physical sciences, courts of law, and literary disputes (*GA* 209–13).³² These are not matters on

²⁹Milburn, "Newman's Skeptical Paradox," 123.

³⁰Newman is in fact so far from proclaiming that the assents of certitude rest on infallible evidence that he has repeatedly been charged with irrationalism and fideism (e.g., Jay Newman, "Cardinal Newman's Phenomenology of Religious Belief," *Religious Studies* 10 [1974]: 129–40). For a convincing rebuttal, see Ferreira, *Doubt and Religious Commitment*, 80–4. Ferreira (78–9) holds that inference and assent differ in the manner of their dependence on reasons (explicit or implicit reasons) as well as on the variability of their strength (since inference is only as strong as the explicit reasons in its favor, while assent, being generated by a wealth of evidence—often implicit—does not seem to waver in this manner). Assent is total and absolute in that it does not fluctuate with each new piece of evidence as inference does. However, Newman explicitly notes that assent can be reversed because of an accumulation of evidence and thus vanish (*GA* 128). Hence, assent (of which certitude is a subset) is not based on perfect evidence.

³¹Newman adds that "the mind itself is more versatile and vigorous than any of its works, of which language is one" (*GA* 232).

³²Newman also gives examples of the illative sense bearing on historical and theological judgments (*GA* 234–47). Notice too that in the examples of scholarly dispute, in particular, it

which conclusive evidence is even possible. To see Newman's meaning clearly, allow us to quote him at length:

The principle of concrete reasoning is parallel to the method of proof which is the foundation of modern mathematical science, as contained in the celebrated lemma with which Newton opens his "Principia." We know that a regular polygon, inscribed in a circle, its sides being continually diminished, tends to become that circle, as its limit; but it vanishes before it has coincided with the circle, so that its tendency to be the circle, though ever nearer fulfilment, never in fact gets beyond a tendency. In like manner, the conclusion in a real or concrete question is foreseen and predicted *rather than actually attained*; foreseen in the number and direction of accumulated premisses, which all converge to it, and as the result of their combination, approach it more nearly than any assignable difference, *yet do not touch it logically*³³ (though only not touching it) on account of the nature of its subject-matter, and the delicate and implicit character of at least part of the reasonings on which it depends. It is by the strength, variety, or multiplicity of premisses, *which are only probable, not by invincible syllogisms*—by objections overcome, by adverse theories neutralized, by difficulties gradually clearing up, by exceptions proving the rule, by un-looked-for correlations found with received truths, by suspense and delay in the process issuing in triumphant reactions—by all these ways, and many others, it is that the practised and experienced mind is able to make a sure divination that a conclusion is inevitable, of which *his lines of reasoning do not actually put him in possession*. This is what is meant by a proposition being "as good as proved," a conclusion as undeniable "as if it were proved," and by the reasons for it "amounting to a proof," for a proof is the limit of converging probabilities. (*GA* 207–8, emphasis ours; see also *GA* 264–5)

As if this were not enough, Newman then cites Bishop Butler himself, the famous probabilist, on the notion of proof and explicitly appeals to a legal (rather than Cartesian or Lockean) standard of proof. Newman writes:

seems clear that he thinks there can be rational peer disagreement as regards these judgments of the illative sense.

³³As he puts it elsewhere, he has consistently maintained that "absolute certitude" is "the result of an *assemblage* of concurring and converging probabilities" and "that probabilities which did not reach to logical certainty, might suffice for a mental certitude; that the certitude thus brought about might equal in measure and strength the certitude which was created by the strictest scientific demonstration." Newman, *Apologia*, 38. As a referee points out to us, this passage should not be taken to imply that only the positive case for *p* should be considered; the case against *p* also affects the overall epistemic probability of *p*.

It may be added, that, whereas the logical form of this argument, is, as I have already observed, indirect, viz. that “the conclusion cannot be otherwise,” and Butler says that an event is proved, if its antecedents “could not in reason be supposed to have happened unless it were true,” and law-books tell us that the principle of circumstantial evidence is the *reductio ad absurdum*. (*GA* 208)

Newman even speaks of such proofs as imperfect. According to Newman, “the imperfections” in these sorts of proofs arise from the very “subject-matter and the nature of the case” (*GA* 209). This is why some commentators suggest that Newman is likely following Hume in expanding Locke’s two categories of demonstrative and probable arguments into three—demonstrations, proofs, and probabilities—and arguing that religious belief can be a matter of proof rather than mere probability.³⁴ Hume thought it sounded too weak to say that it is a matter of probability that “all men must die, or that the sun will rise to-morrow.” Thus for Hume, proof meant “arguments from experience as leave no room for doubt or opposition”—no reasonable doubt or opposition, that is.³⁵ Newman appears to follow this usage as well. However, Newman does not so much create a third category as insist that in fact we all in practice, Locke included, treat proofs (in Hume’s sense) as belonging to the category of knowledge. We are all as certain that Great Britain is an island as we can be—we all treat this as an item of knowledge—even though it rests on a cumulative case from fallible evidence.

We see, then, that the sense in which Newman intends the “absolute proof” of the illative sense to be taken is not the Cartesian, infallibilist notion of one-hundred percent conclusive evidence.³⁶ Rather, this method of indirect proof rests on an insight into a wide array of fallible but converging and convincing evidence. Newman shows how “the mind progresses in concrete matter, viz. from merely probable antecedents to the sufficient proof of a fact or a truth, and, after the proof, to an act of certitude about it.” In this way he has illustrated “the intellectual process by which we pass from conditional inference to unconditional assent” and resolved the paradox (*GA* 213). The illative sense is a faculty of judgment precisely because it does not deal with neat abstract matters of simple mathematics but rather non-entailing evidence that calls for care,

³⁴See Ferreira, *Doubt and Religious Commitment*, 37 no. 7; Ferreira, “Newman on Belief-Confidence, Proportionality and Probability,” *Heythrop Journal* 23 (1985): 171–2; Aquino, “The British Naturalist Tradition,” in *The Oxford Handbook of John Henry Newman*, ed. Frederick D. Aquino and Benjamin J. King (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2018), 162–4; Naulty, “Newman’s Dispute with Locke,” 454f.

³⁵David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 6, n. 10.

³⁶Newman even writes: “I do not mean that we lose our certitude, if we allow that in the abstract it is possible that we are wrong, or that there is a mathematical chance of it.” *TP* I.122.

sensitivity, and prudence (*GA* 228). This is why, unlike the judgment that $2 + 2 = 4$, one's whole self—that is, one's intellectual and moral character—bears on these judgments.

Therefore, we conclude that Milburn's reading, like other infallibilist readings that attempt to inflate the power of the illative sense, is incorrect. At times, Newman uses overly strong phrases like the "indefectibility of certitude" and "absolute proof." But it is imperative when reading Newman that we remember that certitude is not opposed to probability, as it typically is for infallibilists. For as long as people have been reading Newman, there has been confusion as to whether Newman uses the term "probability" (and its variants) in contrast to certitude and the term "certitude" (and its variants) in contrast to what is probable. But as he clarified his terminology in a letter to J. D. Dalgairns, "This is far from my meaning. I use 'probable' in opposition to 'demonstrative'—and moral certainty is a state of mind, in all cases however produced by probable arguments which admit of more or less—the measure of probability necessary for certainty varying with the individual mind."³⁷ And when he says that "there is but probability for the existence of God" he recognizes that this could cause scandal in that he might be taken to mean that we can never be certain of God's existence. Accordingly, he clarifies, "What I meant was, that the moral certainty which belief implied arose from probable not demonstrative arguments."³⁸ Similarly, in a letter to W. G. Penny, Newman clarifies his conviction that "antecedent probability is the great instrument of conviction in religious (nay in all) matters. Here persons at first misunderstood me, and because I talked of 'probable arguments,' they thought I meant that we could not get beyond a probable conclusion in opposition to a moral certainty; which is a condemned proposition—but I hope they understand me better now. I use probable as opposed to demonstrative, not to certainty."³⁹ Newman's resolution of the paradox mentioned above, then, is that certitude is not opposed to probability but is, in concrete matters of fact, built upon numerous, overwhelming lines of probabilistic evidence.

Briefly, the second major strategy to save an infallibilist reading of Newman is to inflate our evidence rather than the power of the illative sense. Martin D'Arcy is representative of this second infallibilist strategy. D'Arcy suggests that fallible, probabilistic evidence can rightly amount to absolute proof when the evidence is "infinite." That is, perhaps Newman thinks that we have an infinite amount of

³⁷ *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. XI, ed. Charles Stephen Dessain (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961), 289; henceforth cited as *LD*. Moral certainty (*certitudo moralis*) was a term coined around 1400 to denote "a very high but not complete degree of persuasion." This is clearly a fallible certitude. James Franklin, *The Science of Conjecture: Evidence and Probability before Pascal* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 69.

³⁸ *LD*, 291.

³⁹ *LD*, 293.

fallible evidence that amounts to an infallible proof.⁴⁰ Apart from not being the best reading of Newman on offer, since he says nothing about infinite evidence, we see two problems with this strategy. First, it is unclear how an infinite amount of less-than-entailing evidence could ever make a conclusion's epistemic probability equal to 1. It seems that an infinite amount of non-entailing evidence, like one of Zeno's paradoxes, gets one ever closer to epistemic probability 1 without ever reaching it. Second, even if one overcomes this obstacle, our evidence for any given proposition appears finite rather than infinite.⁴¹ Whether one thinks evidence consists in experience or one's other beliefs, both are finite in number. In his more careful moments, D'Arcy himself retreats to the position that our evidence in certain cases is only "practically indistinguishable" from infinite evidence rather than actually infinite.⁴² Hence, not only do we argue that the best reading of Newman's paradox is a fallibilist reading, but we conclude that neither strategy for reading Newman as an infallibilist—whether one attempts to inflate the powers of the illative sense or one's evidence—is tenable.

IV.B. Locke as an Infallibilist

For our second argument that Newman is a fallibilist, notice that Newman reads Locke as an infallibilist. As we have shown, a key issue (and perhaps *the* key issue) in the second part of the *Grammar* is whether probable reasoning can lead to certitude. Locke insists that knowledge requires certitude. On this point, Newman agrees. Yet Locke further holds that beliefs based on probabilities cannot achieve certitude, and so do not constitute knowledge. In other words, "Absolute assent has no legitimate exercise, except as ratifying acts of intuition or demonstration" (*GA* 106).⁴³ On this point, Newman disagrees. He rejects Locke's "pretentious axiom that probable reasoning can never lead to certitude" (*GA* 106). Newman not only seeks to show that there can be appropriate certitude in matters of religion but also in other aspects of life. There are many propositions to which we unconditionally assent, though they do not arise from demonstration or intuition.

Moreover, Newman charges Locke (the supposed empiricist) with failing to let the empirical facts guide his epistemological categories. On the one hand, Locke requires conclusive grounds for knowledge (i.e., Locke is an infallibilist). On the other hand, Locke admits that some non-demonstrative conclusions

⁴⁰Martin Cyril D'Arcy, S. J., *The Nature of Belief* (Tacoma, WA: Cluny Media, 2017), chap. 6.

⁴¹J. D. Bastable, "Cardinal Newman's Philosophy of Belief," *Philosophical Studies: Annual Journal of The Philosophical Society, St. Patrick's College, Ireland* 5 (Dec. 1955): 44–70 rightly criticizes D'Arcy on this point.

⁴²D'Arcy, *The Nature of Belief*, 175.

⁴³See also John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 4.2.14; 4.3.6–8, 14; 4.15.1–3; henceforth cited as *ES*.

“border so near upon Certainty, that we make no doubt at all about them; but *assent* to them as firmly, and act, according to that Assent, as resolutely, as if they were infallibly demonstrated, and that our Knowledge of them was perfect and certain” (*GA* 107, *ES* 4.15.2).⁴⁴ That even Locke admits that humans naturally treat propositions as certain even though they are not the product of rational intuition or strict demonstration only goes to show that Locke’s standard for knowledge and certitude is too restrictive; Locke circumscribes the realm of knowledge and certitude in a way that doesn’t fit the common experience of humankind, for we are often certain on less than conclusive evidence. What is more, Newman thinks the number of non-demonstrative conclusions to which we assent with certitude is “numberless” rather than few (*GA* 116). For Newman, Locke’s standard must be wrong, for “It is a *law of nature* then, that we are certain on premises which do not touch <reach> demonstration” (*LD* xxiv.104).

So, Newman reads Locke as an infallibilist who thinks that knowledge requires conclusive grounds but then either (i) must make exceptions to his own principles, or (ii) must think us constantly irrational for treating propositions as certain and known even though they are not. However, Newman is not rejecting Locke’s evidentialist epistemology *per se* but rather challenging him on the nature and scope of knowledge and certitude.⁴⁵ In so doing, Newman broadens Locke’s category of knowledge by allowing in beliefs with nearly conclusive probabilistic grounds. After all, Newman argues, we know (on probabilistic grounds)—and are even certain—that we will die and that Great Britain is an island. Newman agrees with Locke that a “lover of truth” should not hold “any proposition with greater assurance than the proofs it is built upon will warrant” (*GA* 108; see *ES* 4.19.1).⁴⁶ Still, there are assents that people give on “evidence short of intuition and demonstration, yet which are as unconditional as if they had that highest evidence” (*GA* 116f.). On “all these truths we have an imme-

⁴⁴It is noteworthy that while the Scholastic tradition took certitude to be a mental connection to reality about which there is no reasonable doubt, Locke’s notion of certitude excludes some assents to propositions about which there is no serious doubt. In other words, Locke adopts the Cartesian notion of certitude, and Newman seeks to broaden it again.

⁴⁵Newman was a life-long opponent of religious superstition and enthusiasm. On this point, he and John Locke were of one mind (*GA* 107). Newman, however, takes a broad view of reasons and evidence. See Frederick D. Aquino and Logan Paul Gage, “On the Epistemic Role of Our Passional Nature,” *Newman Studies Journal* 17, no. 2 (2020): 41–58.

⁴⁶The belief that we will die, for Newman, serves as a counter-example to the “axiom that probable reasoning can never lead to certitude” (*GA* 106). Such a belief receives unqualified acceptance, though it cannot be demonstrated (*GA* 106; see also *GA* 194–5). Ferreira, *Scepticism and Reasonable Doubt*, 179, argues that this kind of example fits the “category of non-demonstrative argument,” and it puts Newman “in the tradition of ‘proof,’ ‘moral certainty,’ or a substantive equivalent.” As seen above, the real contrast, for Newman, is between probable evidence and demonstration, not between probable evidence and certitude (*LD* 11: 292; see also *LD* 11: 289).

ciate and an unhesitating hold, nor do we think ourselves guilty of not loving truth for truth's sake, because we cannot reach them through a series of intuitive propositions" (*GA* 118).

Newman's proposal leaves us with the sense that his categories of certitude and knowledge are much broader than Locke's.⁴⁷ As Ferreira rightly concludes, his preferred model is cumulative or convergent reasoning in which the resultant certainty is "constituted by the absence of reasonable doubt."⁴⁸ Newman illustrates this kind of reasoning with the example of a cable. A cable is composed of several strands; individually each is too weak and insufficient to support a belief, but collectively they are as "*sufficient* as an iron rod" (e.g., mathematical or strict demonstration). People who refuse to depend on the durability of a cable and demand "an iron bar, would, *in certain given cases*, be irrational and unreasonable." The same applies to people who say that a religious belief is rationally acceptable if and only if that belief can be supported by "rigid demonstration" (*LD* xxi.146). Demonstration, then, is not necessary for certitude.⁴⁹ Hence, again, Newman's understanding of certitude is compatible with having fallible grounds for belief.

V. Is Newman a Strong Fallibilist?

We have attempted to show that Newman is, in contemporary epistemological terms, a *weak* fallibilist (i.e., one who denies that truth-entailing grounds are necessary for knowledge). However, there are times at which he sounds like a *strong* fallibilist (i.e., one who denies that truth-entailing grounds are necessary for knowledge because we *never* possess truth-entailing grounds). For instance, he wrote to his friend William Froude (who claimed that we should never fully

⁴⁷One reader worries that Newman may either beg the question or equivocate on "certitude" in this polemic against Locke. There are some things Newman might say in his defense here. But whether Newman's argument succeeds or fails, it still evidences his fallibilism.

⁴⁸See Ferreira, *Scepticism and Reasonable Doubt*, 227. Cf. *GA* 208, 212.

⁴⁹It has been suggested to us (by an infallibilist interpreter of Newman) that Newman repeatedly seeks to establish an equivalence between formal and informal proofs and thus that he must be an infallibilist after all. We agree that Newman sees an equivalence between formal and informal proofs. But we do not agree with the infallibilist interpreters of Newman that this is an equivalence of exact identity. That is, we do not agree that both proofs reach epistemic probability 1 or Cartesian/Lockean certitude. Rather, as the cable analogy suggests, the identity between formal and informal proofs is in their sufficiency to produce certitude. While they have equivalent effects, no one should confuse a cable with an iron bar. Moreover, there is also an equivalence psychologically: can anyone look introspectively and see a difference in the strength with which they believe a mathematical demonstration on the one hand and the strength with which they believe that there is a material world on the other? Probability 1 and .99999 are likely psychologically indistinguishable.

commit ourselves to propositions since all propositions are only probabilistically supported):

We differ in our sense and our use of the word "certain." I use it of minds, you of propositions. I fully grant the uncertainty of all conclusions in your sense of the word, but I maintain that minds may in my sense be certain of conclusions which are uncertain in yours.⁵⁰

That is, Newman seems to hold that "all conclusions" are supported by less than entailing evidence but resists the conclusion that, even granting this, we can never be certain. Because Newman seems to claim that our evidence is *always* imperfect and yet that we can attain certitude (and therefore, we take it, knowledge), perhaps Newman is a strong fallibilist.

Newman further maintains at times that moral certitude is all that can be attained by human beings (but of course insists that this is real certitude). He writes:

I observe that moral evidence and moral certitude are all that we can attain, not only in the case of ethical and spiritual subjects, such as religion, but of terrestrial and cosmical questions also. So far, physical Astronomy and Revelation stand on the same footing. . . . That is, first there is no demonstration that the earth rotates; next there is a cluster of "reasons on *different* principles," that is, independent probabilities in cumulation: thirdly, these "*amount* to a proof," and "the mind" feels "*as if* the matter was strictly proved," that is, there is the equivalent of proof; lastly, "the mind rests *satisfied*," that is, it is certain on the point. (*GA* 206–7)⁵¹

And at one point in the *University Sermons* he even says that "we are given absolute certainty in nothing."⁵² Basil Mitchell comments:

Newman later glossed this passage with a note which abated the force of "absolute certainty in nothing,"⁵³ but he also later admitted that "left to

⁵⁰Cardinal Newman and William Froude, *F. R. S.: A Correspondence*, ed. Gordon Huntington Harper (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1933), 201.

⁵¹Newman says something similar when talking about the presumptive character of moral proof in *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), esp. chap. 3. The subjects that belong to "moral proof," for Newman, are "history, antiquities, political science, ethics, metaphysics, and theology" (112; see also 109–10). He adds, "In all matters of human life, presumption verified by instances, is our ordinary instrument of proof, and, if the antecedent probability is great, it almost supersedes instances" (113–4).

⁵²John Henry Newman, *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford Between A.D. 1826 and 1843* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 151.

⁵³Newman wrote, "Here, by 'absolute certainty in nothing,' is meant, as I believe, 'proofs such as absolutely to make doubt impossible.'" *Fifteen Sermons*, 151 no. 1.

myself, I should be very much tempted to adopt Butler's view and understand credibility as probability upon which it is safe to act."⁵⁴ Whether or not he actually at any time embraced this view, he clearly acknowledged it as an arguable position.⁵⁵

We see these remarks from Newman as suggestive rather than as signaling a firm, developed commitment to strong fallibilism. However, such statements appear throughout his books and letters and constitute at least some evidence that he was a strong fallibilist. In any case, we believe that the evidence is clear that he was at least a weak fallibilist who did not think perfect (entailing) evidence is required for knowledge. In this way he sought to defend ordinary religious belief against unrealistic rationalist requirements for knowledge—requirements that seem more appropriate for divine than for human knowledge.⁵⁶

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⁵⁴John Henry Newman to Edward Thompson, 7 October 1853. *LD*, vol. XV, 456.

⁵⁵Mitchell, "Newman as Philosopher," in *Newman after a Hundred Years*, ed. Ian Ker and Alan G. Hill (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 223–46, at 229.

⁵⁶The authors wish to thank Billy Abraham, David Clemenson, John Crosby, Brandon Dahm, Ben King, and Rob McNamara for their helpful feedback on this essay.