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John Henry Newman: A Conservative at Heart? The Political and Social thought of John Henry Newman

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This groundingbreaking study is the first book to examine the political and social thought of Blessed John Henry Newman. With access to a wealth of Newman's published and unpublished writings, it challenges the conventional construction of Newman as a high churchman devoid of a political and social conscience. The book demonstrates that throughout Newman's life, first as a member of the Anglican church and subsequently as a convert to roman Catholicism, he retained a keen interest in the political and social issues of Victorian society. The book explores Newman's views towards and array relations, Irish nationalism, the British constitution, his idea of Liberal Knowledge and education, his conservative attitude towards history and the impact of his political and social thought upon today's society.

Having first rebuffed the suggestion that Newman lacked an awareness of political and social problems, this book vigorously attacks the myth that he remained a disciple of political and social conservatism over the course of his life. Newman was indeed a conservative at heart - but the basis of his conservatism rested on his religious beliefs and not his political or social views. The philosophical and religious views which Newman held led him to broaden and deepen his conservation. He, therefore, cannot be labelled a 'Tory': a political and social exponent of conservative principles. In Newman's mind, God, not man, was the measure of all things. He, therefore, always placed limits upon the importance of politics and politicians of his generation. This book testifies that Newman belonged to neither the conservative nor the liberal camp. Instead, he represented a selection of both ideologies. In the pursuit of religious truth, he was 'liberal' when he sought to amend what he believed to be wrong and a 'conservative' when he sought to maintain what he believed to be right.

Dr Stephen Kelly is an evening lecturer, School of History and Archives, University College Dublin. He held the prestigious John Henry Newman Post-Doctoral Fellowship (2010-11), International Centre for Newman Studies, UCD, and the Newman Scholarship (2012), National Institute for Newman Studies, Pittsburgh, USA. Dr Kelly's research interests also include modern Irish history, Anglo-Irish relations, Northern Ireland and European nationalism.

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