



DYNAMICS of dis/agreement

VHI 2016-17

Literature & Dis/Agreement: Faith as a Semi-Logical Mode

MICHAEL D. HURLEY

John Henry Newman has been celebrated as a great thinker and as a great stylist. Yet Newman insisted that his elegance as a writer was no more than an accidental side-effect of his commitment to expressive clarity. But is that true? This talk explores a deep and unexpected dependency between Newman's efforts and achievements in thought and word: a kind of dependency that is also a form of conflict, between thinking and feeling, argumentation and aesthetics.

It will be suggested that Newman does not seek to translate ideas into language so much as he uses the act of writing itself to help forge his ideas. Correspondingly, his *Grammar of Assent* does not so much argue its thesis by syllogistic discipline, as it exploits the literary resources of language to dramatize its thesis, by implicating the reader into the imaginative experience of faith as a 'semi-logical' mode.



Dr Michael D. Hurley teaches English at Cambridge, where he is a University Lecturer and a Fellow of St Catharine's College. He is the author of *Faith in Poetry: Verse Style as a Mode of Religious Belief*, which comes out with Bloomsbury later this year; other books include, *G. K. Chesterton* (2012), and (with Michael O'Neill) *Poetic Form* (2012).

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4pm

Garden Room
St Edmund's College
Cambridge

ALL WELCOME
REFRESHMENTS