
‘The Idea of a University’: Cardinal Newman's Vision

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John Henry Newman’s name is associated in a particular way with education. He was not only a life-long educator at all levels, he was also a great thinker about education. His seminal work, *The Idea of a University*, emerged in the context of the launching of the Catholic University of Ireland between 1852 and 1859. ‘What an empire is in political history, such is a University in the sphere of philosophy and research.’ This article expounds the principal insights of *The Idea*. Three areas stand out in a most engaging fashion. First, there is the scope of university education as the achievement of the faculty to think clearly, together with the conquest of freedom in the genuine pursuit of virtue and religion. Then there is the full circle of the many sciences that are still deeply related to each other: the educated mind will perceive their unity in distinction. Finally, there is the quality of the relationship between students and their professors. That relationship is the only alternative to turning the total enterprise into ‘an arctic winter.’