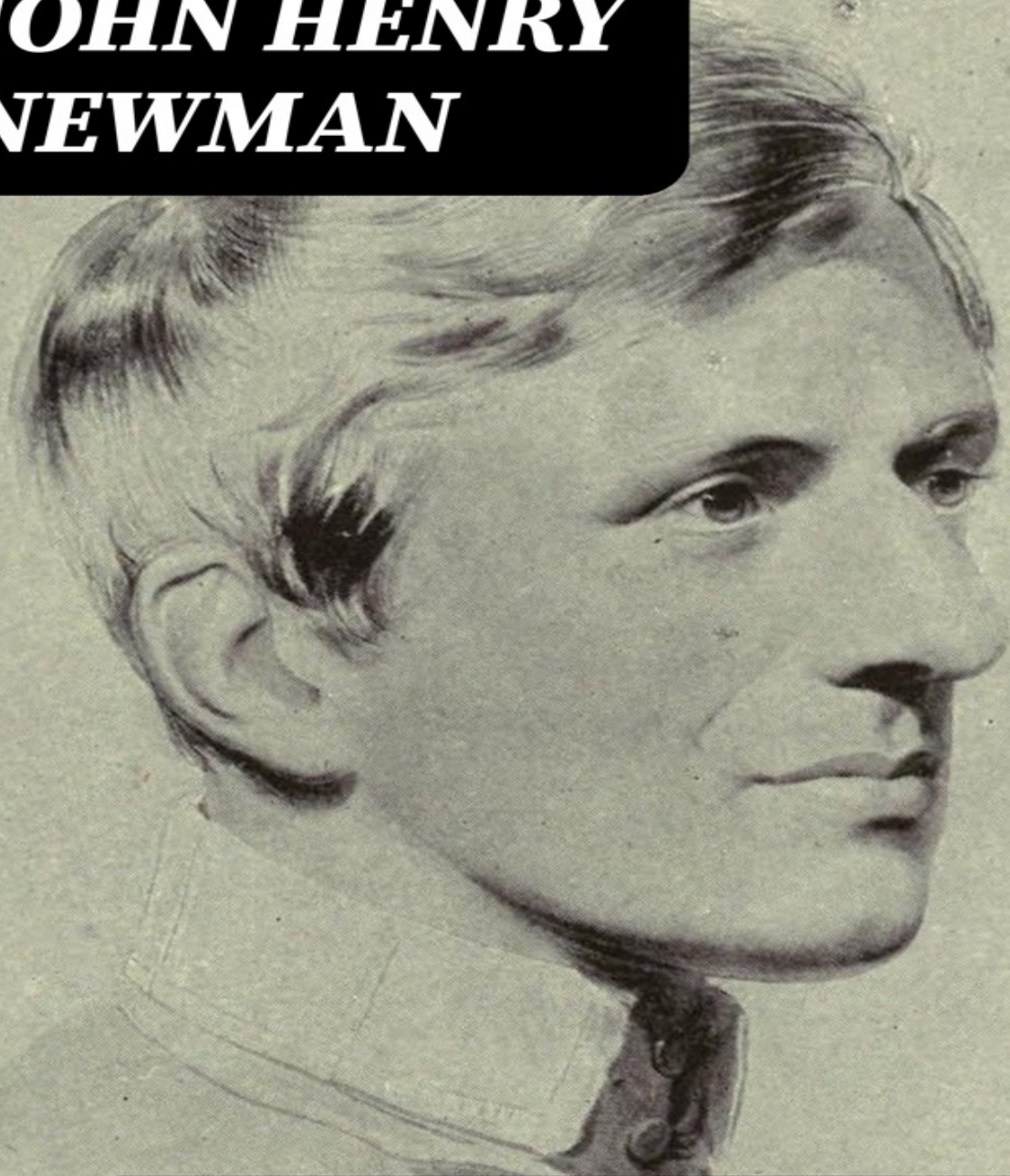


***JOHN HENRY  
NEWMAN***



***APOLOGIA  
PRO VITA  
SUA***

**John Henry Newman**

# **Apologia Pro Vita Sua**

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# **PREFACE.**

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The following History of my Religious Opinions, now that it is detached from the context in which it originally stood, requires some preliminary explanation; and that, not only in order to introduce it generally to the reader, but specially to make him understand, how I came to write a whole book about myself, and about my most private thoughts and feelings. Did I consult indeed my own impulses, I should do my best simply to wipe out of my Volume, and consign to oblivion, every trace of the circumstances to which it is to be ascribed; but its original title of "Apologia" is too exactly borne out by its matter and structure, and these again are too suggestive of correlative circumstances, and those circumstances are of too grave a character, to allow of my indulging so natural a wish. And therefore, though in this new Edition I have managed to omit nearly a hundred pages of my original Volume, which I could safely consider to be of merely ephemeral importance, I am even for that very reason obliged, by way of making up for their absence, to prefix to my Narrative some account of the provocation out of which it arose.

It is now more than twenty years that a vague impression to my disadvantage has rested on the popular mind, as if my conduct towards the Anglican Church, while I was a member of it, was inconsistent with Christian simplicity and uprightness. An impression of this kind was almost unavoidable under the circumstances of the case, when a man, who had written strongly against a cause, and had

collected a party round him by virtue of such writings, gradually faltered in his opposition to it, unsaid his words, threw his own friends into perplexity and their proceedings into confusion, and ended by passing over to the side of those whom he had so vigorously denounced. Sensitive then as I have ever been of the imputations which have been so freely cast upon me, I have never felt much impatience under them, as considering them to be a portion of the penalty which I naturally and justly incurred by my change of religion, even though they were to continue as long as I lived. I left their removal to a future day, when personal feelings would have died out, and documents would see the light, which were as yet buried in closets or scattered through the country.

This was my state of mind, as it had been for many years, when, in the beginning of 1864, I unexpectedly found myself publicly put upon my defence, and furnished with an opportunity of pleading my cause before the world, and, as it so happened, with a fair prospect of an impartial hearing. Taken indeed by surprise, as I was, I had much reason to be anxious how I should be able to acquit myself in so serious a matter; however, I had long had a tacit understanding with myself, that, in the improbable event of a challenge being formally made to me, by a person of name, it would be my duty to meet it. That opportunity had now occurred; it never might occur again; not to avail myself of it at once would be virtually to give up my cause; accordingly, I took advantage of it, and, as it has turned out, the circumstance that no time was allowed me for any studied statements has compensated, in the equitable judgment of the public, for

such imperfections in composition as my want of leisure involved.

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It was in the number for January 1864, of a magazine of wide circulation, and in an Article upon Queen Elizabeth, that a popular writer took occasion formally to accuse me by name of thinking so lightly of the virtue of Veracity, as in set terms to have countenanced and defended that neglect of it which he at the same time imputed to the Catholic Priesthood. His words were these:—

"Truth, for its own sake, had never been a virtue with the Roman clergy. Father Newman informs us that it need not, and on the whole ought not to be; that cunning is the weapon which heaven has given to the Saints wherewith to withstand the brute male force of the wicked world which marries and is given in marriage. Whether his notion be doctrinally correct or not, it is at least historically so."

These assertions, going far beyond the popular prejudice entertained against me, had no foundation whatever in fact. I never had said, I never had dreamed of saying, that truth for its own sake need not, and on the whole ought not to be, a virtue with the Roman Clergy; or that cunning is the weapon which heaven has given to the Saints wherewith to withstand the wicked world. To what work of mine then could the writer be referring? In a correspondence which ensued upon the subject between him and myself, he rested his charge against me on a Sermon of mine, preached, before I was a Catholic, in the pulpit of my Church at Oxford;

and he gave me to understand, that, after having done as much as this, he was not bound, over and above such a general reference to my Sermon, to specify the passages of it, in which the doctrine, which he imputed to me, was contained. On my part I considered this not enough; and I demanded of him to bring out his proof of his accusation in form and in detail, or to confess he was unable to do so. But he persevered in his refusal to cite any distinct passages from any writing of mine; and, though he consented to withdraw his charge, he would not do so on the issue of its truth or falsehood, but simply on the ground that I assured him that I had had no intention of incurring it. This did not satisfy my sense of justice. Formally to charge me with committing a fault is one thing; to allow that I did not intend to commit it, is another; it is no satisfaction to me, if a man accuses me of *this* offence, for him to profess that he does not accuse me of *that*; but he thought differently. Not being able then to gain redress in the quarter, where I had a right to ask it, I appealed to the public. I published the correspondence in the shape of a Pamphlet, with some remarks of my own at the end, on the course which that correspondence had taken.

This Pamphlet, which appeared in the first weeks of February, received a reply from my accuser towards the end of March, in another Pamphlet of 48 pages, entitled, "What then does Dr. Newman mean?" in which he professed to do that which I had called upon him to do; that is, he brought together a number of extracts from various works of mine, Catholic and Anglican, with the object of showing that, if I was to be acquitted of the crime of teaching and practising



deceit and dishonesty, according to his first supposition, it was at the price of my being considered no longer responsible for my actions; for, as he expressed it, "I had a human reason once, no doubt, but I had gambled it away," and I had "worked my mind into that morbid state, in which nonsense was the only food for which it hungered;" and that it could not be called "a hasty or farfetched or unfounded mistake, when he concluded that I did not care for truth for its own sake, or teach my disciples to regard it as a virtue;" and, though "too many prefer the charge of insincerity to that of insipience, Dr. Newman seemed not to be of that number."

He ended his Pamphlet by returning to his original imputation against me, which he had professed to abandon. Alluding by anticipation to my probable answer to what he was then publishing, he professed his heartfelt embarrassment how he was to believe any thing I might say in my exculpation, in the plain and literal sense of the words. "I am henceforth," he said, "in doubt and fear, as much as an honest man can be, concerning every word Dr. Newman may write. How can I tell, that I shall not be the dupe of some cunning equivocation, of one of the three kinds laid down as permissible by the blessed St. Alfonso da Liguori and his pupils, even when confirmed with an oath, because 'then we do not deceive our neighbour, but allow him to deceive himself?' ... How can I tell, that I may not in this Pamphlet have made an accusation, of the truth of which Dr. Newman is perfectly conscious; but that, as I, a heretic Protestant, have no business to make it, he has a full right to deny it?"

Even if I could have found it consistent with my duty to my own reputation to leave such an elaborate impeachment of my moral nature unanswered, my duty to my Brethren in the Catholic Priesthood, would have forbidden such a course. *They* were involved in the charges which this writer, all along, from the original passage in the Magazine, to the very last paragraph of the Pamphlet, had so confidently, so pertinaciously made. In exculpating myself, it was plain I should be pursuing no mere personal quarrel;—I was offering my humble service to a sacred cause. I was making my protest in behalf of a large body of men of high character, of honest and religious minds, and of sensitive honour,—who had their place and their rights in this world, though they were ministers of the world unseen, and who were insulted by my Accuser, as the above extracts from him sufficiently show, not only in my person, but directly and pointedly in their own. Accordingly, I at once set about writing the *Apologia pro vitâ suâ*, of which the present Volume is a New Edition; and it was a great reward to me to find, as the controversy proceeded, such large numbers of my clerical brethren supporting me by their sympathy in the course which I was pursuing, and, as occasion offered, bestowing on me the formal and public expression of their approbation. These testimonials in my behalf, so important and so grateful to me, are, together with the Letter, sent to me with the same purpose, from my Bishop, contained in the last pages of this Volume.

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This Edition differs from the first form of the *Apologia* as follows:—The original work consisted of seven Parts, which

were published in series on consecutive Thursdays, between April 21 and June 2. An Appendix, in answer to specific allegations urged against me in the Pamphlet of Accusation, appeared on June 16. Of these Parts 1 and 2, as being for the most part directly controversial, are omitted in this Edition, excepting certain passages in them, which are subjoined to this Preface, as being necessary for the due explanation of the subsequent five Parts. These, (being 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, of the Apologia,) are here numbered as Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 respectively. Of the Appendix, about half has been omitted, for the same reason as has led to the omission of Parts 1 and 2. The rest of it is thrown into the shape of Notes of a discursive character, with two new ones on Liberalism and the Lives of the English Saints of 1843-4, and another, new in part, on Ecclesiastical Miracles. In the body of the work, the only addition of consequence is the letter which is found at p. 228, a copy of which has recently come into my possession.

I should add that, since writing the Apologia last year, I have seen for the first time Mr. Oakeley's "Notes on the Tractarian Movement." This work remarkably corroborates the substance of my Narrative, while the kind terms in which he speaks of me personally, call for my sincere gratitude.

*May 2, 1865.*

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I make these extracts from the first edition of my Apologia, Part 1, pp. 3, 20-25, and Part 2, pp. 29-31 and pp. 41-51, in order to set before the reader the drift I had in writing my Volume:—

I cannot be sorry to have forced my Accuser to bring out in fulness his charges against me. It is far better that he should discharge his thoughts upon me in my lifetime, than after I am dead. Under the circumstances I am happy in having the opportunity of reading the worst that can be said of me by a writer who has taken pains with his work and is well satisfied with it. I account it a gain to be surveyed from without by one who hates the principles which are nearest to my heart, has no personal knowledge of me to set right his misconceptions of my doctrine, and who has some motive or other to be as severe with me as he can possibly be....

But I really feel sad for what I am obliged now to say. I am in warfare with him, but I wish him no ill;—it is very difficult to get up resentment towards persons whom one has never seen. It is easy enough to be irritated with friends or foes *vis-à-vis*; but, though I am writing with all my heart against what he has said of me, I am not conscious of personal unkindness towards himself. I think it necessary to write as I am writing, for my own sake, and for the sake of the Catholic Priesthood; but I wish to impute nothing worse to him than that he has been furiously carried away by his feelings. Yet what shall I say of the upshot of all his talk of my economies and equivocations and the like? What is the precise *work* which it is directed to effect? I am at war with him; but there is such a thing as legitimate warfare: war has its laws; there are things which may fairly be done, and things which may not be done. I say it with shame and with stern sorrow;—he has attempted a great transgression; he

has attempted (as I may call it) to *poison the wells*. I will quote him and explain what I mean.... He says,—

"I am henceforth in doubt and fear, as much as any honest man can be, *concerning every word* Dr. Newman may write. *How can I tell that I shall not be the dupe of some cunning equivocation*, of one of the three kinds laid down as permissible by the blessed Alfonso da Liguori and his pupils, even when confirmed by an oath, because 'then we do not deceive our neighbour, but allow him to deceive himself?' ... It is admissible, therefore, to use words and sentences which have a double signification, and leave the hapless hearer to take which of them he may choose. *What proof have I, then, that by 'mean it? I never said it!'* Dr. Newman does not signify, I did not say it, but I did mean it?"—Pp. 44, 45.

Now these insinuations and questions shall be answered in their proper places; here I will but say that I scorn and detest lying, and quibbling, and double-tongued practice, and slyness, and cunning, and smoothness, and cant, and pretence, quite as much as any Protestants hate them; and I pray to be kept from the snare of them. But all this is just now by the bye; my present subject is my Accuser; what I insist upon here is this unmanly attempt of his, in his concluding pages, to cut the ground from under my feet;—to poison by anticipation the public mind against me, John Henry Newman, and to infuse into the imaginations of my readers, suspicion and mistrust of everything that I may say in reply to him. This I call *poisoning the wells*.

"I am henceforth in *doubt and fear*," he says, "as much as any *honest* man can be, *concerning every word* Dr.

Newman may write. *How can I tell that I shall not be the dupe of some cunning equivocation?" ...*

Well, I can only say, that, if his taunt is to take effect, I am but wasting my time in saying a word in answer to his calumnies; and this is precisely what he knows and intends to be its fruit. I can hardly get myself to protest against a method of controversy so base and cruel, lest in doing so, I should be violating my self-respect and self-possession; but most base and most cruel it is. We all know how our imagination runs away with us, how suddenly and at what a pace;—the saying, "Cæsar's wife should not be suspected," is an instance of what I mean. The habitual prejudice, the humour of the moment, is the turning-point which leads us to read a defence in a good sense or a bad. We interpret it by our antecedent impressions.

The very same sentiments, according as our jealousy is or is not awake, or our aversion stimulated, are tokens of truth or of dissimulation and pretence. There is a story of a sane person being by mistake shut up in the wards of a Lunatic Asylum, and that, when he pleaded his cause to some strangers visiting the establishment, the only remark he elicited in answer was, "How naturally he talks! you would think he was in his senses." Controversies should be decided by the reason; is it legitimate warfare to appeal to the misgivings of the public mind and to its dislikings? Any how, if my accuser is able thus to practise upon my readers, the more I succeed, the less will be my success. If I am natural, he will tell them "Ars est celare artem;" if I am convincing, he will suggest that I am an able logician; if I show warmth, I am acting the indignant innocent; if I am

calm, I am thereby detected as a smooth hypocrite; if I clear up difficulties, I am too plausible and perfect to be true. The more triumphant are my statements, the more certain will be my defeat.

So will it be if my Accuser succeeds in his manœuvre; but I do not for an instant believe that he will. Whatever judgment my readers may eventually form of me from these pages, I am confident that they will believe me in what I shall say in the course of them. I have no misgiving at all, that they will be ungenerous or harsh towards a man who has been so long before the eyes of the world; who has so many to speak of him from personal knowledge; whose natural impulse it has ever been to speak out; who has ever spoken too much rather than too little; who would have saved himself many a scrape, if he had been wise enough to hold his tongue; who has ever been fair to the doctrines and arguments of his opponents; who has never slurred over facts and reasonings which told against himself; who has never given his name or authority to proofs which he thought unsound, or to testimony which he did not think at least plausible; who has never shrunk from confessing a fault when he felt that he had committed one; who has ever consulted for others more than for himself; who has given up much that he loved and prized and could have retained, but that he loved honesty better than name, and Truth better than dear friends....

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What then shall be the special imputation, against which I shall throw myself in these pages, out of the thousand and one which my Accuser directs upon me? I mean to confine

myself to one, for there is only one about which I much care, —the charge of Untruthfulness. He may cast upon me as many other imputations as he pleases, and they may stick on me, as long as they can, in the course of nature. They will fall to the ground in their season.

And indeed I think the same of the charge of Untruthfulness, and select it from the rest, not because it is more formidable but because it is more serious. Like the rest, it may disfigure me for a time, but it will not stain: Archbishop Whately used to say, "Throw dirt enough, and some will stick;" well, will stick, but not, will stain. I think he used to mean "stain," and I do not agree with him. Some dirt sticks longer than other dirt; but no dirt is immortal. According to the old saying, *Prævalebit Veritas*. There are virtues indeed, which the world is not fitted to judge of or to uphold, such as faith, hope, and charity: but it can judge about Truthfulness; it can judge about the natural virtues, and Truthfulness is one of them. Natural virtues may also become supernatural; Truthfulness is such; but that does not withdraw it from the jurisdiction of mankind at large. It may be more difficult in this or that particular case for men to take cognizance of it, as it may be difficult for the Court of Queen's Bench at Westminster to try a case fairly which took place in Hindostan: but that is a question of capacity, not of right. Mankind has the right to judge of Truthfulness in a Catholic, as in the case of a Protestant, of an Italian, or of a Chinese. I have never doubted, that in my hour, in God's hour, my avenger will appear, and the world will acquit me of untruthfulness, even though it be not while I live.



Still more confident am I of such eventual acquittal, seeing that my judges are my own countrymen. I consider, indeed, Englishmen the most suspicious and touchy of mankind; I think them unreasonable, and unjust in their seasons of excitement; but I had rather be an Englishman, (as in fact I am,) than belong to any other race under heaven. They are as generous, as they are hasty and burly; and their repentance for their injustice is greater than their sin.

For twenty years and more I have borne an imputation, of which I am at least as sensitive, who am the object of it, as they can be, who are only the judges. I have not set myself to remove it, first, because I never have had an opening to speak, and, next, because I never saw in them the disposition to hear. I have wished to appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober. When shall I pronounce him to be himself again? If I may judge from the tone of the public press, which represents the public voice, I have great reason to take heart at this time. I have been treated by contemporary critics in this controversy with great fairness and gentleness, and I am grateful to them for it. However, the decision of the time and mode of my defence has been taken out of my hands; and I am thankful that it has been so. I am bound now as a duty to myself, to the Catholic cause, to the Catholic Priesthood, to give account of myself without any delay, when I am so rudely and circumstantially charged with Untruthfulness. I accept the challenge; I shall do my best to meet it, and I shall be content when I have done so.

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It is not my present accuser alone who entertains, and has entertained, so dishonourable an opinion of me and of my writings. It is the impression of large classes of men; the impression twenty years ago and the impression now. There has been a general feeling that I was for years where I had no right to be; that I was a "Romanist" in Protestant livery and service; that I was doing the work of a hostile Church in the bosom of the English Establishment, and knew it, or ought to have known it. There was no need of arguing about particular passages in my writings, when the fact was so patent, as men thought it to be.

First it was certain, and I could not myself deny it, that I scouted the name "Protestant." It was certain again, that many of the doctrines which I professed were popularly and generally known as badges of the Roman Church, as distinguished from the faith of the Reformation. Next, how could I have come by them? Evidently, I had certain friends and advisers who did not appear; there was some underground communication between Stonyhurst or Oscott and my rooms at Oriel. Beyond a doubt, I was advocating certain doctrines, not by accident, but on an understanding with ecclesiastics of the old religion. Then men went further, and said that I had actually been received into that religion, and withal had leave given me to profess myself a Protestant still. Others went even further, and gave it out to the world, as a matter of fact, of which they themselves had the proof in their hands, that I was actually a Jesuit. And when the opinions which I advocated spread, and younger men went further than I, the feeling against me waxed stronger and took a wider range.

And now indignation arose at the knavery of a conspiracy such as this:—and it became of course all the greater in consequence of its being the received belief of the public at large, that craft and intrigue, such as they fancied they beheld with their eyes, were the very instruments to which the Catholic Church has in these last centuries been indebted for her maintenance and extension.

There was another circumstance still, which increased the irritation and aversion felt by the large classes, of whom I have been speaking, against the preachers of doctrines, so new to them and so unpalatable; and that was, that they developed them in so measured a way. If they were inspired by Roman theologians, (and this was taken for granted,) why did they not speak out at once? Why did they keep the world in such suspense and anxiety as to what was coming next, and what was to be the upshot of the whole? Why this reticence, and half-speaking, and apparent indecision? It was plain that the plan of operations had been carefully mapped out from the first, and that these men were cautiously advancing towards its accomplishment, as far as was safe at the moment; that their aim and their hope was to carry off a large body with them of the young and the ignorant; that they meant gradually to leaven the minds of the rising generation, and to open the gates of that city, of which they were the sworn defenders, to the enemy who lay in ambush outside of it. And when in spite of the many protestations of the party to the contrary, there was at length an actual movement among their disciples, and one went over to Rome, and then another, the worst anticipations and the worst judgments which had been

formed of them received their justification. And, lastly, when men first had said of me, "You will see, *he* will go, he is only biding his time, he is waiting the word of command from Rome," and, when after all, after my arguments and denunciations of former years, at length I did leave the Anglican Church for the Roman, then they said to each other, "It is just as we said: we knew it would be so."

This was the state of mind of masses of men twenty years ago, who took no more than an external and common sense view of what was going on. And partly the tradition, partly the effect of that feeling, remains to the present time. Certainly I consider that, in my own case, it is the great obstacle in the way of my being favourably heard, as at present, when I have to make my defence. Not only am I now a member of a most un-English communion, whose great aim is considered to be the extinction of Protestantism and the Protestant Church, and whose means of attack are popularly supposed to be unscrupulous cunning and deceit, but how came I originally to have any relations with the Church of Rome at all? did I, or my opinions, drop from the sky? how came I, in Oxford, *in gremio Universitatis*, to present myself to the eyes of men in that full blown investiture of Popery? How could I dare, how could I have the conscience, with warnings, with prophecies, with accusations against me, to persevere in a path which steadily advanced towards, which ended in, the religion of Rome? And how am I now to be trusted, when long ago I was trusted, and was found wanting?

It is this which is the strength of the case of my Accuser against me;—not the articles of impeachment which he has

framed from my writings, and which I shall easily crumble into dust, but the bias of the court. It is the state of the atmosphere; it is the vibration all around, which will echo his bold assertion of my dishonesty; it is that prepossession against me, which takes it for granted that, when my reasoning is convincing it is only ingenious, and that when my statements are unanswerable, there is always something put out of sight or hidden in my sleeve; it is that plausible, but cruel conclusion to which men are apt to jump, that when much is imputed, much must be true, and that it is more likely that one should be to blame, than that many should be mistaken in blaming him;—these are the real foes which I have to fight, and the auxiliaries to whom my Accuser makes his advances.

Well, I must break through this barrier of prejudice against me if I can; and I think I shall be able to do so. When first I read the Pamphlet of Accusation, I almost despaired of meeting effectively such a heap of misrepresentations and such a vehemence of animosity. What was the good of answering first one point, and then another, and going through the whole circle of its abuse; when my answer to the first point would be forgotten, as soon as I got to the second? What was the use of bringing out half a hundred separate principles or views for the refutation of the separate counts in the Indictment, when rejoinders of this sort would but confuse and torment the reader by their number and their diversity? What hope was there of condensing into a pamphlet of a readable length, matter which ought freely to expand itself into half a dozen volumes? What means was there, except the expenditure of

interminable pages, to set right even one of that series of "single passing hints," to use my Assailant's own language, which, "as with his finger tip he had delivered" against me?

All those separate charges had their force in being illustrations of one and the same great imputation. He had already a positive idea to illuminate his whole matter, and to stamp it with a force, and to quicken it with an interpretation. He called me a *liar*,—a simple, a broad, an intelligible, to the English public a plausible arraignment; but for me, to answer in detail charge one by reason one, and charge two by reason two, and charge three by reason three, and so on through the whole string both of accusations and replies, each of which was to be independent of the rest, this would be certainly labour lost as regards any effective result. What I needed was a corresponding antagonist unity in my defence, and where was that to be found? We see, in the case of commentators on the prophecies of Scripture, an exemplification of the principle on which I am insisting; viz. how much more powerful even a false interpretation of the sacred text is than none at all;—how a certain key to the visions of the Apocalypse, for instance, may cling to the mind (I have found it so in the case of my own), because the view, which it opens on us, is positive and objective, in spite of the fullest demonstration that it really has no claim upon our reception. The reader says, "What else can the prophecy mean?" just as my Accuser asks, "What, then, does Dr. Newman mean?" ... I reflected, and I saw a way out of my perplexity.

Yes, I said to myself, his very question is about my *meaning*; "What does Dr. Newman mean?" It pointed in the very same direction as that into which my musings had turned me already. He asks what I *mean*; not about my words, not about my arguments, not about my actions, as his ultimate point, but about that living intelligence, by which I write, and argue, and act. He asks about my Mind and its Beliefs and its sentiments; and he shall be answered;—not for his own sake, but for mine, for the sake of the Religion which I profess, and of the Priesthood in which I am unworthily included, and of my friends and of my foes, and of that general public which consists of neither one nor the other, but of well-wishers, lovers of fair play, sceptical cross-questioners, interested inquirers, curious lookers-on, and simple strangers, unconcerned yet not careless about the issue,—for the sake of all these he shall be answered.

My perplexity had not lasted half an hour. I recognized what I had to do, though I shrank from both the task and the exposure which it would entail. I must, I said, give the true key to my whole life; I must show what I am, that it may be seen what I am not, and that the phantom may be extinguished which gibbers instead of me. I wish to be known as a living man, and not as a scarecrow which is dressed up in my clothes. False ideas may be refuted indeed by argument, but by true ideas alone are they expelled. I will vanquish, not my Accuser, but my judges. I will indeed answer his charges and criticisms on me one by one<sup>[1]</sup>, lest any one should say that they are unanswerable, but such a work shall not be the scope nor the substance of my reply. I will draw out, as far as may be, the history of my mind; I will

state the point at which I began, in what external suggestion or accident each opinion had its rise, how far and how they developed from within, how they grew, were modified, were combined, were in collision with each other, and were changed; again how I conducted myself towards them, and how, and how far, and for how long a time, I thought I could hold them consistently with the ecclesiastical engagements which I had made and with the position which I held. I must show,—what is the very truth,—that the doctrines which I held, and have held for so many years, have been taught me (speaking humanly) partly by the suggestions of Protestant friends, partly by the teaching of books, and partly by the action of my own mind: and thus I shall account for that phenomenon which to so many seems so wonderful, that I should have left "my kindred and my father's house" for a Church from which once I turned away with dread;—so wonderful to them! as if forsooth a Religion which has flourished through so many ages, among so many nations, amid such varieties of social life, in such contrary classes and conditions of men, and after so many revolutions, political and civil, could not subdue the reason and overcome the heart, without the aid of fraud in the process and the sophistries of the schools.

[1] This was done in the Appendix, of which the more important parts are preserved in the Notes.

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What I had proposed to myself in the course of half-an-hour, I determined on at the end of ten days. However, I have many difficulties in fulfilling my design. How am I to say all that has to be said in a reasonable compass? And



then as to the materials of my narrative; I have no autobiographical notes to consult, no written explanations of particular treatises or of tracts which at the time gave offence, hardly any minutes of definite transactions or conversations, and few contemporary memoranda, I fear, of the feelings or motives under which, from time to time I acted. I have an abundance of letters from friends with some copies or drafts of my answers to them, but they are for the most part unsorted; and, till this process has taken place, they are even too numerous and various to be available at a moment for my purpose. Then, as to the volumes which I have published, they would in many ways serve me, were I well up in them: but though I took great pains in their composition, I have thought little about them, when they were once out of my hands, and for the most part the last time I read them has been when I revised their last proof sheets.

Under these circumstances my sketch will of course be incomplete. I now for the first time contemplate my course as a whole; it is a first essay, but it will contain, I trust, no serious or substantial mistake, and so far will answer the purpose for which I write it. I purpose to set nothing down in it as certain, of which I have not a clear memory, or some written memorial, or the corroboration of some friend. There are witnesses enough up and down the country to verify, or correct, or complete it; and letters moreover of my own in abundance, unless they have been destroyed.

Moreover, I mean to be simply personal and historical: I am not expounding Catholic doctrine, I am doing no more than explaining myself, and my opinions and actions. I wish,

as far as I am able, simply to state facts, whether they are ultimately determined to be for me or against me. Of course there will be room enough for contrariety of judgment among my readers, as to the necessity, or appositeness, or value, or good taste, or religious prudence, of the details which I shall introduce. I may be accused of laying stress on little things, of being beside the mark, of going into impertinent or ridiculous details, of sounding my own praise, of giving scandal; but this is a case above all others, in which I am bound to follow my own lights and to speak out my own heart. It is not at all pleasant for me to be egotistical; nor to be criticized for being so. It is not pleasant to reveal to high and low, young and old, what has gone on within me from my early years. It is not pleasant to be giving to every shallow or flippant disputant the advantage over me of knowing my most private thoughts, I might even say the intercourse between myself and my Maker. But I do not like to be called to my face a liar and a knave; nor should I be doing my duty to my faith or to my name, if I were to suffer it. I know I have done nothing to deserve such an insult, and if I prove this, as I hope to do, I must not care for such incidental annoyances as are involved in the process.

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## **MY RELIGIOUS OPINIONS.**

# CHAPTER I.

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## HISTORY OF MY RELIGIOUS OPINIONS TO THE YEAR 1833.

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It may easily be conceived how great a trial it is to me to write the following history of myself; but I must not shrink from the task. The words, "Secretum meum mihi," keep ringing in my ears; but as men draw towards their end, they care less for disclosures. Nor is it the least part of my trial, to anticipate that, upon first reading what I have written, my friends may consider much in it irrelevant to my purpose; yet I cannot help thinking that, viewed as a whole, it will effect what I propose to myself in giving it to the public.

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I was brought up from a child to take great delight in reading the Bible; but I had no formed religious convictions till I was fifteen. Of course I had a perfect knowledge of my Catechism.

After I was grown up, I put on paper my recollections of the thoughts and feelings on religious subjects, which I had at the time that I was a child and a boy,—such as had remained on my mind with sufficient prominence to make me then consider them worth recording. Out of these, written in the Long Vacation of 1820, and transcribed with additions in 1823, I select two, which are at once the most

definite among them, and also have a bearing on my later convictions.

1. "I used to wish the Arabian Tales were true: my imagination ran on unknown influences, on magical powers, and talismans.... I thought life might be a dream, or I an Angel, and all this world a deception, my fellow-angels by a playful device concealing themselves from me, and deceiving me with the semblance of a material world."

Again: "Reading in the Spring of 1816 a sentence from [Dr. Watts's] 'Remnants of Time,' entitled 'the Saints unknown to the world,' to the effect, that 'there is nothing in their figure or countenance to distinguish them,' &c., &c., I supposed he spoke of Angels who lived in the world, as it were disguised."

2. The other remark is this: "I was very superstitious, and for some time previous to my conversion" [when I was fifteen] "used constantly to cross myself on going into the dark."

Of course I must have got this practice from some external source or other; but I can make no sort of conjecture whence; and certainly no one had ever spoken to me on the subject of the Catholic religion, which I only knew by name. The French master was an *émigré* Priest, but he was simply made a butt, as French masters too commonly were in that day, and spoke English very imperfectly. There was a Catholic family in the village, old maiden ladies we used to think; but I knew nothing about them. I have of late years heard that there were one or two Catholic boys in the school; but either we were carefully kept from knowing this, or the knowledge of it made simply no impression on our