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Apologia Pro Vita Sua

John Henry Newman · *1864 · Newman's English*

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 his ears. Newman, 1864, Project Gutenberg #19690, in a Dent/Dutton printing with a long editor's approach. For grades 11–12. Quote Newman's own history, not only the introduction. The Bible delighted him from a child; formed convictions came later.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a school read the Apologia as Newman's own costly history of himself—begun as a trial, with "Secretum meum mihi" in his ears—rather than as an editor's preface or a later slogan?

"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"

History of My Religious Opinions to the Year 1833, opening

After a long editorial approach, Newman himself begins: it is a great trial to write the history of himself, but he must not shrink from the task. "Secretum meum mihi" keeps ringing in his ears; yet as men draw toward their end, they care less for disclosures. He was brought up from a child to take great delight in reading the Bible, but had no formed religious convictions till he was fifteen. Teach that history, for grades 11–12, as he wrote it. Quote Newman, not only the Dent introduction or a later life.

KEY CHARACTERS

John Henry Newman
Who undertakes, as a trial, the history of his religious opinions

His father
Who once took him into Warwick Street Chapel, as he remembers, for a piece of music

The child who delighted in the Bible
Whose formed convictions did not come until he was fifteen

HOW TO BEGIN THE APOLOGIA

> *"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"*
>
> Opening of his history

> *"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"*
>
> History of My Religious Opinions to the Year 1833

Grades 11–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

A Trial, Not Shrunk From

OPENING OF HIS HISTORY

It may easily be conceived how great a trial it is to him to write the following history of himself; but he must not shrink from the task. The Apologia is undertaken as a duty, under strain.

- Quote this opening of Newman's own history, not the editor's pages that precede it.
- Keep "I must not shrink from the task."
- 11–12.
- The later chapters are a history, not a pamphlet only.

> *"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"*
>
> History of My Religious Opinions to the Year 1833, opening

02

Secretum meum mihi

OPENING OF HIS HISTORY

The words "Secretum meum mihi" keep ringing in his ears; but as men draw towards their end, they care less for disclosures. Privacy and truth-telling stand in one sentence.

- Keep the Latin as this file prints it, in his quotation marks.
- The trial includes what friends may think on first reading.
- 11–12.
- Do not treat the Latin tag as decoration only.

> *"The words, "Secretum meum mihi," keep ringing in my ears; but as men draw towards their end, they care less for disclosures. Nor"*
>
> History of My Religious Opinions to the Year 1833, opening

03

Delight in the Bible

CHILDHOOD

He was brought up from a child to take great delight in reading the Bible; but he had no formed religious convictions till he was fifteen. The first habit is older than the later argument.

- Keep both halves: delight, and the delayed formed convictions.
- Quote Newman, not a later biographer.
- This is Chapter I of his history.
- 11–12.

> *"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"*
>
> History of My Religious Opinions to the Year 1833

04

Warwick Street Chapel

CHILDHOOD RECOLLECTION

He had once been into Warwick Street Chapel with his father, who, he believes, wanted to hear some piece of music; all that he bore away was a pulpit, a preacher, and a boy swinging a censer. Early impressions are exact, and limited.

- Keep the music, the censer, and the limit of what he bore away.
- Do not make this visit do more work than Newman gives it.
- 11–12.
- The later conversion is not this boyhood hour.

> *"I had once been into Warwick Street Chapel, with my father, who, I believe, wanted to hear some piece of music; all that I bore away from it"*
>
> History of My Religious Opinions to the Year 1833

05

Newman's English, after a Long Introduction

THE EDITION

Project Gutenberg #19690 is Newman's Apologia (1864) in a Dent/Dutton printing. A long introduction stands first. Quote Newman's own history, beginning at the trial of writing it. For grades 11–12.

- Do not memorize the editor as if he were Newman.
- The work is his defence of a life, in his English.
- Name the year 1864.
- Not a later film or a party leaflet.

> *"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"*
>
> History of My Religious Opinions to the Year 1833, opening

A trial of truth-telling | A secret, and a disclosure | The Bible from childhood | Convictions slowly formed | Memory kept within its limits

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 11–12

1. A long editor's introduction stands first; quote Newman's own history, not those pages.
2. "Secretum meum mihi" is his, in this file's quotation marks; keep the Latin.
3. Delight in the Bible from childhood, and formed convictions at fifteen, both belong to Chapter I.
4. For grades 11–12. A costly history of himself, not a later slogan.

Quotations are verbatim from the Newman's English, Project Gutenberg #19690, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/apologia-pro-vita-sua/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.