

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

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Post Office Box 68, Unicoi, Tennessee 37692 Email: [tjtrinityfound@aol.com](mailto:tjtrinityfound@aol.com) Telephone: 423.743.0199

## Three Onlys

By J. H. Merle D'Aubigné

*The following was delivered at the opening of the session of the Theological Seminary in October 1842 and is aimed principally against the innovations of Oxford and Rome. Its very great length, as originally delivered, has made it necessary to drop some of its more local allusions and extended citations; but the train of remark is carefully kept unbroken.*

“To the law and to the testimony.” — “By grace ye are saved.” — “Born of the Spirit.” — *Isaiah 8:20; Ephesians 2:5; John 3:6*

There are three principles which form the essence of Christianity. The first is what we may call its *formal* principle, because it is the means by which this system is formed or constituted; the second is what may be called the *material* principle, because it is the very doctrine which constitutes this religious system; the third I call the *personal* or *moral* principle, because it concerns the application of Christianity to the soul of each individual.

The *formal* principle of Christianity is expressed in few words: THE WORD OF GOD ONLY.

That is to say, the Christian receives the knowledge of the truth only by the Word of God and admits of no other source of religious knowledge.

The *material* principle of Christianity is expressed with equal brevity: THE GRACE OF CHRIST ONLY.

That is to say, the Christian receives salvation only by the grace of Christ and recognizes no other meritorious cause of eternal life.

The *personal* principle of Christianity may be expressed in the most simple terms: THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT ONLY,

That is to say, there must be in each soul that is saved, a moral and individual work of regeneration wrought by the Spirit of God, and not by the simple concurrence of the church,<sup>1</sup> and the magic influence of certain ceremonies.

Recall constantly to your minds these three simple truths: *The Word of God* ONLY. *The grace of Christ* ONLY. *The work of the Spirit* ONLY; and they will truly be “a lamp to your feet and a light to your paths.”

These are the three great beacons which the Holy Spirit has erected in the church. Their effulgence should spread from one end of the world to the other. So long as they shine, the church walks in the light; as soon as they shall become extinct, or even obscured, darkness, like that of Egypt, will settle upon Christendom. As Luther said, “With them the church stands, and without them the church falls.” Let us consider them.

I. The *formal* principle of evangelical Christianity is this: THE WORD OF GOD ONLY.

He who would know and possess the truth, in order to be saved, ought to study that revelation of

concurrent influence which the church is believed by the Puseyites to exert in regeneration by her ministrations.

<sup>1</sup> The words which are used in the French are *adjunction de l'Eglise*; and are employed to express that additional or

God, which is contained in the sacred Scriptures, and to reject everything, which is a mere human addition everything which, as the work of man, may be justly suspected of being impressed with a deplorable mixture of error. There is only one source at which the Christian quenches his thirst; it is that stream, clear, limpid, perfectly pure, which flows from the throne of God. He turns away from every other fountain which flows parallel with it, or which would fain mingle itself with it; for he knows that on account of the source whence these streams issue, they all contain troubled, unwholesome, perhaps deadly waters. The sole, the ancient, the eternal stream, is God; the new, ephemeral, failing stream, is Man; and we will quench our thirst but in God alone. God is, in our view, so full of sovereign majesty, that we would regard as an outrage, and even as impiety, the attempt to put anything by the side of his word.

But this is what the authors of the novelties of Oxford are doing. “The Scriptures,” say they, in the *Tracts for the Times*, “are evidently not, according to the principles of the Church of England, the rule of faith. The doctrine or message of the [G]ospel is but indirectly presented in the Scriptures, and in an obscure and concealed manner.” “[Roman]Catholic tradition,” says one of the two principal chiefs of the school, “is a divine informer in religious things; it is the unwritten word. These two things (the Bible and Catholic traditions) together form a united rule of faith. [Roman] Catholic tradition is a divine source of knowledge in all things relating to faith. The Scriptures are only the document of ultimate appeal; Catholic tradition is the authoritative teacher.” “Tradition is infallible,” says another divine; “the unwritten word of God, of necessity demands of us the same respect which his written word does, and precisely for the same reason, because it is his word.” “We demand that the whole of the Catholic traditions should be taught,” says a third.

Such is one of the most pestiferous errors which can be disseminated in the church. Whence have Rome and Oxford derived it? Certainly, the respect which we entertain for the incontestable learning of these divines shall not prevent our saying that this error can come from no other source than the natural aversion of the heart of fallen man for everything that the Scriptures teach. It can be nothing else than a depraved will which leads man to put the sacred

Scriptures aside. Men first abandon the fountain of living waters, and then hew for themselves, here and there, cisterns which will hold no water. This is a truth which the history of every church teaches in its successive falls and errors, as well as that of every soul in particular. The theologians of Oxford only follow in the way of all flesh.

Behold, then, two established authorities by the side of each other the Bible and tradition. We do not hesitate as to what we have to do.

“TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY!” we cry with the prophet; “if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness.” We reject tradition, as it is a species of rationalism which introduces for a rule in Christian doctrine, not the human reason of the present time, but the human reason of times past. We declare, with the churches of the Reformation in their symbolical writings (confessions of faith), that “the sacred Scriptures are the only judge, the only rule of faith; that it is to them, as to a touchstone, that all dogmas ought to be brought; that it is by them that the question should be decided, whether they are pious or impious, true or false.”

Without doubt there was originally an oral tradition which was pure; it was the instructions given by the apostles themselves, before the sacred writings of the New Testament existed. However, even then, the apostle and the evangelist, Peter and Barnabas, could not walk uprightly, and, consequently, stumbled in their words. The divinely inspired Scriptures alone are infallible; the Word of the Lord endureth forever. But however pure oral instruction may have been at the time that the apostles quitted the Earth, that tradition was necessarily exposed in this world of sin, to be gradually defaced, polluted and corrupted. It is for this cause that the Evangelical church honors and adores, with gratitude and humility, the gracious good pleasure of the Savior, in virtue of which, that pure, primitive type, that first, apostolic tradition, in all its purity, has been rendered permanent by being written, by the Spirit of God himself, in our sacred books, for all coming time. And now it finds in those writings, as we have just heard, the divine touchstone

which it employs for the purpose of trying all the traditions of men.

Nor does it establish, concurrently, as do the doctors of Oxford, and the Council of Trent, the tradition which is *written* and the tradition which is *oral*; but it decidedly renders the latter subordinate to the former, because one cannot be sure that this oral tradition is only and truly the apostolical tradition, such as it was in its primitive purity. The knowledge of true Christianity, says the Protestant church, flows only from one source, namely, from the holy Scriptures, or, if you will, from the *apostolic tradition*, such as we find it contained in the writings of the New Testament. The apostles of Jesus Christ—Peter, Paul, John, Matthew, James—perform their functions in the church today; no one has the need nor the power to take their place. They perform their functions at Jerusalem, at Geneva, at Corinth, at Berlin, at Paris; they bear testimony in Oxford and in Rome itself. They preach, even to the ends of the world, the remission of sins and the conversion of the soul in the name of the Savior; they announce the resurrection of the crucified to every creature; they loose and they retain sins; they lay the foundation of the house of God, and they build it; they teach the missionaries and the ministers of the Gospel; they regulate the order of the church, and preside in synods which would be Christian. They do all this by the *written word* which they have left us; or, rather, Christ—Christ himself—does it by that word, since it is the word of Christ, rather than the word of Paul, of Peter, or of James. “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations: lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Without doubt, as to the number of their words, the apostles spoke more than they wrote: but as to the substance, they said nothing more than what they have left us in their divine books. And if they had, in substance, taught otherwise, or more explicitly than they did by their writings, no one could, at this day be able to report to us, with assurance, even one syllable of these instructions. If God did not choose to preserve them in his Bible, no one could come to his aid, and do what God himself would not wish to do, and what he would not have done. If, in the writings, of more or less doubtful authenticity, of the companions of the apostles, or of those fathers who are called apostolical, one should find any doctrine

of the apostles, it would be necessary, first of all, to put it to the test, in comparing it with the certain instructions of the apostles, that is, with the canon of the Scriptures.

So much for the tradition of the apostles. Let us pass on from the times when they lived to those which succeeded. Let us come to the tradition of the divines of the first centuries. That tradition is, without doubt, of great value to us; but by the very fact of its being Presbyterian, Episcopal, or Synodical, it is no longer apostolical. And let us suppose (what is not true), that it does not contradict itself; and let us suppose that one father does not overthrow what another father has established (as is often the case, and Abelard has proved it in his famous work entitled the *Sic et Non*); let us suppose, for a moment, that one might reduce the tradition of the fathers of the church to a harmony similar to that which the apostolical tradition presents: the canon which might be obtained thus, could in no manner be placed on an equality with the canon of the apostles.

Without doubt, we acknowledge that the declarations of Christian divines merit our attention, if it be the Holy Spirit which speaks in them—that Spirit which is ever living and ever acting in the church. But we will not—we absolutely will not—allow ourselves to be bound by that which, in this tradition, and in these divines, is only the work of man. And how shall we distinguish that which is of God from that which is of men, if not by the holy Scriptures? “It remains,” says Augustine, “that I judge myself according to this only Master, from whose judgment I desire not to escape.” The declarations of the doctors of the church are only the testimonies of the faith which these eminent men had in the doctrines of the Scriptures. They show how these divines received these doctrines. They may, without doubt, be instructive and edifying for us; but there is no authority in them which binds us. All the divines—Greek, Latin, French, Swiss, German, English, American—placed in the presence of the Word of God, are only disciples who are receiving instruction. Men of primitive days, and men of modern times we are all alike scholars in that divine school; and in the chair of instruction, around which we are humbly assembled, nothing appears, nothing exalts itself but the infallible Word of God. I perceive in that vast auditory, Calvin, Luther, Cranmer,

Augustine, Chrysostom, Athanasius, Cyprian, by the side of our contemporaries. We are not “disciples of Cyprian and Ignatius,” as the doctors of Oxford call themselves, but of Jesus Christ. “We do not despise the writings of the fathers,” we say, with Calvin; “but in making use of them, we remember always, that ‘all things are ours’; that they ought to serve, not govern us, and that ‘we, we are Christ’s,’ whom in all things, and without exception, it behooves us to obey.”

This, the divines of the first centuries are themselves the first to say. They claim for themselves no authority, and only wish that the word which has taught them may teach us also. “Now that I am old,” says Augustine, in his *Retractions*, “I do not expect not to be mistaken in word, or to be perfect in word; how much less when, being young, I commenced writing.” “Beware,” says he again, “of submitting to my writings, as if they were canonical Scriptures.” “Do not esteem as canonical Scriptures the works of catholic and justly honored men,” says he elsewhere. “It is allowed for us, without impeaching the honor which is due to them, to reject those things in their writings, should we find such in them, which are contrary to the truth. I regard the writings of others as I would have others regard mine.” “All that has been said since the times of the apostles, ought to be disregarded,” says Jerome, “and can possess no authority. However holy, however learned, a man may be, who comes after the apostles, let him have no authority.”

“Neither antiquity, nor custom,” says the *Confession* of the Reformed Church of France, “ought to be arrayed in opposition to the holy Scriptures; on the contrary, all things ought to be examined, regulated, and reformed according to them.” And the *Confession* of the English Church even says, the doctors of Oxford to the contrary notwithstanding: “The holy Scriptures contain all that is necessary to salvation; so that all that is not found in them, all that cannot be proved by them, cannot be required of any one as an article of faith, or as necessary to salvation.”

Thus the evangelical divines of our times give the hand to the reformers, the reformers to the fathers, the fathers to the apostles; and thus, forming, as it were, a golden chain, the whole church of all ages, and of all people, sings as with one voice to the *God of Truth*, that hymn of one of our greatest poets:

Speak thou unto my heart; and let no sage’s word,  
No teacher, thee beside, explain to me thy law;  
Let every soul, before thy holy presence, Lord,  
Bow down in silent awe,  
And let thy voice be heard!

What, then, is tradition? It is the testimony of history.

There is a historical testimony for the facts of Christian history, as well as for those of any other history. We admit that testimony; only we would discuss it and examine it, as we would all other testimony. The heresy of Rome and of Oxford—and it is that which distinguishes them from us—consists in the fact that they attribute the same infallibility to this testimony as to Scripture itself.

Although we receive the testimony of history as far as it is true, as for example, when it relates to the collection of the writings of the apostles; it by no means results from this, that we should receive this testimony on subjects which are false, as, for instance, on the adoration of Mary, or the celibacy of the priests. The Bible is the faith—holy, authoritative, and truly ancient of the child of God. Human tradition springs from the love of novelties, and is the faith of ignorance, of superstition, and of credulous puerility. How deplorable, yet instructive, to see the doctors of a church, which is called to the glorious liberty of the children of God, and which reposes only on God and his Word, place themselves under the bondage of human ordinances! And how loudly does that example cry to us: “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

All those errors which we are combating come from a misunderstanding of truths. We, too, believe in the attributes of the church of which they speak so much; but we believe in them according to the meaning which God attaches to it, and our opponents believe in them according to that which men attach to it. Yes, there is *one holy* Catholic church; but it is, as the apostle says, “the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.” *Unity*, as well as holiness, appertains to the invisible church. It behooves us, without doubt, to pray that the visible church should advance daily in the possession of these heavenly attributes; but neither rigorous unity nor universal holiness is a

perfection essential to its existence, or a *sine qua non*. To say that the visible church must absolutely be composed of saints only, is the error of the Donatists and fanatics of all ages. So, also, to say that the visible church must of necessity be externally one, is the corresponding error of Rome, of Oxford, and of formalists of all times. Let us guard against preferring the external hierarchy, which consists in certain human forms, to that internal hierarchy which is the kingdom of God itself. Let us not suffer the form, which passes away, to determine the essence of the church; but let us, on the contrary, make the essence of the church, to wit, the Christian life, which emanates from the Word and Spirit of God, change and renew the form. *The form has killed the substance*. Here is the whole history of the Papacy and of false Catholicism. *The substance verifies the form*. Here is the whole history of evangelical Christianity and of the true Catholic church of Jesus Christ.

Yes, I admit it; the church is the judge of controversies—*judex controversiarum*. But what is the church? It is not the clergy; it is not the councils; still less is it the Pope. It is the Christian people; it is the faithful. “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good,” is said to the children of God, and not to some assembly, or to a certain bishop; and it is they who are constituted, on the part of God, *judges of controversies*. If animals have the instinct which leads them not to eat that which is injurious to them, we cannot do less than allow to the Christian this instinct, or, rather, this intelligence, which emanates from the virtue of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian (the Word of God declares it) is called upon to reject “every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.” And this is what is essentially meant when it is said that the church is the *judge of controversies*.

Yes, I believe and confess that there is an authority in the church, and that without that authority the church cannot stand. But where is it to be found? Is it with him, whoever he may be, who has the external consecration, whether he possess theological gifts or not, whether he has received grace and justification or not? Rome herself does not yet pretend that orders save and sanctify. Must, then, the children of God go, in many cases, to ask a decision, in things relating to faith, of the children of

this world? What! a bishop, from the moment he is seated in his chair, although he may be, perhaps, destitute of science, destitute of the Spirit of God, and although he may, perhaps, have the world and Hell in his heart, as had Borgia and so many other bishops, shall he have authority in the assembly of the saints, and do his lips possess always the wisdom and the truth necessary for the church? No. The idea of a knowledge of God, true, but at the same time destitute of holiness, is a gross supernaturalism. “Sanctify them through the truth,” says Jesus. There is an authority in the church, but that authority is wholly in the Word of God. It is not a man, nor a minister, nor a bishop, descended from Gregory, from Chrysostom, from Augustine, or from Irenæus, who has authority over the soul. It is not with a power so contemptible as that which comes from those men that we, the ministers of God, go forth into the world. It is elsewhere than in that episcopal succession, that we seek that which gives authority to our ministry and validity to our sacraments.

Rejecting these deplorable innovations, we appeal from them to the ancient, sovereign, and divine authority of the Word of the Lord. The question which we would ask of the man who would inform himself concerning eternal things, is that which we receive from Jesus himself: “What is written in the law, and how readest thou?”

What we say to rebellious spirits is what Abraham said from heaven to the rich man: “You have Moses and the prophets; hear them.” That which we ask of all is to imitate the Bereans, who “searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so.” “We ought to obey God rather than men,” even the most excellent of men. Behold the true authority, the true hierarchy, the true polity! The churches which are made by men possess human authority—this is natural—but the church of God possesses the authority of God, and she will not receive it from others. Such is the *formal* principle of Christianity.

II. Let us come now to its *material* principle, that is to say, to the body, the very substance of religion. We have announced it in these terms: THE GRACE OF CHRIST ONLY.

“Ye are saved by grace, through faith,” says the Scripture, “and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Evangelical Christianity not only seeks complete salvation in Christ, but seeks it *in Christ only*; thus excluding, as a cause of salvation, all human works, all merit, all co-operation of man or of the church. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, upon which we can build the hope of our salvation, but the *free and unmerited grace of God*, which is given to us *in Christ*, and communicated to us *by faith*.

Now, this second great foundation of evangelical Christianity is likewise overthrown by the modern ecclesiastical Catholicism. The school of Oxford pretends, with Rome and the Council of Trent, “that justification is the indwelling in us of God the Father and of the incarnate Word, by the Holy Spirit, and that the two acts, distinguished from each other by the Bible and our theologians, form only one.” What then? 1. God remits to the sinner the penalty of sin; he absolves him; he pardons him. 2. He delivers him from sin itself; he renews him; he sanctifies him.

Are not these two different things? Would not the pardon of sin, on the part of God, be just nothing at all? Would it not be simply an image of sanctification? Or should we say that the pardon which is granted to faith, and which produces in the heart the sentiment of reconciliation, of adoption, and of peace, is something too external to be taken into account?

Such is the grand difference between us and the Oxford school. We believe in sanctification through *justification*, and the Oxford school believes in justification *through sanctification*. With us justification is the cause, and sanctification is the effect. With these doctors, on the contrary, sanctification is the *cause*, and justification the *effect*. And these are not things indifferent, and vain distinctions. They are the *sic* and the *non*; the yes and the no. While our creed establishes in all their rights these two works, the creed of Oxford compromises and annihilates them both. Justification exists no more, if it depends on man’s sanctification, and not on the grace of God: for “the heavens,” says the Scripture, are not clean in his sight,” “and his eyes are too pure to behold iniquity”; but, on the other hand, sanctification itself cannot be accomplished; for how could you expect the effect to be produced,

when you begin by taking away the cause? “Herein is love,” says John, “not that we loved God, but that he loved us; we love him, because he first loved us.” If I might use a vulgar expression, I should say that Oxford *puts the cart before the horse*, in placing sanctification before justification. In this way neither the cart nor the horse will advance. In order that the work should go on, it is necessary that that which draws should be placed before that which is drawn. There is not a system more contrary to true sanctification than that; and, to employ the language of the *British Critic*, there is not, consequently, a system more monstrous and immoral. What! shall your justification depend, not upon the work which Christ accomplished on the cross, but upon that which is accomplished in your hearts? Is it, not to Christ, to his grace, that you ought to look in order to be justified, but to yourselves, to the righteousness which is in you, to your spiritual gifts?

From this, result two great evils. Either you will deceive yourselves, in believing that there is a work in you sufficiently good to justify you before God; and then you will be inflated with pride, that pride which the Scriptures say “goeth before a fall”; or you will not deceive yourselves; you will see, as the Savior says, that you are poor, and wretched, and blind, and naked; and then you will fall into despair. The heights of pride, and the depths of despair; such are the alternatives which the doctrine of Oxford and of Rome bequeaths to us.

The Christian doctrine, on the contrary, places man in perfect humility, for it is another who justifies him; and yet it gives him abundant peace, for his justification—a fruit of the “righteousness of God”—is complete, assured, eternal.

III. Finally, we define the *personal* or *moral* principle of Christianity We have announced it in these words, THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT ONLY.

Christianity is an individual work; the grace of God converts soul by soul. Each soul is a world, in which a creation peculiar to itself must be accomplished. The church is but the assembly of all the souls in whom this work is wrought, and who are now united because they have but “one Spirit, one Lord, one Father.”

And what is the nature of this work? It is essentially moral. Christianity operates upon the will

of man and changes it. Conversion comes from the action of the Spirit of God, and not from the magic action of certain ceremonies, which, rendering faith on the part of man vain and useless, would regenerate him by their own inherent virtue. “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but (to be) a new creature”; “If through the Spirit ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

Now, the Oxford divines, although there is a great difference among them on this point, as well as some others (going by no means as far as others), put immense obstacles in the way of this individual regeneration. Nothing inspires them with greater repugnance than Christian individualism. They proceed by synthesis, not by analysis. They do not set out with the principle laid down by the Savior: “Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom God”; but they set out with the opposite principle: “All those who have participated in the ordinances of the church are born again.” And while the Savior, in all his discourses, excites the efforts of each individual, saying, “Seek, ask, knock, strive to enter in at the strait gate: it is only the violent who take it by force”; the Oxford divines say, on the contrary, “The idea of obtaining religious truth ourselves, and by our private inquiry, whether by reading, or by thinking, or by studying the Scriptures, or other books; ... is nowhere authorized in the Scriptures. The great question which ought to be placed before every mind, is this: What voice should be heard like that of the holy Catholic and Apostolic church?”<sup>2</sup>

And how shall this individual regeneration by the Holy Spirit be accomplished, since the first task of Puseyism is to say to all, that it is already accomplished; that all who have been baptized have thereby been rendered partakers of the divine nature; and that to preach conversion again to them is contrary to the truth? “It is baptism and not faith,” says one of these divines, “that is the primary instrument of justification”<sup>3</sup>; and we know that with them justification and conversion are one and the same work. To prevent the wretched from escaping from the miserable state in which they are, would not the best means be to persuade a poor man that he

possesses a large fortune, or an ignorant man that he has great science, or a sick man that he has perfect health? The evil one could not invent a stratagem more fit to prevent conversion than this idea, that all men who have been baptized by water are regenerated.

Still more, these doctors extend to the holy supper this same magic virtue. “It is now almost universally believed,” say they, in speaking of their church, “that God communicates grace only through faith, prayer, spiritual contemplation, communion with God: while it is the church and her sacraments which are *the* ordained, direct, visible means for conveying to the soul that which is invisible and supernatural. It is said, for example, that to administer the supper to infants, to dying persons apparently deprived of their senses, however pious they may have been, is a superstition; and yet these practices are sanctioned by authority. The essence of the sectarian doctrine is to consider *faith*, and not the *sacraments*, as the means of justification and other evangelical gifts.”<sup>4</sup>

What then? Shall a child who does not possess reason, and does not even know how to speak; shall a sick man whom the approach of death has deprived of perception and intelligence, receive grace purely by external application of the sacraments? Have the will, the affections of the heart, no need to be touched in order that man may be sanctified? What a degradation of man, and of the religion of Jesus Christ! ...

If the first error of Oxford deprives the church of light, if the second deprives her of salvation, the third deprives her of all real sanctification. Without doubt, we believe that the sacraments are means of grace; but they are only so when faith accompanies their use. To put faith and the sacraments in opposition, as the Oxford doctors do, is to annihilate the efficacy of the sacraments themselves.

The church will rise up against such fatal errors. There is a work of renovation which must be wrought in man, a personal or individual work; and it is God who performs it. “A new heart,” saith the Lord, “will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” By what right would they thus put the church in the place

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<sup>2</sup> *British Critic*.

<sup>3</sup> Newman, on Justification.

<sup>4</sup> *Tracts for the Times*. Advertisement in Volume 2.

of God, and establish her clergy as the dispensers of divine life?

I repeat again, in closing, the three great principles of Christianity are these: *The word of God ONLY*; *The grace of God ONLY*; *The work of the Spirit ONLY*.

I come now to ask you henceforth to apply to yourselves more and more these principles and let them reign supremely over your hearts and lives.

And why? Because everything that places our souls in immediate communication with God is salutary, and everything that interposes between God and our souls is injurious and ruinous. If a thick cloud should pass between you and the Sun, you would no longer feel its genial warmth, and might, perhaps, be seized with a chill. So if you place between yourselves and the Word of God the tradition and authority of the church, you will no longer have to do with the Word of God, that is to say, with a divine, and, consequently, a powerful and perfect instrument, but with the word of man; that is to say, with a human, and, consequently, a weak and defective instrument; it will have lost that power which translates from darkness to light.

Or, if you place before the grace of God and yourselves the ordinances of the church, the episcopal priesthood, the dispositions of the heart, works, *grace will then be no more grace*, as St. Paul says. The instrument of God will have been broken, and we shall no longer be able to say, that “charity proceeds from faith unfeigned,” that “faith worketh by love,” “that our souls are purified in obeying the truth,” “that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith.”

Man always seeks to return, in some way or other, to a human salvation; this is the source of the innovations of Rome and of Oxford. The substitution of the church for Jesus Christ, is that which essentially characterizes these opinions. It is no longer Christ who enlightens, Christ who saves, Christ who forgives, Christ who commands, Christ who judges; it is the church, and always the church, that is to say, an assembly of sinful men, as weak and prone to err as ourselves. “They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him.”

There are two ways of destroying Christianity: one is to deny it, the other to displace it. To put the church above Christianity, the hierarchy above the Word of God; to ask a man, not whether he has

received the Holy Ghost, but whether he has received baptism from the hands of those who are termed successors of the apostles and their delegates; all this may doubtless flatter the pride of the natural man, but is fundamentally opposed to the Bible, and aims a fatal blow at the religion of Jesus Christ. If God had intended that Christianity should, like the Mosaic system, be chiefly an ecclesiastical, sacerdotal, and hierarchical system, he would have ordered and established it in the New Testament, as he did in the Old. But there is nothing like this in the New Testament. All the declarations of our Lord and of his apostles tend to prove that the new religion given to the world, is “life and spirit,” and not a new system of priesthood and ordinances. “The kingdom of God,” saith Jesus, “cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, “Lo, here! or, Lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

Let us, then, attribute a divine institution and a divine authority to the essence of the church, but by no means to its *form*. God has undoubtedly established the ministry of the word and sacraments, that is to say, general forms, which are adapted to the universal church; but it is a narrow and dangerous bigotry which would attribute more importance to the particular forms of each sect than to the spirit of Christianity. This evil has long prevailed in the Eastern Church (Greek) and has rendered it barren. It is the essence of the Church of Rome, and it is destroying it. It is endeavoring to insinuate itself into every church; it appears in England in the Established Church; in Germany in the Lutheran, and even in the Reformed and Presbyterian Church. It is that mystery of iniquity which already began to work in the time of the apostles. Let us reject and oppose this deadly principle wherever it is found. We are men before we are Swiss, French, English, or German; let us also remember that we are also Christians before we are Episcopalians, Lutherans, Reformed, or Dissenters. These different forms of the church are like the different costumes, different features, and different characters of nations; that which constitutes the man is not found in these accessories. We must seek for it in the heart which beats under this exterior, in the conscience, which is seated there, in the intelligence which shines there,



in the will which acts there. If we assign more importance to the church than to Christianity, to the form than to the life, we shall infallibly reap that which we have sown; we shall soon have a church composed of skeletons, clothed, it may be, in brilliant garments, and ranged, I admit, in a most imposing order to the eye, but as cold, stiff, and immovable as a pale legion of the dead. If Puseyism (and, unfortunately, some of the doctrines which it promulgates are not, in England, confined to that school), if Puseyism should make progress in the Established Church, it will, in a few years, dry up all its springs of life. The feverish excitement which disease at first produces, will soon give place to languor; the blood will be congealed, the muscles stiffened, and that church will be only a dead body, around which the eagles will gather together.

All forms, whether papal, patriarchal, episcopal, consistorial, or presbyterian, possess only a human value and authority. Let us not esteem the bark above the sap, the body above the soul, the form above the life, the visible church above the invisible, the priest above the Holy Spirit. Let us hate all sectarian, ecclesiastical, national, or dissenting spirit; but let us love Jesus Christ in all sects, whether ecclesiastical, national, or dissenting. The true catholicity which we have lost, and which we must seek to recover, is that of "holding the truth in love." A renovation of the church is necessary; I know it; I feel it; I pray for it from the bottom of my soul; only let us seek for it in the right way. Forms, ecclesiastical constitutions, the organization of churches, are important, very important. "But let us seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto us."

Let us then, be firm and decided, in the truth; and while we love the erring, let us boldly attack the error. Let us stand upon the Rock of ages the word of God; and let the vain opinions and state innovations which are constantly springing up and dying in the world, break powerless at our feet. "Two systems of doctrine," says Dr. Pusey, "are now, and probably for the last time, in conflict: the system of Geneva, and the Catholic system." We accept this definition. One of the men who have most powerfully resisted these errors, the Rev. W. Goode, seems to think that by the Genevan system, Dr. Pusey intends to designate the Unitarian, Pelagian, Latitudinarian system, which

has laid waste the church, not only in Geneva, but throughout Christendom. "According to Romish tactics," says Mr. Goode, "the adversaries of the Oxford school are classed together under the name that will render them most odious; they belong, it is said, to the *Genevan school*."

Certainly, if the Unitarian school of England and Geneva were called upon to struggle with the semi-papal school of Oxford, we should much fear the issue. But these divines will meet with other opponents in England, Scotland, Ireland, on the continent, and, if need be, even in our little and humble Geneva. Yes, we acknowledge that it is the system of Geneva which is now struggling with the Catholic system; but it is the system of ancient Geneva; it is the system of Calvin and Beza, the system of the gospel and the Reformation. The opprobrium they would cast upon us we receive as an honor. Three centuries ago, Geneva arose against Rome; let Geneva now rise against Oxford. "I should like," said one of the Oxford divines, "to see the Patriarch of Constantinople and our Archbishop of Canterbury go barefoot to Rome, throw their arms round the Pope, kiss him, and not let him go till they had persuaded him to be more reasonable"; that is to say, doubtless, until he had extended his hand to them, and ceased to proclaim them heretics and schismatics.

Evangelical Christians of Geneva, England, and all other countries! It is not to Rome that you must drag yourselves, "to those seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations"; the pilgrimage that you must make is to that excellent and perfect tabernacle "not made with hands"; that "throne of grace, where we find grace to help in time of need." It is not upon the neck of the "man of sin" that you must cast yourselves, covering him with your kisses and your tears; but upon the neck of him with whom "Jacob wrestled, until the breaking of the day"; of him "who is seated at the right hand of God, in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

Yes, let the children of God in the east and in the west arise; let them, understanding the signs of the times, and seeing that the destinies of the church depend upon the issue of the present conflicts,

conflicts so numerous, so different, and so powerful, form a sacred brotherhood, and with one heart and one soul, exclaim, as Moses did when the ark set forward, “Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee.”