

**THE ARTICLES TREATED ON IN TRACT
90 RECONSIDERED AND THEIR
INTERPRETATION VINDICATED IN A
LETTER TO THE REV. R. W. JELF, D.D.
CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH**

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The Articles Treated on in Tract 90 Reconsidered and Their Interpretation Vindicated in a
Letter to the Rev. R. W. Jelf, D.D. Canon of Christ Church by E. B. Pusey

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E. B. PUSEY

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REV. R. W. JELF, D.D.
CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH.

WITH AN APPENDIX FROM ASP. USSHER ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
ANCIENT AND MODERN ADDRESSES TO SAINTS.

BY THE
REV. E. B. PUSEY, D.D.
REGIUS PROFESSOR OF HEBREW, CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH,
LATE FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE.



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CONTENTS.

| | Page |
|---|------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| The Catholic Interpretation of the Articles the true one | 6 |
| Art. v. and xx. Holy Scripture and the Authority of the Church | 12 |
| Art. xix. The Visible Church | 19 |
| Art. xxi. General Councils distinct from Œcumenical | 23 |
| Art. xxv. Number of the Sacraments | 33 |
| Art. xxviii. Transubstantiation | 42 |
| Art. xxxi. Sacrifices of Masses | 59 |
| Art. xxii. Introductory Remarks | 70 |
| Romish doctrine of Purgatory | 79 |
| —————of Pardons | 90 |
| —————of Invocation of Saints | 104 |
| —————of veneration and worship- ping of Images and Relics | 123 |
| Art. xxxii. Celibacy of the Clergy | 129 |
| Art. xxxvii. Jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome | 135 |
| Art. xi. Justification by Faith only | 140 |
| Art. xii. and xiii. Works before and after Justification | 141 |
| Conclusion. | |
| Condemnation of the Tract precipitate | 148 |
| Tendency of individuals to Romanism | 154 |
| Condition and prospects of our Church and our duties in her | 174 |
| Appendix. | |
| Abp. Usher on the difference between ancient addresses and modern invocations of Saints | 187 |
| Illustrations of Romish doctrine of invocation still existing, from Liguori's Glories of Mary | 204 |

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE deep interest which you have ever taken in all which concerns the well-being of our Church, both when serving her, away from your home, in aiding to form (under God) a valuable character which may be, by His blessing, of importance to thousands, and more recently, since you have been restored to us, leaves me no doubt that you will gladly allow yourself again to be addressed on the subject, out of which so much agitation has recently been raised. And this the rather, since, although you have uniformly from the first held "that form of doctrine which was delivered" to us, and wherein your mind was moulded, you have, by your absence, been detached from the efforts of those who have been of late endeavouring to restore it to others, and so also, from the imperfections, infirmities, or errors, which may have clung to any of us in the execution of our task. Agreeing with us as to our general principles on the authority of the Church, the value of "Catholic consent" as a guide to the meaning of Holy Scripture, the high dignity of the Sacraments, the necessity of a higher

standard of holiness, self-denial, self-discipline, almsgiving, than has of late been common among us, you are not committed to any thing which we have said on these subjects in detail. You are come among us, I hope, to assist, under God's guidance,—separately, yet one in heart and object,—in the restoration of a higher sense of our privileges and duties as members and Ministers of the Apostolic Church of this land.

Nor would I, by any thing I write, seek to identify you with myself; enough that we are bound by the privileges of our common duty, and the friendship of most of our lives hitherto.

Nor, again, do I wish to enter into a vindication of the Tract, which has been the centre of this excitement. That, I am convinced, is best left in the hands of its writer; nor do I wish to make him, who views things far more deeply than I can, responsible for my construction of its details. I wish only to help to relieve, if I may, the perplexity of some minds, who think principles which they hold, involved in the censure passed upon the Tract, as also the anxieties of another class, who fear lest the adoption of the principles therein inculcated, should lead to a relaxation of the mode in which the Articles are subscribed. As an instance of this perplexity, I may mention, that calm and conscientious persons have been seriously perplexed, whether they could retain their offices, as Tutors, after the sentence of condemnation passed

on the Tract by the Heads of Houses. In this place, where the advice of elders can easily be had, such could readily be reassured, that the sense in which they understood the Tract, and consequently the way in which they subscribed and explained the Articles, was not that which the Heads of Houses meant to condemn. The perplexity however would be much more extensive and embarrassing, if any of our Bishops should hereafter advert to the Tract, and, without explaining their own views, seem to countenance the general condemnation by the Heads; among those, who coincide with the real views of the Tract, are many by whom the slightest word of their Bishop would be deeply felt; and who yet would find a difficulty in explaining themselves to him; circumstances, to which I need not here advert, have added to the distance at which a Presbyterian must naturally feel himself removed from his Bishop; such persons would naturally too shrink from wearying their already overburthened Bishop with explanations, which would necessarily require much detail, and exhibition of their own personal feelings and views. "Why speakest thou any more of thy matters?" would be the feeling of such persons. And thus they would seem left to decide, as they best might, whether they could continue to serve in a Diocese in which their views of the Articles, on subscribing which they had been admitted to their cure, seemed to have been censured, whether it might not give scandal, even if otherwise allow-

able, whether they ought not silently to withdraw, and yet whether such withdrawing would not be a tacit admission, that the sense in which they had hitherto signed the Articles was an "evasion." On these and other grounds, valuable persons, whose labours our Church could ill spare, might be much harassed, if a Bishop should, by any unexplained reference to the censure of the Heads, seem to lay down that the Articles could not be conscientiously signed on the principles of the Tract, whereas such would, in fact, sign them or adhere to them, not on the principles objected to, but on such, as would be recognized by their Bishops themselves. On the other hand, I have had reason to know, that one chief fear of those who have blamed the Tract, has been lest it should introduce lax ways of signing the Articles generally, or sanction their being signed by persons, who had parted even with the most essential truths which they embody.

On these grounds, I examined (as I was able) the Tract itself, with the view to ascertain what was the amount of the relaxation of the Articles involved in it. It is the result of that examination with which I am now going to trouble you.

Some of the causes, which may have led to misapprehension, the Author of the Tract has, with that simplicity and candour which we so well know, mentioned to yourself in his Letter to you, and its Postscript. But what I wish to draw

attention to is something distinct. The Author had, apparently, two objects in view; one, to vindicate the Catholic interpretation of the Articles against a modern popular system of interpreting them, and to shew that our Articles, fairly construed, were in no case opposed to any teaching of the Church Catholic; secondly, to shew, that certain opinions or practices, which, *though not Catholic*, are to be found more or less prevalent in the early centuries, may yet be held as private opinions by individuals, without hindering any from signing the Articles with a safe conscience. In few words, that *our Articles neither contradict any thing Catholic, nor are meant to condemn any thing in early Christianity, even though not Catholic, but only the later definite system in the Church of Rome.* Perhaps these two points would be better elicited without reference to the Tridentine decrees, since this part of the question relates rather to the hope of the future repentance and restoration of Rome, than to any thing which concerns ourselves at this moment.

Now it appears to me, 1st, that the proposed interpretation of the Articles relates almost entirely to the first of these two points, on which no question would be raised, at least by none, except those of extreme views; 2dly, that there is so broad a line between any practices or doctrines occurring any where in earlier Christianity, and any later corruptions in the Church of Rome, that