

**CUSTOM WITHOUT
TRUTH IS
ANTIQUATED ERROR**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649450220

Custom Without Truth is Antiquated Error by Christian Layman

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

CHRISTIAN LAYMAN

**CUSTOM WITHOUT
TRUTH IS
ANTIQUATED ERROR**

CUSTOM WITHOUT TRUTH

18

ANTIQUATED ERROR.

BY

CHRISTIAN LAYMAN.

London

'Rebuke them sharply,' says the Apostle, 'that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.'

LONDON:
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.

MDCCCLVII.

110.d. 437

IPSWICH:
PRINTED BY J. M. BURTON AND CO.



CUSTOM WITHOUT TRUTH

19

ANTIQUATED ERROR.

IN religion, abuse and error are the certain consequences of following the doctrines and traditions of men, instead of the doctrines and testimony of God. We see this manifested even in our enlightened time, by the prerogative which bishops take upon themselves in their pretended ordinance of Confirmation, and imposition of hands, etc., which we have shown, by the records of the sacred Scriptures, to be quite contrary to the original purpose of heaven. As this ordinance has degenerated into abuse, principally from some misapplication of the term and office of bishop, a few remarks on this subject will not be inappropriate.

That bishops have any divine right, either for title or their authority, is questionable ; and the attempt to found such right upon apostolical succession, is fraudulent and absurd ; being unsupported by historical evidence, and totally at variance with scriptural truth.

The offices of the Church, under our Saviour, were conducted by apostles, bishops and presbyters, and deacons ; presbyters and bishops, sometimes in holy writ called elders, were synonymous. They, the apostles, presbyters, and bishops, or elders, formed the body corporate, similar to the Jewish Sanhedrim—wherein resided their polity and power. The only distinction made

between bishop and presbyter, was the former being appointed to the instruction and care of a single church or congregation. Nowhere in Scripture is it stated of bishops ruling over other ministers, or officially of ranking above others. This became an ecclesiastical regulation afterwards by the order of man, not of God. As our Saviour had apostles who, more especially, were superintendents over both ministers and churches; so it may be presumed, bishops were appointed as their representatives. The representation is not amiss, it is evangelical. But the application of the term, as now made use of, for another office, could not but engender ambiguity and confusion; and so it has proved to the present day. The office being instituted, with it also went its representative of apostleship. Apostleship, therefore, very improperly, became blended and synonymous with the term bishop. And as the representative became blended with the term, Apollyon guile found a favourable opportunity of encouraging vain man to personate the office itself, which he well knew could never be fulfilled. For the extraordinary powers given to the apostles were expressly the gift of Christ himself, as the seal and evidence of his being the Messiah—the Son of God—Immanuel. Which gifts can never be derived from any other source; and therefore vain and preposterous in man to make any such attempt, as it has been long proved.

That prelates, some of whom know better, should still endeavour to foster this illusive notion upon the public mind, is something strange, except a text may explain it. 'Money is the root of all evil.' So is any other idolized passion, uncontrolled by the higher governing principle, of the supreme love of God. The heads of clerical assemblies are well aware that by mental philosophy, and the light of revelation, human conduct is, as well as natural things, subject to analyzation; and as the light from both sources advances more and more towards its meridian, so it will much do away with

the 'vain show' of gone-by days. 'Give glory to God,' is one of the great lessons we are taught in the sacred volume. Now, in plain terms, that is no glory to God, assuming divine power, and not being able, when the attempt is made, to show forth its fruits. 'Ye shall know the tree by its fruits,' says our Saviour. And when the produce of the tree has been long and largely tried, and is still unproductive, we estimate its value accordingly. Why, then, try it any longer? Better that a more profitable one be planted in its stead, than subject it at last to open shame, and the vindictive alternative of the awful mandate of the Most High: 'Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?'

It naturally follows that one leading false principle applied to practice, other false notions and acts are derived from it, and they are built up together; and frequently the fallacy is not detected till the evil consequences are experienced. Hence, any sacred office, undertaken without divine sanction and authority, being enacted under the mere auspices of men, degenerates into abuse; and ultimately into an anomaly, whose origin can no where be found, but in the truth of the Lord's words, 'They have sought out many inventions.'*

Had the ecclesiastics, at first, when they adopted new regulations, not misapplied an already established and scripturally authorized term, they would have prevented much confusion and contention, which has thereby been occasioned ever since. And in the second place, had they selected some, the most approved, to be superintendents, overseers, or guardians, over both ministers and churches, after the manner of the apostles, without pretending to apostolic gifts extraordinary—had they been satisfied with the elevation of such an arrangement, with-

* Before and after William the Conqueror, bishops, sometimes, were elected by the great council of the nation, and confirmed by the Sovereign. Since, then, other modes have been adopted, by the 'inventions of men,' not by apostolic rule: by which, however, ecclesiastics have been governed.

out leaning to indulge the bait of pride and vain glory, aiming at superhuman powers — Abaddon would have been foiled ; and false and costly dignities would not have been set up for the people's homage and maintenance to the present hour.

Had God's honour (not their own) been primarily consulted, and made the chief object of regard, all would have been well ; and none of the consequences here adverted to would have arisen. For the word of the Lord says, 'Thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord : that it may be well with thee.' And, 'them that honour me I will honour.'

The Almighty ensures the fulfilment of his promises, because 'his reward is with him, to give to every one according to their works : working all things together to them that love him.' And the proof of love is hallowed faithful obedience. 'Not those,' says our Saviour, 'that say Lord, Lord, but those that do the will of my Father.'

In the decalogue of Mount Sinai, we observe the wisdom of God in placing the first commandment at the head, and to take the lead of the rest. And the pre-eminent precept of revelation ought always to have the predominant rule in all human affairs ; more especially so when religion is concerned.

The want of duly estimating and attending to the first great principles, as pointed out by the finger of God—see the variance, the vexation, and dissension, it has occasioned. What cause the lovers of the Prince of Peace have had to lament and mourn, because of the discord in the Israelitish camp ! Volumes upon volumes of stumbling blocks have scattered the plains ; and who so much have obstructed the Christian's course, and obscured the light of the Christian name, as the inhabitants of Christendom themselves ? O, these fruits of bitterness, disputations, controversies, envyings, persecutions, strife, and vain glorying, instead of 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good-will towards men.'

But for these dark tempestuous clouds floating in the atmosphere of Zion, the shining beams of the approbation of heaven would have been constantly enjoyed; God's honour, not man's, would have become the great theme of praise; and peace, instead of discord, would have reigned in the bosom of the church till now, and her lustre might have been perpetuated to the end of time!

How beautifully our Saviour has embodied, in simple language, first principles with promise—'If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light'—single in supreme love of God—giving glory and honour to him. Our unfaithfulness is the only cause of our dereliction. Honour of God would have led to the honouring of his word; and on no account then would a name, a term, or a word, have been suffered to be either altered, perverted, or misapplied. No. Clerical masters would not have stripped any inspired word of its original signification, and then placed it in their own glossary to become an appellation or title to gratify human dignity and Satanic devices. Neither would clerical masters have stripped any inspired word of its spiritual signification, to place it in their own glossary, and then prostitute it for the name of an earthly building, such as the word 'church,' which has been productive of incalculable mischief.

The inspired volume is a sacred treasure, deposited in the hands of those with whom it is entrusted. And fearful is the woe charged upon those who shall either 'add to, or take away from, the words' thereof. And Satan is well aware that perversion or misuse of words answer the same end. Therefore, once he can engage the affections or passions, by gratifying pride, covetousness, ambition, or lust, or by whatever means, so as to entice man from the supreme love of God, and the oracles of God, his purpose is answered; he gains a conquest; he has now the ascendancy. The arch enemy having discovered the avenue to man's besetting sin, he can at pleasure present the darling bait, and man becomes his servant,