

**TRACTS FOR THE
TIMES, VOL.
II FOR 1834-5**

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Tracts for the Times, Vol. II for 1834-5 by Various

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TRACTS FOR THE TIMES.

BY

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MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

VOL. II.

FOR

1834-5.

“ If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?”

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23/11/86

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NOTICE.

THE Numbers 68, 69, and 70, containing a portion of the Treatise entitled, "SCRIPTURAL VIEWS OF HOLY BAPTISM," by the REV. DR. PUSEY, (vide Table of Contents) are at present reprinting, and will form the conclusion of this Volume.

Number 67, containing the First Part of DR. PUSEY'S *Treatise on Baptism*, is now reprinted.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN completing the second volume of a publication, to which the circumstances of the day have given rise, it may be right to allude to a change which has taken place in them since the date of its commencement. At that time, in consequence of long security, the attention of members of our Church had been but partially engaged in ascertaining the grounds of their adherence to it; but the imminent peril to which all that is dear to them has since been exposed, has naturally turned their thoughts that way, and obliged them to defend it on one or other of the principles which are usually put forward on its behalf. Discussions have thus been renewed in various quarters, on points which had long remained undisturbed; and, though numbers continue undecided in opinion, or take up a temporary position in some one of the hundred middle points which may be assumed between the two main theories in which the question issues, and others, again, have deliberately entrenched themselves in the modern or ultra-protestant alternative, yet, on the whole, there has been much hearty and intelligent adoption, and much respectful study, of those more primitive views maintained by our great Divines. As the altered state of public information and opinion has a necessary bearing on the efforts of those who desire to excite attention to the subject, (in which number the writers of these Tracts are to be included,) it will not be inappropriate briefly to state in this place, what it is conceived is the present position of the great body of Churchmen with reference to it.

While we have cause to be thankful for the sounder and more accurate language which is now very generally adopted among well-judging men on ecclesiastical subjects, we must beware of over-estimating what has been done,

and so becoming sanguine in our hopes of success, or slackening our exertions to secure it. Many more persons, doubtless, have taken up a profession of the main doctrine in question, that, namely, of the One Catholic and Apostolic Church, than fully enter into it. This is to be expected, it being the peculiarity of all religious teaching, that words are imparted before ideas. A child learns his Creed or Catechism before he understands it; and in beginning any deep subject we are all but children to the end of our lives. The instinctive perception of a rightly instructed mind, the *primâ facie* force of the argument, or the authority of our celebrated writers, have all had their due and extensive influence in furthering the reception of the doctrine, when once it was openly maintained; to which must be added the prospect of the loss of state protection, which made it necessary to look out for other reasons for adherence to the Church besides that of obedience to the civil magistrate. Nothing, which has spread quickly, has been received thoroughly. Doubtless there are a number of seriously-minded persons, who think they admit the doctrine in question much more fully than they do, and who would be startled at seeing that realized in particulars, which they confess in an abstract form. Many there are who do not at all feel that it is capable of a practical application: and, while they bring it forward on special occasions, in formal expositions of faith, or in answer to a direct interrogatory, let it slip from their minds almost entirely in their daily conduct or their religious teaching, from the long and inveterate habit of thinking and acting without it. We must not then at all be surprised at finding, that to modify the principles and motives on which men act is not the work of a day; nor at undergoing disappointments, at witnessing relapses, misconceptions, sudden disgusts, and, on the other hand, abuses and perversions of the true doctrine, in the case of those who have taken it up with greater warmth than discernment.

And in the next place, it will be found, that much more has been done in awakening Churchmen to the truth of the

Apostolical Commission as a fact, and to the admission of it as a duty, than to the enjoyment of it as a privilege. If asked what is the use of adhering to the Church, they will commonly answer, that it is commanded, that all acts of obedience meet with their reward from Almighty God, and this in the number; but the notion of the Church as the storehouse and direct channel of grace, as a Divine Ordinance, not merely to be maintained for order's sake, or because schism is a sin, but to be approached joyfully and expectantly as a definite instrument, or rather the appointed means, of spiritual blessings,—as an Ordinance which conveys secret strength and life to every one who shares in it, unless there be some actual moral impediment in his own mind,—this is a doctrine which as yet is but faintly understood among us. Nay, our subtle Enemy has so contrived, that by affixing to this blessed truth the stigma of Popery, numbers among us are effectually deterred from profiting by a gracious provision, intended for the comfort of our faith, but in their case wasted.

The particular deficiency here alluded to may also be described by referring to another form under which it shows itself, viz. the *à priori* reluctance in those who believe the Apostolical Commission, to appropriate to it the power of consecrating the Lord's Supper; as if there were some antecedent improbability in God's gifts being lodged in particular observances, and distributed in a particular way; and as if the strong wish, or moral worth, of the individual could create in the outward ceremony a virtue which it had not received from above. Rationalistic, or (as they may be more properly called) carnal notions concerning the Sacraments, and, on the other hand, a superstitious apprehension of resting in them, and a slowness to believe the possibility of God's having literally blessed ordinances with invisible power, have, alas! infected a large mass of men in our communion. There are those whose "word will eat as doth a canker;" and it is to be feared, that we have been over-near certain celebrated Protestant teachers, Puritan or Latitudinarian, and have suffered in consequence. Hence we have

almost embraced the doctrine, that GOD conveys grace only through the instrumentality of the mental energies, that is, through faith, prayer, active spiritual contemplations, or (what is called) communion with GOD, in contradiction to the primitive view, according to which the Church and her Sacraments are the ordained and direct visible means of conveying to the soul what is in itself supernatural and unseen. For example, would not most men maintain, on the first view of the subject, that to administer the LORD'S Supper to infants, or to the dying and apparently insensible, however consistently pious and believing in their past lives, must be, under all circumstances, and in every conceivable case, a superstition? and yet neither practice is without the sanction of primitive usage. And does not this account for the prevailing indisposition to admit that Baptism conveys regeneration? Indeed, this may even be set down as the essence of Sectarian Doctrine, (however its mischief may be restrained or compensated, in the case of individuals,) to consider faith, and not the Sacraments, as the proper instrument of justification and other gospel gifts; instead of holding, that the grace of CHRIST comes to us altogether from without, (as from Him, so through externals of His ordaining,) faith being but the *sine quâ non*, the necessary condition on our parts for duly receiving it.

It has been with the view of meeting this cardinal deficiency (as it may be termed) in the religion of the day, that the Tract on Baptism, contained in the latter half of this volume, has been inserted; which is to be regarded, not as an inquiry into one single or isolated doctrine, but as a delineation, and serious examination of a modern system of theology, of extensive popularity and great speciousness, in its elementary and characteristic principles.