

**EXTERNAL
RELIGION:
ITS USE AND ABUSE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649579976

External Religion: Its Use and Abuse by George Tyrrell

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

GEORGE TYRRELL

**EXTERNAL
RELIGION:
ITS USE AND ABUSE**

EXTERNAL RELIGION.

EXTERNAL RELIGION :

Its Use and Abuse.

BY

GEORGE TYRRELL, S.J.

Author of "Dark Sayings" and "Words of Vetsera."

LONDON
SANDS & CO.

MDCCCXCIX.

PREFACE.

THE proverbial fruitlessness of religious or philosophical controversy is doubtless in some measure due to the fact that, each one's seemingly many thoughts on such matters are indeed but one thought in diverse clothings ; that the conclusions to which we cleave, really so modify our understanding of the principles from which we profess to draw them, that even the few premisses we may seem to hold in union with our opponents are held in a different sense, and thus there is no common basis for argument. It might be thought that, agreeing in the Apostles' Creed and all it involves, a Catholic and Protestant could easily advance to still fuller agreement ; but it may well be doubted if their

inner understanding of a single article is exactly the same ; while we venture to suspect that the little differences in each case would be found ultimately to depend upon, rather than support the great conclusions concerning which they are at issue. Whether theoretically it must be so, matters little, since practically, so it is that, for the most part, men first fix their beliefs, and then fabricate reasons in support of them. We flatter ourselves that our thoughts are built up logically from principles which are independent of their consequences ; but in reality, they are rather as the stones of an arch of which each is supported by all the rest. In purely abstract science, where perfect precision of terms is attainable, logic holds inexorable sway ; nor is there room for difference of opinion ; but where the conceptions dealt with are necessarily imperfectly defined, recourse to dialectical reasoning is idle, until agreement in the manner of simple apprehension can be secured.

Here, however, the same difficulty besets the

elements of the discussion as attends on the total construction to which it is directed. There is no rule for forcing another to apprehend things exactly as we ourselves apprehend them, whether they be simpler notions, or their more complex resultants; the only resource is, by every artifice of exposition and illustration, to set out our idea so clearly that it may find its way readily into any mind already capable of responding to it. But as the same bias of vision, or refraction, which distorts the image of the whole, will proportionally distort the image of each component part, one may just as well begin with the former, and face the problem in the gross as in detail. Nay, better; for it is our mode of conceiving the whole that determines our mode of conceiving the parts, rather than inversely.

It is then by the frequent and diversified setting forth of the Catholic conception of Christianity in its entirety, viewed now from one side, now from another, that we best render

assistance to those many souls who, consciously or unconsciously, are in need of such an ideal and to whom it has only to be clearly presented in order to be apprehended, desired, and accepted.

These lectures, slight as they are in many ways and directed to practice rather than to speculation, do nevertheless sketch, in a few rough strokes, one particular outline of the Catholic Religion, which may be of interest just now when the question of ecclesiasticism has come into prominence once more before the eyes of the British public—a question whose solution largely depends on the view we take of the relation of external to internal religion. The Catholic and the Protestant conception of Christianity are distinct from one another not only in their entirety, but—such is the organic unity of each system—in their every detail, notwithstanding many all-but coincidences and points of all-but contact. Were these contacts and coincidences perfect, logic might force the

opponents to total concord under pain of incoherence. But, since as a fact they are not, we shall better deal at once with the two conceptions in their entirety, than wrangle about any of their parts, since these are really shaped and animated by the same spirit that characterizes the whole. In either case our task is one, not of argument, but of exposition; we have but to let the Truth appear, and then bid men "Come and see!" And of these, some will remain and some will go away, according to the power of seeing they bring with them.

G. T.