

# Reformation Part 2 - The Tractarian Movement

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now, do you remember what it is that we're seeking to do together? I am presenting four talks on the subject of Reformation.

And the perspective is biblical and theological, rather than simply historical. We are used to studies of Reformation, and particularly of the 16th century Reformation, which are angled historically, and which are concerned in the first instance to tell us what happened.

None of that is wrong, but I'm doing something different. I am taking the notion of Reformation. I am broadening it to include, as I think it ought to include, all that is meant by the words revival and renewal.

And I am seeking to explore what constitutes Reformation, revival, and renewal as a work of God. A work of God, which takes various forms, at various times, in various situations, but which is essentially the same work, in the sense, I mean, that it's God, through his word and spirit, advancing the work of grace that has as its final goal, the perfection of the church, which we shall only see when Christ comes again, and the new order for which we wait becomes reality.

[ 1 : 59 ] But it's very clear in the New Testament that God is at work in the church to make it grow and advance towards that goal.

You think, for instance, of the middle verses of Ephesians chapter 4, when every part of the body of Christ makes its own contribution, the body makes increase of itself for the building up of itself in love, till we all come, in the unity of the faith, to the fullness of Christ.

That's what the work of God, that we call Reformation, Renewal, and Revival, is, as we would say, in aid of.

And if you look at the matter that way, then you realize at once, well now, there have been a whole series of movements in history, movements of the Spirit of God, through the Word of God, which fall more or less under that complex heading.

I say complex because in my mind, I'm holding together the three words, the three R's, Reformation, Renewal, Revival, and I'm asking you, for at least the purposes of these talks, to get into the habit of doing the same.

[ 3 : 31 ] It's a single, many-sided work of God. You may recall that at the end of my introduction of this idea, last week, when I talked to you, a shrewd question was asked as to whether these movements of God are not, again and again, flawed.

And of course, the answer is yes. What else would you expect when there are movements of God among imperfectly sanctified sinners, whose understanding of God's ways is often defective, and whose personal idiosyncrasies, call them oddities, mean that when they're excited, as God's people are excited in times of Reformation, Renewal, or Revival, there's imbalance, just because we are, none of us, very well-balanced people.

Sin has put us all out of kilter, simply as human beings. And one aspect of the work of grace is the, shall I call it, the reconfiguring of us, in our mindset, our attitudes, our habits, and so on, in the image of the perfect man, the perfectly balanced man, the perfectly godly man, the incarnate Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

But at the moment, none of us are very far along that road. And so, when excitement comes, we get unbalanced, more or less.

And that's the fundamental reason, it seems to me, why these 3R movements do have their flaws. And if you come at them unsympathetically, you're likely to see only the flaws, and not the work of God.

[ 5 : 41 ] And if you come at them too sympathetically, you will only see the work of God, and not the flaws. And either way of looking at these movements, is itself unbalanced and incomplete.

Well, that's what I'm trying to transcend in these talks of mine. So that from one standpoint, at any rate, they are talks on the discerning of what's right, with various spiritual movements, as well as the discerning of what's inadequate about them.

Now, this may come as a bit of a jolt to you, friends, because you, could be, are used to thinking of the 16th century Protestant Reformation as virtually flawless, and the 18th century Evangelical Revival, both sides of the Atlantic, as virtually flawless.

And I made reference last time to the Welsh Revival of 1904, which Welsh Evangelical Christians, anyway, still regard as virtually flawless.

Well, this is just the way that we tend to do. And in so doing, we demonstrate our own imbalance.

[ 7 : 08 ] Historians can help us to see that there were flaws in these movements, but for sure, the surest guidance on this matter, we have to review everything theologically in terms of the teaching of Scripture.

And that's basically the habit of mind for viewing spiritual movements that these four talks of mind are intended to teach, help us forward into, as far as we, that is, I am pontificating from up here, and you, sitting listening, are able to go.

I am not the Pope. You mustn't attach infallibility to anything that I say. I tell you as much as I think I can see. And I lay it before you for your assessment, your judgment, your discussion, so that we may all of us learn together.

That's the thought embodied in the title of this weekly meeting, Learner's Exchange. And that's the way it has to be in the Christian Church, just because of how we are all located in this state of things where the work of grace has begun in the lives of all God's children, all real believers, and I hope that means each single one of us, but at the same time, it isn't finished.

And so we can, all of us, make mistakes. Just as, by the grace of God, we can all of us see things and everything that we see, we are called upon to share.

[ 9 : 04 ] That's part of the Christian life. So, coming closer to our announced subject for today, the Tractarian movement, in the Church of England, in the 1830s and early 1840s, corresponds to what we call the Counter-Reformation in the Roman Catholic Church in the second half of the 16th century.

You may not know much about the Counter-Reformation, but its very name tells you what was going on. It was the Catholic Church which had seen the departure of the Lutheran churches and the Reformed churches of Switzerland and the Low Countries and the Netherlands, and it was the Catholic Church seeking to pull itself together in order to stand and keep standing despite these losses, just as America had to do, of course, after Pearl Harbor in 1941 or whenever it was. And so, theology was strengthened in the Counter-Reformation and personal devotion was strengthened in the Counter-Reformation. You may have heard about that. Does the name Ignatius Loyola mean anything to you?

He was a tremendous influence in the strengthening of personal piety among Roman Catholics. End of the 16th century and in the very early 17th century, a man named Francis, not Francis of Assisi, but Francis de Salle, S-A-L-E-S.

Ever heard of him? Francis took the teaching of Ignatius and popularized it and as a result, he too became a great influence for personal godliness on the Roman Catholic side of the fence so that historians mapping what was going on in the church in the 17th century often speak of the 17th century as an era of revival in piety.

[ 11 : 15 ] Both sides of the Reformation divide with the Puritans and the continental pietists on the one side of the divide, you see, and Ignatius and Francis on the other.

And the inner structures of the church were tightened up, tightened up to such an extent that a quality which, again, historians call the siege mentality descended on the Roman Catholic Church. That is, it organized itself in a series of defensive postures in order to meet and resist attacks from the children of the Reformation.

And the Roman Catholic Church went on for four centuries in that defensive mode until Vatican II in the 1960s when a lot of windows that had been shut for 400 years were opened and a real measure of new vitality among Roman Catholics at least in the West.

I say at least in the West because, after all, I'm a Westerner, you are Westerners. We can't so easily track Catholicism in Latin America and in other parts of the world where Catholicism is the dominant form of Christianity.

[ 12 : 42 ] But we can know something about it in the English-speaking Christian world and surely all of us have met godly Roman Catholics embodying the post-Vatican II ethos.

People who have made us realize that God hasn't abandoned the Roman Catholic Church, whatever flaws and mistakes it's set up may embody.

No, God, the Spirit, is working through His Word there just as God the Spirit is working through His Word elsewhere. In the same way, I now move you on to think, the Tractarian movement operated within Anglicanism as a counter to the sense that the Church, the Church of England, was in great danger from, this is familiar grown to us now, from something called liberalism, which in the 1820s had picked up from elements in the broad Church tradition of the 18th century and 18th century and was beginning, as the Tractarians thought, to undermine the foundations of the Church's life. Now, don't jump to the conclusion that the pressure points were the same then as they have been more recently for us. It wasn't so much a matter of doctrine, though there was a very regrettable doctrinal looseness among the liberals.

They called themselves liberals, so I'll call them liberal. Among the liberals of the 1820s and 1830s and 1840s, they took the broad Church Latitudinarian line, which some Anglicans had been taking ever since the end of the 17th century.

[ 14 : 57 ] All this quest for doctrinal precision, they said, is misguided. the mysteries of the faith will never be formulated effectively in a precise way.

All the formulations we've inherited from the past are provisional, so what we do is say the creed as a gesture of respect for the Christian past and then tell ourselves and tell others if they ask us, well, Christianity is essentially a style of life, a pattern of corporate worship and ethics, a religious ethos, style, whatever, but don't treat the creed or the 39 articles or any other confessional formulation as if it was presenting to us the last word on doctrinal, the last word of doctrinal truth.

And as evangelicals, and I might add as children, if you are children of the historic tractarian movement, you will discern from what I've just said that the threat which the tractarians thought they discerned had at its base a question of faith, what the tractarians said in their hearts is these fellows have not got their Christian beliefs straight and we have to watch them like hawks at that point.

But now, the immediate pressure point, call it the presenting issue, in the 1830s, was not an issue of doctrine as it has been for us with our diocese and the Episcopal Church here in Canada and in the States.

The presenting issue had to do with the relation between church and state. See, in the 1830s, what was inherited from the past was a setup in which the Church of England, which of course was and remains established.

[ 17 : 27 ] That means, at the very least, that the Church is supposed to be the nation at prayer and the Church's leaders are supposed to lead the nation in prayer and the Church enthrones the new monarch with a, what do you call it, what's the word I've lost, coronation, with a coronation service and the Church provides chaplains for Parliament and so on and so on.

But the flip side of that by the 1830s was that the Church had effectively become a department of the state. And then, you may know, as you know your English history, in 1832, the Reform Bill was passed which gave a lot of people the vote that they hadn't had before and Parliament after 1832 was very much on the key vive to make sure that the new voters wouldn't be displeased with its performance.

And so, Parliament set going a reform program of its own, a reform program, I mean, to adjust institutional inadequacies in the whole British, the whole British constitutional framework.

And one inadequacy that they set themselves to adjust was the story of the episcopate, the Anglican bishops, in Ireland.

Parliament passed an act abolishing ten Irish bishoprics. Parliament didn't consult the Church in any shape or form, Parliament just did it because, pragmatically, having these ten Irish bishoprics functioning in addition to the bishoprics that remained made no sense.

[ 19 : 36 ] They were all of them tiny little setups with only about half a dozen clergy in each. And yet, being bishoprics, they had to maintain central offices and that cost money, of course, and they were finding it hard to raise the money to keep going.

and in terms of pastoral care and oversight, well, a bishop can look after more than half a dozen clergy and perhaps eight or ten parishes.

So, these bishoprics were abolished and their endowments were put into the treasury for augmenting the endowments of the bishoprics that remained.

It was a very straightforward and essentially unimportant adjustment. Or so it seemed to the leaders, the national leaders in parliament who made it.

But, the Tractarians saw this as the presenting issue of secularism embodied in parliament and approved by the broad church and liberal people in the church, whereby parliament took over the management of the church.

[ 20 : 59 ] Now, that wasn't actually a new idea. Ever since the second half of the 16th century, a position to which the name Erastianism was given, never heard that name, it was formed from the name of a man named Erastus, a physician in Holland who wrote theology in his spare time.

The Erastian position was formulated thus, in the Old Testament, kings were put in charge of religious affairs.

And that's part of the revealed order of God. So, the church in all countries that follow the scriptures, that is, in Lutheran and Reformed communities, the church should accept whatever structural setup the ruler for the time being enacts for it.

Which is a way of saying the state should run the church. Now, that didn't create waves in the late 16th century when Erastus wrote it out.

Because, in fact, it was the way that the Reformation had happened all over Western Europe and in Britain as much as anywhere. It was simply giving a name to what had already become the case.

[ 22 : 31 ] Nobody had doubted during those early days except the Anabaptists who split off from the Catholic Church. That's another story. But nobody in the Lutheran churches, in the Reformed churches, or in the Church of England, had doubted that the proper persons to carry through Reformation, the reforming of doctrine and of discipline and of worship, the proper persons were the government, that is, the monarch for the time being.

And this had been assumed in Britain, without challenge, until the 1830s. But the 1830s represent the first act of the state, which made a body of opinion in the Church feel that this is a scandal. Here is something happening which ought not to be happening. Why not? Because the Lord Jesus Christ is head of his Church and he governs his people through the Church's officers and not through any of the officers of state.

Now it was out of that sense of threat that the Tractarian movement took its rise. And John Henry Newman, whose name I'm sure you know, who was one of the leaders of the Tractarian movement from 1833 when it began, until 1845 when he became a Roman Catholic, John Henry Newman always maintained that the beginning of the Tractarian movement, or the Oxford movement as it was called, because it was based on Oxford, Oxford University, the beginning of the Tractarian movement, said Newman, was a sermon preached at the Assizes, that is, at the opening of the circulating court proceedings, where, this was standard stuff in England, judges went round on circuit from one population centre to another to try the cases that were awaiting trial in that city wherever it was.

And it always, the work of the Assizes always began with a religious service where a sermon was preached. And a man named John Keeble, ever heard of him?

[ 25 : 13 ] He was professor of poetry in Oxford. He wrote a very popular book of poems called The Christian Year. One, at least, of those poems is quite commonly sung in the church today.

There is a book, who runs, may read, that wisdom doth impart. And, oh, how does the verse go? I'm not quite clear about the third line, but the substance is, all that's needed in order to interpret it is pure eyes and a Christian heart.

well, you may not know that verse, but a lot of Anglicans do know it because a lot of Anglicans still sing it. What Keeble is talking about there, of course, is the revelation of God in creation, the heavens declaring the glory of God, the firmament showing his handiwork, and all nature crying out, as Christians believe it does, in praise to its creator.

Because lots of the Psalms say that that's exactly what's happening and why should we doubt it.

Well, Keeble, this distinguished man who, in addition to being professor of poetry at Oxford, was a country clergyman, just outside Oxford, he preached a sermon to which he gave the title National Apostasy, preaching to judges and law officers, solicitors, lawyers, so on.

he said, very emphatically, this act of the state in suppressing the Irish bishoprics was wrong, and it indicates that the church is being treated as simply a department of state, and the government runs it, and that's wrong too.

[ 27 : 06 ] The church has its own law, the church has its own authority, and the spokesmen for the church must be allowed to declare decisively what can and can't be done in the Lord's name.

The thinking was that if the bishops had been consulted, or the clergy had been consulted about the Irish, the suppression of the Irish bishoprics, things would have been right, but they weren't consulted, and that meant that the procedure was wrong.

Cable didn't know what he was starting, he just said this to a group of legal eagles, because he thought they were the people to whom it ought to be said. They were the guardians of the constitution, as well as being Christian people, good Anglicans he hoped, and therefore folk who would appreciate the point he was making.

Well, that actually acted like the match flame, or the cigarette end, that starts a forest fire.

Newman and one or two more young clergymen in Oxford felt the force of what Cable had said, and they moved into action in the writing of tracts.

[ 28 : 32 ] Tracts are little books which have wide distribution and which make points that the authors believe ought to be made and received by the whole community.

The tracts were quite small in the first instance, eight pages, twelve pages, sixteen pages, that kind of thing. I am myself involved in the publication of a series of tracts for us Anglicans at this very moment, and so I understand, I think, the mentality of the first tractarians.

They wrote, they published, and then, as a matter of fact, they went round on horseback from rectory to rectory. How else should they go around?

There were no trains or buses in those days. No, they rode round on horseback from rectory to rectory distributing these tracts for free if the chaps weren't prepared to buy them and for a very low price if the chaps were.

But the point was they were anxious to get their ideas out as soon as possible. Who were they, you ask? Well, like Newman, they were young clergymen feeling their oats, young Oxford students who were going to be clergymen, and they were fired up about the church in danger.

[ 30 : 03 ] But now, against that historical background, consider the emphases which those tracts were making theologically Oh yes, they were Anglican compositions, and there was no question about the Trinitarian incarnational base, the creedal base of what was being said, but the points that were being highlighted were these.

Authority over the church belongs to Christ, I said that a moment ago, Christ's authority is exercised, they said, by the clergy corporately.

And the basis for that is that the clergy, man by man, have received the authority of the apostolic succession.

They have been ordained in the succession by bishops who themselves are carriers and transmitters of the succession, and that gives them the authority of Christ.

Well, I don't expect you to like that doctrine any more than I like it, but this was the upfront response of the Tractarians following on Keeble's sermon, and this was the central message of the Tracts.

[ 31 : 41 ] And they ended quite in a rah-rah note, at least the early ones did. I'm thinking particularly of the very first, which Newman himself wrote, ended with the summons to all clergy, choose your side.

This is going to be a fight. Choose whether you're going to be on the side of the state, which is insisting, it seems, on managing the church, as if the church isn't able to manage its own affairs, or whether you will be on the side of Christ, and the clergy, and the apostolic authority, which we clergy carry.

Yes, those early tractarians were expecting a fight, and they got one. This kind of talk did not sit well with the majority of the bishops, nor with the majority of the clergy.

But these young men, they were all fired up, and the fact that they were a small minority at first didn't stop them at all. They very soon found that they had more to say than simply appealing to this understanding of their own authority as ministers of the gospel and leaders of the church.

What more you ask? Well, in the 1830s, the Romantic Movement, capital R, in Western culture, was in full cry, full strength, and one of the aspects of the Romantic Movement in Western culture, was a passion for the past.

[ 33 : 32 ] The medieval era, so all the Romantics felt, was wonderful. Now, that isn't, of course, the whole of the Romantic ideology, but it was the bit of the Romantic ideology that appealed to these young clergymen.

And they began to say, you know, the Reformation of the 16th century. Though it got some things right, got some things ruinously wrong, it abandoned a great deal of medieval piety, which we ought to hold on to.

It abandoned the medieval understanding of repentance in terms of the penitential system, whereby you confess your sins to a priest, and when he pronounces absolution in the name of the Lord, he gives you a certain discipline to practice.

Well, that was ditched. The dignity of worship as expressed in clerical robes and all kinds of ornamentation in the church, and the use of lights, candles, all over the church, and incense being swung past all around the church, all of that is medieval stuff, which the church of Rome rightly holds on to, and we Anglicans have lost.

Now, in that, you can see, there's a passion for the authority, in all of that, there's a passion for the authority of Christ, and for holiness, and for reverence, and for real repentance, and for the dignity of worship, and the honor of God in the church.

[ 35 : 32 ] But it's all twisted, so an evangelical would say, quite significantly twisted by this uncritical medievalism.

however, into the tracts was poured this uncritical medievalism, and very soon the tractarians were known as people who wanted to take the church of England back into the Middle Ages, in terms of its practices.

And, again, one has to say, evangelicals, and most broad church men also saw much in this to be critical of, and they distanced themselves from it, and so the fight which the tractarians had expected became reality.

Now, let me say straight away what seemed to me to be some of the negative aspects of the line that the tractarians were taking. you can see, perhaps, that for the tractarians, non-episcopal Christianity didn't count, just because it was non-episcopal.

The apostolic succession doesn't operate in non-episcopal churches, Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist, whatever, and that means that within those churches, the full authority of Christ is not known.

[ 37 : 05 ] That was the tractarian line. The authority of Christ was not construed in the way that an evangelical would construe it, that is, in terms of faithfulness to Scripture.

Nothing was said against faithfulness to Scripture, but the tractarians' point was that unless you got the apostolic succession, you haven't got the fullness of the church's authority.

Note I say the church's authority, for the tractarians, the authority of Christ in and over the church, means exactly what the phrase the church's authority means.

Now, can you see that there's something to be bothered about at that point? Actually, what has come up, when, what does come up every time anything like this is said, is the fundamental cleavage, I say the fundamental cleavage, between all reformed churches, on the one hand, and the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, on the other.

Just let me stop over this a minute, because there are many people who discuss the competing claims of Anglicanism and other Protestant bodies as against the claims of Rome and the Orthodox, without ever getting to this fundamental difference.

[ 38 : 41 ] this is the fundamental Reformation cleavage. The Catholic, it has to do with your view of the nature of the church.

The Catholic idea is that Christ's church, in the first instance, is a ministerial structure, a structure that is, of bishops and clergy stemming from the apostles, the structure carries the apostolic succession, which means authority, the authority of Christ speaking through the leadership of his, the leaders of his people, and the way of salvation is to link up with the church, so that the gospel is not so much a message of come to Christ, the savior that you all need, as it's a message of come to the church where you will find the grace that all of you need.

Certainly that grace will lead you to Jesus Christ, it is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in its very nature. Certainly, if you come to the church, the church through its faithful ministers will look after you and guarantee you a continued fellowship with Christ and a final glory through Christ.

But the church is the mediator of salvation through the ministers. That's the key thought. Now, if I believed in the church that way, I should have to choose between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, each of which, I should conclude, has a stronger claim to be the church than Anglicanism does.

But I don't believe in the church that way, and I suspect that you don't either. The other way of believing in the church, which was focused at the Reformation and which is still fundamental to all Protestant and Evangelical church life is this.

[ 41 : 01 ] church is the fellowship of those who have faith in Christ. In the word, through the spirit, Christ offers himself directly to everyone who hears the gospel.

And you put faith in him directly, according to the scriptures and his own word of promise. He receives you, the spirit thus brings you into a new life in which you are indwelt by the spirit and belong to the new humanity.

The new humanity is the church, the company of all those who share this salvation. The church lives under the authority of the word of God, which is the word of Christ, which is our Bible, holy scripture.

church life. The holy scriptures exhibit the pattern of faithful and godly church life. The fellowship generates that pattern by its own action from within.

The fellowship appoints ministers, ministers of the gospel, pastors, teachers. The fellowship directs the ministers to celebrate the sacraments, as well as directing them to preach and apply the word of God.

[ 42 : 27 ] If you maintain the episcopal succession, well, that is for historical dignity, but it doesn't count in terms of theology.

What counts in terms of theology is that all the ministers whom the church appoints should be faithful to scripture. That's my basic understanding of the nature of the church, and as I said, I expect that it's yours too.

But at this point, the Tractarians went the way of Rome and Orthodoxy, and so I have to say, I think that it was simple clear-headedness on the part of John Henry Newman which led him finally to become a Roman Catholic.

Christian because as he discerned, he was a minister of a church which didn't corporately embrace the understanding of the nature of the church that he'd come to believe.

And he was quite clear-sighted about that. The Anglican church doesn't believe in the nature of the church the way that the Catholic church does.

[ 43 : 45 ] But the early Tractarians swallowed this mistaken view of the nature of the church and they worked it into all their various tracts.

So, what you had in the Tractarian movement was four ideals which are natural expressions of their point of view.

One is that the church is the body of Christ exerting authority both internally over its own people and externally as God's messenger to the world through its clerical leadership, bishops and clergy in the apostolic succession.

and the fact that we Anglicans have the apostolic succession makes us Catholic. Our church, they said, would not be Catholic if it didn't have this succession at its heart.

Catholicity depends, they said, on apostolicity understood in this way rather than in Protestant terms, that is, in terms of faithfulness to the apostolic message.

[ 45 : 07 ] And the apostolic commitment. So that's the first tractarian ideal, that the whole Anglican church should come to see itself in these terms.

Second tractarian ideal, the church is about holiness, and holiness of a medieval sort is the proper goal for the church to aim at, holiness.

In its worship, and in the personal life of its members. So, yes, bring back incense, bring back candles, bring back medieval church decorations, all of that is important.

Bring back the system of the confessional, medieval, all of that is important too, you don't have the fullness of repentance without it.

Bring back all that medieval, all the medieval asceticism, fasting, and so on, that went with the medieval system.

[ 46 : 20 ] Bring back such, at least in valuation, bring back such medieval ideals as clerical celibacy, and the monastic vocation, and fasting as a regular ingredient in Christian life.

All of this belongs to real holiness. Now, you will see from what I'm saying, that the Tractarians, though they all believed that the Bible is the word of God, were not actually taking their ideal of holiness straight from the scriptures, they were taking it from history, and you may think, as I certainly think, that that was a big mistake and a big disfigurement, but they believed that all of this

belonged to the true reverence.

the third ideal is medieval sacramentalism as an alternative to the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith.

all the way through the 19th century controversies between evangelicals and people in the Tractarian movement, this was a theme that kept recurring.

You are moving away from the essence of the gospel, said the evangelicals, to the Tractarians, because you are rejecting the doctrine of justification as it was clarified in the 16th century.

[ 48 : 09 ] All the merit being Christ's, forgiveness and acceptance being free to us because of his merit, nothing, therefore, needing to be done by us to earn salvation or work our passage to glory, assurance of salvation, therefore, being our privilege right now.

Assurance, that is, not only of present acceptance but of future acceptance and future glory also. No, said the Tractarians, it's not like that.

It's a matter of accepting an initial forgiveness, ministered, actually, by baptism, and then continuing a life of faithfulness as long as you continue a life of Christian faithfulness.

So, your acceptance by God and the regular periodic forgiveness of the latest batch of your sins is guaranteed, but you must keep working to your dying day and you shouldn't entertain assurance of final salvation.

That will make you lazy. What you must do, rather, is recognize that the good works that you are called as a Christian to perform are absolutely necessary to your final salvation in some way about which we don't need to be too explicit.

[ 49 : 43 ] just accept the fact that thus it has to be, thus it is in the teaching of Christ, so they maintained, and the Reformation doctrine of justification is distorted and one-sided as an account of what's at the heart of the gospel.

Well, that's what they thought in the Middle Ages. That's what Roman Catholicism still thinks. That's what the Council of Trent said, that's something that the Second Vatican Council didn't change.

So if you talk to Roman Catholics about justification by faith, you have some tough talking to do. I have been in a group of conservative Catholics and conservative evangelicals who believe themselves to have found a way of articulating for Catholics the doctrine of salvation by free and sovereign grace.

But we haven't yet changed the Catholic mindset whereby Roman Catholics believe, well, you've got to keep going in Christ or you forfeit the salvation that you now have.

Don't, therefore, overvalue anything that the conversation called Evangelicals and Catholics together has brought forth. We've got some of the way, but not all of it.

[ 51 : 09 ] all of this is said in elaboration of the third feature of the Tractarian goal, that is to get back to the wisdom of medievalism against the mistakes of the Reformation.

And then, as you would expect, the fourth ideal, which right from the start, the Tractarians unashamedly and unabashedly put forward, was the ideal of convergence with the Roman Catholic Church, not absorption, but parallelism and communion with each other as far and as fully as that can be achieved, because the Roman Catholics are our brothers, and the negative attitude towards Roman Catholicism is all wrong.

So said the Tractarians, and in putting the matter to you this way, I've already shown how far I disagree with all four of these Tractarian ideals.

Nonetheless, and this is what I say as I wind down, I find in Tractarianism an attempt, this guided attempt, to be sure, but a real attempt, to further values which I as an evangelical must embrace and seek to further in a more biblical way.

The honor of Christ as Lord of his church, yes, the holiness of God's people as a demonstration to the world of the power of grace and a confirmation to the world of the truth of the gospel, yes, the authority of the scriptures which the Tractarians were prepared to deploy against the liberals, yes, and the reality of or the necessity of repentance as the flip side of the life of faith, the life of faith being a life of repentance as the general confession in our Bible services in the New Testament, morning and evening prayer and the Lord's Supper teaches us to do, yes, again, and I think frankly, that the theme of ongoing repentance is very much understressed in evangelical teaching today.

[ 54 : 00 ] So, while I think that the Tractarians, the pioneers of what the history books call the Catholic revival in Anglicanism, got it wrong, got a number of things, a string of things wrong, yet the values which they were seeking to focus and promote were right.

And so, in the church conflict today, I find myself a great deal closer to the high churchmen, the self-styled Anglo-Catholics of eastern Canada.

We don't have them in this province, but in eastern Canada there are many of them. I find myself much closer to them and much more easily able to cooperate with them in fellowship and witness than I do to the developed form of liberalism which stands before us and threatens to overwhelm us in this province.

Can you perhaps see why? I don't think that the liberal view of the church, the liberal idea of holiness, which of course includes same-sex unions under certain conditions.

I don't think the liberal idea of the gospel and the authority of the Bible and such significance as the liberals attach to repentance is on track at all.

[ 55 : 31 ] I think they're out of the way first step. I think they de-supernaturalize the faith. And so, as I say, though I still have the difficulty with historic tractarian emphases, all of which are maintained more or less by moderns in the Catholic heritage, while I still have my difficulties with the way that modern self-styled Catholics spell these things out, I think that they are much closer to the center of things than any version of liberalism as we meet it today, is or can be.

I wonder if you agree with me. I've talked for an hour and I'd better stop. We now move from monologue into dialogue and you can tell me if you agree with me. I thought of this whole presentation as an exercise in discernment.

I've shared with you what I think I discern and Freudian lapse, I suppose. I would like you to share with me what you deserve.

In case you're wondering where I'm going after all this, I shall give the same treatment in talk number three of this series to the 18th century Methodist revival, which appears in the program under the rather enigmatic name of urban renewal, bringing the gospel to the towns.

and then fourthly, I shall say something about the charismatic renewal and how that fits into all of this pattern. But now you can see, this is an exercise in discerning and, well, I don't claim to have got everything right, so I wait to discern your discernments, and there's one at the back, please.

[ 57 : 33 ] that's what I have heard, but what I have heard is that a lot of them are quite liberal in their application of the gospel, as liberal as many of the people here who we encounter in the diocletal.

And so, although I too have been bronzed because of their apparent piety and their willingness to take the heart decision to follow in Christ, their parenting, people especially know to be careful because they're often quite liberal in their applications of the gospel.

That is, they want the appearance of piety, but underneath it, they're quite liberal as a movement.

That's a good question and it prompts me to say some things additional to what I said in the talk.

The tractarian movement came to call itself Anglo-Catholicism in the middle of the 19th century and in 1880 a young man who went on, this was in England, to become a bishop of no less than three dioceses in succession, a man named Charles Gore, G-O-R-E, introduced the Catholic movement to biblical criticism and the doubts about the authority of scripture, which German scholars had developed, and maintained that this was a proper, how can I say, a proper bequest from the world of modern scientific Christian theology, that the

Catholic world ought to be able to receive. So that, and in the 20th century a number of people saw that this in effect was what he was saying, so that while, as good Catholics, we are, this is Gore talking now, we are going to stand fast for the creed, and he made a name for himself fighting against the rejection of the virgin birth, which is in the creed, we can't be as sure of the Bible as we can be of the creed, and so it's from the creed that we should get our authority, because it comes from the undivided church, of which Christ is the head, and of which the framers of the creed were his faithful spokesmen.

[ 60 : 20 ] Well, that became the viewpoint of Anglo-Catholicism in general in Britain, and of some Anglo-Catholics here in Canada.

But it should be said that in eastern Canada, where a lot of old traditions maintained themselves, the original tractarian viewpoint, which involves receiving the Bible as the word of God, and declining to part company with it, declining to relativize it to any kind of modern teaching, and declining also to regard ritualism as of the essence of Christian worship.

that older sort of Catholic piety, the tractarian sort, still is standard, and liberal Anglo-Catholics are unusual.

Well, that's very confusing. Well, do you know the name of Robert Krauss? Yes. Well, he embodies the older tractarian ethos.

He's a fine scholar and a very wise, godly man. And as long as he's there, I think the conservative Catholics will remain on track in eastern Canada.

[ 61 : 43 ] So, I had another question. You know, there's a movement from the global south, with Archbishop Gomes is working to establish essentially a confession of faith that all Anglicans would have to subscribe to as a counter-liberal activity, which has always sounded to me like a good thing to do.

But what I'm wondering is is a parallel in that to what we saw in the Bacterian movement as trying to establish a papal role of this is what we believe.

And are there associated risks in becoming... I know the liberals are quite concerned that we might become a confessional church, and I can see why they would be. My question to you is, do you think we should also be concerned about that?

I think there have been a confessional church in the sense because of the 39 articles and because of... Well, let me... Let me speak briefly to that. One, I agree with you, we are...

Anglicanism is a confessional form of Christianity, and the word confessional means we stand by the faith of the scriptures and here is how we formulate it.

[ 63 : 00 ] That's the significance of the 39 articles. Nothing changes there. As an evangelical Anglican, I believe that I am right at the center of things, right in the mainstream, in taking that line.

Second, what you say about attempts in the global south to formulate confessional Anglicanism that will become a standard for all Anglicans for the future.

It's perfectly true that people like Archbishop Gomez have been talking that way and the global south primates as a body are saying, yes, that's what ought to happen.

It's also true that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who's a liberal Catholic by formation anyway, is doing damage control by accepting that agenda and saying, I'll do it.

And he talks in terms of formulating a sort of two-tier Anglican communion, whereby those who are loyal to the heritage and therefore who reject the line that North America is taking on the presenting issue of ethics for people with a gay inclination, those people become the inner circle of Anglicanism and the North American churches become the outer circle where communion is not wholly broken, but it's only partial.

[ 64 : 41 ] How that's going to work out, we don't know, because Rowan Williams hasn't yet published his blueprint for doing it. But as I say, he's taken it to himself as his agenda.

He had to, really, because if he had declined to do so, there's no real doubt that Peter Ekinola, Archbishop of Nigeria, would be acknowledged by the churches, the younger Anglican churches of the Southern Hemisphere, as their leader pro tem, because, first of all, he's got all the qualities that make for a fine evangelical leader, and secondly, he is completely on board with this idea of restructuring the Anglican communion and excluding, he would categorically exclude, I think, all those who identify with the line that the Episcopal Church in the States has taken and that it looks as if the Anglican Church of Canada is going to take also at the next synod, though, please God, it won't.

Are you with me? That is where we are today. I'm agreeing with your discernment of the situation and adding some details to it.

And we should pray for the restructuring, which certainly, I think, is going to happen. Pray that it be done right and that it become not another can of worms.

Well, now, wait a minute. Two hands went up together. Your second, John, actually three hands, because you were next, weren't you?

[ 66 : 28 ] No. Or, okay. Right on. You're next. I agree with you on your thing. In regard to the closure of the 11 Irish people's race, was there any full resistance to that, either on the part of the Irish people's race or English people's race or elsewhere?

No. Nobody resisted it. At the time it was being done. And nobody regarded it as a scandal that it should be done until Keeble spoke up in his Assize sermon at Oxford in 1833.

And when he gave the sermon, the title National Apostasy, he chose those words because he believed that the acceptance by the Church of England of what Parliament had done in this matter, was a sign that the Church of England was in process of apostatizing from the rule of Christ.

You see? And the urgent task now was to call the Church back to a proper acceptance of the Church of Christ in terms of following what clergy and the apostolic succession told the Church to do.

Got it? That's the story. Wait a minute. It's somebody. No, John came next, I think. Yeah. With the true confessional life, it always reminds me of the Lutheran Church and Lutheran Confessions, but I also read in the Anglican Science, the Anglican Church, they call it the bonds of affection, and like the Roman Catholic faith, what's already the bonds of affection as a confessional church?

[ 68 : 06 ] Well, that is my view, that we are a confessional body and have always been so simply because the 39 articles and a version of the historic Anglican prayer book have been fundamental to our Constitution.

And the articles in particular, which tell us how to interpret the prayer book, are also a declaration for the whole of the Christendom and indeed the whole of the civilized world to take note of that this is what we Anglicans stand for.

And to say we aren't a confessional church, it seems to me, is just confusing. Some people say it as a way of expressing the fact that they don't want to be tied to any particular doctrinal affirmation. They are, in other words, in the liberal tradition, as it was in the 1830s and as it still is in the first decade of the 21st century. And people like me, you see, counter that by saying, well, to your own master you stand or fall, but you are unfaithful Anglicans who really have no business to recognize yourselves as anything other than eccentrics whom the Anglican Church retains on sufferance. you are not the leaders, you are the oddballs. But you know, when you say that, you don't get general assent.

[ 70 : 03 ] Except, of course, in a group of evangelicals. Now, well, thank you for saying that. And perhaps that's a happy note on which we draw stumps, as one says, in the world of cricket.

postpone our further thoughtful fellowship, and on this subject, anyway, until we get to item number three in my series.

Meantime, I said this is all about discernment. Discerning what's right, discerning what's wrong, appreciating what's right, as well as nailing what's wrong. We, all of us, I think, do well to ask ourselves whether our sympathies with fellow Christians are as broad as they should be, and whether we aren't in danger of writing off as nobodies Christians whose minds are muddled, and who, therefore, are, in fact, going the wrong way, simply because their heads aren't clear yet. Isn't it our task to love them and try and clear their heads for them? Well, think that one over, friends. Discern, and God bless you.