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THE FALLACIES

OF THE

Argument in
PLYMOUTHIST AND DARBYITE

ASPERSIONS OF

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

ANALYZED AND ANSWERED.

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"THE BEST MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND."

[No date ; no name of publisher or printer.]

SUCH is the heading of a fly-leaf which has come across our path many times of late ; for it is industriously sent, by post and by other methods, to "the best members" of our Church. It is greatly to be desired that some one competent to the task, would write a brief, pithy tract in reply to it, exposing its fallacies, and refuting its "reasons." To induce some one of our readers to take up the task, we offer a few hints which may turn out to be helpful in the way of preparation for the work we have assigned to him.

The anonymous fly-leaf begins thus, after the heading, which we print above :—"The *Record* newspaper of November 13th, 1861, in reviewing certain tracts called 'the C. S. Tracts,' stated that those who hold the opinions set forth in these tracts 'have weakened most of the existing Churches by enticing away many of the best members.'" We did say so ; and the Plymouthists have not been slow to take advantage of our words. They have quoted them everywhere, paraded them everywhere, in tract, pamphlet, and fly-leaf ; by post, and otherwise. Our readers knew well what we meant by "best members," and what we did not mean, and, we suspect, so did also the Plymouthists. We said "best" only ; not the strongest minded, not the wisest, not the most thoughtful. We did not say that the Plymouthists had enticed away those who were most competent to form an opinion on the points at issue between us and them : nor those who knew us best : nor those who knew them best. Every clergyman knows what sort of brethren—generally of the weaker brethren—and most frequently of the weaker sex—are enticed away ; how little competent they always are to form a trustworthy judgment on questions either of doctrine or of ecclesiastical polity.

That this was the sense in which we used the word "best," is clearly shown by our subsequent statement at

p. 62: "There are among them (the Brethren) many truly pious and godly christians, however they may have been deluded by the pretensions of the sect to superior spirituality, respecting the true nature of their innovations, both in doctrine and discipline."

But this writer gives us an opportunity of showing out fully our meaning of the word "best," as we then used it. He goes on to say, after the paragraph we have quoted, "Why is this? The reasons are many and plain, of which the following are a few." The "*reasons*" are nine in number; and we may say that none but the "best" people—in the sense in which we then used the word—could be enticed to take a single step, in any direction, because of anything in them; and yet they are a fair enough specimen of the style of "reasoning," by which Plymouthists, and other sectaries, seek to draw away disciples after them, and by which some of "the best" people *are* drawn away. Let us just go over the "*reasons*," *seriatim*, with an apology to thoughtful readers for occupying valuable space in exposing fallacies so transparent. Here is the fly-leaf's first "reason:"—

"1st. Because they have learned that the Church of England is the world's Church, and therefore at enmity with God; that is to say, she is supported, in a great measure, by the world, by a rate which atheists, infidels, drunkards, whoremongers, &c., &c., are by law compelled to pay. Thus, the Church of England makes a friend of the world," &c. If this "reason" have any reason in it, the strength of it is this—Because a few bad men contribute, willingly or unwillingly, a small sum of money, sometimes, for the maintenance of the outer fabric of the church, *therefore* the people who worship in these buildings, so maintained, are bad people, and are to be called "the world's Church;" that is, not a Church at all; for "the world" is here opposed to God. We might ask, in return, are there no atheistical, infidel, drunken, or worse pence expended in the erection or maintenance of temperance-halls, large rooms, and other places wherein the Plymouthists delight to worship? But, our *reply* to the "reason" is, that we hold it to be the duty of a Christian State to support the Church of Christ, and that it is the duty of every Christian man cheerfully to obey the

bidding of the State in this, as in every other righteous thing. (Rom. xiii. 1—8.) And we have also to inform this anonymous writer, that we do not make laws for exceptional cases such as “atheists, infidels, drunkards, whoremongers, &c., &c.”—not even for the unknown author of this fly-leaf. We hold fast the principle that it is the duty of the Christian State to support the Christian Church, and if this author will attack it, and give us his name, we will do our best, Bible in hand, and with no other weapon of warfare, to defend it against him or any other competent man; and God speed the right.

“2d. Because, while the members of the Church of England say, ‘I believe in the Holy Ghost’—in practice [they] deny it by their substituting human contrivances for the free operations of God’s Spirit in their mode of worship.” We presume that the “human contrivances” here spoken of are, an educated ministry—and that “the free operations of God’s Spirit” refer to the uneducated exhorters of the Plymouth sect. Is, then, the Spirit of God excluded from “human contrivances;” and is it needful that a man should be ignorant of Hebrew, Greek, theology, philosophy, English grammar, pronunciation, and intonation, before the Spirit of God will work in him and by him? Is it necessary that the God of order should have His Church thrown into confusion before He will work; and that the Hearer of prayer should select a man that comes to Him without knowing what he is to ask, before He will pray in him, and answer his prayer? The phrase “free operations” here used, is an elegant way of expressing the random ramblings of ignorant, conceited, proud, presumptuous men before their fellow-men, who then blasphemously call their doings and the miserable result of them, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

“3d. Because the commandments of the Lord (1 Cor. xiv. 37) are systematically set aside.” We turned to our Bible with some trepidation, we confess, in the face of this terrible-looking “reason.” We were greatly reassured, however, after making it certain that we were right in the quotation, on reading the verse, which we transcribe at length: “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” That, word for word, is the verse so oracularly quoted. We beg per-

mission, in reply, to quote the verse which immediately follows it: "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."

"4th. Because, instead of spreading the Lord's Table, she spreads the parish table: that is to say, any one in the parish has a right to partake of it, so long as he or she leads a moral life." Precisely so: by their fruits ye shall know them: and every professing Christian in the parish who leads a moral life may come to the Lord's Table, and welcome. Even this anonymous writer, if he would only purge himself from all malice and slander, from evil speaking, from the sin of bringing railing accusations against the people of the Lord, and "if he leads a moral life,"—even he may come and welcome. We believe that God only can judge the heart. We read, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

We put the 5th and the 7th "reason" together—"5th. [Because] they do not believe that every child that is baptized in the Church of England is 'regenerate,' 'grafted into the body of Christ's Church,' 'a member of Christ,' 'a child of God,' or 'an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.'" "7th. Because they do not believe that every one that is buried by the Church of England is truly committed to the ground 'in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.'" To all this we reply, in a word, Neither do we. But our Prayer-book is constructed for the Church, not for the world, not for "atheists, infidels, drunkards, whoremongers, &c., &c." If they *will* use it, and use it wrongfully, the sin is theirs, not ours. This "reason" takes the *abuse* of the Prayer-book as if it were its use. We do not defend the abuse of it by bad men, but only the use of it by good men.

We now return to the 6th "reason," and beg "the best members" of our own, and of all Churches to note it well, that they may see where they are going to, as well as where they are going from. "6th. Because they have no desire to place themselves again under the curse, the yoke and bondage of a law which works death, which brings sin to remembrance, which ministers condemnation, which annuls the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and only offers them temporal blessings. They desire rather to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, and no more to be

entangled with the yoke of bondage. Having been risen with Christ, they trust they shall ever have grace given to them to seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and to set their affections there." We so very recently pointed out the circumstance that the Plymouthists deny the law of God as a rule of life, and argued that whole question so fully; showing that, in fact, they are doctrinal, and, in many respects, practical Antinomians, and pointed out at so great length the direful consequences of such a dogma, that we need not now enter on it again. But let the reader mark this plain, undisguised avowal of their dislike to the law of God; they are not ashamed of it but rather glory in it. This writer here says that to teach and to preach that we must obey the law of God is to be "under the curse:" it is "to bring sin to remembrance." "My sin is ever before me," says the Psalmist. An old Divine sweetly says, "When we remember our sin, God forgets it; when we forget our sin it comes into remembrance before God." Whoso wishes to be set free, so far as man can do it, from obedience to the law of God, knows where to go,—he has but to join the Plymouthists, and then he may continue in sin that grace may abound. We are sure that "the best members of the Church of England" will not go there with their eyes open.

"8th. Because the Word of God tells them that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church; and, therefore, to set one (however good she herself may be), who rules a kingdom of the world lying in wickedness, over the Church of Christ, is, to say the least, a fearful dishonour to Him." Is it so? Then why is it promised of the Church, in her day of brightest glory, that "Kings shall be her nursing fathers and Queens her nursing mothers"? If it is a dishonour to Christ, why do the prophets of God, speaking by the Holy Ghost, foretel the fact that so it shall be as the glory of the Church? But this "reason" is so put as if we denied that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of His Church. That doctrine we maintain: the headship of the earthly king, and all besides, is subordinate to Him who is Head, and Lord of all.

"9th. Because, if the Church of Rome is the Mother of Harlots, the Church of England must be one of her

prostitute children, and therefore they obey the injunction, 'Come out of her, my people;' desiring, in love and faithfulness, to obey the other injunction towards their fellow-Christians, 'pulling them out of the fire.'" This "reason" belongs to the category known to modern logic as "the Goodwin-sands and Tenterden steeple;" and to the ancient logic as "*post hoc, ergo propter hoc.*" The Church of Rome is first, the Church of England is after. The Church of Rome is a Mother of Harlots; therefore, the Church of England is her daughter, and so a prostitute. Q. E. D. This is a style of "reasoning" in which the men who indulge in "the free operations," as opposed to "human contrivances," deal very largely.

After these nine "reasons," follows this brief letter:—
 "My dear Friend,—Will you kindly read this once more but please do so on your knees before God, and may He direct you. Yours sincerely"—(signed) "Hating the garment spotted by the flesh." We beg to be permitted a quotation from the same epistle of St. Jude, in which this author finds this long name for himself. "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, *despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.* These are murderers, complainers, walking after their own lusts, and their mouth speaking great swelling words, these be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." Such are, we suppose the strongest of the reasons by which "the best members of the Church of England" are enticed away. The reader can now judge for himself what meaning he ought to attach to the word "best" in this case.

But, we crave the reader's patience, there is another side to the fly-leaf, to which we turn for a moment. The page is headed, "Prove all things:" which we proceed to do, in this case, at all events. It is divided into three columns—one is devoted to extracts from the Missal, which concern us not; the middle column contains "extracts from the Church of England Prayer-book;" and the third from "the Word of God." The author himself gives us a summary of what he has "proved." 1st, "The Christian is taught by God's Word (1) that He saved us." "All who use the Church of England prayers say (1) they are not saved." This is *proved* by the quotation, "O God, make speed to save

us." At this rate, they who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, must not pray to be saved. And so David and the other psalm-writers, who pray for salvation in almost every psalm, teach thereby that they are not saved; and, indeed, they are not actually saved till they fall asleep in Jesus, and so enter on their rest.

But (2) the Christian is taught that he has peace with God; we of the Church of England say that we have not obtained peace; (according to this author,) because we pray, in the Litany, "O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace." That is to say, if we ask for daily bread, we have no bread; if we have the thing, or the promise of the thing, then we are not to ask it. This is Plymouthism. We, on the other hand, teach that we are to ask it just because God has promised to give it; and if we have it actually in possession, we are still to pray for it that so God, in his mercy, grace, and goodness, may continue it with us from moment to moment. We have faith in God's promises; we believe that prayer makes them God's performances.

But farther (3) we must neither ask for repentance, nor for the Holy Spirit, if we be Christians, because, if we be Christians, we have them. We have them; but we need to repent daily of our daily sins. If, like the Plymouthists, we are under no law, then we need neither repentance nor the Holy Spirit, because then we can commit no sin; for, where no law is, there is no transgression. But if we be under a law, as the rule of our life, which we are daily breaking, and so daily grieving God's Holy Spirit, then we need to seek daily the grace of repentance towards God, as well as faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and daily do we need to pray with David, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me: restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit."

So also (4) the Christian is taught that he is a saint. According to this wise Plymouth Brother, those who use our prayers say "they are not saints." What, thinks the reader, is the proof? Here it is: "We therefore pray thee help thy servants whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood. Make them to be numbered with thy

saints in glory everlasting." That is the proof. Because we pray that we may be at last found among the Saints in God's glory; *therefore* we are not saints.

And finally (5), because we pray to be delivered from wrath, and from everlasting damnation, in the Litany; *therefore* we "are under the wrath of God and everlasting damnation." So reasons this Plymouth Brother, who is, as he well may be, ashamed to put a publisher's, printer's, or his own name to his "Reasons." And yet inconclusive, and every way contemptible as such "reasoning" is, it often shakes the minds of those who are not accustomed to systematic thinking, to the sifting of evidence, and the detection of sophistry. Such anonymous "Reasoners" are the moral garroters of society. They steal in behind the weak and the unprotected, grasp them by the throat, and spoil them of their goods. Every man should carry a thick stick, morally, not only for self-defence, but that he may also have wherewith to protect the weak and feeble who are unable to protect themselves.

THE ERRORS OF THE DARBY AND PLYMOUTH SECT;

Being the Reviews which appeared in the
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Third edition, price Fourpence.

May be had at the Office of the Record, 169, Fleet-street; or at Seeley's, Fleet-street; Nisbet's, Berners-street; Wertheim's, Paternoster-row, and Holles-street; and Shaw's, Paternoster-row, and Southampton-row.

* * * This pamphlet contains a full analysis of the pernicious doctrines of the Plymouth and Darby Brethren, with a statement of their notions on Church government, and a reply to all their errors, both in doctrine and in ecclesiastical polity.

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