

**THE 'ESSAYS AND REVIEWS'
EXAMINED; A SERIES
OF ARTICLES CONTRIBUTED
TO THE 'MORNING POST'**

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The 'Essays and reviews' examined; a series of articles contributed to the 'Morning Post' by
James Buchanan

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JAMES BUCHANAN

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1778
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'ESSAYS AND REVIEWS'
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A SERIES OF ARTICLES CONTRIBUTED TO THE
'MORNING POST.'

REVISED AND CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR.

WITH PREFACE, INTRODUCTION, AND APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS.

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P R E F A C E .

THE substance of the following work consists chiefly of a series of articles which the author was kindly invited to supply, and which appeared at stated intervals in the columns of the 'Morning Post.' A desire having been expressed in various quarters that they should be collected and reprinted in a separate form, he could feel no hesitation in complying with it, except what might arise from his deep sense of their manifold defects and imperfections.

From the plan of the series, which contemplated a distinct Examination of each of the 'Essays and Reviews' individually, to be followed up by a general survey of the scheme of thought which is developed in the volume considered as a whole,—it was impossible to avoid altogether some reference to the same topics in different connections, such as may sometimes have the appearance of unnecessary repetition. But the judicious reader will make due allowance for any occasional superfluity of this kind, if he finds that it contributes, on the whole, to the

clearer exposition and more definite statement of the leading principles which pervade the volume from its commencement to its close.

In the Introduction some brief reference is made to a topic which the author conceives to be one of considerable importance, both in a speculative and practical point of view; the connection, namely, and the contrast between the two Schools which have successively arisen at Oxford; or the common principles which may be shown to belong to both, while their respective tendencies point in such opposite directions. He has confined his remarks chiefly to those views respecting the authority and the interpretation of Scripture which were developed towards the close of the Tractarian movement, and which appear to him to constitute the link of connection between two schools apparently antagonistic. He has offered no exposition of the distinctive principles of Tractarianism: for his views on that subject he may be permitted to refer to a little treatise formerly published, 'On the Tracts for the Times.'*

* London: Hamilton Adams, and Co. Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1843.

INTRODUCTION.

THE TWO SCHOOLS AT OXFORD:

THEIR POINTS OF CONNECTION AND OF CONTRAST, AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE 'TRACTS FOR THE TIMES,' AND THE 'ESSAYS AND REVIEWS.'

THAT two Schools of religious thought, so unlike each other in many respects, and with such opposite tendencies, as those which are represented, respectively, by the 'Tracts for the Times,' and the 'Essays and Reviews,' should have both sprung up at Oxford; and, after extending to the sister University, as well as to several provincial colleges, should have created a wide-spread sensation throughout the whole Church of England, and affected, to a large extent, the substance, as well as the form, of her teaching at home and abroad, can hardly fail to be regarded as a remarkable phenomenon which calls for some investigation of its cause and origin, and also as a significant indication of certain under-currents of opinion beneath the smooth surface of educated society which render it one of the most ominous signs of the times. For these two Schools appeared, if not simultaneously, yet in such rapid succession, that

little more than an interval of twenty years elapsed from the first announcement of the one to the full-blown development of the other; and scarcely had the Church time to recover her breath after the shock of an attack on her Protestant formularies, when she was again convulsed and agitated by an assault on the very foundations of her Christian faith.

Considering the brief space of time which intervened between the two, and giving due weight to the fact that both have arisen among contemporaries, or among the pupils of such as lived and laboured together during that interval, it seems reasonable to conclude, that each of them must be traced ultimately to causes which were in active operation at a period antecedent to the public appearance of either. We cannot account for the first sudden transition from old Orthodoxy into a path which led direct to Romanism, nor for the second transition into a path which tends towards the opposite extreme of Rationalism, by ascribing them merely to the caprices of individual minds, or the accidental and wayward vicissitudes of public opinion. Both may have been occasioned, in part, by passing events, and shaped by the exigencies of the hour; but their causes must be traced further back, and may be discovered in the state of mind and feeling existing before the first 'Tract' appeared, and which readily responded to the key-note of that trumpet, proclaiming, with no 'uncertain sound,' a want which all had more or