

**A CALM EXPOSURE OF  
THE UNFAIRNESS OF  
THE "GENERAL REPLY  
TO ALL OBJECTIONS"**

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A

**CALM EXPOSURE**

OF THE

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OF THE

**"GENERAL REPLY TO ALL OBJECTIONS"**

OF THE AUTHOR OF

**"ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY."**

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BY

**JAMES BEAVEN, M.A.**

CURATE OF LEIGH.

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## CALM EXPOSURE,

&amp;c.

THE Second Part of my Remarks on Religious Celibacy had already gone through the press, when the Fifth Part of Mr. TAYLOR'S "Ancient Christianity," which had been long announced, and which was to contain replies to all objections, came to my hands. I turned to it with some little curiosity, to see what kind of reply had been made to the objections to his work: and I was certainly not a little astonished at the line he had thought proper to take. Instead of any distinct meeting of the various specific charges made against his publication, there was a good deal of talk of his own determination not to be put down, and the like; and what to me, at least, appears to be an evasion of the real point at issue, and a changing of his position to another more defensible.

But that I may show more distinctly what I mean, I take the liberty of looking into his "General Reply," and of showing more in detail its emptiness, and its total failure so far as its *pro-*

*fessed* purpose is concerned. That he may imagine it a reply, I can easily conceive; and that it may answer the purpose of casting dust into the eyes of those who do not take the pains of examining for themselves, is by no means doubtful.

It divides itself into two parts: "The Author and his Opponents," and "The General Reply to all Objections, by a Re-statement of the Question."

Mr. Taylor had, it seems, received the very wholesome hint, that he might have acted with greater prudence, and written with more effect, if he had waited for a while,—perhaps Horace's "nonum in annum,"—till his information had been somewhat digested, before he poured it forth upon the public. But the emergency, it seems, was too urgent. "It is these past nine years that have seen the venom of the Oxford Tract doctrines insidiously shed into the bosoms of perhaps a majority of the younger clergy of the episcopal church. At the end of such another period, we may have to look back toward the light kindled by the Reformers, as a glimmer, fading in the remote horizon; and forward—into an abyss!" An awful prospect truly, and a melancholy retrospect. But how stands the fact? Let any person look abroad into his neighbourhood, and especially amongst the younger Clergy, and see if any *peculiarities* of the Oxford Tract writers have made much way. Undoubtedly, true Church principles are being better understood every where; the principles commonly known and received in the



Church ages ago by those who have been called High Churchmen, and distinctly recognized in the formularies of the Church : these are better understood, and more generally received. And a happy thing it is for the Church and the nation, that they are so ; else we were going on towards the recognition of the Church as one of the Christian denominations ! as the Episcopal section of the Church ! These principles are becoming, humanly speaking, the salvation of the Church and nation. But as to *peculiarities* of the Oxford school, whether correct or incorrect, every well-informed person must know that their influence is very limited. Whom, for instance, does one meet with, holding Dr. Pusey's opinions as to sin after Baptism ; or Mr. Williams's, as to reserve in communicating religious knowledge ; or Mr. Newman's, on justification, so far as they differ from the orthodox views of the beginning of this century ? Who has adopted the feeling, appearing in some of the Tracts, of the propriety of an *implicit* reception of the teaching of the present Church ? Or, to come to Mr. Taylor's idea, (which I can trace to no writer of that school, except perhaps Mr. Froude,) that there are some who claim " a pre-eminent sanctity " for the Nicene age, and on that ground are wishing us to re-adopt its whole system : I may be very ignorant of the state of the Church ; but I have met with no person who would wish us to revive Nicene practices in the mass, or to look up to the Church of that age as an authority to be reverently followed : and I appeal

to the information of any other person, whether there is any such tendency in the clergy generally, or even the younger clergy of his neighbourhood? Mr. Taylor's haste, therefore, was certainly uncalled for, if his object was only to prevent the "spiritual debauchery, and flagrant impiety," (whatever may be the proper meaning and application of those mild terms,) consequent upon the spread of Oxford Tract peculiarities. But, seriously, can any sane person believe that such language as this can apply to any effect produced, or likely to be produced, in this country, even by as wide a prevalence as appears possible of the whole system of the conductors of the Oxford Tracts? And is it not well known, that the direct effect of the influence of these eminent persons has been to increase purity and reverence, wherever it has extended?

Mr. Taylor is in considerable misapprehension as to the object of the strictures which have been made upon his *literary qualifications*. It may suit a particular purpose to represent himself as a person "aiding to rescue Christianity and Protestantism in England," attempted to be put down by "a prompt and decisive expression of academic scorn and official wrath," because "in the urgency of a moment of public danger and anxiety he was found guilty of having mis-read a particle, or of citing a passage as from one treatise, which is actually found in another." What he is accused of is not indifference to "literary reputation," but apparent carelessness of *truth*. Can he

seriously think, that a person who has shown himself incapable of extracting the true meaning of what he reads<sup>1</sup> without exaggeration or caricature, and who quotes spurious writings as genuine, and the writers of one age as belonging to another, can either arrive at *truth* himself, or lead others into it? What is the truth of a whole case made up of, but the truth of its details? And can any one misrepresent the one without perverting the other? Are exaggeration and mistake practically any better than falsehood? And, even supposing his cause to be a good one, can it be right to falsify history, even hastily and inadvertently, in order to prevent another person from doing it in another direction? Can it be right, in short, in ever so small a degree, to do evil that good may come of it? And yet this is precisely what his "literary errors" amount to. And his way of meeting their exposure may pass with the ignorant, but not with the intelligent; may pass with partisans, but cannot with the fair and candid.

But he assures us that "to make it evident that a sovereign regard for truth prevails with him over every inferior consideration, he will in the course of this reply plainly acknowledge every instance of inadvertence or error that may have been found to attach to the evidence adduced in the preceding numbers:" and this promise he repeats. Now, I

<sup>1</sup> This has been shown, in the completest manner, in the papers in the British Magazine, and less fully in my own remarks on Religious Celibacy.