

**REPLY TO THE REV. R. I.
WILBERFORCE'S
PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH
AUTHORITY**

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Reply to the Rev. R. I. Wilberforce's Principles of Church Authority by R. I. Wilberforce & Henry Drummond

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R. I. WILBERFORCE & HENRY DRUMMOND

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BY
HENRY DRUMMOND.

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REPLY TO WILBERFORCE'S CHURCH AUTHORITY.

THE name of Wilberforce is associated with reminiscences of piety, active philanthropy and eloquence: whatever appears under that name claims from the reader a favourable consideration. The inquiry of the late Archdeacon of the East Riding of Yorkshire into the principles of Church authority has been published as his vindication for deserting the Anglican, and for joining the Roman, section of the Catholic Church, which step he took a few weeks afterwards. The newspapers have informed us that "he was a double first class man at Oxford:" this academical phrase means, in plain language, that he distinguished himself both as a classical and as a mathematical scholar. The author, therefore, possesses every natural and acquired advantage for the accomplishment of the work which he undertook.

The position maintained in this book is, that our Lord "associated," or took into partnership with Himself, the apostle Peter for the building of the Church. The relationship of the other Apostles to Peter is not stated; but as they are said to be useless without Peter, and Peter to be sufficient without

them, it is to be presumed that the author considers them only as so many clerks of the works. When our Lord left the earth His associate Peter was left behind, and when Peter died, it is said that he bequeathed his share of the partnership to the Bishop of Rome in perpetuity: that each succeeding bishop of Rome has inherited not only Peter's apostolical place, but a higher place which had been given him over and above his apostleship; that the Church, although built upon twelve Apostles, stands ever since Peter's death on one, who, like the Grand Lama, never dies: that all these successors of Peter have, upon all subjects, infallibly guided the Church, let their conduct in other matters have been what it might; and that whatever may be the faith and piety of any Christian, he will be eternally damned if he do not believe this theory, and submit his judgment, opinions, and five senses blindly to say, do, and think whatever the Bishop of Rome, through divers priests, his servants, shall tell him.

This theory is attempted to be supported by the perversion of some passages of Holy Writ; is sustained in defiance of others; and argued with a manifest unsoundness in theology, which shows that "to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent" requires a different kind of learning from that which is conversant with choruses of Greek plays and Newton's Principia.

It is possible that Mr. Wilberforce would never have left the Church of England if proceedings had not been commenced against him in the Ecclesiastical courts in consequence of his work on the Eu-

charist, which contained statements of doctrines alleged to be contrary to the Articles and Canons of that Church. This work is filled with the same erroneous statements, with the additional error of making the kingdom of Christ to be already come, and holding the doctrine of the fifth monarchy men, with this only difference, that Mr. Wilberforce places the rule in the King-Priest at Rome, while they placed it in the people. The wordiness and obscurity of our author's style makes it difficult to find out what he really means: in all probability he has not learned his theology, such as it is, from the Scriptures or from the Fathers, but has excogitated it for himself; and he has gone to them, not in the spirit of an enquirer, but, as one who had already framed his own theory of doctrine, and then had hunted in the Fathers for passages to bolster it up.

This might be shown to be the case from the way in which Mr. Wilberforce has quoted Hooker, whose writings, so far from confirming Mr. Wilberforce, are point blank against his whole theory, and fully refute it. For Hooker shows that the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity have their several distinct attributes, which are not interchangeable: that as we cannot say of the Father, nor of the Holy Ghost that they became incarnate, so Incarnation is the union of the Divine and Human natures in the Person of the Son, the two natures being hence inseparably united. When at our Lord's death the soul was separated from the body, still the divine nature was not separated from the soul or the body, and that when the soul and body were reunited at the resurrection,

and our Lord ascended into heaven, His Personal presence is in heaven alone until the second Advent ; and He is only spiritually present in the Church by the " other Comforter," the Holy Ghost, whom He promised to send after His own departure, by whom all acts are done in the Church, regeneration, sanctification, guiding, &c. &c. Hooker says, " The substance of the body of Christ hath no presence, nor can have but only local. There is no proof in the world strong to enforce that Christ had a true body, but by the true and natural properties of His body, amongst which properties, definite and local presence is chief." 302.

Mr. Wilberforce confounds Incarnation, which is the sole attribute of the Son, with regeneration, which is a totally different mystery, and is the work of the Holy Ghost. And the confusion in his mind seems to have originated from pressing too exclusively the analogy of Adam and Eve, which was a type of the relationship between Christ and the Church ; and he has thus confounded the type with the antitype. For as Eve was formed out of the body of Adam, so Mr. Wilberforce infers the Church to be formed out of the body of Christ. Eve was a single individual formed out of another individual : but the Church is a body corporate, composed of many individuals, first formed by ordinary generation, and then regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is a single individual.

In his work on the Incarnation, p. 80, our author writes : " Thus as Adam was a type of humanity in his constitution, so also is Christ —— ' for the

“ first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man
“ is the Lord from heaven.’ The first is the original
“ form in which humanity was moulded, and with
“ which all its inheritors have been connected by
“ natural descent. The second is the pattern form
“ on which it was remodelled, and which was de-
“ signed as a principle of union to those who should
“ be joined to it by grace. Thus is that object at-
“ tained for which man’s heart had always longed—
“ the union of our inferior nature with that superior
“ nature by which its weakness might be redressed,
“ and its ignorance enlightened.” In referring to
our Lord’s promises made in His last discourse,
John xiv. 16, Mr. Wilberforce says : “ His promises
“ look to the restoration of that which was about to
“ be lost to them—the presence, namely, of our Lord
“ according to His human nature.” 273. Yet at
p. 278 he says : “ but though our Lord’s presence be
“ the presence of His man’s nature, it is yet a spiri-
“ tual, and not a carnal presence.” I know not what
this means. In page 317 he says : “ Now on this
“ subject in general it may be said, that our union
“ with the manhood of Christ, or our participation
“ in His presence, is brought about in our union with
“ the Church, which is His body mystical. It is not
“ that one of these is a means or channel through
“ which we approach the other, but since the two
“ processes are identical, it is impossible to divide
“ them : for that which joins men to Christ’s mysti-
“ cal body the Church, is their union with His man’s
“ nature ; and their means of union with His man’s
“ nature is bestowed in His Church or body mysti-
“ cal.”

We do not become united to Christ by our union with His human nature, for if this were so, every child of Adam would be in union with Christ. We are united to His human by His taking our nature: the members of His Church are united to His Divine nature by the Holy Ghost which is given to them.

The two succeeding works of Mr. Wilberforce are pervaded by the same error. In his treatise on baptism, he asks, p. 27, "What is regeneration? it is the effect of that gift of grace which the Father of all mercies was pleased to embody in the manhood of His incarnate Son, that thereby humanity at large might be reconstructed." And again, p. 57: "For this reason was the system of sacraments ordained, as being the means whereby the humanity of the Word should extend itself to others; so that men might hereby have the same relation to the second Adam which the course of nature gave them to the first."

In his work on the Eucharist, he says, p. 101: "It was by the Incarnation that God and man, the finite and the infinite, were brought into relation; and that the graces which were inherent in the one, were communicated as a gift to the other. Now the medium through which these gifts are extended, is not the Deity, but the manhood of Christ." Neither by the one, nor by the other, but by the Holy Spirit.

On p. 104, he says, "Our Lord is not present in this ordinance by spiritual power only, but He has consecrated His body to be the peculiar me-