

The Church Guardian.

Upholds the Doctrines and Rubrics of the Prayer Book.

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."—Eph. vi. 24.
"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."—Jude: 3.

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THE "DESTRUCTIVE CRITICISM."

The effort of "Destructive Criticism" has been to eliminate from the Sacred Record, that without which it is no record, and has no sanctity—viz. its accuracy and trustworthiness. And has it not succeeded to its own satisfaction, in proving the narratives of the Creation and the Fall to be Fables; the Pentateuch for the most part to have been a composition of Babylonian scribes; that Moses is an ideal personage made up of himself, Ezekiel, Ezra, and others; that Abraham, Isaac, and Ruth, not to mention others, are myths? that David did not fight Goliath, that Elijah is a legendary character, and that Isaiah is not one man but two.

Surely this is "destructive" enough. Yes; but, unfortunately for the critics, it is "destructive" only on paper; and reminds us of that famous despatch in which the battle and the victory were described with the greatest circumstantiality, but which ought to have been sent from the opposite camp after the event.

The truth of Scripture has been "destroyed," according to the critics, hundreds and thousands of times; but it still lives nevertheless, and the only signs of "destruction" are those which are apparent in the enemy's ranks. The Word of God remains intact, and exerts its vitalising influence over millions.

But where are the various Schools which could only live out their little day by attacking it? Verily, the ablest defenders of Holy Writ have not done it half the service against its enemies that those enemies have themselves accomplished. Where are Feuerbach, Baur, Strauss, and their theories, by each of which Christianity was threatened with a speedy dissolution? As *The Spectator* wisely said the other day, "like revolutions generally, the critical revolution is busily engaged in devouring its own children. Already those who were in the van a dozen years ago are superseded and out of date. Such names as Ewald, Schrader, and Dillman have become the Girondins of a new advance which has found its Robespierre in Wellhausen."

The passion of these critics for destruction, not being gratified by impossible assaults on religion, has at length found fitting occupation in the annihilation of their parents, grandparents, and near relations. Professor Wellhausen's turn will come next, and the forthcoming critical school will show him and his wild theories the same mercy that he has shown to his predecessors.

What is the proper attitude of the Church towards the "destructive criticism?" Three courses are open: to make friends with it; to attack it; and to leave it alone.

To make friends with it, will be to repeat the old mistake of "liberal" theologians all the world over. The concessions required at the outset logically involve the concession of everything distinctive in Supernatural Religion. The Britons conceded Kent to the Saxons. It was only a little strip of territory; what was left was ample for all British requirements. But we know the rest.

To attack it, as we have seen, is perfectly superfluous. It will destroy itself if left alone; and this latter is the course we advocate. It can only thrive through notoriety. Let the Church look to its own "lamps, pitchers, and trumpets," and maintain its unshaken confidence in the Rock of Ages

on which it rests, and remember Who it was Who said, "Whosoever falleth on this rock shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder," and think how many times this prophecy has been fulfilled.—*Selected.*

COVENANTS AND GRACE FOR INFANTS.

"The consent and custom of all nations, the theories of the profoundest authors on the constitution of human society, concur in the affirmation, that infants, as soon as born, are capable of becoming parties to a Civil Contract.

The Divinely prescribed usage of the Jewish Church, the entire consent of the Christian Church, and with but few exceptions all professing Christians from the time of the Apostles to the present, concur, not only in recognizing infants as capable of a covenant relation, but of formally sealing and satisfying that covenant." (*Rev. Saml. Seabury, D.D.*)

"Infants are made members of both the Family and State, without their knowledge or consent; and are bound to obey the laws of both. It is the practice of mankind in both these Societies to act for children, promise for them, and train them as they think proper. Now, if God has so constituted these two Divine Societies, we may infer, as to the third Society of God's appointment, the Church, that Infants become members of it also, without their knowledge and consent." (*Mrs. D. C. Weston, "Catechism on the Church,"* Less. xxiv.)

"Of such is the kingdom of God." (St. Luke xviii. 16.)

"Of these, *i. e.*, little children, is My (Christ's) kingdom here on earth." (*Rev. Dr. S. Fuller, "Loutrou,"* p. 80.)

"We find, in St. Matt. xix. 13, the first foundation of Christian Baptism, in the giving a spiritual gift to Infants.

"They did not bring little children to our Saviour to be cured of any disease, but to receive a spiritual blessing, which they believed would result from His putting His hands on them with prayer. This was taught them by the ancient custom of laying on of hands." (*Rev. C. H. Hall, D.D. "Notes on the Gospels,"* I. 217.)

"Infants are part of the Church of God; they are the sheep of Christ and belong to His flock. Why should they not bear the mark of Christ? They have the promise of salvation, why should they not receive the seal whereby it is confirmed unto them." (*Bishop Jewell Works II. 1105.*)

"The habit of faith which afterwards doth come with years is but a farther building up of the same edifice, the first foundation of which was laid by the Sacrament of Baptism. . . . Till we come to actual belief, the very Sacrament of faith is a shield as strong, as after this the faith of the Sacrament against all contending powers. . . . If, without any fear or scruple we may account them and term them believers, only for their outward profession's sake, which inwardly are farther from faith than infants, why not infants much more at the time of their solemn initiation by Baptism the Sacrament of faith, whereunto they not only conceive nothing opposite, but have also that grace given them, which is the first and most effectual cause out of which our belief groweth?" (*Hooker, Book V. ch. lxxv. Quoted from Augustine.*)

"As a learner, whose name is simply enrolled is

called a pupil, a scholar before he commences to learn; so in the case of a Disciple, whoever is set apart, and instituted into the School of Christ, is called a Disciple from his Baptism. (*Hodges, 198.*)

"Some say that Baptism cannot be salutary to Infants, who cannot make the answer of a good conscience. To this I answer, that St. Paul saith that the true Circumcision before God is not the outward Circumcision of the flesh, but the internal Circumcision of the heart and spirit. (Sam. II. 29.) But will any hence argue, that Jewish Infants for want of this were not to be admitted into Covenant with God by Circumcision? And yet the argument is plainly parallel; the answer of a good conscience is required that the Baptism may be salutary; therefore they only are to be baptized who can make this answer; and the inward Circumcision of the heart is required as the only acceptable Circumcision in the sight of God, therefore they only should be circumcised, who have this inward Circumcision of the heart." (*Rev. Dr. Whitby New Testament Comment. 968.*)

RELIGION IS FOR MEN ALSO.

Most men prefer their wives and daughters to be members of the Church. Unless they happen to be so pious that their piety interferes with my lord's pleasure, he rather thinks it a right and proper thing for women. But, as we read God's Word, man was made in the image of God, and woman is the glory of man. God expects more from man than He does from woman. He should be to her an example of goodness and purity and piety that she could look up to, and in so doing be aided to the Eternal Kingdom. Here is an able-bodied man that can work six days in the week, but is too weak to walk to church on Sundays; or, if he gets there, the service and sermon are voted a bore. The woman, who is termed the "weaker vessel," can stand up and say her creed and kneel down and say her prayer; but he, the lord of creation, the image of God, can do nothing but suffer. This specimen of God's image had better do a little thinking for himself. He will not be here many years longer; will have to go forth some of these days, and there will be no wife to wait on him or help him; will go forth a stranger into a strange country, and at the appointed time will have to stand up; can no longer loll and vote Christ's Service a bore; will have to stand up before the Christ he was ashamed of and account to Him for the way he lived, for what he did and for what he did not. Certain is it? As certain as the sunrise. And no thought on the subject; no concern; passing through life as a dumb beast, without reflection! O man made in the image of God, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, bestir yourself and act as one who must soon give an account to the Righteous Judge.—*Southern Churchman.*

A CORRESPONDENT of the *New York Herald* asks: "Is there a society in New York for the advancement of the physical and moral well being of man, and what are the conditions requisite to enter the same? Who will give the required information?"

Ans.—The Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New York. The conditions of entrance are "Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ," and "the sacraments of baptism, and Lord's Supper, as generally necessary to salvation."