

232

THIRTY-FIVE REASONS

WHY I AM NOT A MEMBER OF THE EPISCOPALIAN CHURCH,

COMMONLY CALLED THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

BY GEORGE FRED. PLAYTER.

[If it be asked, Why was this Tract written? I may reply by first asking, Why are Tracts by the Episcopalian party written? The spirit and character of the letter towards non-Episcopalian Churches caused the present publication. In newspapers, in magazines, in reviews, as well as in tracts, and I should not forget the pulpit, those out of the Episcopalian Church are incessantly urged to enter it, and unchristianized for refusing. If there were no obstacles in the path, we would hearken to our Episcopalian brethren, and appoint a day when we would all move, *en masse*, into the Establishment, and become one flock having one fold and one Shepherd. But important reasons deter thousands and tens of thousands from doing so at present. Some of those reasons are furnished by the following pages.]

I. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because the *temporal head* of that church is the Sovereign of the Realm. Yet I have no desire against my Sovereign, but wish her every good, and the possession of every right and every privilege granted by the constitution, with this exception—the Sovereignty of the church of Christ. If any have the headship of the church on earth, it must be those who are the shepherds of the fold, and who are to ‘feed the flock of God;’ yet even these are not ‘lords over God’s heritage,’ and have no ‘dominion over’ its ‘faith.’ Nor can the body have two heads, else the church were a monstrosity. The title ‘head of the church’ can be given neither to the Apostle Peter, the Roman Pontiff, nor to the Queen of England. I therefore cannot become connected with a church that suffers the sovereignty of Christ to be shared, and his purchased right to be invaded. ‘*ONE Lord, one faith, one baptism.*’ And that one Lord is ‘*the HEAD over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.*’

II. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because the *authority* of appointing the head ministers of the church is in other hands than the church. The election of bishops originally was in the people composing the christian church, and afterwards in the presbyters; but now in England the election is entirely in the hands of the Sovereign of the Realm. True, there