

## PERSECUTING BISHOPS (E. Review, 1822)

1. *An appeal to the Legislature and Public; or the Legality of the Eighty Seven Questions proposed by Dr. Herbert Marsh, the Bishop of Peterborough, to Candidates for Holy Orders and for Licences, within that Diocese, considered.* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London, Seeley.
2. *Speech, delivered in the House of Lords, on Friday June 7, 1822, by Herbert, Lord Bishop of Peterborough, on the Presentation of a Petition against his Examination Questions, with Explanatory Notes, a supplement, and a copy of the Questions.* London. Rivington, 1822.
3. *The Wrongs of the Clergy of the Diocese of Peterborough stated and Illustrated.* By the Rev. T.S. Grimshaw, M.A., Rector of Burton, Northamptonshire; and Vicar of Biddenham, Bedfordshire.
4. *Episcopal Innovation; or the Test of Modern Orthodoxy, in Eighty-Seven Questions, imposed as Articles of Faith, upon Candidates for Licences and for Holy Orders in the Diocese of Peterborough; with a Distinct Answer to each Question, and General Reflections relative to their Illegal Structure and Pernicious Tendency.* London. Seely, 1820.
5. *Official Correspondence between the Right Reverend Herbert Lord Bishop of Peterborough and the Rev. John Green, respecting his Nomination for the Curacy of Blatherwycke, in the Diocese of Peterborough, and County of Northampton: Also between His Grace Charles Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Rev. Henry William Nevile, M.A. Rector of Blatherwycke, and of Cottesmore in the County of Rutland.* 1821.

It is a great point in any question to clear away encumbrances, and to make a naked circle about the object in dispute, so that there may be a clear view of it on every side. In pursuance of this disencumbering process, we shall first acquit the Bishop<sup>1</sup> of all wrong intentions. He has a very bad opinion of the practical effects of high Calvinistic doctrines upon the common people; and he thinks it his duty to exclude those clergymen who profess them from his diocese. There is no moral wrong in this. He has accordingly devised no fewer than *eighty-seven* interrogatories, by which he thinks he can detect the smallest taint of Calvinism that may lurk in the creed of the candidate; and in this also, whatever we may think of his reasoning, we suppose his purpose to be blameless. He believes, finally, that he has legally the power so to interrogate and exclude; and in this, perhaps, he is not mistaken. His intentions, then, are good, and his conduct, perhaps, not amenable to the law. All this we admit in his favour: but against him we must maintain, that his conduct upon the points in dispute has been singularly injudicious, extremely harsh, and, in its effects (though not in its intentions), very oppressive and vexatious to the Clergy. We have no sort of intention to avail ourselves of an anonymous publication to say unkind, uncivil, or disrespectful things to a man of rank, learning, and character—we hope to be guilty of no such impropriety; but we cannot believe we are doing wrong in ranging ourselves on the weaker side, in the cause of propriety and justice. The Mitre protects its wearer from indignity; but it does not secure impunity.

It is a strong presumption that a man is wrong, when all his friends, whose habits naturally lead them to coincide with him, think him wrong. If a man were to indulge in taking medicine till the apothecary, the druggist, and the physician, all called upon him to abandon

his philocathartic propensities—if he were to gratify his convivial habits till the landlord demurred, and the waiter shook his head—we should naturally imagine that advice so wholly disinterested was not given before it was wanted, and that it merited some little attention and respect. Now, though the Bench of Bishops certainly love power, and love the Church, as well as the Bishop of Peterborough, yet not one defended him—not one rose to say, “I have done, or I would do, the same thing.” It was impossible to be present at the last debate on this question, without perceiving that his Lordship stood alone—and this in a very gregarious profession, that habitually combines and butts against an opponent with a very extended front. If a lawyer is wounded, the rest of the profession pursue him, and put him to death. If a churchman is hurt, the others gather round for his protection, stamp with their feet, push with their horns, and demolish the dissenter who did the mischief.

The Bishop has at least done a very unusual thing in his Eighty- seven Questions. The two Archbishops, and we believe every other Bishop, and all the Irish hierarchy, admit curates into their dioceses without any such precautions. The necessity of such severe and scrupulous inquisition, in short, has been apparent to nobody but the Bishop of Peterborough; and the authorities by which he seeks to justify it are anything but satisfactory. His Lordship states, that forty years ago he was himself examined by written interrogatories, and that he is not the only Bishop who has done it; but he mentions no names; and it was hardly worth while to state such extremely slight precedents for so strong a deviation from the common practice of the Church.

The Bishop who rejects a curate upon the Eighty-seven Questions is necessarily and inevitably opposed to the Bishop who ordained him. The Bishop of Gloucester ordains a young man of twenty-three years of age, not thinking it necessary to put to him these interrogatories, or putting them, perhaps, and approving of answers diametrically opposite to those that are required by the Bishop of Peterborough. The young clergyman then comes to the last-mentioned Bishop; and the Bishop, after *putting him to the Question* says, “You are unfit for a clergyman,”—though, ten days before, the Bishop of Gloucester has made him one! It is bad enough for ladies to pull caps, but still worse for Bishops to pull mitres. Nothing can be more mischievous or indecent than such scenes; and no man of common prudence, or knowledge of the world, but must see that they ought immediately to be put a stop to. If a man is a captain in the army in one part of England, he is a captain in all. The general who commands north of the Tweed does not say, “You shall never appear in my district, or exercise the functions of an officer, if you do not answer eighty-seven questions on the art of war, according to my notions.” The same officer who commands a ship of the line in the Mediterranean, is considered as equal to the same office in the North Seas. The sixth commandment is suspended, by one medical diploma, from the north of England to the south. But, by this new system of interrogation, a man may be admitted into orders at Barnet, rejected at Stevenage, readmitted at Brogden, kicked out as a Calvinist at Witham Common, and hailed as an ardent Arminian on his arrival at York.

It matters nothing to say that sacred things must not be compared with profane. In their importance, we allow, they cannot; but in their order and discipline they may be so far compared as to say, that the discrepancy and contention which would be disgraceful and pernicious in worldly affairs, should, in common prudence be avoided in the affairs of religion. Mr. Greenough has made a map of England, according to its geological varieties;—blue for the chalk, green for the clay, red for the sand, and so forth. Under this system of Bishop Marsh, we must petition for the assistance of the geologist in the fabrication of an ecclesiastical map. All the Arminian districts must be purple. Green for one theological extremity—sky-blue for another—as many colours as there are Bishops—as many shades of these colours as there are Archdeacons—a tailor’s pattern card—the picture of vanity, fashion, and caprice.

The Bishop seems surprised at the resistance he meets with; and yet, to what purpose has he read ecclesiastical history, if he expect to meet with anything but the most determined opposition? Does he think that every sturdy supralapsarian bullock whom he tries to sacrifice to the Genius of Orthodoxy, will not kick, and push, and toss; that he will not, if he *can*, shake the axe from his neck, and hurl his mitred butcher into the air? His Lordship has undertaken a task of which he little knows the labour or the end. We know these men fully as well as the Bishop; he has not a chance of success against them. If one motion in Parliament will not do, they will have twenty. They will ravage, roar, and rush, till the very chaplains, and the Masters and Misses Peterborough request his Lordship to desist. He is raising up a storm in the English Church of which he has not the slightest conception; and which will end, as it ought to end, in his Lordship's disgrace and defeat.

The longer we live, the more we are convinced of the justice of the old saying, that an *ounce of mother wit is worth a pound of clergy*; that discretion, gentle manners, common sense, and good nature, are, in men of high ecclesiastical station, of far greater importance than the greatest skill in discriminating between sublapsarian and supralapsarian doctrines. Bishop Marsh should remember, that all men wearing the mitre work by character, as well as doctrine; that a tender regard to men's rights and feelings, a desire to avoid sacred squabbles, a fondness for quiet, and an ardent wish to make everybody happy, would be of far more value to the Church of England than all his learning and vigilance of inquisition. The Irish Tithes will probably fall next session of Parliament; the common people are regularly receding from the Church of England—baptizing, burying, and confirming for themselves. Under such circumstances, what would the worst enemy of the English Church require?—a bitter, bustling, theological Bishop, accused by his clergy of tyranny and oppression—the cause of daily petitions and daily debates in the House of Commons—the idoneous vehicle of abuse against the Establishment—a stalking-horse to bad men for the introduction of revolutionary opinions, mischievous ridicule, and irreligious feelings. Such will be the advantages which Bishop Marsh will secure for the English Establishment in the ensuing session. It is inconceivable how such a prelate shakes all the upper works of the Church, and ripens it for dissolution and decay. Six such Bishops, multiplied by eighty-seven, and working with five hundred and twenty-two questions, would fetch everything to the ground in less than six months. But what if it pleased Divine Providence to afflict every prelate with the spirit of putting eighty-seven queries, and the two Archbishops with the spirit of putting twice as many, and the Bishop of Sodor and Man with the spirit of putting only forty-three queries?—there would then be a grand total of two thousand three hundred and thirty-five interrogations flying about the English Church; and sorely vexed would the land be with Question and Answer.

We will suppose this learned Prelate, without meanness or undue regard to his worldly interests, to feel that fair desire of rising in his profession, which any man, in any profession, may feel with-out disgrace. Does he forget that his character in the ministerial circles will soon become that of a violent impracticable man—whom it is impossible to place in the highest situations—who has been trusted with too much already, and must be trusted with no more? Ministers have something else to do with their time, and with the time of Parliament, than to waste them in debating squabbles between Bishops and their Clergy. They naturally wish, and, on the whole, reasonably expect, that everything should go on silently and quietly in the Church. They have no objection to a learned Bishop; but they deprecate one atom more of learning than is compatible with moderation, good sense, and the soundest discretion. It must be the grossest ignorance of the world to suppose that the Cabinet has any pleasure in watching Calvinists.

The Bishop not only puts the questions, but he actually assigns the limits within which they are to be answered. Spaces are left in the paper of interrogations, to which limits the

answer is to be confined;—two inches to original sin: an inch and a half to justification; three quarters to predestination; and to free will only a quarter of an inch. But if his Lordship gives them an inch, they will take an ell. His Lordship is himself a theological writer, and by no means remarkable for his conciseness. To deny space to his brother theologians, who are writing on the most difficult subjects, not from choice, but necessity; not for fame, but for bread; and to award rejection as the penalty of prolixity, does appear to us no slight deviation from Christian gentleness. The tyranny of calling for such short answers is very strikingly pointed out in a letter from Mr. Thurtell to the Bishop of Peterborough; the style of which pleads, we think, very powerfully in favour of the writer.

“*Beccles, Suffolk, August 28th, 1821.*”

“My Lord,

“I ought, in the first place, to apologise for delaying so long to answer your Lordship’s letter: but the difficulty in which I was involved, by receiving another copy of your Lordship’s Questions, with positive directions to give short answers, may be sufficient to account for that delay.

“It is my sincere desire to meet your Lordship’s wishes, and to obey your Lordship’s directions in every particular; and I would therefore immediately have returned answers, without any ‘restrictions or modifications,’ to the Questions which your Lordship has thought fit to send me, if, in so doing, I could have discharged the obligations of my conscience, by showing what my opinions really are. But it appears to me, that the Questions proposed to me by your Lordship are so constructed as to elicit only two sets of opinions; and that, by answering them in so concise a manner, I should be representing myself to your Lordship as one who believes in either of two particular creeds, to neither of which I do *really* subscribe. For instance, to answer Question I. chap. ii. in the manner your Lordship desires, I am reduced to the alternative of declaring, either that ‘mankind are a mass of *mere* corruption,’ which expresses more than I intend, or of leaving room for the inference, that they are only *partially* corrupt, which is opposed to the plainest declarations of the Homilies; such as these, ‘Man is *altogether* spotted and defiled’ (Hom. on Nat.), ‘without a *spark* of goodness in him’ (Serm. on Mis. of Man, &c.).

“Again, by answering the Questions comprised in the chapter on ‘Free Will,’ according to your Lordship’s directions, I am compelled to acknowledge, either that man has such a share in the work of his own salvation as to exclude the *sole* agency of God, or that he has no share whatever; when the Homilies for Rogation Week and Whitsunday positively declare, that God is the ‘only Worker,’ or, in other words, *sole* Agent; and at the same time assign to man a certain share in the work of his own salvation. In short, I could, with your Lordship’s permission, point out twenty Questions, involving doctrines of the utmost importance, which I am unable to answer, so as to convey my real sentiments, without more room for explanation than the printed sheet affords.

“In this view of the subject, therefore, and in the most deliberate exercise of my judgment, I deem it indispensable to my acting with that candour and truth with which it is my wish and duty to act, and with which I cannot but believe your Lordship desires I should act, to state my opinions in that language which expresses them most fully, plainly, and unreservedly. This I have endeavoured to do in the answers now in the possession of your Lordship. If any further explanation be required, I am most willing to

give it, even to a minuteness of opinion beyond what the Articles require. At the same time, I would humbly and respectfully appeal to your Lordship's candour, *whether it is not hard to demand my decided opinion upon points which have been the themes of volumes; upon which the most pious and learned men of the Church have conscientiously differed; and upon which the Articles, in the judgment of Bishop Burnet, have pronounced no definite sentence.* To those Articles, my Lord, I have already subscribed; and I am willing again to subscribe to every one of them, 'in its literal and grammatical sense,' according to His Majesty's declaration prefixed to them. "I hope, therefore, in consideration of the above statement, that your Lordship will not compel me, by the conciseness of my answers to assent to doctrines which I do not believe, or to expose myself to inferences which do not fairly and legitimately follow from my opinions.

"I am, my Lord, &c. &c."

We are not much acquainted with the practices of courts of justice; but, if we remember right, when a man is going to be hanged, the judge lets him make his defence in his own way, without complaining of its length. We should think a Christian Bishop might be equally indulgent to a man who is going to be ruined. The answers are required to be clear, concise, and correct—short, plain, and positive. In other words, a poor curate, extremely agitated at the idea of losing his livelihood, is required to write with brevity and perspicuity on the following subjects:—Redemption by Jesus Christ—Original Sin—Free Will—Justification—Justification in reference to its Cause—Justification in reference to the time when it takes place—Everlasting Salvation—Predestination—Regeneration on the New Birth—Renovation, and the Holy Trinity. As a specimen of these questions, the answer to which is required to be so brief and clear, we shall insert the following quotation:—

*"Section II.—Of Justification, in reference to its cause.*

"1. Does not the eleventh Article declare, that we are 'justified by Faith *only*?'

"2. Does not the expression 'Faith only' derive additional strength from the negative expression in the same Article 'and *not* for our own works?'

"3. Does not therefore the eleventh Article *exclude* good works from all share in the office of Justifying? Or can we so construe the term 'Faith' in that Article, as to make it *include* good works?

"4. Do not the twelfth and thirteenth Articles *further* exclude them, the one by asserting that good works *follow after* Justification, the other by maintaining that they *cannot precede* it?

"5. Can that which never precedes an effect be reckoned among the *causes* of that effect?

"6. Can we then, consistently with our Articles, reckon the performance of good works among the *causes* of Justification, whatever qualifying epithet be used with the term *cause*?"

We entirely deny that the Calvinistical Clergy are bad members of their profession. We maintain that as many instances of good, serious, and pious men—of persons zealously

interesting themselves in the temporal and spiritual welfare of their parishioners, are to be found among them, as among the clergy who put an opposite interpretation on the Articles. The Articles of Religion are older than Arminianism, *eo nomine*. The early Reformers leant to Calvinism; and would, to a man, have answered the Bishop's questions in a way which would have induced him to refuse them ordination and curacies; and those who drew up the Thirty-nine Articles, if they had not prudently avoided all precise interpretation of their Creed on free will, necessity, absolute decrees, original sin, reprobation, and election, would have, in all probability, given an interpretation of them like that which the Bishop considers as a disqualification for Holy Orders. Laud's Lambeth Articles were illegal, mischievous, and are generally condemned. The Irish Clergy in 1641 drew up one hundred and four articles as the creed of their Church; and these are Calvinistic and not Arminian. They were approved and signed by Usher, and never abjured by him; though dropt as a test or qualification. Usher was promoted (even in the days of Arminianism) to bishoprics and archbishoprics—so little did a Calvinistic interpretation of the Articles in a man's own breast, or even an avowal of Calvinism beyond what was required by the Articles, operate even then as a disqualification for the cure of souls, or any other office in the Church. Throughout Charles II. and William III.'s time, the best men and greatest names of the Church not only allowed latitude in interpreting the Articles, but thought it would be wise to diminish their number, and render them more lax than they are and be it observed that these latitudinarians leant to Arminianism rather than to high Calvinism; and thought, consequently, that the Articles, if objectionable at all, were exposed to the censure of being "too Calvinistic," rather than too Arminian. How preposterous, therefore, to twist them, and the subscription to them required by law, by the machinery of a long string of explanatory questions, into a barrier against Calvinists, and to give the Arminians a monopoly in the Church!

Archbishop Wake, in 1716, after consulting all the Bishops then attending Parliament, thought it incumbent on him "*to employ the authority which the ecclesiastical laws then in force, and the custom and laws of the realm vested in him*" in taking care that "*no unworthy person might hereafter be admitted into the sacred Ministry of the Church*"; and he drew up twelve recommendations to the Bishops of England, in which he earnestly exhorts them not to ordain persons of bad conduct or character, or incompetent learning but he does not require from the candidates for Holy Orders or preferment any explanation whatever of the Articles which they had signed.

The Correspondence of the same eminent Prelate with Professor Turretin in 1718, and with Mr. Le Clerc and the Pastors and Professors of Geneva in 1719, printed in London, 1782, recommends union among Protestants, and the omission of controverted points in Confessions of Faith, as a means of obtaining that union; and a constant reference to the practice of the Church of England is made, in elucidation of the charity and wisdom of such policy. Speaking of men who act upon a contrary principle he says, *O quantum potuit insana φιλαντία!*

These passages, we think, are conclusive evidence of the practice of the Church till 1719. For Wake was not only at the time Archbishop of Canterbury, but both in his circular recommendations to the Bishops of England, and in his correspondence with foreign Churches, was acting in the capacity of metropolitan of the Anglican Church. He, a man of prudence and learning, publicly boasts to Protestant Europe, that his Church does *not* exact, and that he *de facto* has never avowed, and never will, his opinions on those very points upon which Bishop Marsh obliges every poor curate to be explicit, upon pain of expulsion from the Church.

It is clear, then, the practice was to extract subscription, and nothing else, as the test of orthodoxy—to that Wake is an evidence. As far as he is authority on a point of opinion, it is his conviction that this practice was wholesome, wise, and intended to preserve peace in the Church; that it would be wrong at least, if not illegal, to do otherwise; and that the observance of this forbearance is the only method of preventing schism. The Bishop of Peterborough, however, is of a different opinion; he is so thoroughly convinced of the pernicious effects of Calvinistic doctrines, that he does what no other Bishop does, or ever did do, for their exclusion. This may be either wise or injudicious, but it is at least zealous and bold; it is to encounter rebuke, and opposition, from a sense of duty. It is impossible to deny this merit to his Lordship. And we have no doubt, that, in pursuance of the same theological gallantry, he is preparing a set of interrogatories for those clergy men who are presented to benefices in his diocese. The patron will have his action of *Quare impedit*, it is true; and the judge and jury will decide whether the Bishop has the right of interrogation at all; and whether Calvinistical answers to his interrogatories disqualify any man from holding preferment in the Church of England. If either of these points are given against the Bishop of Peterborough, he is in honour and conscience bound to give up his examination of curates. If Calvinistic ministers are, in the estimation of the Bishops, so dangerous as curates, they are, of course, much more dangerous as rectors and vicars. He has as much right to examine one as the other. Why, then, does he pass over the greater danger, and guard against the less? Why does he not show his zeal when he would run some risk, and where the excluded person (if excluded unjustly) could appeal to the laws of his country? If his conduct be just and right, has he anything to fear from that appeal? What should we say of a police officer, who acted in all cases of petty larceny, where no opposition was made, and let off all persons guilty of felony who threatened to knock him down? If the Bishop value his own character, he is bound to do less,—or to do more. God send his choice may be right! The law, as it stands at present, certainly affords very unequal protection to rector and to curate; but if the Bishop will not act so as to improve the law, the law must be so changed as to improve the Bishop; an action of *Quare impedit* must be given to the curate also—and then the fury of interrogation will be calmed.

We are aware that the Bishop of Peterborough, in his speech, disclaims the object of excluding the Calvinists by this system of interrogation. We shall take no other notice of his disavowal than expressing our sincere regret that he ever made it; but the question is not at all altered by the intention of the interrogator. Whether he aim at the Calvinists only, or includes them with other heterodox respondents—the fact is, they *are* included in the proscription, and excluded from the Church, the practical effect of the practice being that men are driven out of the Church who have as much right to exercise the duties of clergymen as the Bishop himself. If heterodox opinions are the great objects of the Bishop's apprehensions, he has his Ecclesiastical Courts, where regular process may bring the offender to punishment, and from whence there is an appeal to higher courts. This would be the fair thing to do. The curate and the Bishop would be brought into the light of day, and subjected to the wholesome restraint of public opinion.

His Lordship boasts that he has excluded only two curates. So the Emperor of Hayti boasted that he had only cut off two persons' heads for disagreeable behaviour at his table. In spite of the paucity of the visitors executed, the example operated as a considerable impediment to conversation; and the intensity of the punishment was found to be a full compensation for its rarity. How many persons have been deprived of curacies which they might have enjoyed but for the tenour of these interrogatories? How many respectable clergymen have been deprived of the assistance of curates connected with them by blood, friendship, or doctrine, and compelled to choose persons for no other qualification than that they could pass through the eye of the Bishop's needle? Violent measures are not to be

judged of merely by the number of times they have been resorted to, but by the terror, misery, and restraint which the severity is likely to have produced.

We never met with any style so entirely clear of all redundant and vicious ornament as that which the ecclesiastical Lord of Peterborough has adopted towards his clergy. It, in fact, may be all reduced to these few words—"Reverend Sir, I shall do what I please. Peterborough."—Even in the House of Lords, he speaks what we must call very plain language. Among other things, he says that the allegations of the petitions are *false*. Now, as every Bishop is, besides his other qualities, a gentleman; and as the word *false* is used only by laymen who mean to hazard their lives by the expression; and as it cannot be supposed that foul language is ever used because it can be used with personal impunity, his Lordship must therefore be intended to mean not *false*, but *mistaken*—not a wilful deviation from truth, but an accidental and unintended departure from it.

His Lordship talks of the drudgery of wading through ten pages of answers to his eighty-seven questions. Who has occasioned this drudgery, but the person who means to be so much more active useful, and important, than all other Bishops, by proposing questions which nobody has thought to be necessary but himself? But to be intolerably strict and harsh to a poor curate, who is trying to earn a morsel of hard bread, and then to complain of the drudgery of reading his answers, is much like knocking a man down with a bludgeon, and then abusing him for splashing you with his blood, and pestering you with his groans. It is quite monstrous, that a man who inflicts eighty-seven new questions in Theology upon his fellow-creatures, should talk of the drudgery of reading their answers.

A Curate—there is something which excites compassion in the very name of a Curate !!! How any man of Purple, Palaces, and Preferment, can let himself loose against this poor working man of God, we are at a loss to conceive,—a learned man in an hovel, with sermons and saucepans, lexicons and bacon, Hebrew books and ragged children—good and patient—a comforter and a preacher—the first and purest pauper in the hamlet, and yet showing, that, in the midst of his worldly misery, he has the heart of a gentleman, and the spirit of a Christian, and the kindness of a pastor; and this man, though he has exercised the duties of a clergyman for twenty years—though he has most ample testimonies of conduct from clergymen as respectable as any Bishop— though an Archbishop add his name to the list of witnesses, is not good enough for Bishop Marsh; but is pushed out in the street, with his wife and children, and his little furniture, to surrender his honour, his faith, his conscience, and his learning—or to starve!

An obvious objection to these innovations is, that there can be no end to them. If eighty-three questions are assumed to be necessary by one Bishop, eight hundred may be considered as the minimum of interrogation by another. When once the ancient faith-marks of the Church are lost sight of and despised, any misled theologian may launch out on the boundless sea of polemical vexation.

The Bishop of Peterborough is positive, that the Arminian interpretation of the Articles is the right interpretation, and that Calvinists should be excluded from it; but the country gentlemen who are to hear these matters debated in the Lower House, are to remember, that other Bishops have written upon these points before the Bishop of Peterborough, and have arrived at conclusions diametrically opposite. When curates are excluded because their answers are Calvinistical, a careless layman might imagine that this interpretation of the Articles had never been heard of before in the Church—that it was a gross and palpable perversion of their sense, which had been scouted by all writers On Church matters, from the day the Articles were promulgated, to this hour—that such an unheard-of monster as a



Calvinistical Curate had never leapt over the pale before, and been detected browsing in the sacred pastures.

The following is the testimony of Bishop Sherlock:—

““The Church has left a latitude of sense to prevent schisms and breaches upon every different opinion. It is evident the Church of England has so done in some Articles, which are most liable to the hottest disputes; which yet are penned with that temper as to be willingly subscribed by men of different apprehensions in those matters.’ ”—(SHERLOCK’S *Defence of Stillingfleet’s Unreasonableness of Separation.*)

Bishop Cleaver, describing the difficulties attending so great an undertaking as the formation of a national creed, observes:—

““These difficulties, however, do not seem to have discouraged the great leaders in this work from forming a design as wise as it was liberal, that of framing a confession, which in the enumeration and method of its several articles, should meet the approbation, and engage the consent of the whole reformed world.

““If upon trial it was found that a comprehension so extensive could not be reduced to practice, still as large a comprehension as could be contrived, within the narrower limits of the kingdom, became, for the same reasons which first suggested the idea, at once an object of prudence and duty in the formation and government of the English Church.’

“After dwelling on the means necessary to accomplish this object, the Bishop proceeds to remark:—’Such evidently appears to have been the origin, and such the actual complexion of the confession comprised in the Articles of our Church; *the true scope and design of which will not, I conceive, be correctly apprehended in any other view than that of one drawn up and adjusted with an intention to comprehend the assent of all, rather than to exclude that of any who concurred in the necessity of a reformation.*

““The means of comprehension intended were, not any general ambiguity or equivocation of terms, *but a prudent forbearance in all parties not to insist on the full extent of their opinions in matters not essential or fundamental, and in all cases to waive, as much as possible, tenets which might divide, where they wish to unite*’ “ (Remarks on the Design and Formation of the Articles of the Church of England, by WILLIAM, Lord Bishop of Bangor, 1802.—pp. 23-25.)

We will finish with Bishop Horsley.

“It has been the fashion of late to talk about Arminianism as the system of the Church of England, and of Calvinism as something opposite to it, to which the Church is hostile. That I may not be misunderstood in what I have stated, or may have occasion further to say upon this subject, I must here declare, that I use the words Arminianism and Calvinism in that restricted sense in which they are now generally taken, to denote the doctrinal part of each system, as unconnected with the principles either of Arminians or Calvinists, upon Church discipline and Church government. This being premised, I assert, what I often have before asserted, and by God’s grace I will persist in the assertion to my dying day, that so far is it from the truth that the Church of England is decidedly Arminian, and hostile to Calvinism, that the truth is this, *that upon the principal point in dispute between the Arminians and the Calvinists—upon all the points of doctrine characteristic of the two sects, the Church of England maintains an absolute neutrality; her Articles explicitly assert nothing but what is*

*believed both by Arminians and by Calvinists.* The Calvinists indeed hold some opinions relative to the same points, which the Church of England has not gone the length of asserting in her Articles; but neither has she gone the length of explicitly contradicting those opinions; insomuch, that *there is nothing to hinder the Arminian and the highest supralapsarian Calvinist from walking together in the Church of England and Ireland as friends and brothers, if they both approve the discipline of the Church, and both are willing to submit to it.* Her discipline has been approved; it has been submitted to; it has been in former times most ably and zealously defended by the highest supralapsarian Calvinists. Such was the great Usher; such was Whitgift; such were many more, burning and shining lights of our Church in her early days (when first she shook off the Papal tyranny), long since gone to the resting-place of the spirits of the just.”—(*Bishop HORSLEY’S Charges*, p. 216—pp. 25, 26.)

So that these unhappy Curates are turned out of their bread for an exposition of the Articles which such men as Sherlock, Cleaver, and Horsley think may be fairly given of their meaning. We do not quote their authority, to show that the right interpretation is decided, but that it is doubtful—that there is a balance of authorities—that the opinion which Bishop Marsh has punished with poverty and degradation, has been considered to be legitimate by men at least as wise and learned as himself. In fact, it is to us perfectly clear, that the Articles were originally framed to prevent the very practices which Bishop Marsh has used for their protection—they were purposely so worded, that Arminians and Calvinists could sign them without blame. They were intended to combine both these descriptions of Protestants, and were meant principally for a bulwark against the Catholics.

“Thus,” says Bishop Burnet, “was the doctrine of the Church cast into a short and plain form; in which they took care both to establish the positive articles of religion and to cut off the errors formerly introduced in the time of Popery, or of late broached by the Anabaptists and enthusiasts of Germany; *avoiding the niceties of schoolmen, or the peremptoriness of the writers of controversy; leaving, in matters that are more justly controvertible, a liberty to divines to follow their private opinions without thereby disturbing the peace of the Church.*”—(*History of the Reformation*, Book I. part ii. p. 168, folio edition.)

The next authority is that of Fuller.

“In the Convocation now sitting, wherein Alexander Nowel, Dean of St. Paul’s, was Prolocutor, the nine-and-thirty Articles were composed. For the main they agree with those set forth in the reign of King Edward the Sixth, though in some particulars allowing more liberty to dissenting judgments. For instance, in this King’s Articles it is said, that it is to be believed that Christ went down to hell (to preach to the spirits there); which last clause is left out in these Articles, and men left to a latitude concerning the cause, time, and manner of his descent.

“Hence some have unjustly taxed the composers for too much favour extended in their large expressions, clean through the contexture of these Articles, which should have tied men’s consciences up closer, in more strict and particularising propositions, *which indeed proceeded from their commendable moderation.* Children’s clothes ought to be made of the biggest, because afterwards their bodies will grow up to their garments. Thus the Articles of this English Protestant Church, in the infancy thereof, they thought good to draw up in general terms, foreseeing that posterity would grow up to fill the same: I mean these holy men did prudently prediscover, that differences in judgments would unavoidably happen in the Church, *and were loath to unchurch any, and drive them off from an ecclesiastical communion, for such petty differences, which made them pen the*

*Articles in comprehensive words, to take in all who, differing in the branches, meet in the root of the same religion.*

“Indeed most of them had formerly been sufferers themselves, and cannot be said, in compiling these Articles, (an acceptable service, no doubt,) to offer to God what cost them nothing, some having paid imprisonment, others exile, all losses in their estates, for this their experimental knowledge in religion, *which made them the more merciful and tender in stating those points*, seeing such who themselves have been most patient in bearing, will be most pitiful in burdening the consciences of others.”— (See FULLER’S *Church History*, book ix. p. 72, folio edit.)

But this generous and pacific spirit gives no room for the display of zeal and theological learning. The gate of admission has been left too widely open. I may as well be without power at all, if I cannot force my opinions upon other people. What was purposely left indefinite, I must make finite and exclusive. Questions of contention and difference must be laid before the servants of the Church, and nothing like neutrality in theological metaphysics allowed to the ministers of the Gospel. *I come not to bring peace, &c.*

The Bishop, however, seems to be quite satisfied with himself, when he states, that he has a *right to do* what he has done—just as if a man’s character with his fellow-creatures depended upon legal rights alone, and not upon a discreet exercise of those rights. A man may persevere in doing what he has a right to do, till the Chancellor shuts him up in Bedlam, or till the mob pelt him as he passes. It must be presumed, that all men whom the law has invested with rights, Nature has invested with common sense to use those rights. For these reasons, children have no rights till they have gained some common sense, and old men have no rights after they lose their common sense. All men are at all times accountable to their fellow-creatures for the discreet exercise of every right they possess.

Prelates are fond of talking of *my see, my clergy, my diocese*, as if these things belonged to them, as their pigs and dogs belonged to them. They forget that the clergy, the diocese, and the Bishops themselves, all exist only for the public good; that the public are a third, and principal party in the whole concern. It is not simply the tormenting Bishop *versus* the tormented Curate, but the public against the system of tormenting; as tending to bring scandal upon religion and religious men. By the late alteration in the laws, the labourers in the vineyard are given up to the power of the inspectors of the vineyard. If he have the meanness and malice to do so, an inspector may worry and plague to death any labourer against whom he may have conceived an antipathy. As often as such cases are detected, we believe they will meet, in either House of Parliament, with the severest reprehension. The noblemen and gentlemen of England will never allow their parish clergy to be treated with cruelty, injustice, and caprice, by men who were parish clergymen themselves yesterday, and who were trusted with power for very different purposes.

The Bishop of Peterborough complains of the insolence of the answers made to him. This is certainly not true of Mr. Grimshawe, Mr. Neville, or of the author of the Appeal. They have answered his Lordship with great force, great manliness, but with perfect respect. Does the Bishop expect that humble men, as learned as himself, are to be driven from their houses and homes by his new theology, and then to send him letters of thanks for the kicks and cuffs he has bestowed upon them? Men of very small incomes, be it known to his Lordship, have very often very acute feelings; and a Curate trod on feels a pang as great as when a Bishop is refuted.

We shall now give a specimen of some answers, which, we believe, would exclude a curate from the diocese of Peterborough, and contrast these answers with the Articles of the

Church to which they refer. The 9th Article of the Church of England is upon Original Sin. Upon this point his Lordship puts the following question:—

“Did the fall of Adam produce such an effect on his posterity, that mankind became thereby a mass of mere corruption, or of absolute and entire depravity? Or is the effect only such, that we are very *far gone* from original righteousness, and of our own nature *inclined* to evil?”

*Excluding Answer.*

“The fall of Adam produced such an effect on his posterity, that mankind became thereby a mass of mere corruption, or of absolute and entire depravity.”

*The Ninth Article.*

“Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk); but it is the fault or corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore, in every person born into the world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation.”

The 9th Question, Cap. 3rd, on Free Will, is as follows:—”Is it not contrary to Scripture to say, that man has no share in the work of his salvation?”

*Excluding Answer.*

“It is quite agreeable to Scripture to say, that man has no share in the work of his own salvation.”

*Tenth Article.*

“The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God. Wherefore, we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.”

On Redemption, his Lordship has the following question, Cap. 1st, Question 1st:—”Did Christ die for all men, or did he die only for a chosen few?”

*Excluding Answer.*

“Christ did not die for all men, but only for a chosen few.”

*Part of Article Seventh.*

“Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed

by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ unto everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour.”

Now, whether these answers are right or wrong, we do not presume to decide; but we cannot help saying, there appears to be some little colour in the language of the Articles for the errors of the respondent. It does not appear at first sight to be such a deviation from the plain, literal, and grammatical sense of the Articles, as to merit rapid and ignominious ejection from the bosom of the Church.

Now we have done with the Bishop. We give him all he asks as to his legal right; and only contend, that he is acting a very indiscreet and injudicious part—fatal to his quiet—fatal to his reputation as a man of sense—blamed by Ministers—blamed by all the Bench of Bishops—vexatious to the Clergy, and highly injurious to the Church. We mean no personal disrespect to the Bishop; we are as ignorant of him as of his victims. We should have been heartily glad if the debate in Parliament had put an end to these blamable excesses; and our only object, in meddling with the question, is to restrain the arm of Power within the limits of moderation and justice—one of the great objects which first led to the establishment of this Journal [*The Edinburgh Review*] and which, we hope, will always continue to characterise its efforts.

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