

### THIRD LETTER TO ARCHDEACON SINGLETON

My dear Sir,

I hope this is the last letter you will receive from me on Church matters. I am tired of the subject; so are you; so is everybody. In spite of many Bishops' charges, I am unbroken; and remain entirely of the same opinion as I was two or three years since—that the mutilation of Deans and Chapters is a rash, foolish, and imprudent measure.

I do not think the charge of the Bishop of London successful, in combating those arguments which have been used against the impending Dean and Chapter Bill; but it is quiet, gentlemanlike, temperate, and written in a manner which entirely becomes the high office and character which he bears.

I agree with him in saying that the Plurality and Residence Bill is, upon the whole, a very good Bill;—nobody, however, knows better than the Bishop of London the various changes it has undergone, and the improvements it has received. I could point out fourteen or fifteen very material alterations for the better since it came out of the hands of the Commission, and all *bearing materially upon the happiness and comfort of the parochial Clergy*. I will mention only a few:—the Bill, as originally introduced, gave the Bishop a power, when he considered the duties of the parish to be improperly performed, to suspend the Clergyman and appoint a Curate with a salary. Some impious person thought it not impossible that occasionally such a power might be maliciously and vindictively exercised, and that some check to it should be admitted into the Bill; accordingly, under the existing act, an Ecclesiastical Jury is to be summoned, and into that jury the defendant Clergyman may introduce a friend of his own.

If a Clergyman, from illness or any other overwhelming necessity, were prevented from having two services, he was exposed to an information, and penalty. In answering the Bishop, he was subjected to two opposite sets of penalties—the one for saying *Yes*; the other for saying *No*: he was amenable to the needless and impertinent scrutiny of a Rural Dean before he was exposed to the scrutiny of the Bishop. Curates might be forced upon him by subscribing parishioners, and the certainty of a schism established in the parish; a Curate might have been forced upon *present* incumbents by the Bishop without any complaint made; upon men who took, or, perhaps, bought, their livings under very different laws;—all these acts of injustice are done away with, but it is not to the *credit* of the framers of the Bill that they were ever admitted, and they completely justify the opposition with which the Bill was received by me and by others. I add, however, with great pleasure, that when these and other objections were made, they were heard with candour, and promised to be remedied by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London and Lord John Russell.

I have spoken of the power to issue a Commission to inquire into the well-being of any parish: a vindictive and malicious Bishop might, it is true, convert this, which was intended for the protection, to the oppression of the Clergy—afraid to dispossess a Clergyman of his own authority, he might attempt to do the same thing under the cover of a jury of his ecclesiastical creatures. But I can hardly conceive such baseness in the prelate, or such infamous subserviency in the agents. An honest and respectable Bishop will remember that the very issue of such a Commission is a serious slur upon the character of a Clergyman; he will do all he can to prevent it by private monition and remonstrance; and if driven to such an act of power, he will of course state to the accused Clergyman the subjects of accusation, the names of his accusers, and give him ample time for his defence. If upon anonymous accusation he subjects a Clergyman to such an investigation, or refuses to him any advantage

which the law gives to every accused person, he is an infamous, degraded, and scandalous tyrant: but I cannot believe there is such a man to be found upon the Bench.

There is in this new Bill a very humane clause (though not introduced by the Commission), enabling the widow of the deceased clergyman to retain possession of the parsonage house for two months after the death of the Incumbent. It ought, in fairness, to be extended to the heirs, executors, and administrators of the Incumbent. It is a great hardship that a family settled in a parish for fifty years perhaps, should be torn up by the roots in eight or ten days; and the interval of two months, allowing time for repairs, might put to rest many questions of dilapidation.

To the Bishop's power of intruding a Curate without any complaint on the part of the parish that the duty has been inadequately performed, I retain the same objections as before. It is a power which without this condition will be unfairly and partially exercised. The first object I admit is not the provision of the Clergyman, but the care of the parish: but one way of taking care of parishes is to take care that clergymen are not treated with tyranny, partiality, and injustice: and the best way of effecting this is to remember that their superiors have the same human passions as other people; and not to trust them with a power which may be so grossly abused, and which (incredible as the Bishop of London may deem it) *has been*, in some instances, grossly abused.

I cannot imagine what the Bishop means by saying, that the members of Cathedrals do not in virtue of their office bear any part in the parochial instruction of the people. This is a fine deceitful word, the word *parochial*, and eminently calculated to coax the public. If he means simply that Cathedrals do not belong to parishes, that St. Paul's is not the parish church of Upper Puddicomb, and that the Vicar of St. Fiddlefrid does not officiate in Westminster Abbey: all this is true enough, but do they not in the most material points instruct the people precisely in the same manner as the parochial Clergy? Are not prayers and sermons the most important means of spiritual instruction? And are there not eighteen or twenty services in every Cathedral for one which is heard in parish churches? I have very often counted in the afternoon of week days in St. Paul's 150 people, and on Sundays it is full to suffocation. Is all this to go for nothing? and what right has the Bishop of London to suppose that there is not as much real piety in Cathedrals, as in the most roadless, postless, melancholy, sequestered hamlet, preached to by the most provincial, sequestered, bucolic Clergyman in the Queen's dominions?

A number of little children, it is true, do not repeat a catechism of which they do not comprehend a word; but it is rather rapid and wholesale to say, that the parochial Clergy are spiritual instructors of the people, and that the Cathedral Clergy are only so in a very restricted sense. I say that in the most material points and acts of instruction, they are much more laborious and incessant than any parochial Clergy. It might really be supposed from the Bishop of London's reasoning, that some other methods of instruction took place in Cathedrals than prayers and sermons can afford; that lectures were read on chemistry, or lessons given on dancing; or that it was a Mechanics' Institute, or a vast receptacle for hexameter and pentameter boys. His own most respectable Chaplain, who is often there as a member of the body, will tell him that the prayers are strictly adhered to, according to the rubric, with the difference only that the service is beautifully chanted instead of being badly read; that instead of the atrocious bawling of parish Churches, the Anthems are sung with great taste and feeling; and if the preaching is not good, it is the fault of the Bishop of London, who has the whole range of London preachers from whom to make his selection. The real fact is, that, instead of being something materially different from the parochial Clergy, as the Commissioners wish to make them, the Cathedral Clergy are fellow labourers with the parochial Clergy, outworking them ten to one; but the Commission having provided

snugly for the Bishops, have by *the merest accident in the world* entangled themselves in this quarrel with Cathedrals.

“Had the question,” says the Bishop, “been proposed to the religious part of the community, Whether, if no other means were to be found, the effective cure of souls should be provided for by the total suppression of those Ecclesiastical Corporations which have no cure of souls, nor bear any part in the parochial labours of the Clergy; that question, I verily believe, would have been carried in the affirmative by an immense majority of suffrages.” But suppose no other means could be found for the effective cure of souls than the suppression of Bishops, does the Bishop of London imagine that the majority of suffrages would have been less immense? How idle to put such cases!

A pious man leaves a large sum of money in Catholic times for some purposes which are superstitious, and for others, such as preaching and reading prayers, which are applicable to all times; the superstitious usages are abolished, the pious usages remain: now the Bishop must admit, if you take half or any part of this money from Clergymen to whom it was given, and divide it for similar purposes among Clergy to whom it was not given, you deviate materially from the intentions of the founder. These foundations are made *in loco*; in many of them the *locus* was perhaps the original cause of the gift. A man who founds an almshouse at Edmonton does not mean that the poor of Tottenham should avail themselves of it; and if he could have anticipated such a consequence, he would not have endowed any alms-house at all. Such is the respect for property that the Court of Chancery, when it becomes impracticable to carry the will of the donor into execution, always attend to the *cy pres*, and apply the charitable fund to a purpose as germane as possible to the intention of the founder; but here, when men of Lincoln have left to Lincoln Cathedral, and men of Hereford, to Hereford, the Commissioners seize it all, melt it into a common mass, and disperse it over the kingdom. Surely the Bishop of London cannot contend that this is not a greater deviation from the will of the founder than if the same people remaining in the same place, receiving all the founder gave them, and doing all things not forbidden by the law which the founder ordered, were to do something more than the founder ordered, were to become the guardians of education, the counsel to the Bishop, and the Curators of the Diocese in his old age and decay.

The public are greater robbers and plunderers than any one in the public; look at the whole transaction, it is a mixture of meanness and violence. The country choose to have an established religion, and a resident parochial Clergy, but they do not choose to build houses for their parochial clergy, or to pay them in many instances more than a butler or a coachman receives. How is this deficiency to be supplied? The heads of the Church propose to this public to seize upon estates which never belonged to the public, and which were left for another purpose; and by the seizure of these estates to save that which ought to come out of the public purse.

Suppose Parliament were to seize upon all the alms-houses in England, and apply them to the diminution of the poor-rate, what a number of ingenious arguments might be pressed into the service of this robbery: “Can anything be more revolting than that the poor of Northumberland should be starving, while the poor of the suburban hamlets are dividing the benefactions of the pious dead? *‘We want for these purposes all that we can obtain from whatever sources derived.’*” I do not deny the right of Parliament to do this, or anything else; but I deny that it would be expedient; because I think it better to make any sacrifices, and to endure any evil, than to gratify this rapacious spirit of plunder and confiscation. Suppose these Commissioner Prelates, firm and unmoved, when we were all alarmed, had told the public that the parochial Clergy were badly provided for, and that it was the duty of that public to provide a proper support for their Ministers;—suppose the Commissioners, instead

of leading them on to confiscation, had warned their fellow subjects against the base economy, and the perilous injustice of seizing on that which was not their own;—suppose they had called for water and washed their hands, and said, “We call you all to witness that we are innocent of this great ruin;”—does the Bishop of London imagine that the Prelates who made such a stand would have gone down to posterity less respected and less revered than those men upon whose tombs it must (after all the enumerations of their virtues) be written, *that under their auspices and by their counsels the destruction of the English Church began?* Pity that the Archbishop of Canterbury had not retained those feelings, when, at the first meeting of Bishops, the Bishop of London proposed this *holy innovation* upon Cathedrals, and the head of our Church declared with vehemence and indignation that nothing in the earth would induce him to consent to it.

Si mens non læva fuisset,  
Trojaque nunc stares, Priamique arx alta maneres.

“But,” says the Lord Bishop of London, “you admit the principle of confiscation by proposing the confiscation and partition of Prebends in the possession of non-residents.” I am thinking of something else, and I see all of a sudden a great blaze of light: I behold a great number of gentlemen in short aprons, neat purple coats, and gold buckles, rushing about with torches in their hands, calling each other “My Lord,” and setting fire to all the rooms in the house, and the people below delighted with the combustion: finding it impossible to turn them from their purpose, and finding that they are all what they are, by divine permission; I endeavour to direct their *holy innovations* into another channel; and I say to them, “My Lords, had not you better set fire to the out of door offices, to the barns and stables, and spare this fine library and this noble drawing-room? Yonder are several cow-houses of which no use is made; pray direct your fury against them, and leave this beautiful and venerable mansion as you found it.” If I address the divinely permitted in this manner, has the Bishop of London any right to call me a brother incendiary?

Our *holy innovator*, the Bishop of London, has drawn a very affecting picture of *sheep having no shepherd*, and of millions who have no *spiritual food*: our wants, he says, are most imperious; even if we were to tax large Livings we must still have the money of the Cathedrals: no plea wilt exempt you, nothing can stop us, for the formation of benefices, and the endowment of new ones. We want (and he prints it in italics) for these purposes “*all that we can obtain from whatever sources derived.*” I never remember to have been more alarmed in my life than by this passage. I said to myself, the necessities of the Church have got such complete hold of the imagination of this energetic Prelate, who is so captivated by the holiness of his innovations, that all grades and orders of the Church and all present and future interests will be sacrificed to it. I immediately rushed to the acts of Parliament which I always have under my pillow to see at once the worst of what had happened. I found present revenues of the Bishops all safe; that is some comfort, I said to myself: Canterbury, 24,000*l.* or 25,000*l.* per annum; London, 18,000*l.* or 20,000*l.* I began to feel some comfort: “things are not so bad; the Bishops do not mean to sacrifice to *sheep and shepherd’s money* their present revenues; the Bishop of London is less violent and headstrong than I thought he would be.” I looked a little further and found that 15,000*l.* per annum is allotted to the future Archbishop of Canterbury, 10,000*l.* to the Bishop of London, 8000*l.* to Durham, and 8000*l.* each to Winchester and Ely. “Nothing of *sheep and shepherd* in all this,” I exclaimed, and felt still more comforted. It was not till after the Bishops were taken care of, and the revenues of the Cathedrals came into full view, that I saw the perfect development of the *sheep and shepherd principle*, the deep and heartfelt compassion for spiritual labourers, and that inward groaning for the destitute state of the Church, and that firm purpose printed in italics, of taking *for these purposes all that could be obtained from whatever source derived*; and even in this delicious rummage of Cathedral property, where all the fine church feelings of the Bishop’s

heart could be indulged without costing the poor sufferer a penny, stalls for Archdeacons in Lincoln and St. Paul's are, to the amount of 2000*l.* per annum, taken from the *sheep and shepherd fund*, and the patronage of them divided between two commissioners, the Bishop of London and the Bishop of Lincoln, instead of being paid to additional *labourers in the Vineyard*.

Has there been any difficulty, I would ask, in procuring Archdeacons upon the very moderate pay they now receive? Can any Clergyman be more thoroughly respectable than the present Archdeacons in the see of London? but men bearing such an office in the Church, it may be said, should be highly paid, and Archbishops who could very well keep up their dignity upon 7000*l.* per annum, are to be allowed 15,000*l.* I make no objection to all this; but then what becomes of all these heart-rending phrases of *sheep and shepherd, and drooping vineyards, and flocks without spiritual consolation*? The Bishop's argument is, that the superfluous must give way to the necessary; but in fighting, the Bishop should take great care that his cannons are not seized, and turned against himself. He has awarded to the Bishops of England a superfluity as great as that which he intends to take from the Cathedrals; and then, when he legislates for an order to which he does not belong, begins to remember the distresses of the lower Clergy, paints them with all the colours of impassioned eloquence, and informs the Cathedral institutions that he must have *every farthing he can lay his hand upon*. Is not this as if one affected powerfully by a charity sermon were to put his hands in another man's pocket, and cast, from what he had extracted, a liberal contribution into the plate?

I beg not to be mistaken; I am very far from considering the Bishop of London as a sordid and interested person; but this is a complete instance of how the best of men deceive themselves, where their interests are concerned. I have no doubt the Bishop firmly imagined he was doing his duty; but there should have been men of all grades in the Commission, some one to say a word for Cathedrals and against Bishops.

The Bishop says, "his antagonists have allowed three Canons to be sufficient for St. Paul's, and therefore four must be sufficient for other Cathedrals." Sufficient to read the prayers and preach the sermons, certainly, and so would *one* be; but not sufficient to excite by the hope of increased rank and wealth eleven thousand parochial Clergy.

The most important and cogent arguments against the Dean and Chapter confiscations are passed over in silence in the Bishop's Charge. This, in reasoning, is always the wisest and most convenient plan, and which all young Bishops should imitate after the manner of this wary polemic. I object to the confiscation *because it will throw a great deal more of capital out of the parochial Church than it will bring into it*. I am very sorry to come forward with so homely an argument, which shocks so many Clergymen, and particularly those with the largest incomes, and the best Bishoprics; but the truth is, the greater number of Clergymen go into the Church in order that they may derive a comfortable income *from* the Church. Such men intend to do their duty, and they do it; but the duty is, however, not the motive, but the adjunct. If I were writing in gala and parade, I would not hold this language; but we are in earnest, and on business; and as very rash and hasty changes are founded upon contrary suppositions of the pure disinterestedness and perfect inattention to temporals in the Clergy, we must get down at once to the solid rock, without heeding how we disturb the turf and the flowers above. The parochial Clergy maintain their present decent appearance quite as much by their own capital as by the income they derive from the Church. I will now state the income and capital of Seven Clergymen, taken promiscuously in this neighbourhood:—

- No. 1. Living 200*l.*, Capital 12,000*l.*;
- No. 2. Living 800*l.*, Capital 15,000*l.*;

- No. 3. Living 500*l.*, Capital 12,000*l.*;
- No. 4. Living 150*l.*, Capital 10,000*l.*;
- No. 5. Living 800*l.*, Capital 12,000*l.*;
- No. 6. Living 150*l.*, Capital 1000*l.*;
- No. 7. Living 600*l.*, Capital 16,000*l.*

I have diligently inquired into the circumstances of seven Unitarian and Wesleyan ministers, and I question much if the whole seven could make up 6000*l.* between them; and the zeal and enthusiasm of this last division is certainly not inferior to that of the former. Now here is a capital of 72,000*l.* carried into the Church, which the confiscations of the Commissioners would force out of it, by taking away the good things which were the temptation to its introduction. So that by the old plan of paying by lottery, instead of giving a proper competence to each, not only do you obtain a parochial Clergy upon much cheaper terms; but from the gambling propensities of human nature, and the irresistible tendency to hope that they shall gain the great prizes, you tempt men into your service who keep up their credit, and yours, not by your allowance, but by their own capital; and to destroy this wise and well-working arrangement, a great number of Bishops, Marquises, and John Russells, are huddled into a chamber, and after proposing a scheme which will turn the English Church into a collection of consecrated beggars, we are informed by the Bishop of London that it is a *Holy Innovation*.

I have no manner of doubt, that the immediate effect of passing the Dean and Chapter Bill will be, that a great number of fathers and uncles, judging, and properly judging, that the Church is a very altered and deteriorated profession, will turn the industry and capital of their *élèves* into another channel. My friend, Robert Eden, says, “This is of the earth earthy:” be it so; I cannot help it, I paint mankind as I find them, and am not answerable for their defects. When an argument taken from real life, and the actual condition of the world, is brought among the shadowy discussions of Ecclesiastics, it always occasions terror and dismay; it is like Æneas stepping into Charon’s boat, which carried only ghosts and spirits.

Gemuit sub pondere cymba Sutilis.

The whole plan of the Bishop of London is a ptochogony—a generation of beggars. He purposes, out of the spoils of the Cathedral, to create a thousand livings, and to give to the thousand Clergymen 130*l.* per annum each: a Christian Bishop proposing, in cold blood, to create a thousand livings of 130*l.* per annum each;—to call into existence a thousand of the most unhappy men on the face of the earth,—the sons of the poor, without hope, without the assistance of private fortune, chained to the soil, ashamed to live with their inferiors, unfit for the society of the better classes, and dragging about the English curse of poverty, without the smallest hope that they can ever shake it off. At present such livings are filled by young men who have better hopes—who have reason to expect good property—who look forward to a college or a family living—who are the sons of men of some substance, and hope so to pass on to something better—who exist under the delusion of being hereafter Deans and Prebendaries who are paid once by money, and three times by hope. Will the Bishop of London promise to the progeny of any of these thousand victims of the *Holy Innovation* that, if they behave well, one of them shall have his butler’s place; another take care of the cedars and hyssops of his garden? Will he take their daughters for his nursery-maids? and may some of the sons of these “labourers of the vineyard” hope one day to ride the leaders from St. James’s to Fulham? Here is hope—here is room for ambition—a field for genius, and a ray of amelioration! If these beautiful feelings of compassion are throbbing under the cassock of the Bishop, he ought in common justice to himself to make them known.

If it were a scheme for giving ease and independence to any large bodies of Clergymen, it might be listened to; but the revenues of the English Church are such as to render this wholly and entirely out of the question. If you place a man in a village in the country, require that he should be of good manners and well educated; that his habits and appearance should be above those of the farmers to whom he preaches, if he has nothing else to expect (as would be the case in a Church of equal division); and if upon his village income he is to support a wife and educate a family without any power of making himself known in a remote and solitary situation, such a person ought to receive 500*l.* per annum, and be furnished with a house. There are about 10,700 parishes in England and Wales, whose average income is 285*l.* per annum. Now, to provide these incumbents with decent houses, to keep them in repair, and to raise the income of the incumbent to 500*l.* per annum, would require (if all the incomes of the Bishops, Deans and Chapters of separate dignitaries, of sinecure rectories, were confiscated, and if the excess of all the livings in England above 500*l.* per annum were added to them) a sum of two millions and a half in addition to the present income of the whole Church; and no power on earth could persuade the present Parliament of Great Britain to grant a single shilling for that purpose. Now, is it possible to pay such a Church upon any other principle than that of unequal division? The proposed pillage of the Cathedral and College Churches (omitting all consideration of the separate estate of dignitaries) would amount, divided among all the Benefices in England to about 5*l.* 12*s.* 6½*d.* per man: and this, which would not stop an hiatus in a cassock, and would drive out of the parochial Church ten times as much as it brought into it, is the panacea for pauperism recommended by Her Majesty's Commissioners.

But if this plan were to drive men of capital out of the Church, and to pauperise the English clergy, where would the harm be? Could not all the duties of religion be performed as well by poor Clergymen as by men of good substance? My great and serious apprehension is, that such would not be the case. There would be the greatest risk that your Clergy would be fanatical, and ignorant; that their habits would be low and mean, and that they would be despised.

Then a picture is drawn of a Clergyman with 130*l.* per annum, who combines all moral, physical, and intellectual advantages, a learned man, dedicating himself intensely to the care of his parish—of charming manners and dignified deportment—six feet two inches high, beautifully proportioned, with a magnificent countenance, expressive of all the cardinal virtues and the Ten Commandments,— and it is asked with an air of triumph if such a man as this will fall into contempt on account of his poverty? But substitute for him an average, ordinary, uninteresting Minister; obese, dumpy, neither ill-natured nor good-natured; neither learned nor ignorant, striding over the stiles to Church, with a second-rate wife—dusty and deliquescent—and four parochial children, full of catechism and bread and butter; or let him be seen in one of those Shem-Ham-and-Japhet buggies—made on Mount Ararat soon after the subsidence of the waters, driving in the High Street of Edmonton;<sup>1</sup> among all his pecuniary, saponaceous, oleaginous parishioners. Can any man of common sense say that all these outward circumstances of the Ministers of religion have no bearing on religion itself?

I ask the Bishop of London, a man of honour and conscience as he is, if he thinks five years will elapse before a second attack is made upon Deans and Chapters? Does he think, after Reformers have tasted the flesh of the Church, that they will put up with any other diet? Does he forget that Deans and Chapters are but mock turtle—that more delicious delicacies remain behind? Five years hence he will attempt to make a stand, and he will be laughed at and eaten up. In this very charge the Bishop accuses the Lay Commissioners of another intended attack upon the property of the Church, contrary to the clearest and most explicit stipulations (as he says) with the heads of the Establishment.

Much is said of the conduct of the Commissioners, but that is of the least possible consequence. They may have acted for the best, according to the then existing circumstances; they may seriously have intended to do their duty to the country; and I am far from saying or thinking they did not; but without the least reference to the Commissioners, the question is, Is it wise to pass this bill, and to justify such an open and tremendous sacrifice of Church property? Does public opinion *now* call for any such measure? is it a wise distribution of the funds of an ill-paid Church? and will it not force more capital out of the parochial part of the Church than it brings into it? If the bill be bad, it is surely not to pass out of compliment to the feelings of the Archbishop of Canterbury. If the project be hasty, it is not to be adopted to gratify the Bishop of London. The mischief to the Church is surely a greater evil than the stultification of the Commissioners, &c. If the physician have prescribed hastily, is the medicine to be taken to the death or disease of the patient? If the judge have condemned improperly, is the criminal to be hung, that the wisdom of the magistrate may not be impugned?<sup>2</sup>

But, why are the Commissioners to be stultified by the rejection of the measure? The measure may have been very good when it was recommended, and very objectionable now. I thought, and many men thought, that the Church was going to pieces—that the affections of the common people were lost to the Establishment; and that large sacrifices must be instantly made, to avert the effects of this temporary madness; but those days are gone by—and with them ought to be put aside measures which might have been wise in those days, but are wise no longer.

After all, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London are good and placable men; and will ere long forget and forgive the successful efforts of their enemies in defeating this mis-ecclesiastic law.

Suppose the Commission were now beginning to sit for the first time, will any man living say that they would make such reports as they have made? and that they would seriously propose such a tremendous revolution in Church property? And if they would not, the inference is irresistible, that to consult the feelings of two or three Churchmen, we are complimenting away the safety of the Church. Milton asked where the nymphs were when Lycidas perished? I ask where the Bishops are when the remorseless deep is closing over the head of their beloved Establishment?<sup>3</sup>

You must have read an attack upon me by the Bishop of Gloucester, in the course of which he says that I have not been appointed to my situation as Canon of St. Paul's for my piety and learning, but because I am a scoffer and a jester. Is not this rather strong for a Bishop, and does it not appear to you, Mr. Archdeacon, as rather too close an imitation of that language which is used in the apostolic occupation of trafficking in fish? Whether I have been appointed for my piety or not, must depend upon what this poor man means by piety. He means by that word, of course, a defence of all the tyrannical and oppressive abuses of the Church which have been swept away within the last fifteen or twenty years of my life; the Corporation and Test Acts; the Penal Laws against the Catholics; the Compulsory Marriages of Dissenters, and all those disabling and disqualifying laws which were the disgrace of our Church, and which he has always looked up to as the consummation of human wisdom. If piety consisted in the defence of these—if it was impious to struggle for their abrogation, I have indeed led an ungodly life.

There is nothing pompous gentlemen are so much afraid of as a little humour. It is like the objection of certain cephalic animalcula to the use of small-tooth combs, "Finger and thumb, precipitate powder, or anything else you please; but for heaven's sake no small-tooth combs!" After all, I believe, Bishop Monk has been the cause of much more laughter than

ever I have been; I cannot account for it, but I never see him enter a room without exciting a smile on every countenance within it.

Dr. Monk is furious at my attacking the heads of the Church; but how can I help it? If the heads of the Church are at the head of the Mob; if I find the best of men doing that, which has in all times drawn upon the worst enemies of the human race the bitterest curses of History, am I to stop because the motives of these men are pure, and their lives blameless? I wish I could find a blot in their lives, or a vice in their motives. The whole power of the motion is in the character of the movers: feeble friends, false friends, and foolish friends, all cease to look into the measure, and say, Would such a measure have been recommended by such men as the Prelates of Canterbury and London, if it were not for the public advantage? And in this way, the great good of a religious establishment, now rendered moderate and compatible with all men's liberties and rights, is sacrificed to names; and the Church destroyed from good breeding and Etiquette! the real truth is, that Canterbury and London have been frightened—they have overlooked the effect of time and delay—they have been betrayed into a fearful and ruinous mistake. Painful as it is to teach men who ought to teach us, the legislature ought, while there is yet time, to awake and read them this lesson.

It is dangerous for a Prelate to write; and whoever does it, ought to be a very wise one. He has speculated why I was made a Canon of St. Paul's. Suppose I were to follow his example, and, going through the bench of Bishops, were to ask for what reason each man had been made a Bishop; suppose I were to go into the county of Gloucester, &c. &c. &c.!!!!

I was afraid the Bishop would attribute my promotion to the Edinburgh Review; but upon the subject of promotion by Reviews he preserves an impenetrable silence. If my excellent patron Earl Grey had any reasons of this kind, he may at least be sure that the reviews commonly attributed to me were really written *by* me. I should have considered myself as the lowest of created beings to have disguised myself in another man's wit, and to have received a reward to which I was not entitled.<sup>4</sup>

I presume that what has drawn upon me the indignation of this Prelate, is the observations I have from time to time made on the conduct of the Commissioners; of which he positively asserts himself to have been a member; but whether he was, or was not a member, I utterly acquit him of all possible blame, and of every species of imputation which may attach to the conduct of the Commission. In using that word, I have always meant the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and Lord John Russell; and have, honestly speaking, given no more heed to the Bishop of Gloucester, than if he had been sitting in a Commission of Bonzes in the Court of Peking.

To read, however, his Lordship a lesson of good manners, I had prepared for him a chastisement which would have been echoed from the *Seagrave* who banqueteth in the castle, to the idiot who spitteth over the bridge at Gloucester; but the following appeal struck my eye, and stopped my pen:—"Since that time my inadequate qualifications have sustained an appalling diminution by the affection of my eyes, which have impaired my vision, and the progress of which threatens to consign me to darkness: I beg the benefit of your prayers to the Father of all mercies, that he will restore to me the better use of the visual organs, to be employed on his service; or that he will inwardly illumine the intellectual vision, with a particle of that Divine ray, which his Holy Spirit can alone impart."

It might have been better taste, perhaps, if a mitred invalid, in describing his bodily infirmities before a church full of Clergymen, whose prayers he asked, had been a little more sparing in the abuse of his enemies; but a good deal must be forgiven to the sick. I wish that every Christian was as well aware as this poor Bishop of what he needed from Divine

assistance; and in the supplication for the restoration of his sight and the improvement of his understanding, I most fervently and cordially join.

I was much amused with what old Hermann<sup>5</sup> says of the Bishop of London's Æschylus. "We find," he says, "a *great arbitrariness of proceeding, and much boldness of innovation, guided by no sure principle;*" here it is: *qualis ab incepto*. He begins with Æschylus, and ends with the Church of England; begins with profane and ends with holy innovations—scratching out old readings which every commentator had sanctioned; abolishing ecclesiastical dignities which every reformer had spared; thrusting an anapæst into a verse, which will not bear it; and intruding a Canon into a Cathedral, which does not want it; and this is the Prelate by whom the proposed reform of the Church has been principally planned, and to whose practical wisdom the Legislature is called upon to defer. The Bishop of London is a man of very great ability, humane, placable, generous, munificent; very agreeable, but not to be trusted with great interests where calmness and judgment are required; unfortunately, my old and amiable school-fellow, the Archbishop of Canterbury, has melted away before him, and sacrificed that wisdom on which we all founded our security.

Much writing and much talking are very tiresome; and, above all, they are so to men who, living in the world, arrive at those rapid and just conclusions which are only to be made by living in the world. This bill past, every man of sense acquainted with human affairs must see, that as far as the Church is concerned, the thing is at an end. From Lord John Russell, the present improver of the Church, we shall descend to Hume, from Hume to Roebuck, and after Roebuck we shall receive our last improvements from Dr. Wade: plunder will follow after plunder, degradation after degradation. The Church is gone, and what remains is not life, but sickness, spasm, and struggle.

Whatever happens, I am not to blame; I have fought my fight.—Farewell.

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<sup>1</sup> A parish which the Bishop of London has the greatest desire to divide into little bits; but which appears quite as fit to preserve its integrity as St. James's, St. George's, or Kensington, all in the patronage of the Bishop.

<sup>2</sup> "After the trouble the Commissioners have taken (says Sir Robert), after the obloquy they have incurred," &c. &c. &c.

<sup>3</sup> What is the use of publishing separate charges, as the Bishops of Winchester, Oxford, and Rochester have done? Why do not the dissentient Bishops form into a firm phalanx to save the Church and fling out the Bill?

<sup>4</sup> I understand that the Bishop bursts into tears every now and then, and says that I have set him the name of Simon, and that all the Bishops now call him Simon. Simon of Gloucester, however, after all, is a real writer, and how could I know that Dr. Monk's name was Simon? When tutor in Lord Carrington's family, he was called by the endearing though somewhat unmajestic name of *Dick*; and if I had thought about his name at all, I should have called him Richard of Gloucester.

<sup>5</sup> Ueber die Behandlung der Griechischen Dichter bei den Engländern. Von Gottfried Hermann. Wiemar Jahrbucher, vol. liv. 1831.

